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Tilling the Lord's Vineyard and Defending Portuguese Interests: Towards a Critical Reading of Father S. Manrique's Account of Arakan

The first volume of the *Itinerario de las misiones orientales* written by the Augustin monk Fray Sebastião Manrique is one of only a few pre-nineteenth century western accounts of the Buddhist kingdom of Arakan or Rakhaing (known as Yakhai in Siamese chronicles, as Roshanga in Bengali poetry and as Rakhine in Myanmar/Burma)¹. A first edition of the *Itinerario*, written after 1642, was published in Rome in 1649. It was followed by a second edition in 1653². Most later European accounts on Arakan were based on Manrique's narrative. Clemente Tosi literally copied Manrique's text in his *Dell' India orientale descrizione geographica et historica* (Rome, 1669). Thomas Salmon, an 18th century compiler of travel accounts, put into an encyclopaedic order the information found in Manrique and made it accessible to a larger public³.

In 1629, Sebastião Manrique came to Mrauk U, the capital of Arakan, as an envoy of the resident Portuguese of Dianga (a suburb of the port of Chittagong in southeast Bengal). They felt threatened by the appointment of a new

Arakanese governor in Chittagong, thought to be hostile to their community. Manrique spent close to six years in Arakan at a time when the kingdom had reached the zenith of its political and military power.

During the first decades of the 15th century, Arakan had merely been a battle ground for rival Mon and Burmese armies. But after the foundation of Mrauk U in 1430, the Arakan strengthened their resources and steadily expanded their territory to the south (Sandoway) and the north-west (Ramu). Under the reign of King Minba (1531-1553), Arakan successfully defended itself against a Burmese invasion (1545/1546) and even occupied Chittagong for a few years. The loss of a strong central authority in Bengal following the Mughal conquest of 1576 and the decline of the Toungoo empire in Myanmar after 1580 created a chance for further expansion. Probably around 1578, the Arakanese King Min Phalaung (1571-1593) put his hold on Chittagong, the former Bengal port that remained under Arakan's sway until 1666. Min Phalaung and his two successors fought seemingly endless wars to extend

Arakanese domination over southeastern Bengal and parts of the Irrawaddy delta. In 1598, King Minrajagri's (1593-1612) troops took part in the siege of Pegu and shortly afterwards beat off an invading army of Ayutthaya. The pillage of the treasures of the Burmese empire considerably enriched the court of Arakan, but the southern territorial expansion into Lower Burma failed. In a country devastated by years of war, the king wanted to revive trade and wisely chose to keep control only of Syriam, which had been the most important of the Burmese ports. He left the control of the port to Felipe de Brito y Nicote, a Portuguese captain who had been in his service for several years already, favouring the local Portuguese community over their Indian rivals from the Coromandel ports who had also lobbied at Mrauk U to further their commercial aims. De Brito soon rejected the king's authority and pursued his own objectives. With local Mon allies, he frustrated Arakanese attempts at gaining back control over Syriam, obtained Goa's backing and was sovereign ruler of Syriam from 1608 to 1612. But he failed in unifying the Portuguese communities established along the eastern shores of the Bay of Bengal. At the same time, another Portuguese adventurer, Sebastião Tibau, gained control over the salt-producing island of Sandwip, north of Chittagong. His shifting alliances with local lords failed to establish his position firmly, so he finally turned to Goa, too, asking for military help. But the grandiose project of invading Arakan and conquering Mrauk U in 1615 failed. While Portuguese mercenaries played an important role in Arakan's expansion at the end of the 16th century, de Brito and Tibau challenged Arakan's overlordship in the north-east Bay of Bengal at the beginning of the 17th century. From the end of the reign of King Minkhamaung (1612-1622) and during Sirisudhammaraja's reign (1622-1638), the Luso-Asians benefited from a high degree of autonomy in the Chittagong area, but they were increasingly integrated into Arakan's strategy against its enemies in Bengal. Much evidence illustrating this development and precious

information regarding the Portuguese community can be found in Father Manrique's account.

The *Itinerario* became more accessible to contemporary historians when C. Eckford-Luard's English translation was published in 1927 by the Hakluyt Society⁴. Notes and comments were not only provided by the editor, but also by the Jesuit father H. Hosten who had spent many years in studying Manrique's book, by G.E. Harvey, an English colonial historian, and by San Shwe Bu, an Arakanese scholar. Though their comments do not altogether lack a critical approach, no attempt was ever made to provide an analysis of the historical content of Manrique's narrative in conjunction with a study of Arakanese and Burmese sources.

It was Maurice Collis, a British judge and a prolific writer, who ensured Manrique's lasting fame when he transformed some major episodes of the Augustin father's stay in Arakan into a historical romance. *The Land of the Great Image*, published in 1943, became a popular book widely read in Burma and beyond and it has been for decades the most easily available book on Arakan's history. True, it is a lovely piece of writing, exotic and imaginative as well as informative. While it starts with a long introduction on Portuguese Goa and the Catholic missions in Asia, the thread of Collis' narrative is Manrique's voyage to Arakan and his adventures and experiences in the *Land of the Great Image*⁵ which cover 26 of a total 32 chapters. But, as Collis' book was peppered with references to historical works and occasionally manuscript sources, statements relating to Arakan and its kingship have often been considered by readers as established historical facts. This is unfortunate. Collis' reading of the *Itinerario* was neither analytical nor profound and his book cannot be used as a reliable historical study. A comparison with the original text shows that the gifted writer made a selective use of Manrique's account without much questioning its author's authority on points where a critically minded reader would naturally raise his eye-brows.



Maurice Collis wanted to introduce Father Manrique “so to tell his story that its rare flavour is brought out, its queerness relished and its implications understood, and not only his story but that of the extraordinary king he met”⁶. Collis’ judgmental attitude regarding his hero hardly foretells a balanced portrait and, naturally, Father Manrique himself did not look upon his own account as a queer story. In the first chapter, the Augustine friar tells his readers that “after some modern narratives fell into [his] hands”, he “took heart” and decided that he could “at any rate write and give immortality to [his] adventures with less bias and more veracity”⁷.

A historian eager to exploit Manrique’s narrative for his study of Arakanese history will start to address the original text with a set of questions which lie generally far away from Collis’ quest for anecdotes and entertainment and keep a critical distance to the purpose announced by the author himself. We may wonder what the account itself tells us of the author’s intentions and what were the deeper motives to fulfil such a painstaking task as the writing of a travelogue. We will have to pay attention to the place where the work was published (Rome!) and for what kind of readership the author possibly wrote.

This article is a contribution to such a preliminary study of Manrique and the account of his missionary activities and travels in Asia in as far as it will focus on at least some of the motives of Manrique’s writing. It acknowledges the importance of Manrique’s text and examines the reliability and usefulness of the first volume of the *Itinerario de las misiones orientales* for the study of Arakanese history, with reference to the Portuguese presence in the kingdom and to the end of the reign of King Sirisudhammaraja. One specific point, the assumed massacres of thousands of men and beasts by this king prior to his coronation ceremony in 1635, is analysed in the context of political instability prevailing during the early 1630s.

At this point, we may briefly state what Manrique’s account is not and was probably, in the eyes of its author, not meant to be. It is not a description of the kingdom of Arakan and the

author did not intend, unlike Maurice Collis, to draw a portrait of the king. Put on a string, Manrique’s information relating to the king contains plenty of contradictions and does not provide a coherent picture. It is also in no way an attempt to provide the reader with a kind of history, that is, a connected and intelligible story of either the Portuguese communities in the northwest Bay of Bengal or the events he went through himself. Manrique’s descriptions of his stay and adventures in Arakan follow a loose chronological order which is rarely helpful to reconstruct the social and political context of his six years in the country. Obviously, such an approach was not relevant for the Augustine father. The verbosity of so many descriptions rather suggests that Manrique intended to provide his contemporary readers with a picture of the kingdom intimately connected to the underlying motives of his literary work.

We will show that Manrique’s writing was prompted, first, by the defence of his missionary work against those who defamed it, and, second, by his diplomatic commitment to the interests of the Portuguese Christian communities. Both motives give an inner unity to his text and form the background against which the historian has to appreciate the information he may wish to extract from the missionary’s travel account.

The first volume of the *Itinerario* (“Journey to Arakan”, covering the time from May 1628 to April 1637) contains 39 chapters. Only chapters 10 to 34 deal directly with Arakan. These chapters can be divided into four parts: Chapters 10 to 20 deal with Manrique’s arrival in Arakan and his audiences at the court; chapters 21 to 25 provide information on the court, the capital, religious beliefs and practices as well as the Burmese-Siamese wars in the 16th century; chapters 26 to 30 deal with matters of religious conversion and chapters 31 to 35 evolve around the coronation of King Sirisudhammaraja.

The defense of the Catholic missions

The major purpose of Manrique’s book was the defence of the Catholic missions and more

particularly the work of the Augustine friars in India. The justification of the missions against their detractors (especially in Rome) is brought to the reader through an emotional portrait of its author and occasionally his own merits, a plea for the greatness of the heavy task to accomplish, and occasional references to the propagation of the faith by meritorious fathers of the Augustine order.

The work aims at edifying the piety and faith of its readers. Riddled with moral maxims and quotations from Holy scripture and Saint Augustine, the *Itinerario* attempts to illustrate divine providence that rewards the good and destroys the bad. Intertwined with the rather confusing threads of the author's main narrative, innumerable digressions and anecdotes aim at justifying the true faith and lead to moral exhortations.

*"I may perhaps be allowed, benevolent Reader, to prolong this parenthesis...., stirred as I am with great sorrow to see that even after a poor Missionary has passed through trials such as this and others to which Missionaries are subject, when he describes missionary efforts on the spot at which they took place, he yet meets with certain writers who believe that the Brethren suffer all these trials gladly in return for freedom from the summons of the chapel bell and the rigours of cloister life. That there should be a Prior so ignorant as to jeer at missions, is a harder trial to bear than all the hardships I have related."*⁸

This complaint finely summarizes our author's feelings on the attacks which the missionaries had to confront at home. Manrique deeply resented the unfair accusations that missionaries would go abroad to evade a truly monastic life. The missionaries' life was, unlike their detractors thought, a burdensome and dangerous existence. That is the message our writer conveys throughout his book. Nonetheless he is not writing to discourage, but to arouse and stimulate vocations for the missions, as, with God's grace, our author claims, great works can be done in the heathen countries⁹.

He praises the unassuming demeanour of the Augustine friars and their particular merits and exalts the superiority of the monastic orders over the secular clergy¹⁰.

Stressing the "many hardships, imprisonments and captivities" that he suffered¹¹, Manrique draws our attention to the tribulations of his own existence, though he is pleased that, owing to the grace of God, he can indulge in the glorious work of propagating his faith ("recognising with true gratitude His grace in calling us and thereby meriting being chosen by Him"¹²).

While incidentally mentioning Franciscans, Dominicans and Jesuits, Manrique presents his fellow friars of the Augustine order as the true champions of missionary work. He acclaims their humility, explaining that they strictly refuse any presents made by kings and would not easily accept any honour offered them¹³:

"This is a policy which the earliest Augustin Brethren to pass into East India long ago grasped as the best to adhere to. Not one of them, when establishing settlements in pagan Gentile and Maumetan countries, would ever accept money from the Lords of the soil on which they settled. In some parts, even after leave of build had been given, they used to purchase the sites. This excellent policy has been maintained up to the present day [...]"

*For as a rule, these Lords never grant concessions to religious orders unless they consider some advantage will be derived from it, either through an influx of Christian trade or for some special reason, but in any case merely for personal gain of some kind or other. If they find these advantages are not forthcoming, they seek for opportunities of evading those grants which they had made merely in a spirit of covetousness. Those early sons of St. Augustin... fully understood this and would never accept any pecuniary aid in such countries."*¹⁴

Several examples sketch the excellency of the Augustine friars' department. In the most



perilous situations, they face the danger with unrelenting devotion and give proofs of their Christian charity. According to Manrique, Friar Domingos de la Purificacion and himself were several times the victims of attempted murder. In one instance, a group of fourteen men were arrested and they would have been executed, if Manrique had not intervened on their behalf. Finally they were made over to his service, favourably disposed to become Christians!¹⁵ In another account of an adventure, Manrique describes how a fellow missionary, Domingos de la Purificacion, crossed at the peril of his life a crocodile-infested river to hear the confession of one Juan Errera Barbosa, a penitent Portuguese pirate at the point of his death¹⁶. "Through these and other worse dangers did the Fathers pass when busied in their Apostolic duties", says Manrique who "could give an account of many other Augustin Missionaries"¹⁷.

One particular trial of our author was his secret journey to the forbidden Maum mountains¹⁸ where he visited a small group of exiled Portuguese and "Topaze" (i.e. mixed blood) Christians. Manrique and his companions, assures our writer, faced capital punishment in case of detection¹⁹.

The success of the missionary efforts was measured by the number of conversions and baptisms. In chapter 27 we find an extensive account of the conversions done by the Augustine friars in Arakan and Pegu between 1621 and 1634. Manrique asserts that he baptised, together with two other friars, and "after duly instructing them", 11,407 persons of the 18,000 who entered Arakan during the five years of his stay. During a previous period four other friars had baptised 16,090 persons among the 20,000 who had "come" from the Mughal empire to Arakan. The figures that Manrique provides are, at first sight, impressive, but the results look less brilliant when we take into account the particular nature of that success. The people whom Manrique shamelessly presents as "coming" to Arakan, were the poor Bengali country-folk captured by the Portuguese slave-raiders and destined to be handed over to the Arakanese king

or, more often, sold on the slave-markets around the Bay of Bengal!²⁰ Mass conversions were thus quite speedy and true conversions of the heart might probably have been extremely rare.

Noteworthy missionary successes actually appear as trivial. The conversion of two Protestants, a Belgian and a German, in 1634, during the time when the king did not want Manrique to leave the court, represents the sole missionary triumph in a period of fourteen months²¹. Manrique candidly recognises that he failed to convert convicts on the way to be executed, "no doubt owing to [his] own sinfulness"²².

The defence of the propagation of the Catholic faith being a major purpose of our author, it is not surprising that the text abounds in stereotyped attacks against Buddhists and Muslims²³. We will briefly deal with his treatment of Buddhism and turn to his perception of the Muslims in a later paragraph.

The information Manrique provides on the Buddhist religion and its ceremonies is confusing and contradictory and may have been partly copied from Mendes Pinto's *Peregrinação*²⁴. It appears that Manrique did not know the Arakanese language and had only a poor command of Indian languages²⁵, contrary to what he makes us believe when he writes that he was discussing matters with the monks²⁶.

Without mincing his words, Manrique qualifies the Buddhist religion as "a deceitful and false doctrine". The "blind Idolaters", "Ministers of Hell" and "followers of the Devil" aroused his astonishment, because they preferred "the lies and snares with which the Devil had filled their minds". Their good works done "under the influence of a false faith" were "fruitless and lacking in all merit"²⁷. For a twenty-first century reader, at least, the redundant style of his accusations bears the mark of a tiresome litany²⁸. This catalogue of less than laudatory epithets is counterbalanced by a sincere admiration for the piety, the generosity and the charity of the heathens. Several times Manrique mentions the respect priests enjoy²⁹ and the behaviour of the Buddhists is even presented as a model for the Christians.

“I was edified by seeing their very complete rejoicings, the carrying out of so many pious acts and so much charity, such as the giving of alms, payment of debts the provision of free tables bearing every kind of food and delicacy bestowed for the love of God on whatever people might come to share them, irrespective of class. Such acts are indeed more to be expected of Christians than infidels, but in them incidentally they surpass many Christians.”³⁰

The Buddhist monks do not only preach renunciation, but they really practice it and set an example to follow.

“However, no real grounds for apprehension existed, inasmuch as the education given to most of these pagans was, as I have said, usually obtained in the temples or the private houses of the Raulins³¹, who are so moderate and forbearing as regards ambition and the insatiable desire for the acquisition of riches that they not only counsel and teach (by word of mouth) the hindrances such a pursuit places in the road leading to a spiritual life, but also teach it by example knowing how much greater is the effect of actually doing what one preaches than merely preaching what one does not do, as do so many persons who not only follow the true Catholic faith but also profess a state of perfection.”³²

Manrique does not whisper a single word about the state of the catholic faith of his compatriots. Interestingly, it is among the native Christians that he found striking examples of piety and spiritual ardour. A native Christian woman, who did her best to take along to Angaracale the heathen wives of some Christian Portuguese, inspired boundless admiration in the missionary.

“I confess that at the sight of her tears I was not only edified but confused in considering how much this good Indian woman had done to please God and how little I was doing. [...] Therefore I was ashamed when I considered the beauty and

purity of soul beneath that dark skin and how the Divine Lover must be enamoured of her to have endowed her with so much of His spirit.”³³

The missionaries tried to bring together in single villages or city quarters the Christian population and Father Manrique struggled hard to implement this scheme³⁴. This was a strategy to get the native converts to abandon their “heathen rites” and induce the native wives of the Portuguese mercenaries to adopt the Christian faith.

The more or less openly acknowledged intentions of the Augustine friar also reveal his personality. On the one hand, Manrique gives lively descriptions of his adventures and reveals quite frankly his true feelings and emotions. On the other hand, his moral comments easily take the lead over his descriptions, especially when he narrates his encounters and conflicts with local authorities.

Manrique’s diplomatic missions and the Portuguese in the Bay of Bengal

Manrique did not have in mind to make an exact report of his political and ecclesiastical missions, their causes and their results. We do not even know if the missions he was entrusted with were official or more or less informal tasks.

The first journey to Arakan originated with the imminent danger of a military expedition of the Arakanese against the semi-autonomous Portuguese population of Dianga. According to Manrique, a new governor had been appointed at Chittagong and he was hostile to these Portuguese, because he had once been arrested by them. But this could hardly have been the only reason for punishing the Portuguese. To avoid an attack on Dianga at a moment when the majority of the men able to carry arms had left on slave-raids along the Bengal rivers, Manrique was sent as an envoy to the Arakanese court³⁵. The risks involved for the Portuguese were high indeed, as an Arakanese battle fleet under the order of the *koyangri*³⁶ lay already at Uritaung³⁷ “to carry out the King’s orders



issued on the unjust solicitation of the Governor of Chatigân”³⁸.

Manrique met the *koyangri* in Uritaung. He seemed to be friendly to the Portuguese³⁹ and Manrique declared himself ready to answer for his fellow countrymen at Dianga. He also confirmed their loyalty to the king. This is why we may speculate if the planned attack on Dianga was eventually linked to a breach in the bonds of allegiance of the Portuguese to the king. Such a hypothesis is indirectly confirmed by Manrique himself when, ahead of his second audience with the king, he writes to his compatriots at Dianga exhorting them not to indulge anymore in their mortal sins⁴⁰. What that meant becomes fairly clear in the king's words at the audience: no Portuguese should be at the service of the Mughal Emperor⁴¹. Manrique told the king that this was anyway forbidden to the Portuguese by an order of His Majesty the King of Portugal. But the Portuguese communities in the service of the King of Arakan, or of any other prince beyond the control of the *Estado da India*, he went on to explain, usually felt free to pursue policies in their own interest. Manrique's narrative contains a number of examples which reflect this independent state of mind.

In the situation that he faced at the court in early 1630, Manrique ultimately won his case by recalling the ancient merits and the proven faithfulness of the Portuguese at the king's service⁴². The king resolved to appoint another governor of Chittagong⁴³. Unfortunately we do not learn anything about later developments regarding this matter.

Manrique may indeed have exaggerated the afore-mentioned conflict simply to impress his readership. His account suggests that he would have gone to Arakan anyway and for some other reasons. At the second audience, he handed over a letter of the Father Provincial of the Augustine order to the king. One may infer that his voyage to Arakan had been planned for some time. Moreover Manrique mentions three times that he was in charge of a mission for the viceroy, Miguel de Noronha, count of Liñares (1629-1635). But he does not make plain to his

readers what its objective was⁴⁴. It could possibly be related to the viceroy's anti-Dutch endeavours in the Bay of Bengal. The casual treatment of these essential tasks confirms our belief that Manrique rather wanted to impress than to inform.

Manrique's noteworthy descriptions of his encounters with King Sirisudhammaraja bear an astonishing air of familiarity. At the five audiences, our Augustine father seems to have hardly been bothered by any ceremonial impediments. He is merely complaining about the never-ending delivery of presents. With the depiction of the fifth audience, one gets the impression that Manrique was visiting an old friend. This is in stark contrast to his later chapter on Sirisudhammaraja's coronation ceremony in 1635 and with just anything we might have in mind on Western envoys meeting Oriental and specifically Burmese or Arakanese kings and the protocol involved. A description of such an informal way of dealing with the king highlights the fact that Manrique was, or rather wants us to believe that he was, on excellent terms with the supreme lord of the country at the beginning of his stay. Five years later, when the king did not grant him permission to leave the country, their supposedly cosy relations came to an end. Unfortunately Manrique does not give us the least description or appreciation of the sovereign's personality. So, in the end, we wonder if Manrique really came into such close contact with the king at all. Was he merely boasting of such familiarity with the court to further inflate his stature in the eyes of the readers?

The worries about his missionary duties play an increasingly prominent part in his narrative. True, the three favours that Manrique asked for, during the second audience, were speedily granted: the liberation of eight Christian families at “Cuami”, the construction of a church and the visit of the Christians living at the capital⁴⁵.

But the concession of these favours had required skilful diplomacy in more than one direction. When Manrique intended to re-

establish the native converts in a “Christian” quarter, the Portuguese captain (who was in charge of these Christians and liable to the king for their behaviour) protested because he was afraid to attract the mistrust of the king and his council. There are quite a few examples which show that Manrique was not coping to badly with challenging situations. He presents himself as an astute speaker whose rhetorical devices could eventually impress a reluctant king. While presenting a gift at the 1634 coronation ceremony, he told the king:

“The Christians of Dianga say I am a prisoner because they know of the great honours and kindnesses you have done me and continue to show me, and that by these acts you not only make me your slave but have also placed all the Christians within your dominion under great obligations. The King laughed at this flattering solution of the subject and granted me the permission we had asked for.” [i.e. the permission to leave the kingdom]

Many of Manrique’s ambiguous and sometimes contradictory judgements on men, their habits, attitudes or, as mentioned above, their religion, characterise him as a basically honest man who was torn between his spontaneous enthusiasm for the marks of a refined civilization, on the one hand, and his vocation to promote the one and true Catholic faith, on the other. He laments about the suspicion of the “Maghs” [=Arakanese], but praises the diplomatic skill of these “barbarians”. While other seventeenth century accounts of the Luso-Asian community of the north-eastern Bay of Bengal generally denounce it as a lawless bunch of pirates, Manrique refrains from judging so harshly the behaviour of his fellow countrymen⁴⁶. The forceful deportation of thousands of Bengalis into slavery is shyly hidden by our author under the veil of mass conversions. The rare criticisms of the Portuguese relate to actions of the past. Recalling the achievements of the Portuguese soldiers at the service of the Burmese emperor Bayinnaung (1553-1581), the Augustine friar condemns their

cupidity, but seems to believe that they did not want to appear too obviously greedy. Surprisingly, we do not find a single word on the famous Felipe de Brito y Nicote in the famous Felipe de Brito y Nicote in the *Itinerario*. The most likely reason is that de Brito betrayed the Arakanese king in 1601, built a fortress in Syriam, a port whose governorship had been entrusted to him after the fall of the First Toungoo empire and defended himself victoriously against two Arakanese attacks in 1605 and 1607. No mention is also made of the ensuing loss of Syriam to the Burmese king Anaukphetlun on 28 March 1613. The neglect of a figure like de Brito is nonetheless remarkable as the five years of his undisputed control over parts of Lower Burma (1608-1613) with the help of both Mon and Burmese allies, run parallel to Sebastião Tibau’s sway over Sandwip (1607-1616). Tibau, though much exalted by Manrique (see below), was actually a less glamorous and daring person than de Brito. Briefly, Manrique confined himself to outline the meritorious Portuguese record of service in the Arakan and Chittagong area and passed over the case of de Brito who, after allegedly serving the Arakanese king for two decades, later brilliantly resisted Arakanese attempts to subdue him.

As far as the relations between the Arakanese king and the Portuguese mercenaries were concerned, Manrique’s description bears a great interest for the historian. Our author makes clear that the Portuguese were “officially” defending the Arakanese border area against the “encroachment and tyranny” of the Mughal Emperor⁴⁷. The term “Portuguese” refers here to the leaders of a Luso-Asian community of Portuguese, mixed bloods, Indian Christians and slaves of diverse origins. According to Wouter Schouten’s description of a slave raid in southern Bengal in 1663, the captain of the fleet was a Portuguese while the men rowing the boats were Arakanese. These “Portuguese” incursions along the rivers of Bengal and the deportations of men, women and children into slavery were useful from the point of view of an Arakanese *raison d’Etat* as the constant reign of terror in

south-eastern Bengal effectively created a deserted buffer zone between the Mughals and the Buddhist kingdom. On the other hand, they were profitable for the Portuguese thanks to the booty they made and the slaves they could sell. They were also legitimate from a Catholic point of view and approved by the authorities of the *Estado da India*, as our author candidly states.

*"With the object of securing these two entrances [by land and by sea], the Magh kings decided to always retain Portuguese in their service granting the best of them the rank of Captain and conferring on them Bilâtas, or revenue-producing lands, on the understanding that they maintained a certain force of their country-men and also Geliâs. Geliâs are very swift vessels which are used on the Ganges for fighting. They are usually propelled by thirty-eight rowers who live on the Bilâtas or estates of those Captains, under the obligation of serving whenever called upon. Besides this annual income they were authorised to take their vessels into the principality of Bengala, which belonged to the Great Mogol. Here they would sack and destroy all the villages and settlements on the banks of the Ganges, to a distance of two or three leagues up-stream, and besides removing all the most valuable things they found, would also take captive any people with whom they came in contact. This raiding was pronounced by the Provincial Council at Goa to be just, since the Mogors were not only invaders and tyrannical usurpers but also enemies of Christianity. For they desired to extirpate it wholly from the Orient..."*⁴⁸

Sebastião Gonzales Tibau, a Portuguese of humble origins, had come to Bengal in 1605 and earned his living as a mercenary and trader on Sandwip, an island in the north-eastern Bay of Bengal. The island owed its prosperity mainly to its salt and sugar cane trade. Tibau survived the famous 1607 expedition against Dianga when King Minrajagri wanted to punish the

rebellious Portuguese community. With local Bengal allies he made himself master of Sandwip in 1609⁴⁹. His control over the island and the small fleet that he commanded became more an annoyance than a real threat for the Arakanese. Manrique introduces Tibau as a "brave Portuguese" who became "king of Sundiva" (Sandwip). In fact, Tibau could only uphold his position through local alliances. But he was a fickle ally of the Arakanese and Bengali lords and he refused to co-operate with his fellow countryman de Brito⁵⁰. In 1610, he helped prince Min Nyo, the rebellious governor of Chittagong, who sent his daughter as a hostage to Sandwip. When the allied troops were beaten by the Arakanese crown prince (later King Min Khamaung), Min Nyo fled to Sandwip. Before he died, Tibau married his daughter who had been made a Christian. It seems that Min Nyo's widow, Khaung Pauk Ma, refused to marry Antonio, Tibau's brother, because she did not want to become a Christian⁵¹. According to Arakanese sources, she later returned to Chittagong where she was arrested in 1612 by King Man Khamaung⁵². Min Nyo's successor was a prince called Alamanja by Manrique. This name refers to the middle son (*alat min*) Cakrawate who governed Chittagong up to 1612. He bore the Muslim title Suleiman Shah⁵³. Manrique says that the young Arakanese governor, while arriving in Chittagong, was advised to "keep on good terms" with Tibau to "preserve his own position"⁵⁴. Cakrawate did this by proposing to Tibau to marry one of his daughters who was moreover ready to become a Catholic. Tibau received Cakrawate's embassy "with delight" and Manrique gave his reasons as follows:

"...because of the service it enabled him to do to the Divine Majesty by bringing the Princess of Chatigan to a knowledge of his own sacred and true faith, as well as for the great opening it gave him for ingratiating himself with the Viceroy of India and also doing valuable service to His Majesty of Portugal, his natural suzerain."

One may be sceptical about Tibau's Christian intentions, but Manrique rightly notes that it was in Tibau's interest to ingratiate himself with Goa. Though the conversion of a princess was not enough to achieve this aim, Tibau actively appealed to Goa in the following year.

Manrique gives an elaborate and edifying account of the embassy sent to Chittagong and the conversion of the princess. After her arrival in Sandwip, the princess, baptised with the name of Maxima, was married to Tibau "amidst increased demonstrations of delight and joy"⁵⁵. The story of this conversion is rather surprising because Maxima cannot have been very old at that time, as her father is said to have become governor at the age of twenty-three. What is even more puzzling is the fact that Tibau is said to have married another Arakanese princess just a couple of years before, who would logically have been the cousin of Maxima. As moreover Tibau had already grown up sons, he must have had another wife at an earlier time.

The description of the siege of Chittagong in 1612 highlights Tibau's opportunism. When Min Khamaung became king after the death of his father Minrajagri, he attacked his brother Cakrawate in Chittagong. The governor defended himself for four months "with the assistance of the Portuguese ruler of Sundiva, by holding the most important position with a body of four hundred Portuguese." Tibau even appealed to the king of "Assaram" to send him 140 Portuguese, ammunition and weapons to support Cakrawate⁵⁶. But once Min Khamaung sent him a messenger asking him to withdraw the four hundred Portuguese from Chittagong, Tibau declared that these men were not under his control.

"He asked the Magh [=Arakanese] Envoy if any inhabitants of Sundiva were in the service of the Prince of Chatigan [=Cakrawate]. On his replying in the negative, he said: "Then of what does your King complain? The Portuguese are not my vassals but free people, who can leave this island any time they wish, and I

*cannot force them to stay. As regards this protest I look upon the Ruler of Portugal as my natural Lord and King, and being his loyal subject I always obey his orders with scrupulous care. So I will write to these Portuguese you refer to suggesting that they should leave Chatigan and join your King. But if they refuse to do this, your valiant King, who is there with his weapons in his hand, can compel them as I cannot."*⁵⁷

Min Khamaung did indeed compel them and took Chittagong. A few months later, Tibau allied himself with the Arakanese to confront the Mughal troops in Bhallua. Manrique passes without reproving Tibau's opportunism and embellishes his portrait with the attribute of being a "loyal subject" of the Portuguese king. This double-standard in judging Tibau's actions underscores that Manrique wanted to stress above all the crucial role that the Portuguese could play in local politics. He was fascinated by their incidental power to do or undo. Manrique reports for example that some of the besieged Arakanese wrote to King Min Khamaung that they would like to surrender, but that they were "powerless" as the city was "held by the Portuguese"⁵⁸.

A detailed account of the events also points to the notorious divisiveness of the Portuguese communities. Four hundred Portuguese backed the rebellious governor Cakrawate during the siege of Chittagong in 1612. Tibau asked them indeed, as seen in the above quotation, to abandon their resistance to Min Khamaung. They replied that the "Ruler of Sundiva could govern his own people, but [that] they would manage their own affairs". Only when Cakrawate was seriously injured, did they surreptitiously apply for help from Tibau to save two of his children whom the rebel governor was said to have entrusted to his Portuguese mercenaries. Once more it is Tibau who finds himself portrayed by Manrique as a noble man and devout Catholic. "Urged on by a truly apostolic zeal he decided to snatch that Prince from the dark and tortuous paths of heathendom..."



Cakrawate died in his palace before Raphael de Santa Monica, an Augustin friar who secretly entered Chittagong during the ongoing siege, could convert him to the Catholic faith. The news of the death was then kept secret until the moment Friar Raphael left the city for Hugli together with Cakrawate's children.

In Manrique's account, the siege of Chittagong in 1612 ends in a less than dramatic way. At the moment Cakrawate's death was announced, "the Portuguese retired", and the King entered "the city without opposition". From this point on, Manrique's attention focuses on the career of Cakrawate's son, who was educated as a Christian (called Dom Martin) and later made a career in the service of the king of Portugal⁵⁹.

Nothing is further said about Tibau. Through other writers, we know that he later allied himself with the Arakanese against the Mughal troops. Bocarro suggests that Tibau was at the head of his own ships and of an Arakanese squadron. Treacherously, he left his advance position in Dakatia Khal (at the mouth of the Meghna river) and opened the way for the progress of the Mughal troops. He slaughtered some of the Arakanese commanders and sold their troops into slavery before leaving for a rampaging spree against Arakanese coastal towns. Being by this time left without any local allies, he turned to Goa, asked for military help and - as an acknowledgement of Goa's authority - promised to send part of the tax revenue of Sandwip. He took advantage of the failure of Goa to secure de Brito's hold over Syriam and won support for a new project of Portuguese territorial expansion along the north-eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal. But, in 1615, when the Goan fleet under admiral de Menezes sailed up the Kaladan, he refused to commit his own forces. The expedition ended as a disaster. The Portuguese ships were routed by the Arakanese fleet and two Dutch vessels. Admiral de Menezes was killed and the departure of the Goan armada spelled Tibau's ruin a year later. Nothing of all this is referred to by Manrique.

Looking at the considerable amount of trouble that Tibau's activities caused both to the Arakanese and to Goa and considering Tibau's fairly low moral standard, Manrique's favourable portrait of the "ruler of Sundiva" cannot go unchallenged if we try to sort out fact and fiction.

Manrique was partial to a more offensive Portuguese policy in Arakan, though, unlike in Father Nicolau de Conceição's account of 1644, we cannot find in the *Itinerario* any suggestion to try once more to conquer Arakan⁶⁰. Manrique regretted that Portugal did not pursue its conquests in the area "with the same vigour and earnestness with which they started" and he attributes this development of the subjection of Portugal to Spain⁶¹. Manrique's 17th century opinion is contradicted by the analysis of a contemporary historian like Sanjay Subrahmanyam who writes that "the most important feature of early Habsburg control over the *Estado da India*" was precisely the "growing tendency to territoriality"⁶².

The Portuguese community at Dianga, who was serving the king of Arakan, has to be neatly differentiated from the Portuguese who lived in Mughal Bengal. Each had its own particular interests. It is clear that both Portuguese communities enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy, but they were not completely masters of their own destiny. In Arakan, the local autonomy of the Portuguese was seriously hit after Tibau's eviction from Sandwip by Arakanese troops and his death in 1617, a fact that Manrique plainly omits as well. A similar observation could probably be made with regard to Bengal and the consequences of the destruction of Hugli in 1632⁶³.

Goa tried to revive up its relations with Mrauk U in the early 1630s following the resurgence of a strong Burmese kingship based in the northern capital of Ava⁶⁴. On the other hand, Manrique alludes to the project of a treaty between Musundulim, the "prince of Angelim"⁶⁵ and the Portuguese viceroy⁶⁶. As for the Portuguese who lived beyond Goa's control and protection, they had to come to terms with the

changing local conditions. For the whole Luso-Asian community in Arakan, this meant that they were actually more than before integrated into a general pattern of Arakanese policy: defending the north-eastern border against the impending Mughal threat and carrying on the lucrative slave-trade. For many more decades, the reputation of the seafaring Portuguese (“Feringhi”) and Arakanese struck the population of Bengal with horror. They made the country-folk flee, aghast at the prospect of being enslaved⁶⁷.

Manrique gives a partial, but vivid picture of this divided and warlike world of the coastal areas of Bengal. The Augustine friar speaks favourably about his compatriots, keen on stressing their piety and trustfulness. Unhesitatingly he draws a veil on the scandalous slave-raids and he seems insensitive to the plight of those he felt all too glad to baptize. But the inherent contradictions in the one-sided sketch of his countrymen cannot hide a more complex reality. Their sense of freedom made the Portuguese a notoriously unreliable partner for the Arakanese ruler. It is possible that in 1633-1634, Manrique was kept as a hostage in Mrauk U, because the king wanted to exert some pressure on the Dianga Portuguese⁶⁸.

Constantly Manrique reminds his readers of the exemplary hostility between, say, the cursed Mughals and the noble Portuguese, but the reports of his own down-to-earth daily-experiences with Muslims are not as narrow-minded. After his return to Bengal in 1635, Manrique describes his problems in finding a ship in Pipli to pursue his travel. His description illustrates a variety of relations between Muslims and local Christians. He recalls, for example, that he met a “Mogol of high rank” who, though he declared that “the Priests were really guilty of the great damage the Portuguese, who lived in the Magh [=Arakanese] kingdom committed in Imperial territory”, treated him very courteously. Then drawing a practical conclusion from his good luck of finding some Muslim traders who took him along on their ship, he writes:

“All this and even more can be accomplished through private interest, which induces the greatest foes to become helpers and assist those whom they really desire to see exterminated throughout the world.”⁶⁹

The end of King Sirisudhammaraja’s reign

The last years of King Sirisudhammaraja’s reign were a critical period in Arakan’s dynastic history. In July 1638, after the king’s death, Kusala, an ambitious nobleman, violently usurped power and reigned under the name of Narapati. This came as no real surprise as Kusala had been intriguing for several years against the reigning king and he was probably instrumental in the poisoning of the king’s son and successor during the first months of 1638. Information relating to the growing political instability at the Arakanese court after 1630 is found in native Arakanese sources, in Manrique’s account and in Dutch VOC reports. Manrique’s account calls for a critical analysis as it contains a strange report of a series of “massacres” that the king undertook to assure his longevity prior to his coronation ceremony in 1635. Maurice Collis gave this story an air of credibility which it does not deserve. Our review of Manrique’s and Collis’ text should start with a short note on Sirisudhammaraja’s reign.

Unlike his three predecessors who were above the age of thirty when they became kings, Sirisudhammaraja was merely twenty or twenty-two when he ascended the throne of Arakan at the death of his father Min Khamaung in 1622. At the very beginning of the century, the Mughal control over Bengal had not yet been fully established and the Burmese empire was in shambles. But in 1613, the Mughal emperor Jahangir called for a conquest of Arakan. Attempts made in 1616 and somewhere between 1621 and 1623 failed, but from then on, Arakan had to face the Mughal threat. On its eastern frontier, it also felt the growing pressure of the renascent Burmese empire under King Anaukphetlun. The Arakanese reacted to these



menaces by a considerable number of military activities. Sirisudhammaraja led an expedition into Bengal in October 1622; in 1625, Dhaka suffered a massive Arakanese attack and, according to Father Manrique, the climate of latent warfare with Bengal lasted until 1629. In 1626, the king sent an expeditionary force against Syriam and Pegu at a time when the Burmese king was making war in the Shan States. This expedition may have been a reply to earlier Burmese raids against Sandoway in southern Arakan. Sirisudhammaraja's reign saw also intensive diplomatic activities. During the early years of King Salwan's reign (1629-1648), Arakan sent at least four embassies to Burma. The first embassy conveyed an open threat to intervene in Pegu, but the relations between the two courts took a more quiet turn after the fourth embassy returned around 1634⁷⁰.

In May 1624, Sirisudhammaraja made a clever move by sending presents to Shah Jahan who had revolted against his father Jahangir and tried to build up a stronghold in Bengal. Shah Jahan acknowledged the gifts and sent the Arakanese king a robe of honour and a *farman* confirming his possessions⁷¹. It is revealing that during emperor Shah Jahan's long reign from 1628 to 1658, there was no new attempt from the Mughals to conquer Arakan or Chittagong. In 1633, Goa sent Gaspar Pacheco de Mesquita, a trusted negotiator, to conclude an anti-Mughal alliance, but the king refused. Arakan's power was then sufficiently renowned to attract even the attention of a Siamese king. At an unspecified moment between 1630 and 1634, King Prasat Thong sent an embassy "to establish peaceful relations" with Arakan⁷². All this does not only point to a very active, but also to a successful and prestigious reign. Unfortunately, the second half of the reign was overshadowed by a simmering inner political crisis and this is where we can turn to Manrique's account.

According to the Augustine friar, a Muslim magician "induced the king to perpetrate the most diabolical cruelties under the pretext of saving his own life" just before his coronation

in January 1635. After commenting extensively on the pregnant women thrown into the foundations of a new reservoir and the fire set on a part of the city to "propitiate their idols", the list of "cruelties" culminated with the "*timiama*" that the king was supposed to have carried out secretly "in a valley between two lofty mountains". To become invisible and invincible, the "odoriferous and precious *timiama*" should comprise 6000 human hearts, 4000 hearts of white cows and 4000 hearts of white doves.

*"So, like a second Herod the Ascalonite, he sent out the impious tools of his cruelty, and they at once began seizing innocent men and women in market-places and other spots where they gathered together, and so actively that in a few days the terror they aroused was such that no man dared to venture out into the cheerful light of day."*⁷³

Though he resided several years in Mrauk U, Manrique had actually not much to say on these sacrifices, as he did not see himself anything of what he pretended. He gives us a surreal description of a "devilish executioner" "surrounded by great fires and cauldrons" who "distilled the hearts and other ingredients he sent for":

"In this occupation and in other necessary acts he passed the ill-spent hours of the day, while in order to recuperate, he employed most of the hours of the nights in invoking all the powers of Tartarus with fearful shouts."

The sacrifices went on for months so that "the Nobles and the discontented populace with them were driven to the point of revolt"⁷⁴.

In *The Land of the Great Image*, Maurice Collis summarised and simplified Manrique's opulent and fantastic description and made an attempt at giving a rational explanation to the narrative. According to the British writer, the Arakanese king wanted to obtain an elixir to counter a prophecy announcing his early death after his coronation, to fight off the Mughal emperor and to become a world conqueror. Beside the fact that Manrique does not speak

about any elixir, Collis' political and ideological explanations cannot positively be deduced from the original text of the *Itinerario*. Uncannily, Collis expressed no doubt about the sacrifice of 6000 people, while Manrique, who also reports rumours of 18000 people killed, merely cites the figure of 6000 as the more reliable figure. Slaughtering 6000 people may seem incredible even for an Asian despot, says Collis, but, basically, he did not hesitate to believe in the performance of human sacrifices on such a large scale by a Buddhist king. Trying to provide a kind of psychological rationale for the unbelievable, he states that the king was a paranoid⁷⁵. Then, carried away by his own imagination, Collis rewrites the story and tells his readers that Sirisudhammaraja "possessed a secret police who were subject directly to him" and "orders did not go through any minister"⁷⁶.

Obviously, Collis was not as surprised by Manrique's weird stories as a historian should be. He could actually have done better. In 1936, just a few years before Collis published *The Land of the Great Image*, D.G.E Hall finished a study of Dutch trade with Arakan in a journal in which Collis himself had already published half a dozen articles, the *Journal of the Burma Research Society*. Hall's paper contained much information on the Dutch-Arakanese relations. Remarkably, not a single line refers to massacres under the reign of Sirisudhammaraja. Why did Maurice Collis ignore this fact?

One could discard our criticism of Collis' work by saying that he was just a writer who wanted to please and entertain his public. Yet Collis announced in his preface that he intended to "disclose... a Buddhistic [political] theory which is as curiously related to the Christian *Civitas Dei* as is the Confucian". Should this relate to the concept of the *cakravartin*, or world conqueror, his uncritical reading of Manrique's text will be even more misleading. We may thus safely conclude that Collis' *The Land of the Great Image* has little or no value for the historian interested in Arakan's kingship.

What could then a possible interpretation of the above story be? Questions raised by the historian could read as follows. Is Manrique's story just a product of its author's imagination or is there anything true about it? And, if some fact is to be found, what is its nature? Let us first turn to a clue given by Manrique himself. After describing the strange proceedings of the "devilish executioner", Manrique abruptly stops by saying:

*"The Christians heard of this, and after one or two meetings, decided not to take sides with either party, but to wait in a united body until they could see what the actual result of the present rumours would be."*⁷⁷

This candid remark is important for two reasons. First, it suggests that there was an ongoing conflict between the king and another party. So at least some part of what Manrique writes, calls for a political interpretation. Next we have to conclude that the horrifying nature of what Manrique describes is considerably watered down by the fact that he looks upon all this as "rumours".

The Arakanese sources do confirm the emerging political crisis. So do the unpublished Dutch VOC sources. As we have already shortly anticipated, a conflict was simmering for several years between King Sirisudhammaraja and one of the most powerful lords of the country, Kusala, the lord of Launggrak. In the Arakanese chronicles, its account is slightly less strange for a modern reader than Manrique's report⁷⁸. Na Lak Rum, a royal advisor, reportedly warned the king that Kusala, the lord of Launggrak, intended to ruin him with the use of black magic and told him to fight back with similar means. But the king did not listen to his advice. Things were complicated by the fact that Queen Natshinmay colluded with the lord of Launggrak - she was reportedly his lover - and played the king false. In 1638, the king died under obscure conditions. According to one written tradition, Kusala pushed the king to build a water reservoir - a detail that is confirmed by Manrique - filling it up with rice, because a white



elephant was expected to arrive. Later Kusala prepared a poison that was supposed to kill the king in seven months. Prophecies confirmed that the king would die soon. According to a different tradition, Kusala successfully caused the king's death by having a *ngazi* singer (a popular bard and story-teller) recite a magic spell in the king's presence. The king was once more warned by Na Lak Rum and Gunamañju, the abbot of the Shit-taung pagoda, but their efforts were vain. He invited the *ngazi* singer to the court and died a week later.

Though the chronicles do not provide a fully coherent story, it is not difficult to see that Manrique did not wholly invent his story. It reflects indeed, in some altogether confused and biased way, the very real political crisis at the court. It is not possible, for example, to identify Na Lak Rum with the Muslim prophet of Manrique, but we know that there were actually very powerful Muslim officials at the court in the 17th century who may somehow fit Manrique's hostile depiction. The absence of any clear indication of a political conflict at the court in Manrique's description can best be explained by the fact that the Augustine father neither intended to reconstruct a contemporary historical background nor did he try to give a true account of what he had seen or what he possibly knew. But his surprising account can truly be read against a factual historical background⁷⁹. While the *Itinerario* has a relatively small intrinsic value regarding its information on the political situation in Arakan in the mid-thirties of the 17th century, when read in the light of the local sources, it gives us at least a confirmation of the native historiography. Both sources underline, for example, that the political rivalry and the ambitious struggle of Kusala dragged on for a long time. The lord of Launggrak had his own guard - in modern terms, we would rather call it a private army - but he was seemingly unable to take power immediately after Sirisudhammaraja's death. It was only after a son of the king, considered to be the legitimate successor to the throne, died a few months later, that Queen Natshinmay dared

to impose her candidate on the kingdom. This son, known only by the name of Prince Saturday, was reportedly poisoned by Queen Natshinmay. Kusala did not command sufficient respect from the members of the royal council to get approval and it was only under pressure that they complied.

Once King Narapati (*alias* Kusala) established himself in the palace, he ultimately cleared his way to power by killing the whole court elite and replacing it with his own men. King Narapati's reign from 1638 to 1645 comes in stark contrast to the active reign of his predecessor⁸⁰. The palace revolution and its dire consequences caused a stand still in Arakan's foreign relations. The usurper was 45 when he proclaimed himself king. He suffered increasingly from a "debilitating illness that made it impossible for him to walk" (Van Galen) and condemned him to a secluded life in the palace. After 1643, he was unable to reign and one of his sons progressively took over the reins of government. Beyond the limits of Arakan's heartland, his grip on power remained precarious. Min Yè Kyaw Htin (*aka* Mangat Rai or Nga Tun Khin), the governor of Chittagong who belonged to the old royal line, rebelled and proclaimed himself King of Chittagong. Known as Muzaffar Shah to his Muslim subjects, it was only at the end of 1639 that he was forced into exile by Narapati's troops⁸¹. Revolts of the commander of the royal bodyguard (December 1643) and of the new governor of Chittagong (April 1644) bear testimony to Narapati's failure to enforce his control over the whole kingdom. In 1644, the king went ahead with a controversial project of resettling thousands of Chittagonian weavers and dyers in the central plains of Arakan. Many among these newly established service groups died by famine in 1645 as the price of rice soared. On the other hand, the textile industry of Chittagong was hit resulting in a blow to the entrepôt trade of Arakan's only major port. But despite the dynastic break in the year 1000 of the Arakanese/Burmese era (AD 1638), there is little evidence that the change at the head of the



kingdom weakened Arakan's power assets or its integration into the regional trade network.

Manrique left Arakan in 1635 and none of the subsequent events were recorded in the *Itinerario*. They have been summarised here to put into perspective the stories surrounding the king's coronation. These stories are at first confusing for the historian, but, again, looking at the way the author writes, they were likely not meant for the purely historical record. It seems to have been the author's main intention to amuse his readers in the four chapters dealing with Sirisudhammaraja's coronation (chapters 31-34). These chapters form a kind of sub-narrative where the defence of the Catholic faith, the praise of the Augustine missionaries and individual Portuguese exploits are much less prominent than in the preceding chapters. Chapter 31 opens with an apology stating that despite "the high-souled recoil from any account of tragical events", the author has to begin "with the murders and holocausts of this youthful Barbarian Emperor". This start creates in the mind of the reader an immediate sense of dramatic intensity. After a well-graded presentation of horrors, the description reaches an anti-climax when we learn that all these horrors were actually "rumours". The next three chapters deal with the festivals held at the coronation of the king and one of his lords and Manrique starts off with the following:

"The curious reader will have been disgusted at having seen (with the eyes of the mind) all the cruelties, murders, and holocausts which were narrated in the last Chapter, But now, in accordance with my promise, I shall enliven and divert him."

While these chapters provide fewer instances of the Portuguese presence or the missionaries' activities, the pervasive moralising tone that underlies the descriptions links them to the preceding parts of Manrique's labours in the country. Manrique intended to "give immortality" to his adventures, but even when he merely wanted to entertain, he still wanted to edify his readership.

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- ² The original text was re-edited in 1946 (Lisbon, AGC).
- ³ The 18th century compiler probably took his information from an appendix to Ovington's *A voyage to Suratt in the year 1689 giving a large account of that city and of the English factory there* (London 1696) that contained a *Description of the Kingdoms of Arracan and Pegu*, the latter being clearly based on Manrique.
- ⁴ *Travels of Fray Sebastien Manrique 1629-1643*. Vol. 1: Arakan. London: Hakluyt Society, 1927. According to M. Collis, "the volumes issued by that Society are largely reserved for its members and few come into the hands of the general public." (Collis 1943: 12).
- ⁵ The Great Image is the Mahamuni, a statue of Lord Buddha that, according to the belief of the Arakanese, was made on the initiative of an Arakanese king when Sakyamuni resided on the Selagiri mountain in northern Arakan. Moved to Mandalay after the Burmese conquest in 1785, it is until today the most revered statue in Burma.
- ⁶ Collis 1943: 12.
- ⁷ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 3.
- ⁸ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 412.
- ⁹ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 171.
- ¹⁰ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 172.
- ¹¹ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 233.
- ¹² Manrique 1927, vol. 1, vol. 1: 232.
- ¹³ In 1634, Manrique refused the appanage of a monthly rent, 20 baskets of rice and salt and 20 servants, conforming to the principles of his order. (Manrique 1927, vol. 1, vol 1: 271); Friar Raphael de Santa Monica, sent to Chittagong to take care of the conversion of the daughter of the governor of Chittagong, refused the honour of sitting on top of an elephant (Manrique 1927, vol. 1, vol. 1: 307).
- ¹⁴ Manrique 1927, vol. 1, vol. 1: 269-270.
- ¹⁵ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 289-291, 293.

Note

¹ Shorter accounts of Arakan include Fernberger (1999), Leblanc (1648) Hamilton (1744) and Barbosa. The second volume of the *Itinerario de las misiones orientales* includes the "Voyage to China and the Far East", the "Journey through India" and the "Voyage to Europe through Afghanistan, Persia, and

¹⁶ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 294-298.

¹⁷ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 292, 294. The author says that certain monks appealed to the king that the presence of priests was contrary to the laws of the country (Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 287).

¹⁸ Probably situated in northeastern Arakan.

¹⁹ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 326-348. "The penalty for evasion is death for those immediately concerned, with their families and nearest relatives, together with the confiscation of their property to the accusers." (Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 330).

²⁰ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 286-287. Schouten says that the Bengali population was badly protected by its governors. (Schouten 1727 (vol. 2): 67).

²¹ One may exclude from these figures the baptisms of those Christians who did not benefit from the spiritual assistance of a priest for years and whose children, being born of Christian parents, had never been baptised. (See Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 168).

²² He gives the same explanation later, while preaching to a group of natives in Bengal: "I made many suggestions while moralizing on these words. But my lack of spiritual vigor and my sins caused me to make so little impression upon those Infidels, that although they listened with great attention and in complete silence, yet not one was converted or wished to enlist under that divine standard." (Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 437).

²³ The devastation of the villages in Bengal was considered to be legitimate because the Mughals were looked upon as usurpers, tyrants and enemies of the Christians. (pp. 285-286). Allegedly human sacrifices, ordered by King Sirisudhammaraja, had been instigated by a 'false' Muslim preceptor.

²⁴ See the following notes of the editor: n. 1, p. 221; n. 5, p. 223; n. 14, p. 229 et pp. 245-246.

²⁵ See the following notes of the editor: n. 22, p. 103; n. 4, p. 419.

²⁶ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 97.

²⁷ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 232, 353, 234, 237.

²⁸ See for example chapter 25.

²⁹ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 161.

³⁰ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 234. See as well p. 223 and p. 249 for an appraisal of the king. The courtesy of Sirisudhammaraja's guard attained a high standard: [When the guards refused him entry to the royal crowning ceremony, Manrique notes:] "And this, although Barbarians, these guards effected with the greatest courtesy and consideration, an example to those in certain places in Europe, where, ... they hustle and harry them." (p. 388).

³¹ The word 'Raulin' is one of the expressions Manrique indiscriminately uses for the Buddhist monks or hermits. The term is found in Cesare Federici's late sixteenth century travel account. In his study on Theravada Buddhism in East Bengal, Heinz Bechert refers to the use of this word for monks who did not comply with the mid-nineteenth century reform of the sangha by the queen of the Chakmas (Bechert 1977).

One might recall that the word is found with Italian travellers of the 16th century, like Federici. It has as well been used in connection with a kind of popular priest of the Chakma tribe.

³² Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 242. Even Muslims occasionally deserve civil remarks (e.g. p. 427).

³³ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 280.

³⁴ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 192, 282. Our author mentions the permission to assemble the scattered groups of Christians at Angaracale, a few kilometres from Dianga, which lay south of Chittagong (p. 277).

³⁵ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 88.

³⁶ The *koyangri* [spelt: *kuiy ran kri*] was the chief of the royal palace guard, one of the highest positions at the court. Men trusted by the king, they were commonly appointed as military commanders in times of war. Manrique describes him as Captain-General.

³⁷ Uritaung or Orietan (as Manrique spells the word) lies at the confluence of the Kaladan river and one of its western tributaries, the Mayu. It is famous for its pagoda, the greatest in Arakan. The Arakanese navy had a base near Uritaung which lies about 25 km upstream from the mouth of the Kaladan river.

³⁸ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 115.

³⁹ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 121.
⁴⁰ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 149-151.
⁴¹ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 152.
⁴² Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 89, 128, 132, 145.
⁴³ None of Manrique's data on Chittagong's governors match with the Arakanese chronicles.
⁴⁴ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 394, 432, 438 ("...on certain state matters").
⁴⁵ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 156-157. See as well p. 181. The Christian quarter was two miles north of the capital according to Wouter Schouten, a Dutch doctor who visited Arakan in 1660 (Schouten 1727, vol. 1: 239). Before going back to Dianga, Manrique explains that the king's dispatches were "necessary for the preservation and spread of Christianity in the province of Chatigân" (p. 276).
⁴⁶ Methwold 1672: 13; Bernier 1830: 151, 237-238; Bocarro 1876 (vol. 2): 431; Sarkar 1907:422. A less severe description is found in Schouten 1727 (vol. 1): 240. The Dutch doctor who visited Bengal in 1663, presents probably the best single account of a Portuguese slave raid (vol. 2: 63-73). The Portuguese get a more favourable treatment in the early nineteenth century *Pawtugi Yazawin*, a Myanmar language account of the Portuguese expansion in Asia, see Tun Aung Chain 2002.
⁴⁷ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 89.
⁴⁸ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 285. It is curious that Manrique does not even openly condemn piracy when he became himself a victim of pirates. After stating that these piratical enterprises were practically a Portuguese monopoly (p. 286), he does not say if those pirates were Muslims or Arakanese (p. 396). See also A. Bocarro's description as quoted by Subrahmanyam 1993(B): 259): "... in the kingdom of Arração [there are] 600 Portuguese and 2000 Christians who are employed by that King in his wars against the Mogor, and the said Portuguese and their sons who are fighting men, inclusive of many topaz Christians, comprise the entire force of the King, and he makes them large payments, and gives them extensive farm lands, but all of them take advantage of the enormity of the land so that they more or less know

neither law nor King, though they have some Padres and a Church."

⁴⁹ Bocarro 1876 (vol. 2): 431-443.
⁵⁰ Guedes 1994: 156 ff.
⁵¹ Bocarro 1876 (vol. 2): 439-440.
⁵² Candamalalankara 1931 (vol. 2): 164. Bocarro (1876 (vol. 2): 440) rather vaguely asserts that she was married to the "king of Chittagong" when the relations between Tibau and the Arakanese king prospered. This might have happened after the siege of 1612, about which Bocarro says nothing at all. If she actually married a governor of Chittagong, it might possibly have been the successor of Cakrawate about whom we know very little.
⁵³ Chowdhury 1997: 147.
⁵⁴ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 302.
⁵⁵ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 304-309.
⁵⁶ It is improbable that this refers to the far-away king of Assam, as the translator of Manrique's account thinks (p. 311, note 17). A better hypothesis would be the neighbor king of Tripura who had a certain number of Portuguese in his service.
⁵⁷ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 311.
⁵⁸ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 310.
⁵⁹ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 312-321. On Dom Martin's career, see Guedes 1995 and Subrahmanyam 1993 (A).
⁶⁰ Guedes 1995: 93-94.
⁶¹ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 214.
⁶² Subrahmanyam 1993(B): 122, 132.
⁶³ Manrique does not mention the 1632 events, but calls the Mughal emperor an enemy of the Christians. See also Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 436, n. 10.
⁶⁴ Guedes 1994: 179 and p. 180, note 45, referring to the mission of Gaspar Pacheco de Mesquita, sent in 1633 to the court of Mrauk U. This mission has probably to be understood in the context of the fall of Hugli in 1632 and the eviction of the Portuguese community.
⁶⁵ Hijili (Orissa).
⁶⁶ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 438-440. Manrique praisises the Portuguese contribution to the economic welfare of the Tamluk area (p. 435).
⁶⁷ See for example Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 405.

The Persian chronicler Talish gives a clear indication of the change that happened probably in the 1620's, when the incursions into Bengal became increasingly a Portuguese enterprise ("The raja appointed the Feringi pirates to plunder Bengal, and thence he did not send the Arracan fleet for the purpose", Sarkar 1907: 420). This situation did not change before 1665 when the majority of the Portuguese of Chittagong and Dianga left Arakan and switched to the Mughal side.

⁶⁸ Manrique saw himself as the victim of the failed mission sent to Goa in 1633 and led by Gaspar Pacheco de Mesquita (Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 323). There has as yet been no thorough study of this embassy.

⁶⁹ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 445.

⁷⁰ U Kala 1960, vol. 3: 205-209; 225-226.

⁷¹ Nathan 1936, vol. 2: 710-711.

⁷² Van Vliet 1975: 95.

⁷³ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 358.

⁷⁴ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 352-359.

⁷⁵ Collis insinuates the king's madness from the beginning of the 26th chapter (p. 203): "We have already given indications of Thiruthudhamma's state of mind. Readers may have begun to ask themselves whether he were not mad." Collis' inference is actually a foregone conclusion leaving no space to the reader for an alternative line of argument.

⁷⁶ Collis 1943: 206-207.

⁷⁷ Manrique 1927, vol. 1: 359.

⁷⁸ Candamalankara 1932: 175-184.

⁷⁹ This being said, it is very difficult to find satisfying answers to more specific questions as, for example, the question of the "sacrifices".

⁸⁰ Candamalankara 1932: 196-209.

⁸¹ Chowdhury 1997: 147; 152.