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The Arabs Living in Coastal China during the 10th-13th Centuries

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Abstract: From the 10th to the 13th century, southeast China was under the rule of the Song Dynasty. Because the land Silk Road in the northwest was blocked, most of the Arab merchants from the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian area came to South China by sailing the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Because of the long-term policy of encouraging overseas trade implemented by the Song Dynasty, a large number of Arab merchants came to China to engage in trade, via Quilon, Chola, Srivijaya, Java, Borneo and Champa. In order to wait for the monsoon, or to avoid the long difficult journey, more and more Arab merchants began to live in the southeast coast of China. Apart from their engagement in the maritime trade, they also had an active participation in the urban construction of coastal cities and the governmental management of the overseas trade, thus made great contributions to the prosperity of overseas trade and the promotion of the contacts between China and the world of Indian Ocean.

Key Words: the Song period; Arabs; China; Coast

The Song period in Chinese history, as it happens, is the golden age of the Arab traders' maritime navigation and also a peak time of China's overseas trade and communication. During the 10th-13th centuries, a large number of Arabian merchants came to coastal China. Some of them began to live there, either for a short stay waiting for the winter monsoon, or for a long-term life. The study of the Arabs who came to China during this period has made a lot of achievements, mainly focusing on two aspects: the study of the foreign traders and the Muslim people⁴⁴⁴. On the basis of the previous studies, this paper aims to provide a holistic study on how they came to

⁴⁴⁴ About the Muslims who came to China in the Song period, Shou-yi Bai and Shu-sen Qiu have conducted many ponderable studies. See Shou-yi Bai, *Zhongguo yisilan shi cunqiao*. Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 1983, 412 p., p.1-20,104-169; Shu-sen Qiu ed., *Zhongguo huizhu shi*. Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 2012, 705 p., p.1-76. About the academic achievements on foreign traders, see Wengang Xu, « Songdai fanshang yanjiu zongshu », *E-zhou daxue xuebao*, 2016:3:13-15. There are also many studies on the individual merchants and their families, e.g. studies on Pu Shougeng by Kuwabara Jitsuzō and Xianglin Luo; studies on Xin-yatuo-luo by Jian-chun Ma, et al. In addition, in the research on the overseas trade, Bureau for Foreign Shipping (*shi-bo-si*) and the Foreigners' Lane (*fan-fang*) in the Song Dynasty, the stories of Arab merchants were more or less involved. Due to space limitations, they will no longer be listed one by one here. The achievements which is closely related to the theme of this article will be quoted and discussed in the specific part of the following text.

China by sea and how they lived their life in the southeastern coast of China.

In AD 651, the Arabs destroyed the Sassanids and the Persian region became a province of the Arab Empire. In 750, after the establishment of the Abbasid Empire (*Hei-yi Da-shi* in Chinese literature), a large number of Persian believers in Shiite Islam entered the ruling class and became an important part of the upper-class society of the Arab Empire. After the 10th century, in most of the Chinese historical books the Arab world, including Persia, was collectively called Da-shi (Tazi, a Persian term for “the Arabs”)⁴⁴⁵. Therefore, for the Muslim merchants living in the southeast coast of China in the Song period, it is difficult to accurately distinguish their ethnic nationality, except for those with accurate native origin. So in this article, “Arabs” is widely used in a historical context and it refers the people from the Arabian world, including Persia, the Arabian Peninsula, and North and part of East Africa.

I – The Prosperity of Overseas Trade and the Arab Merchants Coming to China

As early as the Han Dynasty, maritime traffic between the Arabian world and China had been established⁴⁴⁶. Down to the Tang Dynasty, the maritime trade between China and the Arab countries had turned to be very frequent⁴⁴⁷. There are many detailed records about it both in the Chinese and in the Arabian literature⁴⁴⁸. Because it was horribly far from the Arabian States to China, in order to wait for the monsoon, or to avoid the long difficult journey, some Arabian merchants began to live in China's coastal areas. Up to the end of the Tang Dynasty, the number of Arab merchants in coastal China had reached tens of thousands⁴⁴⁹.

The war in late Tang had a devastating impact on the Muslim merchants living along the Chinese coast, and the sea route to China was interrupted for

⁴⁴⁵ On the contrary, in the historical documents of the Tang Dynasty, perhaps due to the economic power and influence of the Persian people in history, or due to the vague or lack of awareness of the world beyond Persia, the peoples from Western Asia and North Africa, including the Arabian Peninsula, are indiscriminately called Persians.

⁴⁴⁶ Gu Ban, *Hou hanshu*, juan 88, « xiyu zhuan ». Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965, 3684 p., p. 2920.

⁴⁴⁷ Jinming Li, « Textual Research on the Maritime Routes between China and the Arabian Sea during the Tang Dynasty », *Haijiao shi yanjiu (Maritime History Studies)*, 2009(2): 48-58.

⁴⁴⁸ Yangxiu Ou, *Xin tangshu*, juan 43b. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975, 6472 p., p. 1153-1154. Ibn Khordadbeh ed., Xian Song trans., *Daoli bangguo zhi (the Book of Roads and Kingdoms)*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991, 283 p., p.64-72. Sulaiman (al-Tajir) ed., Gen-lai Mu et al. trans., *Zhongguo yindu jianwen lu (travels on China and India)*. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983, 167 p., p. 7-9.

⁴⁴⁹ In 760, Tian Shengong invaded Yangzhou, and « looted the treasures of the inhabitants (...) Thousands of Arabian and other foreign merchants died in this disaster » (Liu Xu, *Jiu tangshu*, juan 110, « Deng Jingshan zhuan ». Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975, 5407 p., p. 3313). Abu Zaid Hassan, the Arabian merchant, narrated that Guangzhou « is a city where the Arabian merchants gathered ». When *Huang Chao* captured Guangzhou in late Tang, « a total of 120,000 of Muslims, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrianists, were killed » (Genlai Mu et al. trans., *Zhongguo yindu jianwen lu*, p. 96).

a time⁴⁵⁰. However, during the Five Dynasties period, the trade between the coastal areas in south China and the Arabian States remained active⁴⁵¹.

From the very beginning, the Song Dynasty had adopted an incentive policy on overseas trade, many Arabian merchants came to China for trade. According to *Zhufan zhi*, we know in the Song Dynasty, from many states and trading harbours of the Arabian world, like Mecca (*Ma-jia guo*), Zanzibar (*ceng-ba guo*), Berbera (*bi-pa-luo guo*), Mirbat (*wu-ba guo*), Zufar (*nu-fa*), Migiartinia (*Zhong-li guo* in Somalia), Oman (*weng-man guo*, Sohal Harbour), Kish (*ji-shi guo*), Bagdad (*bai-da guo*), Basra (*bi-si-luo guo*), Mosul (*wu-si-li guo*), Bilād al-Rum (*lu-mei guo*, the territory of Roman Empire in Asia Minor), al-Murabitūm (*mu-lan-pi guo*, which ruled the area of al-Maghreb and south Spain from the late 11th century to the middle 12th century), Misr (*wu-si-lī guo*, Egypt), Alexandria (*e-gen-tuo guo*), Madagascar (*kun-lun-ceng-qī guo*), Algeria (*mo-jia-lie guo*), Shiher (*shi-heh*, located in the coast of Hadramaut), Isfahan (*ya-si-bao-xian*), Kalhat (*jia-li-ji*), Maghrib (*pi-ruo-ye*, Ifrikyā), Iraq (*yi-lu*), Siraf (*si-lian*), Bahrain (*bai-lian*), Mashhad (*ji-ji*) and Hormuz (*gan-mei*)⁴⁵², came the merchants trading in China.

The contacts between *Da-shi* (the Arabian States) and the Song court recorded in « wai-guo zhuan » (the biography of the Foreign Nations) in *Songshi* are all closely related to the Muslim merchants engaged in maritime trade in coastal China. In addition to the intergovernmental diplomatic contacts, with Arabian merchants its real practitioner in most of the cases, many well-known Arabian merchants had close contacts with the Song court. For their huge contribution to the customs revenue, the Song Dynasty granted some of them honorary official titles as a kind of reward and honor⁴⁵³. Except for *Po-luo-qin-san-mo-ni* (Abdallah al-Somalia?) who came to China in 1003 as « the envoy of King A-mi », all the Arabians who came to China to pay tribute recorded in « the biography of Da-shi » in *Song huiyao jigao* are maritime merchants⁴⁵⁴. In fact, many Arabs who claim to be envoy to pay tribute to China are all merchants engaged in maritime trade with the aim of getting high return gifts from the Song Dynasty. In the early Southern Song, Supervisory Censor Zhang Shou 张守 had pointed out the fact that « in order to share the favour of obtaining the official document issued by the court (which must be very useful for the people to go trading abroad), the maritime merchants always enticed the foreign businessmen to pretend to be

⁴⁵⁰ Genlai Mu et al. trans., *Zhongguo yindu jianwen lu*, p. 97-98.

⁴⁵¹ Li Qingxin, « Nation along the Coast: foreign relations and overseas trade in the Southern Han regime », *Gaomin xiansheng bashi huadan jinian wenji*. Beijing: xianzhuang shuju, 2006, p. 300-315; Shouyi Bai, *Zhongguo yijilanjiao shi cunqao*, 344 p., p. 112-113.

⁴⁵² Zhao Rukuo, *Zhufan zhi*, see Bowen Yang annotated, *Zhufan zhi jiaoshi*. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996, 237 p., p. 98-134, 90.

⁴⁵³ Shaofeng Chen, *Study on the Foreign Tribute Missions to China in the Song Dynasty (Songdai haiwai zhuguo chaogong shituan ruhua zhi yanjiu)*, Fujian Normal University, 2013, 237 p., p. 108-115.

⁴⁵⁴ Lin Liu et al. ed., *Song huiyao jigao*. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2014, 10006 p., p. 9827a-9829a.

diplomatic envoys of a certain emir paying tribute to the central Dynasty »⁴⁵⁵.

The Muslim merchants, who paid their personal tribute to the Song Dynasty, are mostly those engaged in maritime trade who have lived for a long time or visited frequently in the coastal cities of China. Some of them lived in China, and some of them frequently traveled between China and Southeast Asia, Southeast Asia and the Arab world, taking Champa, Panduranga⁴⁵⁶, Java 阇婆, Kilah 古罗 and other Southeast Asian countries as their settled base.

Many Arab merchant families did their business all the year round in Southeast Asia and China. According to the records in the Chinese literature, most Arabian merchants came to China from India and Southeast Asia, after a short or long stopover.

Up to the Song Dynasty, the commercial power of the Arab merchants along the coast of South Asia and Southeast Asia had increased impressively. A large number of Muslim merchants dwelled in Chola, Quilon, Srivijaya, Java and Borneo, the countries on the maritime trade route between China and the Persian Gulf.

Located in the southeast of the Indochina Peninsula, Champa was an important transit point between the Indian Ocean and coastal China, where the Persian and Arabian merchants had lived long time ago. In « the Biography of Champa » in *Songshi*, it is said that « the custom and the clothes there are similar to those of the Arab States (*Da-shi*) »⁴⁵⁷. Many of the Arabian traders who come to coastal China to trade stopped at Champa. The Arabian merchant *Pu-hsi-mi* (Abu Hamid) and his son *Pu-ya-tuo-li* (Abu Adil), perennially engaged in long-distance trade on the Indian Ocean. After « receiving the inviting letter from the *fan-zhang* (the Arab merchant in charge of the administration of *fan-fang*) », Abu Hamid « sailed to Guangzhou for commercial profit » in 990, and « had never gone back home for five years ». His son Abu Adil also followed him to come to Guangzhou, pursuing trade between Southeast Asia and Guangzhou. In 995, Abu Adil came to Kaifeng, the capital of the Song Dynasty, to pay tribute and received warm welcome from the emperor Taizong. In 997, he came again with the Panduranga envoy⁴⁵⁸. The fact must have been that *Pu-hsi-mi* and his son *Pu-ya-tuo-li* had been sailing to and fro between Champa and coastal China for trade, with Panduranga a long-term base. In the fall of 1004, the Arabian merchant *Pu-jia-xin* (Abu Kshim) came to Kaifeng. In 1007, he came again with the envoy of Champa⁴⁵⁹. *Pu-jia-xin* must have taken Champa as a transit

⁴⁵⁵ Zhang Shou, *Piling ji*, juan 6 « Lun dashi gulin guo jinfeng zhazi », p. 19a-b, *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu*, Vol. 1072. Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshu guan, 2008, 859 p.

⁴⁵⁶ Panduranga (宾童龙, 奔陀浪), located in the south of Champa, is pronounced « Panran », « Panrang », « Pandaran », « Pardurang » in Cham, which means « white people ». In the late 8th century and later it is inhabited by the Arabians. It is written « Phan-rang » (潘朗) today.

⁴⁵⁷ Tuo Tuo, *Songshi*, juan 489, « the biography of Champa ». Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985, 14263 p., p. 14078.

⁴⁵⁸ *Songshi*, juan 490, « the biography of States », p. 141188-14120.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 14120.

point for his long-distance trading. There are many Arabian merchants who came to China to pay tribute as the envoy of the State of Champa, like Pu-heh-san (Abu Hasan) in 961, 972 and 990; *Pu-si-ma-yin* (Abu Ismail) in 1049, and *Pu-ma-wu* (Abu Mahmud) in 1068 and 1086⁴⁶⁰. And Pu-ma-wu was granted the title of *Gui-de langjiang* in 1068 because of his munificent tribute. As Abu Mahmud had made outstanding contributions in maintaining the trade relations between Champa and China, his son Pu-shu-kě, was awarded the honorary title of *Huaihua Langjiang*⁴⁶¹.

It is just because many Arab merchants came from Champa, so in the accounts of the Song people, they always put « the Arabian States » and « Champa » together. In the 10th century, Wang Yu-cheng 王禹偁 said that « there are numerous people from Arabian States and Champa sailing to China to trade every year »⁴⁶², when he told us the story of a father and son from Champa engaged in trade in Fuzhou.

Srivijaya is an important transit point for trade between the Arab world and China⁴⁶³. Many Arabian merchants lived there. In « the biography of Srivijaya » in *Songshi*, it is said that « the king was called Jambi, many people living there have the same family name “Pu” »⁴⁶⁴. According to the studies of Friedrich Hirth (1845-1927) and Kuwabara Jitsuzō (1871-1932), *Pu* is the transliteration of « Abu », which is a very popular (part of) first name of the Arabs which means « father of »; and most of the people with the family name « Pu » are Arabians. In the late Tang and the Song Dynasty, Arab merchants repeatedly served as envoys of Srivijaya sailing to China to pay tribute. *Pu-heh-li-li* (Abu Hariri) in 904, the first year of the Tianyou period in the Tang Dynasty, *Pu-mie* (Abu Mamun) in 961, the 2nd year of the Jianlong period of the Song Dynasty, *Li-ya-mo* (Mahmūd Li) in 962, *Li-heh-mo* (Mahmūd Li) in 971, *Pu-tuo-han* (Abu ad-Dōḥa) in 975, *Pu-ya-tuo-luo* (Abu Adil) in 983, *Pu-ya-tuo-li* (Abu Adil) in 988, *Pu-po-lan* (Abu Bakran?, assistant envoy) and *Ma-heh-wu* (Mahmūd, general secretary) in 1008, *Pu-mou-hsi* (Abu Mahdi?) in 1017, *Pu-ya-tuo-luo-hsieh* (Abu Abdallah?) in 1028, are all Arabians⁴⁶⁵. In the 1160s, there were dozens of wealthy merchants immigrated from Srivijaya living in Quanzhou. The Shiraf

⁴⁶⁰ *Song huiyao jigao*, p. 9812b, 9813b.

⁴⁶¹ In the imperial edict issued to *Pu Shu-ke*, it is said: « Your father lived in the farthest territory of the Empire, full of talent and wisdom. Having diligently helped the imperial army squashing the revolt, made meritorious contribution and won great honour. In order to reward your father's merit and encourage the same behaviour, grant you this official title of honour ». See Wang An-li (1024-1095), *Wang weigong ji*, juan 2, « Gu guide langjiang pu-ma-wu nan shuke teshou huanhua liangjiang zhi », p. 13b, *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu*, Vol. 1100. Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshu guan, 2008, 800 p.

⁴⁶² Wang Yu-cheng (954-1001), *Wang huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, juan 14, « ji xiao ». Sibu congkan, Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1929, p. 4a-b.

⁴⁶³ Yang Wuquan, *Lingwai daida jiaozhu*. Beijing: Zhonghuashuju, 1999, 483 p., p. 86; Yang Bowen, *Zhufan zhi jiaoshi*. Beijing: Zhonghuashuju, 1996, p. 34-36; 89-91.

⁴⁶⁴ *Songshi*, juan 489, « the biography of Srivijaya », p. 14088.

⁴⁶⁵ *Songshi*, juan 489, « the biography of Srivijaya », p. 14088-14089.

giant *Shi-la-fu* (which is actually the name of his hometown), who had lived in the South of Quanzhou for a long time, and was influential in the Quanzhou Muslim community, came to China exactly from Srivijaya⁴⁶⁶. In the winter of 992, the official of Guangzhou reported that « when *Pu-ya-tuo-li* (Abu Adil) went home from the capital (Kaifeng) the year before last, he heard that his country was invaded by the Javanese. So he lived in Nanhai County (Guangzhou) for a year. This spring, when going to Champa by ship, he was hindered by the adverse wind and came back to Nanhai again. He implored (your Majesty) to issue an imperial decree to (help) his country (Srivijaya) »⁴⁶⁷. This *Pu-ya-tuo-li* must have been an Arabian merchant living in Srivijaya, engaged in maritime trade between Southeast Asia and China. Because of the war between Srivijaya and Java and the adverse wind, he lived in Guangzhou for a long time. In 1012, an Arab named *wu-hsi-hu-lu-hua* (Bouteflika?) came Guangzhou on a Kalah boat, expressed his « admiration for the civilized central Dynasty from a remote place »⁴⁶⁸.

In Java and Borneo, which are located between the Persian Gulf and China Sea, there were also many merchant dwellers from the Arabian States. The deputy envoy of Java *Pu-ya-li* (Abu Ali) who came to China in 992 and the deputy envoy Abu Ali of Borneo and his guide *Pu-lu-xie* (Abdallah, an Arab merchant living in China engaged in trade to Java whose boat was blown to Borneo) who came in 977, were all Arabian merchants⁴⁶⁹.

Quilon on the Malabar Coast in southwest India and Chola (with Madras its important port) on the Coromandel Coast in southeast are both important localities where the Arab traders lived. In « the description of Quilon » in *Zhufan zhi*, it is said that « lots of Arabs lived in this country »⁴⁷⁰. In « the biography of Chola » in *Songshi*, the deputy envoy of Chola *Pu-jia-xin* (Abu Kashim) who came to China in 1015, and the envoy *Pu-ya-tuo-li* (Abu Adil) who came to China in 1033 were all Arabs living there for trade⁴⁷¹. During the 9th-13th centuries the number of Arab traders in Chola (i.e., the « Ma'bar » in *Yuanshi*) was huge and played a crucial role in the country's foreign trade and fiscal management. Abū 'Alī and Sayyid, the father and son who had been prime ministers of Ma'bar in the late 13th century, were exactly Arabs from Qalhat of Oman.

II – Arab Merchants Active in Coastal China during the Song Period

Maritime trade was the main form of communication between China and Arab countries in Song Dynasty. Among the Arab businessmen who live in

⁴⁶⁶ Lin Zhiqi (1112-1176), « Quanzhou dongban zang fanshang ji », *Zhuozhai wenji*, juan 15, p. 12a, *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu*, Vol. 1140. Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshu guan, 2008, 765 p.

⁴⁶⁷ *Songshi*, juan 489, « the biography of Srivijaya », p. 14089.

⁴⁶⁸ Yang Bowen, *Zhufan zhi jiaoshi*, p. 91. *Songshi*, juan 490, « the biography of the Arabian States », p. 14121. Kalah is located in the lower valley of Merbok R., to the west of Kedah.

⁴⁶⁹ *Songshi*, juan 489, « the biography of Borneo », p. 14094.

⁴⁷⁰ Yang Bowen, *Zhufan zhi jiaoshi*, p. 68.

⁴⁷¹ *Songshi*, juan 489, « the biography of Chola », p. 14096-14097.

the coastal cities of China, there are a large number of wealthy merchants. They imported a large quantity of incense, ivory and other goods in the form of tribute or direct foreign trade. In 993, *Pu-hsi-mi* (Abu Hamid), an Arab shipowner who did business in Guangzhou, entrusted *Li-ya-wu* (Mahmud Li), the envoy from *Da-shi* (the Arabian States), to send his tribute of « fifty elephant tusks, one thousand and eight hundred catties of frankincense, seven hundred catties of wrought iron, a bolt of Java cotton cloth embroidered with red silk, four bolts of foreign brocades with design of colorful flowers, two bolts of white *yue-nuo* cloth (a kind of exquisitely woven cloth made in the Arabian area), a glass bottle from *Du-die*, a piece of unknown exotic incense, a hundred bottles of rose-water » to the Song emperor⁴⁷². In 1131 the Arabian merchant Pu-ya-li (Abu Alī) came to Guangzhou to trade and presented a tribute of « two hundred and nine large elephant tusks, thirty-five big rhinoceros horns ». According to the official price of that time, the large elephant tusks that is more than 50 catties « is worth 2,600 cash per catty », so only the tusks that he presented was worth « more than 50,000,000 cash »⁴⁷³.

In order to develop overseas trade and increase customs revenues, the emperors of the Song dynasty treated the powerful Arab merchants as honored guests. In the event of important festivals, these wealthy merchants, either in the name of diplomats or directly in the name of personal tribute presenter who « admiring » Chinese culture, would all be involved and treated warmly by the Song court⁴⁷⁴. In the reign of Emperor Zhenzong, the wealthy Arabian merchant *Tuo-po-li* from Tabriz even took part in the important national sacrificial ceremony to the God Mount Tai and the God of River Fen⁴⁷⁵.

Both the customs officials and the emperor himself attached importance to the business and safety of the wealthy Arab merchants. During the *Shaoxing* period of Gaozong emperor, Nan Lian-fu, the governor of Guangzhou, reported to the emperor that « the customs revenue relies mainly on the trade to and from China of the foreign merchants. But recently, in order to achieve the huge wealth (of betrothal presents), a high-ranked official named Zeng Li with the honorary title of *Youwu Dafu* married his younger sister to the wealthy Arab merchant Abu Alī (*Pu-ya-li*). So Pu-ya-li stayed at Guangzhou and didn't go home to trade anymore ». And for this reason, Emperor Gaozong issued a particular imperial edict to « entrust Lian Nanfu with the task to persuade Alī to go home and transport foreign goods

⁴⁷² *Songshi*, juan 490, « the biography of the Arabian States », p. 14119.

⁴⁷³ *Song huiyao jigao*, p. 4210a.

⁴⁷⁴ For example, « In the first year of the Jingde period (1004), (the Arab States) dispatched an envoy (to China) again. At the moment, the envoys of Srivijaya and Bu-tuan (which is located on the west of Panay Island, Philippines) were all in the imperial capital. It happened to be the Lantern Festival, each of them was granted money as gift and all were treated to grand banquet » (*Songshi*, juan 490, « the biography of the Arabian States », p. 14120).

⁴⁷⁵ *Songshi*, juan 490, « the biography of the Arabian States », p. 14120-14121.

to and from Guangzhou »⁴⁷⁶, so as to develop overseas trade and increase the customs revenue. In 1134, the Arabian merchant Pu-ya-li (Abu Ali) was robbed, the emperor personally decreed that the responsible patrol magistrate be degraded, and the Pacification Commission and Judicial commission (of the Eastern Guangnan Circuit) in supervision must capture the robbers within the limit of one month⁴⁷⁷. In case that an official deliberately picked on and extorted the maritime merchant, the emperor would also personally enquire about the case and the involved officials would be punished.

These Arab merchants have lived in coastal China for a long time and have made remarkable contributions to the economic, cultural development and urban construction of the dwelling city. Guangzhou was the most developed maritime trading port in China during the Northern Song Dynasty (10th-12th centuries). Since the Tang Dynasty, more and more foreign merchants settled down in the city. Yanwu Gu, a famous scholar of Ming China, related that « ever since the Tang Dynasty appointed *Jiehao shi* (the official in charge of the foreign trade) to Guangzhou, foreign merchants began to immigrate and settle down, this trend continued till the Song Dynasty. With exotic appearance and speaking foreign tongue, they usually lived near the harbour. The houses they built connected with each other, seems like (another) city, where they raise their sons and grandsons ». « Up to the Song Dynasty, the wealthy merchants were all dressed in expensive silk clothes decorated with gold and pearl, used gold and silver utensils (...) Up to the years of Tiansheng (1023-1032), the foreign population engaged in trade there began to increase rapidly »⁴⁷⁸. From the Tang to the Song period, with the flourishing of Guangzhou's foreign trade, more and more Arab traders began to engage in trade and settle down in Guangzhou. The activities of these foreign merchants directly affect the urban development of Guangzhou City. Historically, the construction of the West City and the two *Yanchi* cities in Guangzhou has been related to the activities of the foreign merchants living in the west and the south of the old city.

The old inner city built in the Tang and the Five Dynasties, was small in scale and was mainly built for the garrison and civil administration. It could not meet the new situation of overseas trade development and the agglomeration of foreigners in the Song Dynasty. In 1071, the West City was built. About this, Tang Jiong recorded in « *ji lue* »: « Canton is a big prefecture located in the area of Five Mountains⁴⁷⁹ (...) the concentration and prosperity of trading boats and goods here, is as rich as that of Hangzhou and Yizhou, which is non-comparable elsewhere. The old city is in the east, it was very small, only to encompass the government office and a few hundreds of households. In the west of it, there are hundreds of thousands of houses built by the great merchants and their family members living there, without

⁴⁷⁶ *Song huiyao jigao*, p. 4213b-4214a.

⁴⁷⁷ *Song huiyao jigao*, p. 9828b-9829a.

⁴⁷⁸ Gu Yanwu, « *za man* », *Tianxia junguo libing shu*. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012, 3950 p., p. 3422, 3423.

⁴⁷⁹ The five mountain ranges lying between the valley of Yangtze and the Pearl River.

any protection ». « The foundation of the West City was constructed in 56 days, and the city was completed in 9 months. The perimeter of the city is thirteen *li* and 180 steps, the height is two *zhang* and four *chi*. (After the building of the West City), many foreigners who admired the righteousness of the Central Kingdom moved in »⁴⁸⁰. It can be seen that the West City in Guangzhou was constructed to meet the needs of the business people living and trading in the west of the Inner City, including the Arab merchants. Due to the construction of the city walls, the social security in the residential areas had been greatly improved, attracting more and more foreign merchants to move in. In 1210, because « in the south of the old city, is the market area, with no protection », on the South periphery of the three cities⁴⁸¹, the military commissioner of Guangdong Chen Xian built two Yanchi Cities⁴⁸², one on the southeast corner, one on the southwest corner. « The east Yanchi city is 90 *zhang* long, with one gate; the west one is 50 *zhang* long, with totally 33 watchtowers »⁴⁸³. It is obvious that the aim to shield the foreign trade facilitated the construction of the new city zone.

During the Xi-ning period (1068-1077), *Xin-ya-tuo-luo* (Sayyid Adil?), the wealthy merchant from Menzon who « had lived in Guangzhou for tens of years, possessing tens of millions of cash »⁴⁸⁴, was elected by the foreign merchants and appointed by the Song court as the leader of *Fanfang*, due to his strong economic strength and his prestige among the Arab merchants in Guangzhou. He was granted the honorary title of *Gui-de General* (and promoted to *Huai-hua General* later) because of his great contribution to the customs revenue⁴⁸⁵. In 1071, when Governor Cheng Shimeng built the West City of Guangzhou, *Xin-ya-tuo-luo*'s proposal to donate silver to support the city building was declined by the Song government⁴⁸⁶. But later in the building of the prefecture academy initiated by Governor Cheng Shimeng and Jiang Zhiqi, *Xin-ya-tuo-luo* did donate money to sponsor it. It is recorded in the local gazetteer: « *Xin-ya-tuo-luo*, who is the leader of the *Fanfang*, when hearing of the construction of the academy, also donate his money to help, and later even sold land to double his donation. Besides, he built another building to attract the foreign kids willing to study in the Academy

⁴⁸⁰ See Wenkuan Huang, « Songdai Guangzhou xicheng yu fanfang kao », *Lingnan wenshi*, 1987(1):30-35.

⁴⁸¹ They are the Inner City, the East City and the West City. The East City was originally built by Zhao Tuo (r. 204-137 BC) in the Southern Han period and rebuilt in the early years of Xining period in North Song.

⁴⁸² *Yanchi*, means goose wing, because its shape is just like the stretched wings of a goose.

⁴⁸³ Guangzhou difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui bangongshi ed., *Yuan Dade nanhai zhi canben*, juan 8, « Cheng hao ». Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1991, 178 p., p. 52.

⁴⁸⁴ Su Zhe, *Longchuan luezhishi*, juan 5. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982, 104 p., p. 25.

⁴⁸⁵ Su Shi, *Sushi ji*, juan 107, « xin-ya-tuo-luo gui-de jiangjun ji », p. 28b, *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu*, vol. 1109. Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshu guan, 2008, 624 p. Menzon, the zone of Port Sohar and Mascat near the Gulf of Oman.

⁴⁸⁶ *Songshi*, juan 490, « the biography of the Arabian States », p. 14121.

»⁴⁸⁷. From this we know that the Arab merchants, including *Hsin-ya-tuo-luo*, the *Fanfang* leader, had given great financial support to the construction of the city academy. And, the acceptance of the Arab kids to the official academy would also greatly enhance their level of Chinese culture⁴⁸⁸.

Moved from Champa to Guangzhou, the Arab Pu family, « were called “white foreigners” by the local people. It was originally a dignified family in Champa. Being afraid of the rough seas on the way sailing back, they ask for the permission of the king of Champa to stay in China to engage in overseas trade. The king of Champa permitted it. The foreign trade relied a lot on their family. As time went on, they began to live within the city and the houses were magnificent and extravagantly built (...) [The family] was famous for her huge wealth, reputedly peerless in Guangdong »⁴⁸⁹. Another Pu family who came to the Ganjiao village of Nanhai during the Jiading period (1208-1224) of Ningzong's reign was also very rich. The family moved to Guangdong because Pu-hai-da-ji (Abu Hajjaj?) was appointed the Tea and Salt Supervisor and Battalion Commander of Guangdong Circuit. Pu-hai-da-ji's two younger brothers, Ma-ha-zhou (Mirza?) and Ma-ha-mo (Mahmud), « advocated to build the Light Tower of Guangzhou to facilitate the sailing of boats from foreign countries, by hanging flag during the day and raising the fire at night on the top of it ». His grandson *Nie-gu-bai* « made a surprisingly large donation to support its construction, all the merchants coming from the West appreciated it »⁴⁹⁰.

From the Five Dynasties to the Song period, Quanzhou's overseas trade had developed rapidly. Zheng Xia (1014-1119) related that in Quanzhou « the market is filled with people from all directions (of the world), the sea is filled with foreign merchant ships »⁴⁹¹. « Maritime merchants clustered, the natives and foreigners mixed together, many powerful families lived there as next-door neighbors »⁴⁹². Up to the Southern Song period, Quanzhou was said to be a prosperous port where « along with the flux and reflux of the tide, the merchants from thousands of nations come and trade here »⁴⁹³. « Admiring the righteousness of the central kingdom, the foreigners come every day; wealthy merchants transport tons of treasure goods (to this city)

⁴⁸⁷ (*Yongzheng*) *Guangdong tongzhi*, juan 44 « the Biography of Liu Fu », p. 75a, *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu*, vol. 562. Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshu guan, 2008, 926 p. About the detailed story of Hsin-ya-tuo-ruo, see Jianchun Ma & Meng Tong, « The Tribute Emissary Xin-zha-tuo-luo from the Arabian States in the Song Dynasty », *Jinan shixue*, Vol. 9, Nov. 2014, p. 158-170.

⁴⁸⁸ Up to the Yuan Dynasty, they were more deeply Sinicized. About this, see Yuan Chen, *Yuan xiyu ren huahua kao*. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000, 158 p., p. 25-27, 44-50, 68-75, 84-101

⁴⁸⁹ Yue Ke, *Tingshi*, juan 11, « Panyu hailiao ». Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981, 190 p., p. 125-126.

⁴⁹⁰ Guoyong Ding collated, *Nanhai ganjiao pushi jiapu*. Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1987, 184 p., p. 141.

⁴⁹¹ Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, juan 7, « dai taishou xie quanhou daoren », p. 10a, *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu*, vol. 1117. Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshu guan, 2008, 633 p.

⁴⁹² Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, juan 8, « dai xie puye xianggong », p. 20b.

⁴⁹³ This is from a poem by Li Wenmin (Li Bing, 1085-1146), see Wang Xiangzhi, *Yudi jisheng*, juan 130, « Fujian lu: Quanzhou ». Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992, 7832 p., p. 3753.

»⁴⁹⁴. Zhu Mu said that « there are two kinds of foreigners, blacks and whites. They all live in Quanzhou, and the place where they live is called *Fanfang* (the Lane of Foreigners). They sail huge boats on the sea, transport elephant tusks, rhinoceros horn, hawkbill, pearl, glass, agate, exotic incense, pepper and other goods (to Quanzhou) »⁴⁹⁵. It was very obvious that the majority of the white foreigners were from the Arabian world.

A large number of Arab merchants lived in Quanzhou. They had played an important role in the economic development and urban construction of the city. During the period of Chunxi (1174-1189), When Lin Shi was in the office of magistrate in Jinjiang County, the foreign merchants funded to build large warships in this county⁴⁹⁶. In 1211, when the Governor of Quanzhou Zou Yinglong rebuilt the city wall, the main money support was also from the Muslim merchants⁴⁹⁷. During the Chunyou period (1241-1252), Pu Kaizong, a wealthy Arab merchant, built the Haoxi Bridge and the Changxi Bridge in the 41st block of Jinjiang County, where the prefecture office of Quanzhou was located, and paved the road which was 20 *li* long, located east to the Changxi Bridge⁴⁹⁸. In the late Song, Pu Shougeng built the Tianfenghaiyun Tower in the 36th block of northeast Quanzhou, « to look out the seaboats »⁴⁹⁹. In the southeast of Quanzhou City, on the north bank of Houzhu harbor, lies « the Lane of Foreigners », where the foreign merchants clustered. In the 1160s, the Arab merchants from Shiraf *Pu Hsiaxin* and *Shina-wei*, who came to China from Srivijaya, built the Muslim cemetery in the southeast of Quanzhou City as the resting place for those « foreign merchants coming to China by sea » who died in Quanzhou⁵⁰⁰.

The Arab maritime merchants were not only active in the marine trade; some powerful businessmen even rank among the customs management and other financial managers in charge of the oversea trade in the Song Dynasty. Pu Shougeng and his family is a typical example. According to Xianglin Luo, The Pu family can trace back to Pu Mengzong, who lived in Langzhou of Sichuan. The six-generation great-grandson of Mengzong named Shibin was

⁴⁹⁴ Zhou Bida (1126-1204), *Wenzhong ji*, juan 109: 13a, « ci fuwen ge zhi xueshi zhongdafu chenmi zuoci chaidian zhi Quanzhou enming buyun zhao », *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu*, vol. 1147-1149. Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshu guan, 2008, 4410 p.

⁴⁹⁵ Zhu Mu, *Fangyu shenglan*, Vol. 1, juan 12, « Quanzhou ». Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003, 445 p., p. 208.

⁴⁹⁶ Ye Shi, *Shuixin ji*, juan 19, « Lingong muzhi ming », p. 12b, *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu*, vol. 1164. Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshu guan, 2008, 1160 p.

⁴⁹⁷ (Wanli) *Quanzhou fuzhi*, juan 4:2a, « guizhi shang: chengchi ». Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1987, 1858 p., p. 299.

⁴⁹⁸ He Qiaoyuan, *Minshu*, juan 18, « dili: qiaoliang: Quanzhou fu: jianjiang xian ». Fuzhou: Gujian renmin chubanshe, 1995, 3704 p., p. 491. According to He Qiaoyuan, Pu Kaizong is Pu Shougeng's father. See *Minshu*, juan 152 « xu-de zhi: Quanzhou fu », p. 4496. Pu Kaizong is most probably another name for Pu Shibin.

⁴⁹⁹ Huang Zhongzhao, *Bamin tongzhi*, juan 73, « gongshi: Quanzhou fu: Jianjiang xian ». Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2006, 1464 p., p. 1059.

⁵⁰⁰ Lin Zhiqi (1112-1176), « Quanzhou dongban zang fanshang ji », *Zhuozhai wenji*, juan 15, p. 12a-b.

appointed the Magistrate of Jinjiang, Quanzhou Prefecture. After leaving office, he chose Quanzhou as his hometown, so his offsprings turned to be Quanzhou natives. Shibin has three sons: Shousheng, Shoucheng and Shougeng⁵⁰¹. Pu Shougeng « sailed to and fro on the sea engaging in maritime transportation and trade in which he was very skilled, earned a huge fortune, and employed thousands of houseboys and servants »⁵⁰². In the eyes of their contemporaries, the Pu family are extremely rich: « having engaged in maritime trade for thirty years, they've got a huge capital of ten million (strings of coins), earned a high profit of 50 % every year. To them, 800 *hu* (50 litres) of pepper is totally negligible »⁵⁰³. In *Songshi*, which is compiled in late Yuan, it is related that Pu Shougeng « holds the post of the Supervisor of Foreign Trade (*shi-bo*), and monopolized the profit of foreign trade for thirty years »⁵⁰⁴. Though the scholars have different opinions about the length of Pu Shougeng's service time as the Supervisor, but it is definitely sure that the Pu family, with its powerful strength in maritime trade, had actually managed the foreign trade in Quanzhou for decades, and turned to be very important figures in the history of overseas trade in Quanzhou. Due to his merit of pacifying the pirates with his brother Shoucheng, Pu Shougeng was promoted to the post of the Military Commissioner of Fujian (*Fuanjian an-fu*) and Military Commissioner-chief for the coastal areas (*Yanhai chih-chih shih*). In 1276, Pu Shougeng was appointed the Pacification Commissioner of Fujian and Guangdong, the top supervisor in charge of the seagoing vessels by Zhao Shi, the exiled young emperor of the Song⁵⁰⁵. In the transition of the Song and the Yuan Dynasty, Pu Shougeng surrendered to the Yuan army and played a decisive role in the contest between Song and Yuan along the southeast coast.

As these Arab families lived longer and longer in China, some family members began to marry with the local people. The young generation became more and more talented in the Chinese classics, and many China-born Arabs began their official career after passing the imperial examination. Pu Shoucheng, Pu Shougeng's brother, was highly cultivated in Chinese literature and left us with a poem collection, *Xinquan xueshi gao*. Another Pu family moved from the *Western Regions* to Shandong and then to Gan-jiao village in Nanhai County of Guangzhou Circuit in the Song Dynasty. Due to the studiousness of its descendants, this Pu family transformed itself into a long-lasting famous scholar-gentry family in the Song period. Pu Hai-da-ji, a family member of the second generation, was promoted the Tea and Salt Supervisor and Battalion commander of Guangdong Province. In the last years of the Song, the fourth-generation grandson Shou-cheng passed the

⁵⁰¹ Xianglin Luo, *Pu Shougeng Yanjiu*. Hong Kong: Zhongguo xueshe, 1959, 264 p., p. 12-31.

⁵⁰² Wang Pan, « Gaocheng ling Dong Wen-bing yi'ai bei », *Quan yuan wen*, Vol. 2, juan 62. Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1998, 530 p., p. 295.

⁵⁰³ Fang Hui, *Tongjiang ji*, juan 6, « yihai qian shangshu benmo », *Wanwei biechang*, Vol. 105. Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1981, p. 374.

⁵⁰⁴ *Songshi*, juan 47, « the biography of Duke Yingguo », p. 942.

⁵⁰⁵ He Qiaoyuan, *Minshu*, juan 152, « xu-de zhi: Quanzhou fu », p. 4496.

provincial test of the imperial examination and was appointed the prefect of Meizhou Prefecture. In the Yuan Dynasty, the Pu family turned to be a prominent scholar-official family with many Jinshi and high-rank officials⁵⁰⁶.

The Arab traders had traditionally been better known for their trade and wealth management. During the Tang and Song period of Chinese history, Arab merchants had established many offshore trade transit stations along the Indian Ocean. Under the encouraging foreign trade policy of the Song Dynasty, more and more Arab merchants came to China and lived in the southeast coast. Apart from their engagement in the maritime trade, they also had an active participation in the urban construction of coastal cities and the governmental management of overseas trade. Their economic and social activities and their involvement in China's foreign trade management had undoubtedly contributed to the prosperity of Chinese overseas trade and the promotion of the contacts between China and the world of Indian Ocean.

⁵⁰⁶ *Nanai ganqiao pushi zupu*. Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1987, p. 138.