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The Viceroy and the Portuguese: The Establishment of Ming Policy towards Macau

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Introduction

Who allowed the Portuguese to settle in Macau? Fujita Toyohachi 藤田豊八 postulated that the Guangdong officials allowed them, in quiet defiance of the Court (Fujita 1932: 475-481). Dai Yixuan 戴裔煊 vehemently disagreed, arguing that the Portuguese let themselves in without permission, through a mixture of intimidation and bribery (Dai 1957: 144-156). In contrast, Tan Shibao 谭世宝 has more recently asserted that the Ming Court itself authorized them to found Macau (Tan 1999: 61-70). Perhaps the broadest trend today is to say that multiple levels of government all allowed the Portuguese in. Local officials, regional officials, and the Ming Court all benefited from Macau in different ways, all tacitly approved of its existence (Wan 2001: 88-102, Jin 2002b; Huang 2006a: 163-169).

In this chapter, I will offer a slightly different point of view. Certainly, many different Ming officials were involved in opening Macau. However, it is probably incorrect to say that they were all benefiting from it, or that they were somehow working together towards a common goal. On the contrary, they were competing against each other. This chapter will show how one official won that competition, how he beat out rivals, and imposed his own vision. We will see that this official basically established Ming policy towards Macau, and that he did so in order to advance his own priorities.

In order to demonstrate this, I will focus on the years 1563-1565, with particular emphasis on the revolt of the Zhelin 柘林 navy in 1564. As we will see, this was a key turning point in Sino-Portuguese relations. And because it is unusually well documented, it will give us an excellent glimpse into the inner workings of the Guangdong administration.

Context: The Viceroy and the Competition for Control of Foreign Affairs

In the Introduction, I said that there was one official who won the “competition” and imposed his own policy onto Macau. That official was the Viceroy of the Guangdong / Guangxi super-province.

Who exactly was the Viceroy? On paper, he was the most powerful individual south of Nanjing. As his title indicates, he simultaneously controlled two provinces. He had a military vocation, to “direct provincial military affairs (提督兩廣軍務).” But that was not all. Traditionally, he also had the position of civil governor (巡撫都御史). That meant that he

exercised broad authority, summed up in his other title of “overall commander (總督)”.¹ In this chapter, I will simply refer to this official as the “Viceroy.”

Officially, the Viceroy was supposed to have jurisdiction over both foreign diplomacy and foreign trade within the region. In regards to diplomacy, arriving tribute embassies were first supposed to get approval from the high regional council, the Three Offices (三司), and then from the Viceroy, before being sent to Beijing.² Since 1529, the Viceroy also had overseen private foreign trade, using taxes from it to fund the regional armies.³ In short, the Viceroy controlled almost all foreign matters—at least on a legal level.

However, in practice, the Viceroy did not have much control over the coastline. The administration there was chaotic, with various players competing for power. In that competition, the Viceroy often found himself in a position of helplessness. One can perceive this, for example, in 1493. In that year, the Viceroy Min Gui 閔圭 reported to the Court with alarm:

In the Guangdong coastal region, many foreign ships are privately trading, constantly without end. Without waiting for their documents to be inspected, they already sell off their goods.”⁴

Min Gui is admitting to a deep ignorance. He does not actually know what ships are trading on the coastline (for the ships’ documents are not inspected). Neither does he know how much money is actually being generated (for the ships sell their goods before being taxed).

How could the Viceroy be so ignorant? There was a fundamental geographical problem. Foreign trade was out on the islands, around Xiangshan 香山, or around Dongguan 東莞, over 120 km away from Guangzhou.⁵ Because of this, the upper administration was out of touch with foreign trade. The Viceroy was even more separated, for he was not stationed at Guangzhou, but rather at Wuzhou 梧州, about 250 km further inland (*Ming shi* 1997, 卷 73). Thus, although the Viceroy had vast power over foreign affairs on a legal level, he had limited power on a practical level.

Historically, other parts of the Ming government had more practical control in dealing with foreigners. For the purposes of this chapter, let us note three forces: 1) the Haidao, 2) the Guangdong navy, and 3) the Court itself. These forces were supposed to be serving or collaborating with the Viceroy, but they often ended up competing against him.

First of all, there was the *Haidao* 海道—the coastal administration official.⁶ He was the one member of the upper administration who actually did go out to visit the trade islands. He was a scholar official, but he worked together with the navy to assure coastal defense, patrolling the Pearl River delta during the monsoon season. Since 1529, he had also taken the duty of overseeing the Foreign Trade Bureau (市舶司)—the office which handled the incoming foreign merchants.⁷ That is to say, he dealt extensively in commercial affairs.

¹ The powers of the Guangdong-Guangxi Viceroys are described in *Ming shi* 1997, 卷 73.

² On the different stages of the tribute process, see Li 2007: 77-81.

³ The 1529 memorial which requests this is recorded in various sources. See, for example, Yan 2002 : 卷 9, 佛郎機傳.

⁴ *Ming shi lu*, [*Xiao zong shi lu* 孝宗實錄], 卷 73, date 弘治六年三月丁丑.

⁵ On the rise of private trade on the Chinese coastal islands, see Zheng 2008: 105-114.

⁶ The precise title is *Ti xing an cha si xun shi hai dao fu shi* 提刑按察司巡視海道副使 [Assistant Officer, charged with patrolling the ocean routes, belonging to the penal branch of the Provincial Surveillance Commission].

⁷ On the Haidao and the position’s duties, see Lin 2008.

Presumably, as he patrolled about the bay, he stopped by the various branches of the Bureau, scattered along the coastline.

The Haidao thus had a curious kind of power. Officially, he was just a mid-level official, with a Court rank of 4b (從四品) (*Ming shi* 1997, 卷 75). This meant that he was only an administrator, not a policy-maker. He was to greet incoming foreigners and deliver messages to them, but not actually conduct diplomacy. He was to ensure that goods were inspected and taxes collected, but not actually negotiate trade agreements. However, since he was the only central official who visited the trade islands, he was free to assume greater powers and nobody could stop him. The most famous example is that of the Haidao Wang Bo 汪柏, who in 1553-1557 negotiated an agreement with the Portuguese captain Leonel de Sousa.⁸ The agreement not only let the Portuguese dock at Macau, but also set their taxes at a base 20% rate, with some adjustments.⁹ That is to say, Wang Bo had set both diplomatic and commercial policy.

One might say that the Haidao was a kind of unofficial coastal baron.

Second of all, another branch of government that competed for control of foreign affairs was the Guangdong navy. As mentioned, the Haidao did not patrol the coastline alone. He worked in conjunction with the Regional Military Office (都指揮使司).¹⁰ An admiral from this office also patrolled the trade islands during the monsoon season.¹¹

This admiral also worked closely with foreign ships. Of course, he had to battle against them when they became troublesome, but it often happened that he battled alongside them as well. By the mid-Ming period, the Guangdong navy only had a minimal standing army. When emergencies happened, the admiral had to recruit mercenary ships—including foreign ships.¹² Tang Kaijian has shown that in the 1550's, the Ming navy had already recruited Portuguese merchant ships twice in order to fight off pirates.¹³

It is not clear if the admirals did this with permission from the Viceroy, or without telling him. In any case, it meant that the Guangdong navy (like the Haidao) directly negotiated with foreigners along the coastline.

Finally, a third competitor for control of Guangdong foreign affairs was the Ming Court itself. Notoriously, the Daoist Jiaying Emperor demanded exotic medicinals for his rituals (Jin 2002b: 97-101). Thus, the Ministry of Finance (戶部) organized a contribution system.¹⁴ Every year, the civil governors of Fujian and Guangdong were expected to supply the Court with a load of exotic goods.¹⁵ For Guangdong, the “civil governor” meant the Viceroy—at least officially.

However, it seems that unofficially, the Ministry of Finance tended to bypass the Viceroy. Instead, he worked directly with the Foreign Trade Bureau (and thus, the Haidao). An early source, the *Riben Yijian* 日本一覽, says that it was the aforementioned Haidao

⁸ On the Haidao Wang Bo, see Huang 2015.

⁹ Carta de Leonel de Sousa ao Infante D. Luís (Cochim, January 15, 1556), in Loureiro 1996: 92.

¹⁰ On the Regional Military Office and its structure, see *Ming shi* 1997, 卷 76.

¹¹ Hu 2006: 卷 3, 沿海衛所戰船.

¹² See Chen 2014.

¹³ See Tang 1999, and Tang 2012.

¹⁴ The Emperor had the Ministry of Finance (戶部) oversee the annual spice contribution. See, for example, *Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 456, date 嘉靖三十七年二月己丑.

¹⁵ We can note, for example, that the “撫臣” of Fujian and Guangdong officially presented the exotic medicinal ambergris (龍涎香) to the Court in *Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 448, date 嘉靖三十六年六月丙子.

Wang Bo 王柏 who set up the commercial network which handled this Court-oriented commerce.¹⁶ Similarly, the one person from this commerce whom the *Guangdong tongzhi* 廣東通志 mentions is a certain Wang Hong 王弘--who seems to have been a family member of Wang Bo (Jin 2002b: 105). In other words, in this domain as well, the Viceroy had only nominal authority. He watched helplessly as the Court and the Haidao scooped away his precious foreign goods.

To conclude, we can see that there was a latent competition to control Guangdong foreign affairs. On paper, the Viceroy had clear authority, but in practice, other branches of government often superseded him. (Again, those branches were 1) the Haidao, 2) the Ming navy, and 3) the Court.) This made coastal administration messy. It meant that Macau was like an open candy jar. Various hands were reaching into it, with little coordination.

That, in any case, was the situation prior to 1564.

The Viceroy and the Haidao

Let us now meet the central figure of this chapter. On October 16, 1563, the Ming Court appointed a new Viceroy to Guangdong / Guangxi : Wu Guifang 吳桂芳.¹⁷

Wu Guifang was forced by circumstances to examine foreign trade more closely. Guangdong was currently under enormous fiscal strain, juggling simultaneous military campaigns against the Yao 瑤 peoples in the inland, and the Japanese pirates along the northeastern coastline. By Autumn 1564, even the Ming Court (which was itself struggling to fund a war against the Mongols in the north) became alarmed by the province's finances, and tried to offer relief.¹⁸ In this context, the tax revenue from foreign trade, which paid for the armies, was becoming ever more important.

In this context, Wu quickly sought information about the Macau.¹⁹ Already around December 1563, he commissioned the Censor (巡按御史) Pang Shangpeng 龐尚鵬, to investigate.²⁰ For our purposes, the main thing to note is that Pang responded with one main suggestion: reform the office of the Haidao. Pang said that Macau had become a dangerous haven of criminality. The best way to impose order would be to have the Haidao station right next to the port. "He will pressure the area, punishing evil. He will show the Court's power, giving rewards. He will make [the Portuguese] remove their houses, and leave with their ships" (Pang 1999). Although Pang does not directly denounce the Haidao, one can sense an implicit criticism here. After all, shouldn't the official have been doing all of those duties already? There must have already been suspicions about the Haidao.

In the competition to control Guangdong foreign affairs, Wu Guifang thus entered the ring. His first move was to humble the overly powerful Haidao. He presented his plans to the

¹⁶ Zheng 1937: 卷 6, 海市條. See Jin 2002b: 105.

¹⁷ 嘉靖四十二年九月乙巳
October 16, 1563

¹⁸ *Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 538, date 嘉靖四十三年九月辛酉.

¹⁹ It is not clear if Wu knew already knew about Macau prior to his appointment or not. In any case, he definitely knew by late November 1563, when a group of Portuguese merchants arrived in Guangzhou to handle the seasonal business negotiations. This group is described in the letter of Brother André Pinto to the Jesuits of India, November 30, 1563, in Loureiro 1996: 126.

²⁰ On this report, see Wu 2009: 134-135. The document is undated. I estimate that it must have been written somewhere between November 1563 (roughly when Wu Guifang arrived in Guangzhou) and February 1564 (when, as we will see, Wu Guifang made suggestions to the Court which clearly follow Pang Shangpeng's advice).

Court in a memorial that was officially processed in Beijing on July 15, 1564.²¹ There, he gave the following assessment:

Formerly, Guangdong had stationed the Haidao at the provincial capital [Guangzhou], where he also managed foreign trade. When the Japanese piracy wars broke out, the Haidao then focused on defending Huizhou and Chaozhou. Local officials were entrusted with foreign trade.²²

Wu Guifang analyzes the Haidao's problem as a tension between two challenges—"foreign trade" in the west and Japanese piracy in the east. He complains that the Haidao is prioritizing the east, and neglecting the west.

Following Pang Shangpeng's recommendations, Wu Guifang thus asks to have the Haidao focus on foreign trade. He thus created new army positions to take over the Haidao's former military duties. For example, he had already created a new maritime defense officer (海防僉事) at Chaozhou.²³ This would free the Haidao from having to fight the Japanese pirates there. He had also created a new mobile squad (游擊) inland, to the west of the Guangzhou, at Zhaoqing. This was apparently an inland patrol fleet, which would free the Haidao from having to fight the Yao riverboats.²⁴ With all of this help, Wu said that the Haidao could focus on one main duty:

From Dongguan 東莞, in the west, down to Qiongzhou 瓊州 [Hainan], the Haidao will have jurisdiction, taking over and controlling the foreigners.²⁵

While Wu claimed that he was helping the Haidao to do his administrative duties, in effect, he was cutting down the official's authority. He was reducing the baron of the coastline to the role of a foreign trade administrator.

As a side note, let us note that Wu Guifang does not specifically mention the Portuguese. He simply speaks broadly of "foreigners" and "maritime trade." Macau was not officially recognized by the Court, and in early 1564, he apparently did not yet wish to change that.

Second of all, Wu Guifang removed the diplomatic powers of the Haidao. Of course, the Haidao did not possess any official diplomatic powers. It was the regional council of Guangdong, the Three Offices 三司, which was supposed to have such powers. However, in his investigations, Wu Guifang had discovered the truth.

²¹ Although the memorial is recorded in the *Ming shi lu* on the date July 15, 1564 (嘉靖四十三年六月戊寅), it must have been written by Wu Guifang a few months earlier. There were delays, due to both travel time and bureaucratic processing. For example, as we will see, the Portuguese sources show that Wu Guifang must have reported their embassy to the Court around January or February 1565. However, the *Ming shi lu* only records the response of the Ministry of Rites to that memorial on May 16, 1565 (嘉靖四十四年四月癸未)—about three or four months later. Thus the July 15 memorial had perhaps been originally written around March or April.

²² *Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 535, date 嘉靖四十三年六月戊寅.

²³ *Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 529, date 嘉靖四十三年正月壬寅. Note that this memorial, in which the Court actually creates the military position in Chaozhou, is dated earlier than Wu Guifang's programmatic memorial, in which he asks the Court to create the position. It is not clear Wu had already preemptively created the position earlier, or if the two memorials were simply recorded out of order.

²⁴ *Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 532, date 嘉靖四十三年三月丁未.

This was probably a naval unit, since the memorial specifically says that the officer who was to fill the position was a naval commander from Dinghai (定海把總), which had been the hotspot of the piracy wars.

²⁵ *Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 535, date 嘉靖四十三年六月戊寅.

Wu had discovered that an ambassador from Portugal was currently waiting at Macau, asking for permission to give tribute. (This was Gil de Gois, whose secretary, João de Escobar, has left us with a wonderfully detailed record of the voyage.²⁶) Wu thus launched the official diplomatic process. He first sent out an initial team to gather the diplomatic documents.²⁷ And then in December 1563, he also dispatched a special envoy to Macau, to more closely investigate the embassy.²⁸ João de Escobar recorded Wu's orders to that envoy:

It is been said to me [i.e. Wu Guifang] that at the port of Macau, where the Portuguese are, there has arrived an ambassador from the King of Portugal to the King of China. Because this affair is very great, and since the *Anção* [按察司--i.e. the office of the Haidao] has not told me about this, I have not given it much credit. You will go to this port when taxes are collected, and you will investigate in detail if this is true.²⁹

This passage reveals an important detail: when Gois' embassy had arrived, the Haidao had not reported it to the Viceroy. That is to say, he had usurped diplomatic powers, effectively rejecting the Portuguese embassy by keeping silent about it.

Wu moved to correct this situation. As noted, he bypassed the Haidao and directly sent his own envoy to Macau. According to Escobar, the envoy toured Macau, then brought a Portuguese representative back with him to Guangzhou. There, an audience was opened before the Three Offices.³⁰ In other words, Wu Guifang restored the regular diplomatic process, re-empowering the Three Offices at the expense of the Haidao.

This did not necessarily benefit Gil de Gois. The Three Offices were not convinced of his legitimacy, and stopped the tribute process.³¹

In summer 1564, Wu Guifang stripped the Haidao of even more military duties.

Wu's first efforts at simplifying the Haidao's duties had been insufficient. This is apparent in examining the writings of Fang Fengshi 方逢時—the acting Haidao. Fang describes how in 1564 he was relentlessly battling against both Japanese pirates on the coast and ethnic Yao 瑶 opponents in the inland rivers.³² He does not mention visiting the Portuguese, and the Portuguese do not mention him visiting. Wu's plan of having him concentrate on Macau was not working at all.

²⁶ For a rich study on Gois' embassy, see Loureiro 2000: 555-572; Wu 2009: 124-129.

²⁷ It is in fact the Portuguese sources which give this detail. Father Manuel Teixeira wrote that “they then chose three men who had greater interaction and knowledge of us, and who know knew us more, who came to this port [Macau] with request letters to find out the truth about our coming” (Teixeira to the Jesuits of Goa, Macau, Dec 1, 1563, in Loureiro 1996: 111). This description matches with what is known about the Ming tribute reception process. After the navy reported the arrival of a foreign embassy, the Three Offices were to appoint three officials to go collect the embassy's identification documents (Gao 1939: 23).

²⁸ Unfortunately, no source gives the name of this envoy. I might suggest that it was a certain Qiu Shiyong 丘時庸. Wu Guifang, in his memorial to the Court about the Portuguese embassy, mentions Qui. He does not say his office, only that he “had personally investigated the foreign envoy through an interpreter” (Wu 1964: 卷 342, “議阻澳夷進貢疏”).

²⁹ João de Escobar, *Comentários*, in Loureiro 1996: 147.

³⁰ João de Escobar, *Comentários*, in Loureiro 1996: 147. The Chinese sources do not mention this audience.

³¹ The Three Offices simply stopped responding to Portuguese letters. Escobar euphemistically writes that the embassy's “request was put on hold for some time.” (*Comentários*, in Loureiro 1996: 148).

³² Fang 2009: 卷 16, 雜著二, “書平長樂葉賊事”

A crisis broke out which forced Wu to address this problem: the Zhelin naval revolt.³³ This was a Ming naval squad that had not been paid for five months. The commander demanded his salary, and led his fleet southward to threaten Guangzhou. He sailed up the Pearl River, defeated the defending navy, and arrived at the provincial capital. However, he could not penetrate the high walls of the city, and so his men pillaged the surrounding countryside. For our purposes, the key thing to note is that Fang Fengshi was among the defeated forces.³⁴

Wu Guifang thus decided to strip the Haidao of even more military duties. He turned instead towards veteran army officers. First, he elected a famous pirate-fighter, the Generalissimo [總兵] Yu Dayou 俞大猷.³⁵ Then, a couple weeks later, Wu elected another veteran of the piracy wars, Tang Kekuan 湯克寬, and gave him jurisdiction over the Guangzhou and eastern Guangdong navies.³⁶ Escobar adds that Yu Dayou had in fact requested to have Tang Kekuan as his lieutenant, because they were old friends.³⁷ In any case, this meant that the Haidao had effectively been demoted. He was no longer a chief commander over the Guangzhou navies. Tang Kekuan, who far outranked Fang, now occupied that position.³⁸

Thus, the Haidao had significantly fallen in power. Previously, he had directed three domains: (1) general coastal defense, (2) foreign diplomacy, and (3) foreign trade. Wu stepped in and redistributed these powers. He gave coastal defense to the Generalissimo Yu Dayou. He gave diplomacy back to the Three Offices. And he left foreign trade in the hands of the Haidao, just as Pang Shangpeng had suggested.

The Viceroy and the Guangdong navy

Let us now turn towards the second rival for control of Guangdong foreign affairs: the Ming navy. There was something of a Scylla and Charybdis dilemma at work. Wu Guifang had weakened the Haidao by empowering the navy. The result was that the navy, in turn, began to challenge him.

³³ The rebel Zhelin fleet, and the Sino-Portuguese fleet that defeated it, have been very well studied. See Chen 2014: 1-2; Dai 1957: 156-159; Fujita 1932: 475-481; Loureiro 2000: 563-572; Wan 2001: 92-100; Huang 2006b: 23-28; Wu 2009: 131-132.

³⁴ Fang 2009: 卷 16, 雜著二, “書平長樂葉賊事”

³⁵ *Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 538, date 嘉靖四十三年九月癸亥. Note that this corresponds to the date October 28, 1564. But Yu Dayou must have been appointed earlier, since Escobar says that the Portuguese had already begun negotiating with him by September 30 (*Comentários*, in Loureiro 1996: 158). October 28 must be the date when the Court recorded the memorial in Beijing.

³⁶ *Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 538, date 嘉靖四十三年九月癸亥.

³⁷ João de Escobar, *Comentários*, in Loureiro 1996: 153. This is assuming that the unnamed “great mandarin” whom the Chumbim [總兵] sent to Macau was indeed Tang Kekuan. The identification seems almost certain, since Escobar says that this “great mandarin” had previously been a powerful general himself, but had recently been disgraced. This was the case with Tang Kekuan, who had just been denounced before the Court in *Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 538, date 嘉靖四十三年九月丁未.

³⁸ Tang was given the position of Chief Regional General [都指揮使], who had a rank of 2b (從二品) (see *Ming shi* 1997: 卷 76). Yu was given the position of Generalissimo [總兵官]. This position did not have a Court rank, but it was the highest possible military position, one of great prestige (see *Ming shi* 1997: 卷 76). In contrast, as noted earlier, the Haidao only had a rank of 4b (從四品).

As mentioned, the Guangdong navy recruited foreign ships in times of emergency. Now, the revolt of the Zhelin navy was a major emergency. Thus, Yu Dayou and Tang Kekuan looked towards Macau. For months, Captain Diogo Pereira had been offering his services to the Guangdong administration, but in vain. Then suddenly, in September 1564, Pereira's offer was accepted: "the one who accepted it was the *chumbim* [總兵]."39

In and of itself, recruiting the Portuguese was not a problem. In fact, Yu Dayou asked permission from Wu Guifang to do so.⁴⁰ The problem was that Yu Dayou had a different vision of foreign affairs than Wu. Wu generally thought of Macau simply as a source of tax revenue. Yu, in contrast, had a broader vision. He apparently belonged to the movement which believed that the key to pacifying coastal society was to allow civilians to openly trade with foreigners. In his own writings, Yu mentions that he had merchant friends who worked with the Portuguese.⁴¹ Indeed, he was probably in league with his friend and associate, Tan Lun 譚綸, who was asking to open the port of Yuegang 月港 to foreign trade at almost this exact same moment (Autumn 1564).⁴²

Thus, as he recruited the Portuguese into his navy, Yu Dayou became somewhat rebellious himself. Yu knew that the Viceroy did not want him to make any promises about the Portuguese embassy.⁴³ However, he willfully disregarded those orders. When the Portuguese asked to have their embassy be presented to the Emperor, Yu readily agreed. In other words, much like the Haidao before him, the Generalissimo usurped diplomatic power that did not belong to him.

Yu Dayou thus made a gesture of defiance towards Wu Guifang. Escobar claims that when Diogo Pereira met with Yu, the latter explained that

This embassy affair was so new, [...] and of such weight, that the great officials of Guangdong did not dare to take it upon themselves [...]. The Generalissimo himself could handle the duty without fear, since he was second only to the King in matters of war.⁴⁴

One can sense an certain criticism of Wu Guifang here. Yu Dayou seems to be contrasting his own courage to the cowardice of the Viceroy. And it certainly is true that in recommending the embassy to the Court, the Generalissimo was pushing towards new diplomatic horizons, places where the Viceroy did not dare go.

In any case, from a military perspective, Yu Dayou's actions were absolutely successful. With the help of the Portuguese, he decisively routed the rebel navy in November 1564.⁴⁵

What did Wu Guifang do about this impertinent, but victorious, general?

He handled him very carefully, using both carrots and sticks. On the carrot side, he wrote to the Court praising Yu Dayou for his victory over the rebels, even praising Yu for his skillful recruitment of the Portuguese!⁴⁶ However, he also used sticks. He ordered Yu to draw

³⁹ João de Escobar, *Comentários*, in Loureiro 1996: 152.

⁴⁰ Yu 2007: 卷 15, "集兵船以攻叛兵."

⁴¹ Yu mentions one such friend, named Lin Hong 林弘, in Yu 2007: 卷 15, "集兵船以攻叛兵."

⁴² *Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 538, date 嘉靖四十三年九月丁未. See also Wu 2009, 132-133.

⁴³ Yu himself mentions this in Yu 2007: 卷 15, "集兵船以攻叛兵."

⁴⁴ João de Escobar, *Comentários*, in Loureiro 1996: 171.

⁴⁵ On this battle, see note 33 above.

⁴⁶ An excerpt from Wu Guifang's victory memorial is included within Yu's collection of writings: Yu 2007: 卷 15, "處柘林叛兵."

up a battle plan to destroy Macau.⁴⁷ That is to say, he asked him to shatter the very agreement that he had just drawn with the Portuguese. It seems that this was largely just rhetoric—an effort to humble the general, and force him to back down. The wiley generalissimo got the message and played along, denouncing the Portuguese and declaring himself ready to attack Macau.⁴⁸ Of course, no attack was ever launched.

The tension was shortlived. By February 1565, the piracy wars had flared again, and Wu Guifang quickly shifted Yu Dayou and Tang Kekuan back to Chaozhou, away from Macau.⁴⁹

Still, Wu Guifang had learned his lesson, and tried to adjust the Macau administration accordingly. In 1565, he made Tang Kekuan's position permanent, creating the office of "Maritime Defense General (海防參將)" (Wu 1964). This general would watch over the rowdy Portuguese, with orders to "hold down" the foreign ships at Macau (Wu 1964). However, this general would only be of the third-rank—less powerful than Tang had been (let alone Yu Dayou). Thus, this general and the Haidao could counterbalance each other. "Together with the Haidao and the lower defense officer [海防僉事]," wrote Wu, "the general should deliberate on and execute policy, distributing pay to each army" (Wu 1964).

In short, Wu Guifang took two "competitors"—the Haidao and the Ming navy—and tried to have them cancel each other out. He wanted them to work together, and check each other's power. He did not want a new baron to arise on the coastline.

The Viceroy and the Court

The third competitor for control of Guangdong foreign affairs was the Court itself. As mentioned earlier, every year, the Ministry of Finance demanded a large contribution of exotic goods from Guangdong. The Viceroy was largely left out of this process. Wu Guifang tried to gain control here as well—but in this case, he was overmatched.

Soon after becoming Viceroy, Wu Guifang told the Court that he could no longer contribute exotic goods, that he needed those goods for his campaign against the Japanese pirates. This comes out in an entry of the court records, dated January 17, 1564--three months after Wu Guifang had been appointed. The entry does not precisely name him, only recording the complaint of the Jiajing Emperor. The Emperor was angry that he had not received his pearls: "Guangdong-Guangxi is bearing the piracy wars, and so is not being attentive."⁵⁰ We can perceive that Wu Guifang must have been behind this matter, since the Emperor says that "Guangdong-Guangxi (兩廣)" made the claim. The Guangdong-Guangxi Viceroy was the only official who had joint authority over both provinces.

Now, a Viceroy fighting against an Emperor was like a fly swatting an elephant. The Emperor dismissed Wu's piracy talk as mere sophistry, and demanded to have his shipment. Thus, about five months later, a large load of pearls arrived at the Court.⁵¹ As previously, the Ministry of Finance received this shipment from "Guangdong" (no specific official mentioned). That is to say, Wu Guifang had probably been bypassed again.

⁴⁷ Wu's original memorial is no longer extant. However, Yu's response to it can be found in Yu 2007: 卷 15, "論商夷不得恃功恣橫."

⁴⁸ Yu 2007: 卷 15, "論商夷不得恃功恣橫."

⁴⁹ The Ming Court records record Yu Dayou fighting the notorious pirate Wu Ping near Fujian in May 1565 (*Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 545, date 嘉靖四十四年四月己丑). This must mean that he had already arrived in place a few months earlier (around February).

⁵⁰ *Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 529, date 嘉靖四十三年正月戊寅.

⁵¹ *Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 534, date 嘉靖四十三年五月壬寅.

Wu Guifang perhaps tried to correct the system using a bottom-up method as well. As mentioned, the Ministry of Finance worked directly with the Haidao to procure goods for the Court.

In a memorial dated February 26, 1565, in Beijing, two lower inspection officials (給事中) denounced several regional officers for “wanton corruption and ineptitude.”⁵² Among those named was the Haidao, Fang Fengshi. Somebody must have whispered rumors to the Court. Was it Wu Guifang? We do not know. In any case, the Haidao had powerful protectors. The Court defended him, excusing him from blame, simply calling for him to be transferred elsewhere.⁵³ The Haidao had served the Court well—how could he be punished?

To summarize, try as he might, Wu Guifang could not change the system of foreign goods contributions to the Court.

It is in this context that we should perhaps understand Wu Guifang’s decision, around February 1565, to report the Portuguese embassy to the Court.⁵⁴ This was a change of heart, for we have seen that he had initially been unwilling to do so.

Let us first briefly review the contents of this memorial. In it, Wu first announces the arrival of the Portuguese embassy, and explains why he believes it to be illegitimate. Second, he confesses the existence of Macau and describes the dangers that it presents. Finally, he proposes one solution to both of these problems: to reject the embassy. This would both maintain the integrity of the tribute system and serve as a rebuke against Macau.

The memorial is a complex piece that deserves an entire article of its own. For the purposes of this chapter, I would just like to highlight one point about it: as he speaks to the Court, Wu Guifang presents himself as the undisputed master of Macau policy. He does not mention all the dissension and insubordination that he had faced. He does not mention Yu Dayou (despite the fact that he is clearly yielding to Yu’s promise to report the Portuguese embassy), nor does he mention Pang Shangpeng (despite the fact that he is clearly following Pang’s advice in the memorial).⁵⁵ Not surprisingly, he does not mention Fang Fengshi either. He portrays himself as the voice of Guangdong, and as the one to consult on all matters related to Macau.

That is perhaps the key meaning of this memorial. After all, Wu did not really have to ask for permission to reject Gois’ embassy. We have seen that he had already rejected it once a year earlier, quietly, without asking the Court. Wu did not really have to confess the existence of Macau either, since the Court doubtless knew already. More than anything else, Wu is telling the Court that the chaotic early days, in which Macau had no clear administration, were over. Macau now had an administration, and that administration was under his control. If Wu Guifang could not stop the Court from intervening in Macau, he could at least force himself into the process.

In a brief memorial dated May 16, 1565, the Ministry of Rites (禮部) approved Wu’s request.⁵⁶

⁵² *Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 542, date 嘉靖四十四年正月甲子.

⁵³ *Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 542, date 嘉靖四十四年正月甲子.

⁵⁴ The memorial is Wu 1964: 卷 342, “議阻澳夷進貢疏.” It is not dated, but as we will see, the Ministry of Rites responds to it in May 1565. Thus, it probably was written a few months before that date.

⁵⁵ In comparing Wu’s memorial to Pang 1999, one can note in particular Wu’s direct quotation of Pang’s phrase “they are men when happy, beasts when angry 喜則人、而怒則獸.”

⁵⁶ *Ming shi lu* [*Shi zong shi lu* 世宗實錄], 卷 545, date 嘉靖四十四年四月癸未.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have seen how the Viceroy took over Macau affairs in Guangdong, and pushed out (or tried to push out) three rivals: the Haidao, the Ming navy, and the Ming Court.

In fact, this is not only the story of the Viceroy, but also of the birth of the Macau administration. In its broad outlines, Wu Guifang had set up the structure that would persist through the rest of the Ming Dynasty. The Haidao would continue to fade in power. In the seventeenth century, he was basically just a trade administrator.⁵⁷ The Guangdong navy would continue to control the Macau maritime space. Indeed, this would not be the last time that they recruited Portuguese ships into their emergency fleets (Dai 1957: 151-156). And of course, the Viceroy would continue to take more and more control over Macau affairs. The most famous example of this would come in the early 1580's, when Viceroy Chen Rui 陳瑞 personally took Matteo Ricci under his wing.⁵⁸

We have seen that this administrative structure was built by the Viceroy, for the Viceroy. The system was not meant to distribute Macau's wealth equally to various levels of society, but rather to monopolize that wealth and send it to the regional armies. The system was not meant to empower other local and regional officials who worked with Macau, but rather to suppress them and control them. This was not a win-win situation, and it did not benefit everyone equally.

If it is true that the Viceroy played such a heavy-handed role, then many traditional assumptions about Macau's opening must be reconsidered. For example, while it is true that the Haidao played an important role in allowing the Portuguese into Macau, we should reconsider to what extent he really bore responsibility. In fact, the black legend of Haidao—of the corrupt official who gave away Chinese land in exchange for Portuguese lucre—did not become popularized until the Wanli 萬曆 era (1573-1620).⁵⁹ That is to say, it only became popular after the Haidao had already faded from his former glory. Is that by chance? Did it not serve the successive Viceroys to place blame upon the Haidao rather than upon themselves?

Similarly, while it is true that the Portuguese had imperialist pretensions and never fully respected Ming authority, we should reconsider whether this was really the reason why they never became full Ming vassals. Did it not serve the successive Viceroys to maintain them as regionally dependent merchants, rather than to place them under the authority of the Court as official vassals? To what extent are the sources giving us the Viceroy's viewpoint on Macau?

It is often said that the winners write history, and the Viceroy was certainly the winner in this story.

⁵⁷ On the Haidao in the late Ming era, see Li 2008: 290.

⁵⁸ On Chen Rui's motivations, see Jin 2002a.

⁵⁹ For example, one of the earliest appearances of the story is in the Wanli-era *Guangdong tongzhi* 廣東通志 (Guo 1996: 卷 69).

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