



### Editorial Note

One goal of the *SBBR* is to make available the unpublished M.A. theses that abound in university libraries but rarely reach the general academic audience. One concern might be that the thesis, especially if published many years after its submission will be taken and critiqued as a representation of the latest in one's body of research. Clearly, understandings and abilities change over time. To offset this, the original month and year of submission in theses published in the *SBBR* will be included in the title in parantheses. Citation of a thesis so published in the *SBBR* must include "(as submitted in month + year)" to be considered a fair use of the material. Of course, this also requires that the thesis printed here must be in its original, unedited form (with the exception of minor spelling or format changes). I have included my M.A. thesis as the first, in order to encourage others to follow course.

The thesis was written in 1992-1993 under the supervision of William H. Frederick and Elizabeth Collins at Ohio University and defended in June 1993. By that time, I had only studied Thai, French, and Spanish at the university level and, using Spanish, proceeded to study Portuguese on my own. Thus, while Iberian sources are used here frequently, Burmese sources were not, save for in translation (my study of Burmese would not begin until SEASSI in the summer of 1994 at Wisconsin-Madison). Another piece, an article based again on Iberian sources was written in 1993 and published in the *Journal of Asian History* in 1994.<sup>1</sup> Thereafter began a long struggle with Arakanese chronicles and revised interpretations of Arakanese history. The major problem in writing the thesis, however, was that other than several useful pieces by Pamela Gutman on art history, numismatics, and an inscription, and a study of Buddhist art by U San Tha Aung,<sup>2</sup> all focused

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<sup>1</sup> "The 1598-1599 Siege of Pegu and the Expansion of Arakanese Imperial Power into Lower Burma." *Journal of Asian History* 28 (1994): 39-57.

<sup>2</sup> See Pamela Gutman. "The Ancient Coinage of Southeast Asia." *Journal of the Siam Society* 66, pt. 1 (January, 1978): 8-21; idem, "Symbolism of Kingship in Arakan." In David G. Marr & A. C. Milner (eds.). *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries*. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986): 279-88. Pam's dissertation was still unavailable to me at the time I submitted my thesis; San Tha Aung, *The Buddhist Art*

on a period far earlier than the one I was examining, almost nothing had been written on Arakan, aside from Burmese-language studies unavailable to me at the time, since 1967, or about twenty-six years earlier, and, moreover, very few items had been published since the 1920s. Without a strong body of secondary work to provide theory to bounce off of or a linear narrative to provide context, much of 1992 and early 1993 was spent charting unfamiliar waters. Readers interested in the Portuguese role in Lower Burma and Arakan are also directed to the work of Maria Ana Guedes who published a study on this topic in Portuguese in 1994.

In the next few years, with Vic Lieberman's guidance, I further developed my understanding of Arakan through indigenous texts, leading to a study of river boats in Arakan and Burma in 1997 (*Oriens Extremus*) and two articles written in 1995 and 1997 that provided a more balanced and farther-reaching examination of the rise and fall of the Mrauk-U state (both articles were published in 1998, one in *Journal of Burma Studies* and the other in the *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*).<sup>3</sup> These provided the rough structure for my doctoral study of Arakanese Buddhism, especially *aranyavasi* and *gammavasi* monastic rivalry, and Islam submitted to the University of Michigan in 1999 ("Where Jambudipa and Islamdom Converged: Religious Change and the Emergence of Buddhist Communalism in Early Modern Arakan (fifteenth to nineteenth centuries)").

While I work mainly on the Irrawaddy Valley today, my interest in Arakan continues. In a forthcoming issue, we will include an annotated list of Arakanese chronicles I compiled in 1995-1996 while on extension from the University of Michigan for language study at Northern Illinois University. This list tentatively identified the 'lost' Do We chronicle and mapped out the different chronicle traditions of Arakanese history.<sup>4</sup> A fuller examination of this chronicle ('Rakhine Min-raza-gri Arei-daw Sadan'. [Palm-leaf manuscript, number 1632] AMs, 1784 [1775], National Library, Ministry of Culture, Yangon, Union of Myanmar) was published in Michael W. Charney, "Centralizing Historical Tradition in

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*of Ancient Arakan (An Eastern Border State Beyond India, east of Vanga and Samatata)*, Rangoon: Government Press: 1979.

<sup>3</sup> "Rise of a Mainland Trading State: Rakhine Under the Early Mrauk-U Kings, c. 1430-1603." *Journal of Burma Studies* 3 (1998): 1-35; "Crisis and Reformation in a Maritime Kingdom of Southeast Asia: Forces of Instability and Political Disintegration in Western Burma (Arakan), 1603-1701." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 41 (1998): 185-219.

<sup>4</sup> I provided the major portion of the text of the 'Do We' chronicle and the annotated list of Arakanese chronicle traditions to Jacques P. Leider, then of Chulalongkorn University and now of the EFEO, in 1998. With the increased interest in Arakan, it would probably be useful to make both available to the general scholarly community, and thus the text of the chronicle and translation will be published in the SBBR as well as the annotated list of Arakanese chronicle traditions in the near future.

Precolonial Burma: the Abhiraja/Dhajaraja myth in Early Kôn-baung Historical Texts” (*South East Asia Research* 10.2 (2002):185-215, see pp. 193-196) and idem, “A Reassessment of Hyperbolic Military Statistics in Some Early Modern Burmese Texts” (*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 46.2 (2004): 193-214, see pp.197-201).

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**ARAKAN, MIN YAZAGYI, AND THE PORTUGUESE:  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GROWTH OF ARAKANESE  
IMPERIAL POWER AND PORTUGUESE MERCENARIES ON THE  
FRINGE OF MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA 1517-1617 (as submitted  
in 1993)**

**A thesis presented to the Faculty of The College of Arts and  
Sciences of Ohio University in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree Master of Arts**

**Michael W. Charney**

**(June 1993)**

**Introduction**

The Portuguese shipmen were a mere handful...but as they were unopposed on the sea, they found themselves in command of it...But it was not enough to be in command of the sea; some point d'appui on land for trade and refitting was essential...The Arakanese, their wits sharpened by experience, saw that here was one of those chances given to nations and individuals, which if boldly exploited yield a great profit. It seemed that a mutually agreeable understanding could be arranged. While the Portuguese were able to provide mastery of seamanship, with a modern knowledge of arms and fortification, the Arakanese could throw into the bargain territorial concessions and trade openings.

M. S. Collis and San Shwe Bu<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Maurice Collis and San Shwe Bu, “Arakan’s Place in the Civilization of the Bay,” *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 15, pt. 1 (1925): 41.

The History of the different Kings that reigned in Burma, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries...is a round of wars and revolts, of treacheries and murders. Its chief interest is derived from the appearance of Europeans upon the scene. Two adventurers, a Portuguese and a Spaniard, played important parts in Burma during the early years of the seventeenth century. The story of their lives is worth telling. It shows how easily lawless Europeans could establish a rule over timid Asiatics by a display of reckless audacity.

Albert Fytche<sup>6</sup>

These two quotations indicate a controversy over the relationship between the rulers of the Burmese region and the Portuguese mercenaries whom they employed. In order to evaluate the situation adequately, several questions must be answered. Which of the two partners, the Arakanese (the example I have chosen) or the Portuguese mercenaries, was dominant in their relationship and why? If the Arakanese were dominant, then why were two groups of Portuguese mercenaries able to revolt against Arakanese rule during the reign of Min Yazagyi, the king of Arakan? If the Portuguese were dominant, then why were these rebellious mercenaries defeated after a decade or so of independence? There are many difficulties in finding an answer to these questions. I would now like to discuss what these difficulties are and how I propose to overcome these problems.

### **Historiography of Arakan**

The history of Arakan has long been overlooked by scholars of Southeast Asian history.<sup>7</sup> This problem exists not simply at the regional level, but

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<sup>6</sup> Albert Fytche, *Burma Past and Present with Personal Reminiscences of the Country*, 2 vols., (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1878): vol. I, 50-51.

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that authors on Southeast Asian history largely fall into two groups. The first group are historians who have examined the role of Southeast Asians in Southeast Asian history. Perhaps it would be clearer to say that this first group of Southeast Asia historians deal with the history of Southeast Asians rather than simply being a history of events which may have taken place in Southeast Asia, but really had little to do with Southeast Asians. The second group of Southeast Asia historians are those historians who deal solely or largely with events in Southeast Asia which concerned only "outsiders," such as the Portuguese, Dutch, or English. An example of this second group are authors such as George Winius or Donald Lach, who really deal with European activities in the Indian ocean and Southeast Asia. To be fair, George Winius does not

is present in the scholarship of those who focus on Burma as well. It is difficult to understand why Arakan has been so overlooked. Indeed, Arakan possesses a long and rich history, a unique culture, and many epigraphical and archaeological remains which would seem to make it especially appealing to Southeast Asian historians. Further, Arakan has played pivotal roles in not only Burmese history, but in Thai history, and in the history of Southeast Asian trade. Many examples can be found of Arakan's trade connections to not only mainland Southeast Asian countries, but to archipelagic Southeast Asia as well. Arakan also presents a unique situation in which all of the major elements of the religions of Southeast Asia are represented: Buddhism, including Mahayana, Theravada, and Tantric sects, Hinduism, animism, and even Islam. Whatever the reasons for this neglect, it is a fact which the current generation of Southeast Asian historians must face, and it presents a difficulty to those historians who wish to learn more about Arakanese history.

Many of the primary sources for Arakanese history are unavailable or at the very least difficult to obtain. The old Arakanese dialect of Burmese is not taught, to my knowledge, in any universities outside of Burma,<sup>8</sup> and all Arakanese chronicles remain untranslated. Even indigenous accounts have been argued to be untrustworthy for the period prior to 1400.<sup>9</sup> The references to Arakan in the chronicles of Arakan's neighbors, such as Pegu, Ayudhya, and Ava are on the whole biased or ill-informed. Likewise, early European accounts are just as biased. Although the Rev. Father Hosten, "the learned annotator of Portuguese and Spanish records," has argued that the Portuguese have written accounts on which "many volumes might be written on Arakan and Pegu alone,"<sup>10</sup> the Portuguese chroniclers which I have read, such

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claim to be a historian of Southeast Asia, but rather of the Portuguese in Asia. His article, "The 'Shadow Empire' of Goa in the Bay of Bengal," *Itinerario* 7, no. 2, (1983): 83-101, clearly deals with Arakan and Burma (as well as Bengal), while really only examining the Portuguese activities there. Donald Lach as well, in his *Southeast Asia in the Eyes of Europe: the Sixteenth Century*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968, has examined the European experience in the Southeast Asia region, while providing important insights, at least incidentally, on some aspects of Southeast Asia history, while dealing little with Southeast Asians themselves. While I have utilized the work of historians belonging to both groups, I have adopted the perspective of the first group of Southeast Asia historians.

<sup>8</sup> Although the Arakanese have used the Burmese alphabet since the fifteenth century. See E. Forchhammer, *Report on the Antiquities of Arakan*, (Rangoon: 1892): 39.

<sup>9</sup> San Shwe Bu, "The History of Arakan," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 12, (1922): 167-169.

<sup>10</sup> Cited in San Shwe Bu, *op. cit.*, 167.

as Antonio Bocarro,<sup>11</sup> Manuel de Fariah y Sousa,<sup>12</sup> and Manuel de Abreu Mousinho,<sup>13</sup> all seem biased and simply repeat brief and superficial information about Arakan. We do, however, have the in-depth observations of Friar Manrique,<sup>14</sup> but his account is of seventeenth century Arakan, when the glory of Arakan had begun to decline.

At the same time there was a seemingly brief period in Southeast Asian historiography in which important, though by no means exhaustive, work was done in putting together some of the elements of Arakanese history. This brief period was largely limited to the years between World War I and World War II, when three scholars, Maurice Collis, San Shwe Bu, and San Baw U, filled the pages of the *Journal of the Burma Research Society* with accounts of sixteenth and seventeenth century Arakanese history based on Arakanese chronicles. Their work was a substantial departure from the previous generation of Burma historians such as Arthur Phayre<sup>15</sup> and D. G. E. Hall,<sup>16</sup> who only dealt

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<sup>11</sup> Antonio Bocarro, *Decada 13 Da Historia Da India*, 2 vols., Lisbon: Ordem Da Classe De Sciencias Moraes, Politicas E Bellas-Lettras Da Academia Real Das Sciencias De Lisboa, 1876.

<sup>12</sup> Manuel de Fariah y Sousa, *The Portugues Asia: Or, The History of the Discovery and Conquest of India by the Portugues; Containing All their Discoveries from the Coast of Africk, to the farthest Parts of China and Japan; all their battels by Sea and Land, Sieges and other Memorable Actions; a Description of those Countries, and many Particulars of the Religion, Government and Customs of the Natives, etc*, 3 vols., translated from the Spanish by John Stevens, London: C. Brome, 1695.

<sup>13</sup> Manuel de Abreu Mousinho, *Breve Discurso Em Que Se Conta a Conquista Do Reyno Do Pegú, Na India Oriental, Feyta pelos Portugueses em tempo do Visorrey Ayres de Saldanha sendo capitão Salvador Ribeiro de Souza, chamado Massinga, natural de Guimarães, a quem os naturaes do Pegú elegerão por seu Rey no anno de 1600*, with an introduction by M. Lopes D'Almeida, Barcelona: Portucalense Editora, 1936.

<sup>14</sup> Fray Sebastien Manrique, *Travels of Fray Sebastien Manrique 1629-1643*, 2 vols., translated from *The Itinerario de las Misiones Orientales*, with introduction and notes, by C. Eckford Luard, with assistance from Father H. Hosten, Oxford: Hakluyt Society, 1927. See also Maurice Collis, *The Land of the Great Image: Being the Experiences of Friar Manrique in Arakan*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943.

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that Phayre was somewhat of a pioneer in the British school of Arakanese history, publishing two important early accounts of Arakanese history, "An Account of Arakan" and "On the History of Arakan," in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* in the 1840s. As he shifted his interests to Burma east of the Yoma mountains, however, he seems to have abandoned research on Arakanese history to other scholars, only dealing with Arakan later in reference to historical developments in Burma proper. A good analysis of Phayre's contributions to the study of Arakanese and Burmese history can be found in Hugh Tinker, "Arthur Phayre and Henry Yule: Two Soldier-Administrator Historians," in D.G. E. Hall (ed.), *Historians of South East Asia*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961): 267-278.

with the Arakanese as an interesting minority group within the boundaries of British Burma. Their accounts are superficial and are more concerned with Arakanese linguistics than with telling the history of an important people. But just as World War I had ushered in a renaissance of Arakanese studies, World War II brought it to an end. Indeed, Burma was largely ignored until the 1970s, and the current generation of Burma historians, such as Maung Htin Aung,<sup>17</sup> Victor Lieberman,<sup>18</sup> and Michael Aung-Thwin (who focuses on Pagan)<sup>19</sup> have largely ignored Arakan.

### The Issue

I became interested in Arakanese history as a result of my investigations into the strange events surrounding two Portuguese adventurers in mainland Southeast Asia in the first quarter of the seventeenth century.

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<sup>16</sup> D.G.E. Hall, *Europe and Burma: A Study of European Relations With Burma to the Annexation of Thibaw's Kingdom 1886*, London: Oxford University Press, 1945; *Burma*, New York: Hutchinson's University Library, 1950; "English Relations With Burma 1587-1686," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 17, pt. 1 (1927): 1-80; "Dagregister of Batavia and Dutch Trade With Burma in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 29, 2 (1939): 142-7. Beyond these general works dealing with Burma *per se*, Hall gives more specific treatment to Arakan in articles such as "Studies in Dutch Relations With Arakan," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 26 (1936): 1-31 and in his general treatment of Southeast Asian history in *A History of South-East Asia*, 4th ed., New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981.

<sup>17</sup> Maung Htin Aung, *A History of Burma*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.

<sup>18</sup> Victor Lieberman, *Burmese Administrative Cycles: Anarchy and Conquest, c. 1580-1760*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984; "Europeans, Trade, and the Unification of Burma, c. 1540-1620," *Oriens Extremus* 27, no. 2 (1980): 203-226; "The Political Significance of Religious Wealth in Burmese History: Some Further Thoughts," *Journal of Asian Studies* 39, no. 4 (August 1980): 753-769; "Provincial Reforms in Taung-Ngu Burma," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 43, pt. 3 (1980): 548-569; "Reinterpreting Burmese History," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29, no. 1 (January 1987): 162-194; "Secular Trends in Burmese Economic History, c. 1350-1830, and their Implications for State Formation," *Modern Asian Studies* 25, no. 1 (1991): 1-31.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Aung-Thwin, "Prophecies, Omens, and Dialogue: Tools of the Trade in Burmese Historiography," in David K. Wyatt & Alexander Woodside (eds.), *Moral Order and the Question of Change: Essays on Southeast Asian Thought*, Monograph Series 24, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1982): 78-103; *Pagan: The Origins of Modern Burma*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985; "Spirals in Early Southeast Asian and Burmese History," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 21, no. 4 (Spring, 1991): 575-602.

One of these “adventurers” was Philip de Brito, who carved a short-lived kingdom for himself at Syriam from 1600 until he was impaled on an iron stake by the Avan king Anaukpetlun in 1613. The other Portuguese adventurer was Sebastião Gonçalves y Tibau, who did roughly the same thing on Sundiva island in 1609. I was surprised to discover that these two events were linked: both of these men led groups of Portuguese mercenaries who had rebelled against their Arakanese employers. Further, they had rebelled against the same king, Min Yazagyi. After further examination, I found that Min Yazagyi was not seen as a weak king by the Arakanese, but considered by many to have been their greatest ruler and that his reign marked a “golden age” in Arakan. Indeed, Min Yazagyi was not weak, for he pushed the boundaries of Arakan over Lower Burma to the Isthmus of Kra in the east and further into Bengal in the west. I was thus confused: how were two Portuguese mercenary groups able to rebel against a kingdom that had shown itself to be immensely powerful? Why had the Portuguese not rebelled against the Arakanese when they were not so expansive, earlier in the sixteenth century? Further, was the cause of the Portuguese rebellions a concomitant of the process of Arakanese expansion or some fault of Min Yazagyi’s, or both?

### Sources

To answer to these questions, I consulted English-language accounts of European travelers who visited Arakan in the sixteenth century and Captain Stevens’ three volume English translation of Fariah y Sousa’s great work, *The Portuguese in Asia*. Not satisfied, I examined the histories of Burma, Thailand, and Bengal for any secondary information that could be found regarding Arakan. Luckily, the Ohio University Southeast Asian Library possessed the *Journal of the Burma Research Society* on microfiche, making available to me the works of Collis, San Shwe Bu,<sup>20</sup> and San Baw U, as well as Mon texts translated by MacGregor,<sup>21</sup> Hall,

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<sup>20</sup> Indeed, it should be noted that Collis and San Shwe Bu seemed to have worked together on most of their articles in the *Journal of the Burma Research Society*. This is shown especially by their joint-authorship of several important articles such as “Arakan’s Place in the Civilization of the Bay,” (previously cited) & “Dom Martin, 1606-1643: The First Burman to Visit Europe,” *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 16, pt. 1 (1926): 11-23.

<sup>21</sup> A. MacGregor’s translation of what he calls an “anonymous” book, however, seems to me to be clearly Mousinho’s work, since MacGregor’s translation seems to read the same as Almeida’s translation of Mousinho’s work. Even more indicative of the fact that these are the same works, both titles are exactly the same. For MacGregor’s translation,



and Furnivall. After collecting as many materials as I could from the Southeast Asian holdings of the major university libraries of the American mid-west, I turned my attention to Portuguese sources, studied Spanish and Portuguese, and I am only beginning to sift through important information recorded by Bocarro, Diogo do Couto, and João de Barros.<sup>22</sup>

### Problems

There are several problems, however, in analyzing the sixteenth and seventeenth history of Arakan specifically and of Burma in general. One major problem is that of the numbers provided for the soldiers or ships involved in various battles. G. E. Harvey, for example, assumed that Western accounts of historical events in Burma were more accurate than the accounts of the Burmese. He has argued that the figures for the sizes of armies, casualties, massacres, etc., provided by Burmese and other chronicles must be highly exaggerated. In the few places which he was able to cross-check, he believed that the actual numbers of were exaggerated three to ten times in the chronicles.<sup>23</sup>

In many ways, his argument is convincing, but there is no reason to accept this view without considerable qualifications. From my examination of the Portuguese chroniclers, for example, I have developed a strong suspicion that Portuguese historians were just as likely to exaggerate their figures for indigenous armies, which they defeated, even more so for indigenous armies which defeated Portuguese contingents. I think that the exaggeration by Portuguese authors is probably due to the secondhand nature of their information, their sources often having themselves only heard stories which had been exaggerated by successive "storytellers." Indeed, Ian A. MacGregor has dealt with this problem in some detail. He offers the case of Fernão Guerreiro's *Relations*, based on original letters of Catholic missionaries which were largely based upon mere rumors. This problem led Guerreiro to make grave errors in his history, including "exaggerations, omissions, and undue glorification." MacGregor also argues that the intent of the authors of reports sent back home to Lisbon played a big part in the exaggeration of their stories.

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see A. MacGregor, "A Brief Account of the Kingdom of Pegu," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 16, pt. 2 (1926): 99-138.

<sup>22</sup> The last two authors, Couto and Barros, compiled the *Décadas*, with Couto writing the first two volumes, and Barros subsequently completing the last two volumes. See Diogo Couto & João de Barros, *Décadas*, 4 vols., with preface and notes by António Baião, (Lisbon: Livraria Sa Da Costa--Editora, 1945).

<sup>23</sup> G. E. Harvey, *History of Burma, From the Earliest Times to 10 March 1824, The Beginning of the English Conquest*, (New York: Octagon Books, 1967): 333-335n.

These authors were competing for a larger readership and thus more influence; a more imaginative story would probably receive the desired amount of attention. In the case of the important work of Tomé Pires, the rediscovery of which in 1933 “revolutionized” Western scholarship on the Melakan trading system, for example, “fervour outran caution” in his description of local resources.<sup>24</sup> Meilink-Roelofs has qualified this view, however, arguing that Pires’ account is an accurate depiction of the Melakan trading system. Instead, Meilink-Roelofs believes that subsequent European observers may have left out information in their accounts which they may have felt was mundane and which they took for granted.<sup>25</sup> But MacGregor touches on another important problem: many of the Portuguese accounts or “histories” were politically motivated and thus exaggeration or underestimates were made purposefully, with less than innocent intentions. As MacGregor explains, again in the case of Tomé Pires:

Readers of the *Suma* have to remember that Pires was pleading a case. He wrote the *Suma* for king Manuel, whom he wished to impress with the worth of Malacca. He wanted to persuade the monarch to cherish his distant possession, to provide it--perhaps partly in Pires himself--with ‘excellent officials, expert traders and lovers of peace’ and to see that it was ‘supplied, looked after, praised and favoured and not neglected.’...Pires’ propagandist intention probably explains at least some of his exaggerations and also the way he glossed over difficulties at Malacca...<sup>26</sup>

Further, Portuguese captains who were actual participants in the historical events which Portuguese historians described, like De Brito or Gonçalves, may have purposely tried to enhance their exploits. They probably thought that local support for Portuguese rule would increase as their reputation as great conquerors became more terrible and frightening.

But the Portuguese historians are not alone in their exaggerations: the same principle may be applied to the situation of indigenous conquerors, who wanted to terrify prospective enemies or enhance the aura of their Buddhist legitimacy. I happened upon this problem during my early research on Philip de Brito’s “kingdom” at Syriam, in which I

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<sup>24</sup> I. A. MacGregor, “Some Aspects of Portuguese Historical Writing of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries on South East Asia,” in D. G. E. Hall (ed.), *Historians of South East Asia*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961): 174, 178.

<sup>25</sup> M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago Between 1500 and about 1630*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962): 1.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

discovered that De Brito seems to have been competing for legitimacy as the leader of the local population in a way similar to indigenous Buddhist leaders.<sup>27</sup> In other words, De Brito won and then lost this support, by ‘playing by the rules’ of Southeast Asians and Theravada Buddhism, until he failed in an attempt to make Southeast Asians ‘play by his rules.’ Other authors have looked more extensively at the legitimacy of Buddhist kingship and have implied similar observations in Thailand, notably S. J. Tambiah and Akin Rabibhadana.<sup>28</sup> Tambiah argues convincingly that a legitimate Buddhist king is believed to be the person in the kingdom with the highest level of accumulated merit (*bun*). The king in a Buddhist society serves as the corrective process, by his righteousness (*dharmā*), to the disordered world. Through his rule, he either accumulates more merit which is reflected in the well-being of his kingdom, or he accumulates demerit (*baṇ*), which is reflected in the development of chaos or destruction in his country. Further, a Buddhist king shows his *Dharma* by conquering non-Buddhist kings and thus spreading Buddhism in his role as a Buddhist world-conqueror, or *chakravartin*.<sup>29</sup> Thus a powerful king, who can command the largest armies and win the most battles is seen as a legitimate Buddhist king. Obviously, Buddhist legitimacy is much more complex than I can explain here, but it should be clear that Buddhist kings had a good reason to exaggerate the size of their armies and the extent of their victories.

The problem is that we may never know what the actual figures were and it is impossible to cross-check every figure which has been

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<sup>27</sup> This work culminated in a paper which I presented at the Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs in 1992, entitled “Buddhist Kingship, Philip de Brito y Nicote, and Constans Phaulcon: The Causal Value of Buddhist Ideals of Kingship as the Basis for Legitimacy of the King in a Buddhist Land.” In this paper, completed under the guidance of Dr. Elizabeth Collins, I argued that beyond the theoretical constructs of Buddhist legitimacy of kingship, there were three “real” requirements, by which anyone, Buddhist or not, could win legitimacy as the king in a Buddhist country: 1. The stability of the country; 2. The protection of the country against foreign enemies; 3. The guarantee of the safe operation of the Buddhist Sangha. Nan-dá-bayin had failed in terms of all three requirements and lost Mon support for his rule. De Brito, was able to meet all three requirements for a time, and won Mon support, but sometime after 1609, De Brito suddenly became a staunch Catholic crusader and alienated the Mons, leading to his defeat by Anaukpetlun in 1613, who was able to meet these requirements.

<sup>28</sup> J. S. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand Against a Historical Background*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1976; Akin Rabibhadana, *The Organization of Thai Society in the Early Bangkok Period, 1782-1873*, Southeast Asia Program data paper, no. 74, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Department of Asian Studies, July, 1969.

<sup>29</sup> Tambiah, *op. cit.*, passim.

provided, since sources are often few and an incident might only be related by one or two chroniclers in varying detail. When cross-checking is possible, I have done so, with explanation in the notes. In other cases, I have noted the figures which sources have provided, with comment and justification. But it is necessary to relate the figures, whether they are exaggerated or not, for several reasons. The first reason, again, is that often an exaggerated figure may be all we have to go on, and exaggerated or not a figure usually contains a good deal of value, whether absolute or relative to other figures which are provided. Second, and probably most important, a numerical figure carries a value which lies outside of the realm of telling us "how many." a number conveys an understanding of how participants in a given battle or massacre viewed the events around them. In the Arakanese, Toungoo, or Avan sieges of De Brito's fortress at Syriam for example, I do not think that it is probable that fifty to one hundred Portuguese successfully destroyed indigenous armies of tens of thousands. But I do think that when we are given such figures, we can better understand how the Portuguese viewed their situation; often tenacious or even hopeless or, when they won, blessed or saved by divine intervention.

Further, the figures provided tell us too little as often as they tell us too much. In the case of indigenous armies, we are rarely told how much of the army was allocated to supply or logistical units, or how many were camp-followers, religious leaders, or various personnel or slaves sent to take care of the personal needs of lords or kings. In the case of Portuguese chronicles, we rarely read of how many indigenous troops fought alongside, and often saved, their Portuguese comrades. In the case of Salvador Ribeyro and Philip de Brito, for example, it took some time before I was able to determine that while there were indeed only several hundred Portuguese in any given battle, they were usually accompanied by thousands of Mon soldiers, with the Mon captain, Ximin Barragao, as a good example. Indeed, Portuguese victories against tens of thousands seem more palpable when we consider that the Portuguese force probably numbered two or three thousand, when we include Mon auxiliaries. Again, I have tried to make these figures available when possible, and certainly the fact of indigenous participation in the Portuguese war effort, though often unspoken, always needs to be kept into account.

Another problem in examining chronicles of this period involves the use of personal or geographical names. In the case of the Arakanese kings, for example, they often had three or more names, Islamic, Buddhist, or otherwise, and Portuguese corruptions of their names makes the confusion drastically worse: the same person may be called by five or six names in any group of accounts and given a century of Arakanese history, this problem of determining who is who must be

multiplied by the hundreds. The same problem exists in indigenous chronicles, such as in the case of Philip de Brito, who is referred to as Changa, Xenga, Nga Zinga, or a variety of other names. Interestingly, European accounts have corrupted De Brito's name into various misspellings: I have counted at least ten versions. The same problem exists for geographical names and the historian has to face accounts which may use San Iago, Cirian, Siriam, etc., for Syriam, Chatigan, Chatigam, Chittigon, etc., for Chittagong, or Jungoma for Chieng Mai. Luckily, two great resources are at the historians disposal: G. E. Gerini's tremendous work of 1909, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia*,<sup>30</sup> and Henry Yule and Arthur Coke Burnell's similarly exhaustive work of 1886, *Hobson-Jobson*.<sup>31</sup> I have used these works extensively as reference for place names, and special note should be given to Yule and Burnell's work, which was the most helpful in determining sixteenth century geographical references.

Related to the problem of variations in place names is the problem of contemporaneous authors who related secondhand notations of geographical locations as if they had been there, or the misunderstanding of these contemporary travelers of where they had been.<sup>32</sup> This problem is especially evident in the location of Portuguese fortresses and trading stations, which may be said to have been located in completely different countries than where they actually were. These travelers also had no idea of which kingdoms certain sites they may have visited were in, and extended the problem by providing extensive commentary on political and economic relationships between these sites and the supposed country around them which are simply false or, at the very least, misleading. I have tried to make it easier for the reader to "navigate" through the sixteenth and seventeenth century Bay of Bengal and Burmese region, by my own investigative work and corresponding notations as well as with several maps which are provided in the text.

One last point needs to be made to allay a criticism of my work which will probably be made with some justification. Despite MacGregor's observation that Barros might be criticized by the "modern historian" for his focus on the "minutiae of small battles and sieges,"

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<sup>30</sup> G. E. Gerini. *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia (Further India and Indo-Malay Archipelago)*. London: Royal Asiatic Society. 1909.

<sup>31</sup> Henry Yule & Arthur Coke Burnell. *Hobson-Jobson Being a Glossary of Anglo-Indian Colloquial Words and Phrases and of Kindred Terms: Etymological, Historical, Geographical, and Discursive*. London: John Murray, 1886.

<sup>32</sup> In some cases, the accounts of Lisbon-based historians were more accurate than those of actual visitors to the countries they wrote about. See I. A. MacGregor, *op. cit.*, 179.

rather than “economic and administrative matters,”<sup>33</sup> examining the plethora of small battles and sieges is inescapable, in many cases, for several reasons. First, as previously explained, the Portuguese and indigenous historians, who are often our only sources, had a field-day with battles and sieges. Few historians were interested in, nor did they seem to have realized the importance of, ascertaining long-term administrative trends in any meaningful way other than ‘proving’ the legitimacy of the current ruler of their nations. Secondly, the ‘minutiae of small battles and sieges’ can offer important information to the careful observer. The complexity of small battles, for example, often offer insights into the personalities of not just the leaders, but also of the average soldier involved. These insights include loyalties, goals, beliefs, as well as how these often forgotten ‘little’ participants lived, fought, and behaved: all of these things tell us something very important in the aggregate about their societies and about how they viewed the historical events happening around them. Particularly, I have used battles and sieges to indicate the true nature of the value of Portuguese weaponry and organization relative to Arakanese weaponry and organization. But I have also used these battles and sieges to determine the leadership qualities of men like De Brito, Gonçalves, Min Yazagyi, Min Bin, and Min Khamaung. Further, these minor battles are only considered alongside general economic and administrative analysis.

### Questions

Which of the two partners, the kings of the Burmese region or the Portuguese mercenaries was dominant in their relationship and why? Some scholars have argued that the mainland Southeast Asian rulers who employed Portuguese mercenaries were dominant in this partnership and that the Portuguese were merely ‘tools’ of Southeast Asian statecraft. Lieberman’s important article, “Europeans, Trade, and the Unification of Burma, c. 1540-1620,”<sup>34</sup> has elaborated on this point carefully, while conceding that the Portuguese eventually became independent players in the Southeast Asian political realm, but only within the parameters of established Southeast Asian political behavior. But if the Arakanese were dominant, then why were two groups of Portuguese mercenaries able to revolt against Arakanese rule during the reign of Min Yazagyi, the King of Arakan?

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<sup>33</sup> I. A. Macgregor, *op. cit.*, 182.

<sup>34</sup> Victor B. Lieberman, “Europeans, Trade, and the Unification of Burma, c. 1540-1620,” 203-226.

On the other hand, George Winius, in his article, "The 'Shadow Empire' of Goa in the Bay of Bengal,"<sup>35</sup> seems to imply that the Portuguese and not the indigenous Asians, were the true masters in their relationship. Indeed, Winius seems to feel that the Portuguese mercenaries in Pegu and Arakan fit into an 'informal empire' of the Portuguese. But if the Portuguese were dominant, then why were both of the rebellious mercenary groups, those of Pegu and Sundiva, defeated after a decade or so of independence?

Falling somewhere between Lieberman and Winius is the argument of G. V. Scammell. Scammell does not question European dominance in the relationship between the Portuguese and the indigenous rulers. Instead, Scammell, in his articles "Indigenous Assistance in the Establishment of Portuguese Power in Asia in the Sixteenth Century"<sup>36</sup> and "The Pillars of Empire: Indigenous Assistance and the Survival of the 'Estado da India' c. 1600-1700,"<sup>37</sup> argues that although the Europeans were dominant, this dominance could not have been achieved without indigenous support or the "adept exploitation of conflicts and divisions in indigenous societies." Scammell's chief concern is to attack the oft-cited claim that meat-eating Europeans (as opposed to the protein deficient diet of Asians), supposedly dominant in technology, simply entered Asia and took control without much effort. Scammell's view thus differs from Lieberman's since Scammell provides a scenario in which Europeans were dominant in their relationship with the indigenous rulers (Scammell only questions the means by which this was done), and Scammell differs from Winius since Scammell sees an important relationship between the indigenous population and the Portuguese. Scammell's argument, however, leads to another question. Is it not possible, for example, that the situation was sometimes reversed and Asians took advantage of conflicts within the *Estado da India* to expand their own power or that Portuguese help was sometimes used by the Asians to achieve their own ends?

The answer to these questions can be found in an examination of Min Yazagyi's reign, during which Arakan both reached its greatest territorial extent and experienced the two mercenary rebellions. Min

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<sup>35</sup> George Davison Winius, "The 'Shadow Empire' of Goa in the Bay of Bengal," *Itinerario* 7, no. 2 (1983): 83-101.

<sup>36</sup> G. V. Scammell, "Indigenous Assistance in the Establishment of Portuguese Power in Asia in the Sixteenth Century," *Modern Asian Studies* 14, 1 (1980): 1-11.

<sup>37</sup> G. V. Scammell, "The Pillars of Empire: Indigenous Assistance and the Survival of the 'Estado da India' c. 1600-1700." *Modern Asian Studies* 22, 3 (1988): 473-489.<sup>38</sup> Arthur P. Phayre, *History of Burma including Burma Proper, Pegu, Taungu, Tenasserim, and Arakan: From the Earliest Time to the End of the First War With British India*, (London: Trübner & Co., 1884): 171.

Yazagyi's reign thus seems to be something of contradiction, since Arakan seems to have been at its greatest power and yet it was experiencing its greatest weakness at the same time. The major question which should be answered, then, is why this seeming contradiction developed.

In order to answer these questions, as well as those mentioned earlier, three developments will be looked at: (1) the Portuguese-Arakanese relationship in the sixteenth century; (2) the revolt of Philip de Brito; and (3) the revolt of Sebastião Gonçalves y Tibau. In examining these three stages of the Arakanese-Portuguese relationship, attention will be focused both on the Arakanese approach to dealing with the outside world, especially with the Portuguese and on the economic and administrative concerns which provoked the Arakanese desire to expand their state territorially and economically.



**Chapter I**  
**Arakanese State and Society at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century**

For many years after the retreat of Tabeng Shwéhtī, Arakan was left, undisturbed. Situated between Bengal and Burma, and far inferior to either in extent and resources, the strength of Arakan lay mainly in woods and swamps, which opposed the passage of an enemy, and offered a safe refuge for the people. Trusting to these natural defences, the kings of Arakan might long have remained secure against foreign foes. But they were not content to exist in obscure independence at home, and they encroached northward and eastward as they found opportunity from the weakness of either neighbor.

Arthur P. Phayre<sup>38</sup>

Mrauk-U, having turned the tables in Bengal proceeded to do the same on Burma. This was the first and only period in its history when Arakan was able not only to repulse the Burmese but even to annex part of their country. Razagri...took Pegu. This campaign was rendered possible by his excellent navy and Razagri, in appointing the Portuguese de Brito, as Governor of Syriam was repeating the policy of the north-west frontier. He depended on those mariners, in conjunction, presumably, with his own seamen, to keep his borders for him.

Maurice Collis and San Shwe Bu<sup>39</sup>

These two quotations indicate that there was a great change, between the first-half of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century, in the way in which the Arakanese kings both viewed the world around them and how they adapted themselves to the changing economic and political climate. What, for example, provoked the Arakanese kings to change from isolated monarchs to great military conquerors? Was this change due to economic developments? If so, what were these developments and how did they affect the world-view of the Arakanese kings and perhaps Arakanese society in general?

In order to answer these questions, the world-view of Arakanese society at the beginning of the sixteenth century will first be examined. Then I will examine the way in which Arakanese kings legitimized their rule: first, in terms of theoretical religious legitimation of kingship and

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<sup>39</sup> Collis and San Shwe Bu, "Arakan's Place in the Civilization of the Bay," 43.

second, in terms of the economic basis of kingly legitimation. This analysis will be used as the basis for the next chapter in which the development of the relationship between the Portuguese and the Arakanese monarchy during the sixteenth century will be examined.

### **Arakanese Society and the Arakanese World-View**

Before examining the world-view of the Arakanese kings and their means of legitimation of kingship, it would be useful to look at what Arakan society was like at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Arakanese were similar to many peoples found throughout the world, who, finding themselves stuck between large and powerful empires, choose either to isolate themselves from the outside world or to purposefully look at other cultures for religions or tools of state-craft through which they could express their own views in a way easily recognizable to the outside world. This choice between isolation and adaptation was faced not just by Arakan, but by many other societies throughout Southeast Asia. Some Southeast Asian societies chose to adapt and opened themselves up to the outside world, as in the case of modern Thailand. Other societies in Southeast Asia chose both adaptation and isolation, in which outside models were utilized but the “doors” to their societies remained closed to the outside world, as shown by examples as varied as modern Burma and premodern Vietnam.

The Arakanese chose the second path, and their culture at the beginning of the sixteenth century reflected both their isolation and their adaptation. One way that we can see both isolation and adaptation is by looking at the temple iconography of Mrauk-U, the Arakanese capital. In the Shithaungparā (Shithaung pagoda), built in C.E. 1535 on Pakaungdaung hill, eighty-four thousand images of the Buddha were enshrined “after the fashion of the great Asoka.”<sup>40</sup> While King Min Bin planned on housing these Buddhist images in the Shithaungparā from the beginning, the pagoda was stylistically Hindu, so much so that “the entire structure is alien in its main features to native architectural style.”<sup>41</sup> In addition to the Buddhist images, the pagoda includes garudas, statues which are probably of Vishnu, and other iconography indicating the old Brahmanic social order, with the Brahmans on top, then kings, below them warriors, and, at the bottom, commoners. Further, the gateway is protected by “a six-armed figure and richly

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<sup>40</sup> San Baw U, “My Rambles among the Ruins of the Golden City of Myauk-U,” *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 16 (1926): 37.

<sup>41</sup> Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, 20.

dressed Brahmans at one side of it.”<sup>42</sup> This “mixture of sculptural representations from the Buddhist cultus and Hindu pantheon”<sup>43</sup> clearly indicates Arakanese religious syncretism. At the same time, another pagoda built by Min Bin, the Andaw pagoda, is completely Buddhist in its design and iconography and shows no sign of Hinduism.<sup>44</sup> A little further away, however, is the Nan tha-gan, or “the tank of the palace people,” which is guarded by two sets of huge “dreadful looking bhilus in sitting posture.”<sup>45</sup> Since the *bhilus* or *bhillas*, are the demons who gather human victims for Hindu gods and goddesses,<sup>46</sup> we can see the adoption of further aspects of Hinduism by the Arakanese. Animism was not neglected either, with a good example being the nat-shrine built to house the female nat, Ma Pru.<sup>47</sup> Interestingly, all four of these examples, the Shithaungparā, the Andaw pagoda, the Nan tha-gan, and the Ma Pru shrine were built roughly in the same thirty-year period and represent the diversity of religious models adopted by the Arakanese.

As in other Southeast Asian civilizations, this syncretic approach to religion by Arakan reflected a centuries-long process of adaptation and change. Theravada Buddhism, for example, was present from before the tenth century, yet for many centuries Arakan was more closely associated with Islamic India than with Sri Lanka.<sup>48</sup> But I think that it is necessary to provide another example of how the Arakanese adopted various foreign religious models in a syncretic manner. In C.E. 1595, the poet Ugga Byan, who was the royal tutor to Prince Min Khamaung, wrote a poem, the only work of his which is extant. Ugga Byan wrote this poem in the Arakanese poetic style of Ra-tu, or seasonal, which was a style that the Arakanese had borrowed from both India and Burma. In this poem, Ugga Byan speaks through the mouth of Min Khamaung’s favorite wife, and describes her feelings, season by season, as she longs for Min

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<sup>42</sup> Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, 24.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-5.

<sup>45</sup> San Baw U, “My Rambles,” *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 11 (1921): 168.

<sup>46</sup> A. Berriedale Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1920): 285.

<sup>47</sup> San Baw U, “My Rambles,” *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 16 (1926): 37.

<sup>48</sup> Hall, *Burma*, 57; Further, this Arakanese willingness to absorb foreign religious models into a syncretic system may account for Juan Gonzalez De Mendoza’s sixteenth century observation that the Spanish knew little of the Arakanese, but they did know that the Arakanese were “very apt to receive the holie gospell.” See Juan Gonzalez De Mendoza (1586), *The History of the Great and Mighty Kingdom of China and the Situation Thereof*, Volume II, translated by R. Parke and edited by George T. Staunton, with an introduction by R. H. Major, (New York: Burt Franklin, n.d.): 321-2.

Khamaung's return during a journey to Pegu. To illustrate my point that Arakanese culture had adopted various foreign religious and cultural models in a syncretic manner, I will examine a few lines:

Plucking now here, now there a precious  
flower.  
With these I mounted the Pagoda steps  
And laid them at the knees of the Exalted.<sup>49</sup>  
All these they offer to pagodas and images:  
Some observe also the Five and the Eight  
Precepts,  
Doing much charity as befits a Buddhist.<sup>50</sup>

These two selections indicate the important role that Buddhism was playing in Arakanese society. But at the same time, the poem indicates the influence of Hinduism:

See the Rain-king marshall his thunder  
clouds  
And make his lightnings flicker; see the Sun-  
king,  
In his rich coat of a thousand scarlet flames,  
Drive out and set his horses at a gallop  
In the circuit of Mount Meru; on the summit  
The King of Heaven sits, smiling at this,  
Until, an amber rod in his left hand,  
His right upon a sword, he shouts again.  
At once the Rain-king summons back at the  
clouds,  
Darkens the sky, darts lightning everywhere,  
And a shower rushing down settles the  
dust.<sup>51</sup>

These references to Indra indicate the importance that Hinduism was playing in Arakanese society as well. But I think that it is interesting that only Indra, and not other Hindu gods such as Vishnu or Çiva, is spoken of in the poem. Although Vishnu is certainly in evidence in the iconography of the royal buildings, as in Ayudhya and Angkor, I think

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<sup>49</sup> First stanza, lines 11-13. See Maurice Collis, "An Arakanese Poem of the 16th Century," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 13 (1923): 224.

<sup>50</sup> Seventh stanza, lines 5-7. *Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>51</sup> Third stanza, lines 11-21. *Ibid.*, 224-225.

that Ugga Byan's neglect in failing to mention Vishnu or Çiva might show that Indra may have entered popular culture for his value as both the God of Rain and the symbol of kingship. This would tie together the two things which directed Arakanese society the most: kingship and water (they primarily saw themselves as a maritime people). Indeed, Indra is spoken of in this poem for his role in nature, rain, as much as he is as a king. But Ugga Byan was a royal tutor, and his environment was the royal court and not an Arakanese village: perhaps Indra played a more important role in his surroundings than he did for Arakanese as a whole.

Other sections of the poem mention aspects of Arakanese life which I think show that Ugga Byan was also in touch with Arakanese culture and society outside of the royal court; the poem also relates a strong animist tradition. As we read:

Why do the Nats who inhabit the Six Regions  
 Allow so cruel a cold to chill us here?  
 Night after night I have complained to them,  
 Till I am weary of complaining; they do not  
 hear,  
 Wherefore I raise my hands in the form of a  
 bud,  
 Wherefore appeal over the Nats to Buddha,<sup>52</sup>

This selection certainly indicates the important influence of animism in Arakanese culture and society. We also read of water festivals, and other indications of animist influence. But at the same time, we can see in this selection a clearer indication of the syncretism of the Arakanese way of looking at religion and the world: animism and Buddhism are seen together in the same context. That is, the Arakanese have adopted Buddhism, and Hinduism for that matter, and blended them with indigenous animism, creating a religious and culture syncretism which provides them with as many models as possible to express their feelings and to reassure themselves of safety in a world which threatens their survival and yet a world from which they have drawn many useful things which allow them to protect their state and society. This is not to say, however, that the Arakanese were unique in their defensive syncretism; indeed, many Southeast Asian societies have adopted similar outlooks, but it is possible that this defensive syncretism was more strongly marked in Arakan than elsewhere. In any case, for the purposes of this case study, this general societal outlook can be kept in mind.

The most important example of how the Arakanese people used outside influences in a syncretic manner and in this way adapted and

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<sup>52</sup> Stanza 10, lines 7-12, *Ibid.*, 227.

maintained their independence is the Mahamuni shrine. This was the national shrine of Arakanese society and it was of great symbolic importance for the chief themes of Arakanese society and national survival. The Candasara image, or Mahamuni image (the “Great Wanderer image”),<sup>53</sup> is supposedly that of Godama Buddha: the Arakanese claim that the shrine was built in B.C.E. 545 and even Asoka is said to have visited this image twenty-three centuries ago.<sup>54</sup> But the “throne,”<sup>55</sup> on which the image of Godama Buddha sat inside the Mahamuni shrine, was built on top of the base which was lined with twelve thousand “magical figures” engraved on copper plates: these engravings were placed here “with a view to calling in the aid of the spirits to make [Arakan] dominant over its neighbouring states.”<sup>56</sup> U San Tha Aung, however, argues that these spirits are engraved on the base of the pagoda to show that the Buddha was superior to all other deities and religions. His view, although much of it guess-work due to the poor condition of the images, is that the spirits represent “Devas, Yaksas, Gandharvas, Asuras, Garudas, Kinnaras, Mahoragas, and Nagas.”<sup>57</sup>

In any case, the Candasara image, provides an important example of the multiplicity of religious models available to the Arakanese, and probably indicates a high degree of Arakanese religious syncretism. That Arakanese religious syncretism, despite San Tha Aung’s perhaps hasty argument that the shrine displays non-Buddhist religious themes to show Buddhist dominance, is more clearly in evidence when the legends of the shrine are taken into account: the *Mahamuni thamein* (history of the Mahamuni shrine) and the *Sappadanapakarana* (an ancient Arakanese manuscript), for example, give clear indications of Arakanese religious syncretism:

[I]t behoves me [Godama] that in this country, which is more excellent than the rest of the 84,000 countries, and which has been the scene of my various transmigrations, should leave my image

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<sup>53</sup> I would like to thank Dr. Collins for explaining to me the significance and meaning of “muni” which mean religious pilgrim or wanderer.

<sup>54</sup> The image was crafted on the orders of King Sanda Thuriya of the Daññawadi Dynasty out of “nine kinds of pure metals.” See San Baw U, “My Rambles,” *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 11 (1921): 165.

<sup>55</sup> U San Tha Aung, *The Buddhist Art of Ancient Arakan (An Eastern Border State Beyond Ancient India, East of Vanga and Samatata)*, (Rangoon: Government Press, 1979): 112.

<sup>56</sup> Chan Htwan Oung, “The Mahamuni Shrine in Arakan.” *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 2 (1912): 262-263.

<sup>57</sup> San Tha Aung, *op. cit.*, 114-5.

and hair, which, I am fully convinced, will be held in veneration by men, nats, and Brahmins, during the 5,000 years subsequent to my Nirvana.<sup>58</sup>

This legendary history includes reference to nats and Hindu priests, which indicates the more widely-shared religious syncretism used for political legitimation throughout Burma: nats, Brahmins, and the Buddha were wedded together symbolically; Kyanzittha, for example, who was the Buddhist king of Pagan, installed nats in the Shwezigon, which Luce has called the “most ‘national’ of all Burma’s pagodas.”<sup>59</sup> Similarly, the Mahamuni shrine is Arakan’s most “national” pagoda, and perhaps the combination of nats and the Buddha is indicative of a Burma-wide syncretism of religious models of political legitimation. But there is something else which indicates a more ambitious syncretic approach to religious models by the Arakanese: within the Mahamuni shrine, Arakan’s “national” symbol, there is a sacred hole which is dedicated to the worship of Vasundhara, the “Earth Goddess.”<sup>60</sup>

The Mahamuni shrine also represented Arakan’s resilience against attempts by the outside world to dominate Arakan in a very real sense as well: almost every legendary or historical invader of Arakan tried to remove the Mahamuni shrine, and the Candasara, but either failed or was cursed as a result. In C.E. 81, the king of Tharekhettara (Prome) supposedly remained in Arakan for three years after his successful invasion, waiting for his engineers to find some way of removing the shrine; eventually it was decided to simply remove its treasure, which is said to have resulted in the fragmentation of Tharekhettara society in C.E. 94. The Shans who melted down the copper image house above the Mahamuni shrine in the late tenth century were driven out by the Arakanese and their new Shan king, brother of the invading king, who had become a “naturalized Arakanese.” Anawratha, who supposedly invaded Arakan in C.E. 1018, was unable to remove the Mahamuni shrine, and his attempts to deface it were undone by the Arakanese,<sup>61</sup> although some accounts argue that Anawratha was

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<sup>58</sup> Translated by Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, 4.

<sup>59</sup> Cited in S. J. Tambiah, *op. cit.*, 110.

<sup>60</sup> Do We, “Maha Razawin,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1920-21): 61-2, cited in Pamela Gutman, “The Ancient Coinage of Southeast Asia,” *Journal of the Siam Society* 66, pt. 1 (January, 1978): 20f.

<sup>61</sup> Chan Htwan Oung, “The Mahamuni Shrine in Arakan,” 263-5; Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, 6.

merely trying to rebuild the Mahamuni shrine.<sup>62</sup> Kyanzitta and Alaungsittu, in C.E. 1096, were able to build their own edifices at the shrine, but the Arakanese had no love for these additions to the shrine.<sup>63</sup> King Min Than, “being prompted by national hatred towards the Burmans, destroyed the shrine built by them and erected a new one.”<sup>64</sup> Another disaster struck the shrine in C.E. 1098, when the Pyus and Mons totally destroyed the Mahamuni shrine; it was not until C.E. 1153, when the Arakanese king, Dasaraja, had the Mahamuni shrine rebuilt. Yet again, the shrine was destroyed, by the Shans for the second time, in C.E. 1354, and rebuilt again in C.E. 1393, by the Arakanese king, Sinda.<sup>65</sup>

The Arakanese thus saw the Mahamuni shrine, which combined elements of Buddhism with local animism, as symbolic of their struggle with the outside world. This importance continued even when the capital of Arakan was moved to Mrauk-U by the Min Zawmun in C.E. 1430: “he constructed a road from this city to Mahamuni; he inaugurated periodical pilgrimages to the sacred shrine, which he put in thorough repairs; the numerous tanks along the road are ascribed to him.”<sup>66</sup> Further, the Mahamuni shrine continued to play a vital role in the symbolic legitimation of Arakanese kingship: As part of their “coronation ritual,” Arakanese kings deposited fifty coins commemorating their reign into a sacred hole in the Mahamuni shrine.<sup>67</sup> Significantly, the first successful removal of the Candasara image by the Burmese in C.E. 1784 marked the permanent end of Arakanese independence and the destruction of Arakanese society. As Forchhammer explains:

Until the removal of the Candasara image, the Mahamuni pagoda was the most sacred shrine in Indo-China; the entire religious history of Buddhistic Arakan centres round this ‘younger brother’ of Gotama; the loss of this relic sank deeper into the hearts of the

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<sup>62</sup> Forchhammer believes that Anawratha even built an entrance hall to the Mahamuni shrine. See Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, 6.

<sup>63</sup> Chan Htwan Oung, *op. cit.*, 263-5.

<sup>64</sup> Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, 6.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>67</sup> Do We, Maha Razawin, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1920-21): 61-2, cited in Pamela Gutman, “The Ancient Coinage of Southeast Asia,” *Journal of the Siam Society* 66, pt. 1 (January, 1978): 20f.



people than the loss of their liberty and the extinction of their royal house. 'It will be brought back again' the Arakanese fondly hope.<sup>68</sup>

The Arakanese isolated themselves inland, but, at the same time, they selected an easily defensible position for their capital, the center of their civilization, which was also on the crossroads of important overland trade routes. This allowed them to resist invasions but at the same time allowed them to select foreign models which they wanted to use to express their own views and culture. We can see this in the Arakanese use of the foreign Buddhist and Hindu models, alongside their own indigenous animism. I will now look at the importance of this syncretic approach to foreign models in the legitimation of Arakanese kingship.

### **Southeast Asian Legitimation of Kingship**

I have already mentioned how the Arakanese used a variety of foreign religious models and blended them with their own: this syncretism was also reflected in Arakanese royal regalia and legitimation of kingship. In many Southeast Asian kingdoms, the central monarch presided over a political system in which concentric rings of decreasing royal influence extended from the political center, often referred to as a "mandala state" or a "galactic polity."<sup>69</sup> The Southeast Asian kingdom, for example, was a symbolic construct of five or nine points:<sup>70</sup> there was a political center ruled by the central monarch, around which orbited a ring of smaller political centers (they were symbolically four, each with its own concentric rings of small localized political centers), ruled by subrulers under the central monarch's direct control. Further out, often in recently captured territories, there was an outer-ring of political centers (symbolically four in number as well) left under the control of foreign vassals of hazy loyalties.<sup>71</sup> The Southeast Asian state thus appeared like a galaxy: "we have before us a galactic picture of a central planet surrounded by differentiated satellites, which are more or less 'autonomous' entities held in orbit and within the sphere of influence of the center."<sup>72</sup> Scholars describe it as a system in which the vassal-rulers of the population centers in the outer rings often had multiple loyalties to

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<sup>68</sup> Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, 6.

<sup>69</sup> For a good discussion of the galactic polity, see Tambiah, *op. cit.*, chapter 7, *passim*.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-4.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

other political centers which created a “patchwork of often overlapping mandalas, or ‘circles of kings’.”<sup>73</sup> Physical, and often cultural distance of the outer population centers from the political center of the central monarch made it easy for subkings to switch allegiances quickly. Since each subcenter replicated the central royal court in its own political center, each subcenter was theoretically a potential political center in its own right, and could become the political center of a new kingdom. As Wolters explains: the “mandala perimeters continued to replicate court situations at the centre. Centres of spiritual authority and political power shifted endlessly.”<sup>74</sup>

Two things seemed to have held the mandala or galactic polity together: ideologies of royal-religious legitimation and the redistribution of wealth by the supreme king to his subrulers. That is, the subrulers were tied to the king theoretically, due to the king’s role as a *dhamaraja*, a *chakravartin*, or as *maharaja*, and the subrulers were tied to the king as a “father” who could provide them with wealth. One means of legitimation of kingship was not enough, and although a king may have been legitimate theoretically, if that king could not provide wealth to his subjects, they might easily transfer loyalty to others who could. Religious legitimation often accounted for this by maintaining this tie between wealth and royal legitimation on the theoretical level: a Buddhist king, for example, could only be legitimate if he maintained the economic prosperity of his kingdom, as one of the three main criteria for Buddhist royal legitimation.<sup>75</sup> Likewise, a ruler who could provide the necessary redistribution of wealth to his subjects might find it difficult to maintain his rule in the face of stiff competition from other wealthy men in his kingdom; the king needed royal-religious legitimation to decrease the number of competitors<sup>76</sup> and to maintain the support of the very powerful Buddhist *sangha*.

As Arakanese royal legitimation depended upon both religious legitimation and the redistribution of wealth throughout the kingdom as well as on the security of an isolated Arakan, Arakanese kings were continually looking for new models of religious legitimation and new opportunities for to acquire wealth for redistribution. I will look at the

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<sup>73</sup> O. W. Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*. (Singapore: Institute Southeast Asian Studies, 1982): 16.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>75</sup> I have discussed these three criteria, the other two being the safety of the *sangha* and the safety of the kingdom from foreign enemies in my paper at the Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs. Charney, “Buddhist Kingship,” *passim*.

<sup>76</sup> Richard A. O’Connor, *A Theory of Indigenous Southeast Asian Urbanism*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Research Notes and Discussion Papers, no. 38 (1983): 18.

way in which Arakanese kings adopted foreign models of religious legitimation of kingship and then I will examine the attempt by Arakanese kings to increase their economic opportunities.

### **Arakanese Kingship: Theoretical Legitimation**

Many foreign religious models of royal legitimation were adopted by Arakanese society through the centuries, as the Arakanese kings looked for the most effective means of keeping their kingdom together and many elements were combined in a syncretic fashion. The Arakanese king, for example, was identified as a Buddhist *dhamaraja*, as a Hindu *maharaja*, and as an Islamic *sultan* all at the same time. One indication of this is that the Arakanese king called himself by more than three different names, each reflecting a different religion and a different model of legitimacy of kingship. Three sixteenth century *lingas* of the Arakanese kings, each five feet high, bore the king's different identifications. One of these, for example, bore the title "King of Persia." In Arakanese chronicles, the Arakanese king is often called "Thura-tan," or *sultan*.<sup>77</sup> The Arakanese kings also claimed to be the protectors of the Buddhist *sangha* and took measures to ensure that in battle, the Buddhist monks would have a safe place to hide from invading armies. King Min Bin built Buddhist temples "after the fashion of the great Asoka," the first great Buddhist king.<sup>78</sup>

The Arakanese kings also depended heavily upon the spiritual value of *nat*-worship. While one group of *nats* was important at the level of the households of the general Arakanese populace, another set of Arakanese *nats* were valued solely for political guidance. Before the Arakanese king would embark on any important military or governmental undertaking, for example, he had to win the support of this second set of *nats*. One of the most important of these *nats* was Wunti, from whom the Arakanese kings had sought guidance since the eleventh century. Wunti was consulted, for example, before King Pai Pyu drove out the Shans in the tenth century. Later, as I will explain, King Min Palaung consulted Wunti and the Arakanese believed that she had killed Bayinnaung when his forces had invaded Arakan.<sup>79</sup>

Arakanese kings often tried to translate their theoretical, religious powers into real powers which could be utilized against those people who threatened the king's position on the throne. Arakanese kings, for

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<sup>77</sup> San Baw U, "My Rambles," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 11 (1921): 168.

<sup>78</sup> San Baw U, "My Rambles," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 16 (1926): 37.

<sup>79</sup> San Shwe Bu, "Wunti Nat," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 9 (1919): 52-53.

example, practiced a cosmological, Brahmanic science called *Yadaya*, which combined “black magic” with astrology to supposedly be invoked only as a “defensive weapon.”<sup>80</sup> According to this “science” the universe was simply being a combination of mathematical equations and astrology. As Maurice Collis explains:

An invading army advancing towards...Mrauk-U would be an expression in the world of [a] form of higher mathematics. The most root way of dealing with the invasion, therefore, would be by the interposition of a neutralizing equation. If the enemy was equal to + x, the interposition of - x would cause him to disappear. Here the science of Ya-da-yá came in. It indicated what was the neutralizing equation, under what circumstances of time and orientation it could be placed in position and how it could be...let off against the advancing foe.<sup>81</sup>

As Collis further explains an incident in which an upstart used *Yadaya* against an early seventeenth century Arakanese king:

He began work by making a calculation showing the astrological relationship between his horoscope and the King's. That gave him the datum for all his future operations...The horoscopic comparison showed Kuthala in what, astrologically speaking, he fell short of the King in power. Ya-da-yá supplied the means of correcting, the adverse measurements in his favour. He accordingly inscribed on certain stone squares the calculation, which was necessary to alter his chart into one superior to the King's, i.e., to change the measurements by which he was now controlled into other figures, which would give him mastery over the cyphers which were the astrological expression of Thiri-thudhamma. Taking the inscribed squares, he buried them at certain angles round the palace. Ya-da-yá determined the angles and the method by which the calculations on the slabs were caused to react against the King. In this way Thiri-thudhamma was invested in a mathematical net. His

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<sup>80</sup> The science was also seen as a means of protection of the Arakanese in general. For example, at the Mahamuni shrine, the symbol of the Arakanese kingdom, there was the *Yadaya* bell, which, if struck “under certain circumstances of time, place, and direction,” would produce a “devastating” sound which would save the user from attackers. See Maurice Collis, “The Strange Murder of King Thirithudhamma,” *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 13, no. 3 (1923): 238-9; The *Yadaya* bell, however, was a later addition, as it was cast by King Naradhipati in 1734 C.E.. See Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, 7.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

measurements were tampered with; the chart, which made him what he was, the King of a country, began to change, until it became possible to calculate at what point of time he would cease to exist at that place...in order to assist the operation of the squares [Kuthala] composed certain verses, written in such a rhythm and composed of such an arrangement of letters, each of which represented a number, that when uttered at a calculated time, place and angle, they set up vibrations assistant to the calculations on the squares.<sup>82</sup> One aspect of this science, which an established king could use against foreign kings, was the construction of stone figures to contain the spirits of foreign kings to “bring them under his subjection.” one stone figure, for example, was said to have contained the spirit of the king of Pagan.<sup>83</sup>

The Yadaya bell, an eighteenth century (C.E. 1734) addition to the Mahamuni shrine, indicates the powers that *Yadaya* gave to the Arakanese king against foreign enemies. It was cast and placed at the shrine by King Naradhipati, with inscriptions of *mantras* (“sacred formulas”) in various languages (but all in Burmese script), “which, when pronoun[c]ed under certain ceremonies, would effect the destruction of any enemy against whom the mandra is directed.”<sup>84</sup> These *mantras* were largely designed for the destruction of foreign enemies. Forchhammer has translated the following version included in the *Sarvasthanapakarana*:

To prevent the inroads of enemies from foreign towns and villages, let offerings of flowers, parched corn, and lamps be made night and day at the Thitthaungnu, Mwedawngayat, and the Myotiparathit pagodas...To cause the rulers of the towns and villages in the four cardinal directions to be panic-stricken, let a pagoda, provided with four archways (facing the four cardinal points), be constructed over the Gôndaw dhat...and let the Yattara bell be hung and struck at the eastern archway, and the enemies from the east will be panic-stricken and quit by flight...[and so on]...If the king desires the destruction of Maunggôt (Mogul Empire), let a pagoda be erected at... Mingauk; on its western side let a tank be dug; let the nagataing be of prano... wood placed upside down, and plant shashauk...trees at the corners of the tank. And Maunggôt will be destroyed...If the destruction of the Kulas (Western foreigners) is

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 239-240.

<sup>83</sup> San Baw U, “My Rambles,” *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 11 (1921): 168.

<sup>84</sup> Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, 7.

wished for, let a pagoda be built either at the entrance of the lesser Kulatan cave...on its western side let a tank be dug; let the nagataing be of kula (?) wood placed upside down; and at its four corners let pebabwé trees be planted. By these means all the Kulas will be destroyed...If the king desires the destruction of Thanlyin (Syriam), let a pagoda be erected on a level of 4 cubits on the top of either the Thanlwin hill or the Thanlwin taung. On its south-western side let a tank be dug; let the nagataing be of thavinthit wood (Karun oil tree) placed upside down and at its four corners plant yinhnaung trees...And Thanlyin will be destroyed...(and so on).<sup>85</sup>

Clearly, *Yadaya* was thought of as a powerful supernatural tool in the hands of the arakanese kings against both foreign and domestic enemies. Indeed, as Forchhammer explains, the “kings of Arakan, firmly believing in the promises of the bell, erected pagodas and dug tanks on the spots pointed out by the inscription.”<sup>86</sup>

Further, Arakanese kings believed in *taran*, a theory which held that tragic events were preceded by reverberations. These reverberations could only be sensed by mediums, who were unusually sensitive people such as “children, lunatics and actors.” As Maurice Collis explains:

[T]he method adopted by the King was called ‘hearing taran.’ According to the Theory of taran, if an event is on the way, its reverberation will first reach the minds of mediums. Such persons will be aware of it before its arrival into the upper consciousness and they will inadvertently say something which will indicate its existence and nature. The method of hearing taran was, therefore, to send a reliable person to stroll in the streets and listen to the casual remarks made by the kind of people who might be mediums.<sup>87</sup>

The king, as well, if his life was in danger, would see this when he looked into a mirror.<sup>88</sup> Thus, it should be clear that a variety of spiritual tools were available for the Arakanese kings to aid them in governing their kingdom and Arakanese society.

### **Arakanese Kingship: Economic Legitimation & New Opportunities**

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>87</sup> Collis, “The Strange Murder of King Thirithudhamma,” 240.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid

The legitimacy of Arakanese kings also depended upon the ability to increase wealth for redistribution to subrulers. But at the beginning of the sixteenth century, economic opportunities were limited. Arakan was a vassal of Bengal and, although the Arakanese were noted for their seamanship, Arakan was said to have no large ports.<sup>89</sup> Indeed, the Arakanese capital, Mrauk-U, was sixty miles upriver of the Arakanese estuary, which seems to me to indicate that Arakan's traditional seafaring orientation was being constrained by its Bengalese overlords, who maintained a virtual monopoly on the trade of this area.<sup>90</sup> Arakan also had to provide the Bengalese king with whatever he wanted:

[T]he kings of Aracan...are bound to furnish him, when he goes out to war, with a certain number of men, elephants, and horses. They also pay him tribute for such harbours as they have in their territories.<sup>91</sup>

Arakan had thus come to depend on land trade-routes. These land-based trade-routes had been the key to Arakan's defensive strategy and had also served as the vehicle by which Arakan could pick and choose the foreign models which it wanted. I will try to show that the gradual collapse of the land-based markets, as well as the fall of Bengal to civil war, and thus a decrease in Bengalese control of the Bay of Bengal trade, contributed to new economic opportunities for the Arakanese kings in the maritime trade of the Bay of Bengal. The economic basis of Arakanese society will be looked at to determine what, if any, economic developments may have made it possible for Arakanese kings to change from isolated monarchs to military conquerors determined to make their presence felt beyond Arakanese shores.

Arakan was traditionally a secondary hub of trade in the Bay of Bengal. Peguan, Bengalese, and Kling<sup>92</sup> traders brought their goods by sea to Mrauk-U, but this trade was relatively small. There was probably a large trade with Southern India, which is indicated by the Arakanese use of South Indian "merit-winning" *dipams*, or lamps. These lamps, which are shaped like human statuettes, indicate that the trade with Southern

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid

<sup>90</sup> François Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard of Laval to the East Indies, the Maldives, the Moluccas and Brazil*, vol. I, translated into English from the third French edition of 1619, and edited by Albert Gray with the assistance of H. C. P. Bell, (London: Hakluyt Society, 1887-89): 327.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid

<sup>92</sup> Traders from the Coromandel coast of India.

India was long-term. One of these lamps, for example, a pre-eleventh century specimen found at the site of Old Wesali, is inscribed with Arakanese script,<sup>93</sup> indicating that the lamps had reached a stage at which the Arakanese had adopted them into their culture, rather than collecting them as oddities.

The export trade of Arakan must also have been under royal control, from which the Arakanese kings seem to have received some personal profit. Van Leur, for example, has cited Arakanese trade as a good example of “royal interference in trade.” Van Leur supported his claim with the orders given to a Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, here after V.O.C.) trading mission to Arakan on 15 June 1628:

having come well in Arakan (you) shall deliver our accompanying missive and presents to the king there with the requisite compliments, and with all kinds of services and offices try to obtain His Majesty’s favour and assistance as much as possible in the collection of a good quantity of rice.<sup>94</sup>

Clearly the V.O.C. leaders thought that appealing to the Arakanese king for trading privileges required compensatory payment, something that was not above V.O.C. employees, who themselves were notorious for secretly siphoning off company profits. The importance of this observation is that Arakanese trade was considered to fall under the Arakanese king’s monopoly on trade and for the Dutch, and earlier the Portuguese, to trade in Arakan, they had to “purchase” a share of the market from the royal house.

Arakanese kings not only increased their economic legitimation through trade, but aided their religious legitimation. The Arakanese kings, for example, utilized maritime trade for religious buildings which served to strengthen the religious aura, and thus theoretical legitimation, of Arakanese kingship: while the overwhelming preponderance of Arakanese housing at Mrauk-U was made of bamboo, the religious structures were made of stone from Ramree, an island some one hundred miles from Mrauk-U.<sup>95</sup> To a limited extent, Arakanese

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<sup>93</sup> San Shwe Bu, “Brass Figure-Lamp Found at Old Wesali, Arakan,” *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 10 (1920): 64-66.

<sup>94</sup> Colenbrander, *Coen*, V, 307, *cf.* 309, cited in Van Leur, *op. cit.*, 351, n. 44.

<sup>95</sup> Collis, “The City of Golden Mrauk-U,” 246.



merchants and Arakanese goods were also present in the trading emporium of Malacca.<sup>96</sup>

Arakanese kings must have benefited from the Gangetic river-trade through their possession of islands in the Sunderbunds (at the Gangetic rivermouth). This can be seen by looking at Sundiva island, which, though under the control of Bengal, must have functioned in a similar manner, economically, as those islands under the Arakanese king's control. Sundiva island possessed a diverse economy: it not only served as a refitting station for riverine traffic, but was a source of many trade goods as well. As Caesar Frederici noted in the mid-sixteenth century:

[Sundiva is] the fertilest Island in all the world...there we determined to stay 40 dayes to refresh us. And when the people of the Island saw the ship...presently they made a place of bazar or a market, with shops right over against the ship with all maner of provision of victuals to eate, which they brought downe in great abundance, and sold it so good cheape, that we were amazed at the cheapenesse thereof. I bought many salted kine there...for halfe a Larine a piece, which Larine may be 12. shillings sixe pence, being very good and fat; and 4. wolde hogges ready dressed for a Larine; great fat hennes for a Bizze a piece...Also a sack of fine rice for a thing of nothing, and consequently all other things for humaine sustenance were there in such abundance, that it is a thing incredible but to them that have seen it.<sup>97</sup>

Further, Sundiva island was the major source of salt for much of the Bay of Bengal, exporting two hundred boatloads of salt each year.<sup>98</sup> But it is clear that trade at this level could not sustain all of Arakan and it is possible that this trade was only made possible by the mid-sixteenth century due to developments that removed Bengalese domination of Arakan's maritime trade, which I will explain later.

Despite the low level of maritime trade during the period of Bengalese domination of the Bay of Bengal, Arakanese must have profited from a very large internal trading network, as well as large trade-

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<sup>96</sup> Tomé Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires: An Account of the East, From the Red Sea to Japan, Written in Malacca and India in 1512-1515*, (London: Hakluyt Society, 1944): 268, 272-3.

<sup>97</sup> Caesar Frederici, "The Voyage of Master Cesar Frederick into the east India, and beyonde the Indies, Anno 1563," in Richard Hakluyt (ed.) *The Principal Navigations and Voyages Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation*, volume 3, (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1927): 259.

<sup>98</sup> J. J. Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, (Calcutta: 1919): 67.

routes overland to Burma and China. The capital of Arakan, Mrauk-U, for example, was a large metropolis, fourteen miles in circumference, with a population of 160,000, not including foreign traders.<sup>99</sup> Nicolo di Conti, traveling in the Bay of Bengal in the first half of the fourteenth century, noted that Mrauk-U was a very large city that took him six days to reach by river from the coast.<sup>100</sup> Within Arakan, it is probable that there was a large trade in horses, as Tomé Pires seems to imply. Further, traders came to Arakan for silver, as well as for the “three or four kinds of cotton cloth” which Arakan produced in great abundance so that there was more cloth “there than in other places.”<sup>101</sup> In the mountain ranges around Arakan, the hill peoples made musk from goats, which was then carried to Ava, and thence to Lower Burma.<sup>102</sup> Indeed, Ava depended heavily upon the trade routes through Arakan to Bengal.<sup>103</sup> The trade with Ava was coupled with the trade-route along the Lemro river, which connected Arakanese kings with the large Southern Chinese trading world.<sup>104</sup> Barbosa, writing at the beginning of the sixteenth century, tells us that Arakan imported elephants from Pegu, and implies that the Arakanese were rich, probably from trade: the Arakanese wore silk as well as cotton garments, and they possessed many “ornaments of gold and silver.”<sup>105</sup>

The Arakanese royal house probably obtained a large amount of its wealth from the exportation of finished rubies: the Arakanese imported “highly coloured rubies” from the kingdom of Capelâguã, which were then polished by skilled Arakanese craftsmen, and re-exported.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> This figure comes from the estimate of Father Manrique in the first third of the seventeenth century, which is probably indicative of Mrauk-U’s population in the mid-sixteenth century. See Maurice Collis, “The City of Golden Mrauk-U,” 245, for Manrique’s estimate.

<sup>100</sup> J.S. Furnivall, “Europeans in Burma of the Fifteenth Century,” *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 29 (1939): 237.

<sup>101</sup> Pires, *op. cit.*, 95-6.

<sup>102</sup> Letter from Tomé Pires to King Manuel of Portugal, From Cochin, India, 27 January 1516. In Pires, *op. cit.*, 516.

<sup>103</sup> Kenneth R. Hall, *Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985): 198.

<sup>104</sup> San Baw U, “My Rambles,” *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 13 (1923): 101.

<sup>105</sup> Duarte Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century*, translated from Spanish, with notes and preface by Henry E. J. Stanley, (London: Hakluyt Society): 182-3.

<sup>106</sup> Letter from Tomé Pires to King Manuel of Portugal, From Cochin, India, 27 January 1516. In Pires, *op. cit.*, 516.

The ruby trade must have been very important to Arakan's economy, for Tomé Pires claims that they were "the chief thing in the kingdom of Arakan."<sup>107</sup> This ruby trade may have been only a recent development, perhaps of the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century: Harvey argues that if there had been a large ruby trade, di Conti would have mentioned it, but he did not.<sup>108</sup> Large-scale trade with Burma is also suggested by Arakan's unit of currency: the *cāça* made of different combinations of tin, copper, and lead,<sup>109</sup> suggests major importation of base metals. Another unit of currency in Lower Burma, the white *cowries* from the Maldivian islands were valid in Arakan, as they were in Martaban, but not in the rest of Pegu,<sup>110</sup> suggesting strong maritime trade from the rich transpeninsular trade with the portages on the isthmus of Kra.

Arakan also possessed rich, wet soil, much of it in the two great alluvial plains of the Kaladan and Lemro rivers, north of Mrauk-U, ideal for wet-rice cultivation.<sup>111</sup> Not only was Arakan self-sufficient in rice, but it was capable of producing enough to make rice an important export commodity. This potential for a profitable rice export would be realized during the steady growth of a "considerable export trade in rice" throughout the seventeenth century.<sup>112</sup>

The Arakanese kings thus possessed the potential for controlling great and profitable export trade, as well as a good port at Mrauk-U, and a unique position on the trade routes between India, Bengal, and Pegu. But the Arakanese kings were not able to exploit this potential, which leads to the question of what was restricting Arakanese trade growth and thus the potential for increased legitimation of Arakanese kingship. Indeed, Arakan's great wealth in natural resources led many European visitors to question Arakan's seeming disinterest in international trade. John Huyghen Van Linschoten, who visited Arakan in the mid-sixteenth century, commented:

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<sup>107</sup> Pires, *op. cit.*, , 96.

<sup>108</sup> Furnivall, "Europeans in Burma of the Fifteenth Century," 239.

<sup>109</sup> Pires, *op. cit.*, 98-99.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>111</sup> Anthony Reid mentions that "numerous smaller rivers of Arakan," produced "rich rice harvests," Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450-1680*, vol. I, *The Lands Below the Winds*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1988): 11.

<sup>112</sup> D.G.E. Hall, *Burma*, 155. Indeed, Arthur Phayre in the nineteenth century brought this growth to fruition by "turning the swamps of Arakan into the granary of the Bay." Laurie, W. F. B. *Sketches of Distinguished Anglo-Indians*, 1887, pg. 136, cited in D.G.E. Hall, *Burma*, 114.

these kingdoms of Aracan and Pegu are very rich and fruitful of all things, besides Gold and precious stones, as Rubies, Espinels, Saffires, Iacinthes, Emeraldes, Granates, and such like...Likewise they make harde ware, which is carried throughout the world: There are greater number of Elephants in these countries, than in any other place [of] the Orientall countries.<sup>113</sup>

Juan Gonzalez De Mendoza, as well, writing of Arakan in the latter part of the sixteenth century, commented that while Arakan was “verie plentifull of prouision,” it had little prepared for export.<sup>114</sup> I think it is probable that Bengal was either openly restricting Arakanese trade or that the Arakanese were hesitant to develop their trade potential for fear of being perceived as a threat by powerful Bengal. Arakanese kings may have seen self-imposed neglect of maritime trade as one more defense technique, by not making themselves an economic threat to their neighbors.

Royal control of Arakanese maritime trade was probably threatened or actively suppressed by the king of Bengal. But another factor emerged: the Arakanese kings may have lost their control of overland trade in the early sixteenth century. Furnivall suggests, for example, that European visitors may have observed a temporary lull in trade when they noted, as Duarte Barbossa did, that Arakan had no port and when they implied that trade was unimportant in Arakan. Furnivall further suggests that the lull in trade may have been due to the “decline of Ava,”<sup>115</sup> which was one of Arakan’s main trading partners on its overland routes. Ava failed in the fifteenth century, to bring the ports of the western Irrawaddy basin under its control, and as it became cut off from maritime commerce by Lower Burma kingdoms, Ava’s economy was ruined by “the growth of tax-free religious lands.”<sup>116</sup> Arakanese royal trade thus lost one of its most important land-based markets.

Bengal was divided in a civil war between the Mughal leaders Humayon and Shere Shah. For most of Min Bin’s reign (1531-1553), eastern Bengal was thus opened to attack from the Arakanese if they chose to do so, and, as I will explain later, they did.<sup>117</sup> I think that the

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<sup>113</sup> Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *The Voyage of Jan Huyghen van Linschoten to the East Indies*, vol. I, edited by Arthur Coke Burnell, (New York: Burt Franklin, n.d.): 97-8.

<sup>114</sup> Mendoza, *op. cit.*, 321-2.

<sup>115</sup> J.S. Furnivall, “Europeans in Burma,” *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 31, pt. 1 (1941): 36.

<sup>116</sup> For a more thorough discussion of this problem see Victor Lieberman, “Europeans, Trade, and the Unification of Burma,” 207-8.

<sup>117</sup> Collis & Sna Shwe Bu, “Arakan’s Place in the Civilization of the Bay,” 42.

significance of Bengalese division, however, was not that Bengal was open to Arakanese intervention. Rather, I think that the division of Bengalese political and military power was also felt in the Bengalese domination of the Bay of Bengal trade. The Bengalese grip on Arakanese trade probably lessened, and the decline of Bengalese markets probably increased trade at Mrauk-U, at the same time that Arakanese landbased traderoutes had collapsed.

With the removal of the Bengalese restriction on trade, new opportunities for economic legitimation gradually opened up to the Arakanese kings. The Arakanese kings, whose export trade had been dwindling for generations, gradually began to trade with the world. These kings, leaders of a society whose outlook was characterized by flexibility in adapting to new political and economic opportunities, probably moved to take advantage of the new economic opportunities offered by maritime trade in the Bay of Bengal more quickly than one might expect. By 1567, for example, “small ships” were sent annually to Cochin before the Portuguese fleet made its return trip to Lisbon.<sup>118</sup> Now, moderate maritime trade also came to Arakan from Golconda. As Antony Schorer observed in the early seventeenth century:

Ships sail every year to the coast of Bengal, Arakan, Pegu, and Tenasserim, carrying a variety of cotton cloths, glass, iron, cotton yarn (red and white), tobacco, and certain shells which are used instead of coins in Bengal and Arakan; they carry also some spice and sandalwood. The return cargoes consist of rice, butter, oil, gingelly seed, sugar, a variety of woven cloths, some fine embroidered quilts, rubies, sapphires, lac, pitch, benzoin, China root, gold, tin, eagle-wood, sappan-wood, which is used for dyeing red, large jars called Martabans, and a drink called nipa. These goods are brought to the whole Coast, as far as Cochin.<sup>119</sup>

William Methwold’s observation from the early seventeenth century more clearly delineates the nature of Arakan’s maritime trade with Golconda:

In September the ships for Achyne, Arrecan, Pegu, and Tannassery set all sayle; for it is to be understood that, alongst this and all other coasts of India, the windes blow constantly trade, six moneths one way and six moneths another...To Arrecan they send store of

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<sup>118</sup> Frederici, *op. cit.*, 257.

<sup>119</sup> Antony Schorer, “Brief Relation of the Trade of the Coromandel Coast, especially at the Factory at Masulipatam, where I resided in the service of the Hon’ble Company in the seventh Year,” in W. H. Moreland (ed.), *Relations of Golconda in the Early Seventeenth Century*, (London: Hakluyt Society, 1931):59.

tobacco, some iron, and few sorts of painted clothes, and returne from thence some gold and gumme lacke, but most part rice, which they sell about Pallecat and that coast of Narsinga.<sup>120</sup>

Further, by the mid-sixteenth century, Arakan was already exporting rice, as part of the growing trade with the Portuguese trading stations in Asia. As Caesar Frederici observed in 1563:

From the great port of Chatigan [Chittagong] they cary for the Indies great store of rice, very great quantitie of Bombast cloth of every sort, Sugar, corne, and money, with other marchandize.<sup>121</sup>

But the new economic opportunities of the first half of the sixteenth century should not be confused as indicating the total elimination of restrictions on trade -- it did not. Indeed, the Portuguese replaced Bengalese control of trade with the Portuguese pass system, in which any ship trading in the Bay of Bengal had to buy a Portuguese pass or face destruction at sea; by 1537, the Portuguese "commanded the whole sea-board from Orissa to Chittagong."<sup>122</sup> Rather, the Portuguese trading system should be seen as a new system rather than a free system. That is, the Bengalese wanted to maintain their ports as the sole sources of trade goods at the expense of Arakanese exports and thus Bengalese control of Bay of Bengal trade meant to Arakan, the suppression of indigenous commodity exports. The Portuguese, however, wanted competition of sources of trade goods, to lower the prices at which Portuguese traders bought goods, while providing Portuguese traders with increased numbers of markets at which they could sell their own trade goods (which increased both demand and profit). The Portuguese system, then, encouraged Arakanese exports as opposed to the Bengalese 'system' which suppressed Arakanese exports with which Bengalese exports competed. This must have revolutionized the Arakanese trading system, since the Arakanese kings were now free, despite the cost of the Portuguese passes, to trade as they wished. Further, the Portuguese system provided, as will be explained in the following chapter, another reason for Arakanese kings to seek a friendly relationship with the Portuguese.

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<sup>120</sup> William Methwold, "Relations of the Kingdome of Golconda, and Other Neighboring Nations within the Gulfe of Bengala, Arreccan, Pegu, Tannassery, etc., and the English Trade in Those Parts," In W. H. Moreland (ed.), *Relations of Golconda in the Early Seventeenth Century*, (London: Hakluyt Society, 1931): 37-8.

<sup>121</sup> Frederici, *op. cit.*, 260.

<sup>122</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 112. <sup>123</sup> Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*, 414.

Economic opportunities for the Arakanese monarchy changed significantly during the first-half of the sixteenth century. The civil war in Bengal removed the previous Bengalese suppression of Arakanese maritime trade, while the decreasing availability of land-based trade sources forced Arakanese kings to look elsewhere for foreign trade. Thus, economically, Arakanese kings had every reason to want to increase their influence in the outside world. With Burma and the east under inhospitable rulers and the west in decay, Arakanese kings made the natural choice of securing markets for Arakan in the west on a permanent basis.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

The Arakanese had many reasons to be afraid of the outside world since they were pressed between the two giants of Pegu and Bengal. But the Arakanese could depend upon the safe geographical location for their society, nestled in between mountain ranges and swampland. The Arakanese kings selected and maintained an inland capital as the center of their state and they preferred relatively safe land-route trade over vulnerable maritime trade. What little maritime trade the Arakanese royal house did control, however, was constrained by the Bengalese. This was not a problem, however, so long as Arakan's land-based trade connections remained open and profitable.

In the relative safety of this situation, the Arakanese found it advantageous to maintain their syncretic way of looking at the world. While countries like Vietnam or Thailand were open to conquest by China and Angkor, respectively, Arakan kings remained independent, with a few brief periods of foreign control. This meant that Arakan was relatively free to select foreign political and social models to reflect ideas and developments which they were experiencing, but for which they needed forms of expression. Thus, the Arakanese adopted a variety of foreign models, which were blended with indigenous systems. For this thesis, however, the significance of this observation is not what the Arakanese did in the past, but the uses to which the Arakanese kings put their syncretism in dealing with the Portuguese later in the sixteenth century, which will be the focus of the following chapters.

At this point it should be clear that Arakanese kings began to shift their policies from political isolation to one prepared to take advantage of the outside world, no longer from the safety of the mountain valleys, but on foreign ground. The decline of land-based trade routes forced Arakanese kings to look at maritime trade as their new, primary link to the outside world and new economic opportunities for kingly legitimation. The decline of Bengalese domination of the Bay of Bengal trade made this shift easier, but the Arakanese royal house probably

would have pursued a policy of extending its influence in this trade anyway, though probably to a lesser degree. With the Bay of Bengal available to growing royal Arakanese interest in maritime trade, Arakanese kings completed the shift and changed from petty monarchs satisfied with political isolation to kings bent on empire and new economic opportunities. The Arakanese also were prepared to apply their traditional borrowing of foreign models to the new challenges, political and economic, which were ahead. And it was at this juncture that the Portuguese entered the Bay of Bengal.



**Chapter II**  
**The Portuguese and Arakanese Relationship, 1517-1600**

When Minbin died in 1553...His sea-power...was the terror of the Ganges region, and his country was on the threshold of the greatest period of her history. But her somewhat spectacular rise was hardly due to the genius of her rulers. It coincides with a period of weakness in Bengal...for Minbin leased to the feringhi who took service under his flag the port of Dianga...

D.G.E. Hall<sup>123</sup>

After 1532 the coast, though poor and largely uninhabited, was liable to pillage by (Portuguese). It would have been a disastrous period for Arakan, with the aggressive Tabinshweti on the throne of Pegu, had not king Minbin...been capable. He strengthened the massive stone walls of Mrohaung and dug a deep moat for the tidal waters; and when the Burmese invad[ed]...he opened the sluices of his great reservoirs and flooded them out. He retained Ramu and Chittagong in spite of raids there by the Tippera tribes while he was engaged with Tabinshweti...

G. E. Harvey<sup>124</sup>

These quotations present different interpretations of Arakan's development into a major power in the sixteenth century. Hall seems to give credit to outsiders and very little credit to the Arakanese themselves. Harvey, however, seems to credit the genius of the Arakanese king, Min Bin. Thus, several important questions should be asked: was Arakan's change from an inward-looking country to an expansive empire due to outside (Portuguese) influence, a change in the political climate of Burma and Bengal, or to a change in the world-view of the Arakanese themselves? Further, by what means did the Arakanese adapt themselves to these changes?

The Arakanese world-view at the beginning of the sixteenth century, as expressed in the first chapter, will play an important role in answering these questions: the development of the relationship between the Portuguese and the Arakanese during the sixteenth century will be looked at in the context of this Arakanese perspective. The period covered in this chapter includes the first meeting of the Portuguese and the Arakanese in 1517 until Min Yazagyi's establishment of Arakanese power at Syriam in 1600. I will focus mostly on the real effect of Portuguese influences and how the Arakanese used, or were used by, the

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<sup>124</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 140.

Portuguese. An important part of this focus will be determining who was the dominant party in the relationship.

### **First Contacts With the Portuguese**

Arakan's first official contact with the growing Portuguese presence in Southeast Asia after 1500 occurred when Don João da Silveira<sup>125</sup> arrived at the Mrauk-U in 1518.<sup>126</sup> D'Albuquerque's successor, Governor Lopo Soares de Albergaria, sent Silveira to gain the concession of a port facility with which the Portuguese could conduct trading activities.<sup>127</sup> The kingdom of Arakan at this time was ruled by Min Yaza (r. 1501-1523) of the Mrauk-U Dynasty. It should be stressed that Arakan's self-imposed isolation did not mean that Arakan was small or weak: it was not. As explained earlier in this thesis, Arakan was pressed between the two empires of Bengal and Pegu, and Arakan carefully defended itself in a way that protected Arakan from attack while at the same time allowing it to sample what it chose of foreign cultures.<sup>128</sup> Geography was favorable to Arakan's defense, since the protection of the Arakan Yoma mountain range, with only two passes, the An and Taungup, often prohibited passage to large armies from the east.<sup>129</sup>

Arakan was a fairly large and important state by both Southeast Asian and European standards: Arakan had twelve large cities, each ruled by a governor appointed by the king,<sup>130</sup> and in each of these cities the king had a "first-rate" palace.<sup>131</sup> The Arakanese king, in his main teak palace, amidst great wealth, lived in the impressive capital city of Mrauk-U: it "was an eastern Venice, like modern Bangkok, a city of

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<sup>125</sup> Silveira was the nephew of Governor Lopo Vaz de Sampayo. See Campos, *op. cit.*, 27f.

<sup>126</sup> It should be noted that other informal contacts had been made earlier by petty Portuguese traders who happened upon Arakan. Indeed, at Chittagong, Silveira was greeted by a fellow Portuguese, João Coelho. Coelho was sent in 1513, by the Fernão Peres d'Andrade expedition, after a fire caused by a mishandled candle gutted their largest ship and forced them to go to Melaka. See Campos, *op. cit.*, 26-7.

<sup>127</sup> Collis & San Shwe Bu, "Arakan's Place in the Civilization of the Bay," 41; Campos, *op. cit.*, 27.

<sup>128</sup> Lach, *op. cit.*, 551.

<sup>129</sup> Indeed, this mountain range also proved to be insurmountable to British armies in 1825, which planned to invade Burma from Arakan. See D.G.E. Hall, *Burma*, 57, 104.

<sup>130</sup> Lach, *op. cit.*, 551.

<sup>131</sup> Duarte Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century*, translated from an early Spanish manuscript with notes and preface by Henry E. J. Stanley, (London: the Hakluyt Society, 1970): 182.

lagoons and canals.”<sup>132</sup> Indeed, Min Yaza must have been very impressive to the visiting Portuguese; as Duarte Barbosa observed in the early sixteenth century:

This king is very rich in money, and powerful from the number of his men at arms: he is often at war with his neighbors, and some of them obey him against their wills, and render him tribute. He lives in great luxury, and possesses very good houses in all the towns where he resides, which have got many pools of water, green and shady gardens, and good trees.<sup>133</sup>

But these Portuguese must have also been surprised by some aspects of Arakanese court life, which is indicated by another selection from Duarte Barbosa’s account:

In twelve towns of his kingdom he has twelve...palaces in which he has many women brought up; that is, in each of these cities he has a governor who each year takes twelve girls born in that year...of the highest rank and the prettiest to be found; and he has them carefully brought up...to the age of twelve years...At the end of the year the governor conducts to the king...twelve damsels of the age of twelve years. The king orders them to be well dressed and to have the name of each one written on their clothes, and...[they are] sent up to a terrace in the sun...they perspire so much...that their clothes become damp [then] the damp garments which they have thrown off are all carried to the king, who smells them, and those [girls whose clothes] do not smell bad he keeps for himself, and [the others] he makes a present of to those of his courtiers who are then present.<sup>134</sup>

Visitors to the Arakanese Court were still surprised in the seventeenth century, such as William Methwold:

The King is by religion a Gentile, but such a one as holdeth all meates and drinks indifferent; he marrieth constantly his owne sister, and giveth for reason the first mens practice in the infancy of the world, affirming that no religion can deny that Adams sons married Adams daughters.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Hall, *Burma*, 58.

<sup>133</sup> Barbosa, *op. cit.*, 182.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 182-3.

<sup>135</sup> Methwold, *op. cit.*, 42.

Although the Arakanese king was normally tributary to Bengal, his submission to Bengalese overlordship should not be exaggerated. Indeed, the Arakanese in general were known for their rebelliousness against their Bengalese overlords.<sup>136</sup> As Tomé Pires observed: the king of Arakan “is warlike and he is always at war” with Bengal.<sup>137</sup>

Min Yaza treated Silveira with great interest when he sailed upriver to the Mrauk-U seeking trade concessions. Silveira came from Chittagong, where, during the winter of 1517-8, he was treated rudely by the Bengalese *vizier*.<sup>138</sup> The Arakanese, realizing that the Portuguese might be used by the Arakanese to regain their former strength at sea in the Bay of Bengal, quickly made friendly overtures to Silveira, sending him an ambassador and a ruby ring as a gift. This first meeting, however, did not bring any new opportunities to the Arakanese; Silveira had difficulty understanding why the Arakanese were so eager to be friendly to him after the Bengalese *vizier* at Chittagong treated him so badly. Silveira thus suspected treachery, despite the attempts of Min Yaza’s emissary to “reassure Silveira that he would be received amicably.” Silveira related his version of these events to the Portuguese government and for the time being, the Arakanese, despite their genuine

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<sup>136</sup> A good example of how strongly the Arakanese valued their independence, is the great rebellion against Burmese rule, which was established in 1784. Hall sums up the Arakanese struggle for independence well: “When they annexed Arakan, however, the Burmese had bitten off more than they could chew. Revolt after revolt broke out, and as their rule became more and more repressive, with the hateful practice of deportation as its chief remedy against disorder, thousands of Arakanese fled over the border into the Chittagong jungles...The[y] attempt[ed] to reconquer their country from bases in the unadministered tracts behind the British frontier.” See Hall, *Burma*, 94.

<sup>137</sup> Pires, *op. cit.*, 89.

<sup>138</sup> Silveira had tried to send a Portuguese representative to the Bengalese court to ask permission to set up a Portuguese factory. The *vizier* of Chittagong’s relative, Gromalle, lost several of his trade vessels in the Maldives when Silveira had decided to engage in a bit of piracy. Silveira forced a pilot of the Bengalese, and his son, into his service, but at Chittagong, the boy told the *vizier* what had happened, and the *vizier* made preparations to capture Silveira. Coelho, however, was on good relations with the Bengalese and offered to mediate between Silveira and the *vizier*. Silveira, however, refused. When Silveira ran out of food, he tried to seize a Bengalese ship carrying rice, and the Bengalese retaliated, routing Silveira’s fleet. Due to the monsoons, Silveira remained in the eastern part of the Bay of Bengal, attacking Bengalese shipping and forced the *vizier* of Chittagong to make peace with him. Although the *vizier* gave food to Silveira’s men, the *vizier* launched another attack, forcing Silveira to find another port to trade in. See Campos, *op. cit.*, 30.

overtures to the Portuguese, were regarded as treacherous and dishonest.<sup>139</sup>

The Portuguese misunderstanding of the Arakanese led the Portuguese to treat Arakan as an enemy rather than as a potential ally. Throughout the remainder of Min Yaza's reign, and the reigns of three of his successors, Gadzabadi (r. 1523-1525), Min Tsauo (1525), and Thatsata (r. 1525-1531), Arakan was subject to periodic attacks on its seacoast by Portuguese raiders. Goa ordered these attacks as revenge for the raids of Arakanese "pirates" on Indian shipping. These Portuguese raids targeting the Arakanese were based on misinformation, since the 'pirates' often turned out to be Afghans rather than Arakanese. Further, Portuguese "freebooters" made unofficial, piratical, attacks on the Arakanese coast in order to ransack the towns and remove anything of value which they could find.<sup>140</sup>

Despite the Portuguese attacks, Thatsata's successor, Min Bin, or Sirisuriyacandramahadhammaraja,<sup>141</sup> (r. 1531-1553), began to reassert Arakanese power against its traditional enemies. Min Bin's first target was Bengal, which was divided by civil war and in no position to offer any meaningful resistance. Over a century earlier, Arakan had surrendered twelve of its northern states to Bengalese control, and had submitted to Bengalese overlordship. Now, however, Min Bin was determined to end Arakanese vassalage and win back its lost provinces. In 1531, after less than a year on the Arakanese throne, Min Bin declared war on the Bengalese court at Gaur. Arakanese troops were sent by three routes to Bengal: by the Kaladin river, along the coast, and by sea.<sup>142</sup> Min Bin's armies successfully occupied the coastal city of Ramu and then took the Bengalese port of Chittagong.<sup>143</sup> At Kantha in Chittaung, the Arakanese captured a Bengalese force of ten thousand under the Bengalese crown prince, Moorad Singh. The Arakanese then marched on Dacca, forcing the Bengalese to agree to negotiations. In these negotiations, Min Bin went to Gaur and, symbolic of Arakan's new importance and Min Bin's new status as a successful conqueror, Min Bin took a princess of the Bengalese royal family, Pesita, as his new queen,<sup>144</sup> although Arakan seems to have surrendered Chittagong back to Bengalese control.

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<sup>139</sup> Lach, *op. cit.*, 551.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 550.

<sup>141</sup> Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, 15.

<sup>142</sup> San Baw U, "My Rambles," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 16 (1926) : 41.

<sup>143</sup> S. M. Ali, "Arakan Rule in Chittagong," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Pakistan* 12, no. 3 (December, 1967): 337.

<sup>144</sup> San Baw U, "My Rambles," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 16 (1926) : 41.

### Portuguese Attack, 1534

By the new peace treaty with Bengal, Arakan's northern borders were secure and, in the east, Burma seemed to pose no immediate threat. Chittagong, taken temporarily by Min Bin in 1531, was an extremely attractive target for Arakanese expansion, due to its increasing value as an important port in the Bay of Bengal trade system. Despite Silveira's miserable handling of his mission to Chittagong in 1517, the Portuguese continued to send a trading ship to Chittagong each year. By 1531, Chittagong was already a major port of call for Portuguese traders. When Damião Bernaldes, the Portuguese trader turned pirate, arrived there in 1531 or 1532, there were seventeen Portuguese trade vessels in Chittagong's harbor.<sup>145</sup>

The trade at Chittagong became so important that in 1533, the viceroy of Goa, Nunno de Cunna, sent Martim Afonso de Mello to the Bengalese court at Gaur. Martim Afonso de Mello was to present the Bengalese ruler, Mahmud Shah, with gifts and the request that Mahmud Shah give the Portuguese permission to establish a trading station at Chittagong.<sup>146</sup> Mahmud Shah was suspicious and he had Martim Afonso de Mello and fifty-three other Portuguese thrown into prison.<sup>147</sup> Antonio de Silva Meneses was sent from Goa in 1534, to win the release of the Portuguese. Meneses' messenger, Jorge Alcocorado, however, took longer than Meneses thought was necessary and Meneses burned various Bengalese coastal installations, including Chittagong.<sup>148</sup>

Although Arakan was not involved in the imprisonment of the Portuguese under de Mello, Arakan was attacked as well. The Portuguese still held to Silveira's belief that Arakan was a weak, petty state: this Portuguese misunderstanding of both Arakanese intentions and their

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<sup>145</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 30; R.S. Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India 1497-1550*, (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969): 232-3.

<sup>146</sup> Thomas Astley (ed.), *A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels Consisting of the Most Esteemed Relations which Have been Hitherto published in any language: Comprehending everything Remarkable in its Kind in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America*, vol. I, (London: Thomas Astley, 1745-7): 84.

<sup>147</sup> Afonso de Mello was captured under unusual circumstances. As Whiteway explains: "Martim Afonso and his captains [made] their presence at a banquet. They were so confident as to go with their swords only. During the banquet, which was in a courtyard surrounded by walls...The doors were closed, and the Portuguese caught like 'fowls in a coop.' The walls were lined with archers who fired among them and killed several... There was no other course for them to adopt [but to surrender]." See Whiteway, *op. cit.*, 233-4.

<sup>148</sup> Astley, *op. cit.*, 84; Campos, *op. cit.*, 34-5.

abilities soon led the Portuguese to make a blunder on a great scale. The Portuguese sent a fleet of warships upriver to Mrauk-U to conquer Silveira's tiny, untrustworthy, kingdom of Arakan. In what is described as an "ingenious" defense, the Portuguese were completely defeated. Min Bin, fresh to the throne of Arakan, wisely left the direction of the Arakanese defense to his prime minister, Maha Pyinnya-gyaw,<sup>149</sup> who was a "great Arakanese statesman and a naval genius." Maha Pyinnya-gyaw realized that the Arakanese fleet, which was designed to simply support land-based defenses, was in no position to fight the Portuguese warfleet which was heavily armed with cannon. Maha Pyinnya-gyaw had informants gather intelligence on the strength of the Portuguese fleet as it sailed upriver. When he knew how strong the enemy was he had a fleet of bamboo-rafts built. Maha Pyinnya-gyaw then filled the rafts with "dummy soldiers" and explosives. As the Portuguese fleet got close to Mrauk-U, there was no sign of Arakanese opposition. But at night, and the tide had lowered the level of the river to hinder the movement of the Portuguese fleet, Maha Pyinnya-gyaw set his plans into action:

When the rafts got near the enemies' ships, they were mistaken for reinforcements, and the enemy directed his fire on them. By a certain arrangement the fuses were set fire to, causing a thousand bonfires and at the same time millions of tiny explosions from the bamboo-rafts amidst the noise and din of battle. The whole river then became ablaze...Some of the invaders' gunboats...were actually set on fire, and the crews of others caught among the blazing bamboo-rafts perished of heat.<sup>150</sup>

The Portuguese realized that they were outwitted and quickly retreated downriver and back to India.<sup>151</sup> This event was so important to the Arakanese, that a son who was born to Min Bin close to this time was named Palaung, the Arakanese name for Portuguese, "to mark the victory."<sup>152</sup> Later, when this prince became king, he was known as Min

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<sup>149</sup> Maha-pyiñnya-gyaw is his popular name, which means "Renowned Wisdom." His real name was Anada-theha. See San Baw U, "My Rambles," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 16 (1926): 40.

<sup>150</sup> San Baw U, "My Rambles," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 11 (1921): 164-165.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>152</sup> The Arakanese name for the Portuguese, Palaung, is said by San Baw U, to "probably" be related to the general name by which Portuguese were known in mainland Southeast Asia, "feringhis." See San Baw U, "My Rambles," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 11 (1921): 164-5.

Palaung.<sup>153</sup> This victory over the Portuguese, coupled with their earlier victory in Bengal, justified a new stage in kingship for Min Bin. To reflect his new prestige as a victor on both land and sea, Min Bin had himself crowned emperor at the Shithaung pagoda.<sup>154</sup>

### **Arakan Restructures Its Forces**

The Arakanese, however, continued to make overtures of friendship to the Portuguese during the reign of Min Bin and the Portuguese were increasingly hired as mercenaries. Although Min Bin was the king of Arakan when the Portuguese had attempted to conquer Arakan in 1534 he realized that the Portuguese represented a new foreign model that Arakan might find some use for. Min Bin had much experience in warfare: before becoming king, he was a military commander and crushed several rebellions of the Saks against their Arakanese overlords. Later, as the governor of Sandoway, he developed a keen understanding of the Arakanese government, seeing both its strengths and its weaknesses. Thus, when Min Bin became king, he was prepared to make both administrative changes and military reforms and was searching for new foreign models to help guide him: he saw the Portuguese as the new model he would adapt to the Arakanese model. Min Bin was also fortunate, he had many capable Arakanese leaders on whom he could depend to help him in his reforms:

When he ascended the throne...the Arakanese nation was at the height of its power and glory. He found himself amidst wise ministers and councillors backed up by a powerful army; and above all, his prime minister...Maha-pyinnya-gyaw (Renowned Wisdom) who was at the helm of state.<sup>155</sup>

Thus, Min Bin felt that he had enough capable Arakanese support to make use of the Portuguese model without becoming dangerously dependent upon Portuguese support.

At the same time, Min Bin's decision to hire Portuguese mercenaries may tell us two things about the character of Arakan's developing interest in dominating the outside world. In his article, "Europeans, Trade, and the Unification of Burma, c. 1540-1620," Victor Lieberman noted that two factors were involved in Pegu's employment of Portuguese mercenaries in the mid-sixteenth century: (1) "Commercial

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> San Baw U, "My Rambles," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 16 (1926): 41.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 40.



profits” from increased trade made this employment possible; and (2) Mercenaries were a stabilizing force since, although levies were raised outside of the sovereign’s center of political power were of uncertain loyalty, “mercenaries joined central forces directly loyal to the crown.”<sup>156</sup> Lieberman’s observations about Pegu and its mercenaries may be applicable to Arakan as well. First, Min Bin’s decision to hire Portuguese mercenaries may reflect increased maritime commercial links with the Portuguese trading world (as well as increasing profits from this trade). Second, although Min Bin made sure that the Arakanese element in his armed forces was dominant, perhaps he also used Portuguese mercenaries to counterbalance regional forces and thus guarantee his personal control over his armed forces. The Portuguese mercenaries may then be seen as a tool used by the Arakanese to secure control of the outside world while at the same time serving as a tool of the royal house for the monarch’s safety against internal, regional threats.

Min Bin used Portuguese help to turn the capital of Arakan into the “strongest fortified city of the Bay.” The Portuguese laid out the walls of the city and constructed the surrounding moats.<sup>157</sup> But it should not be thought that the Portuguese had turned an inconsequential city into a great port capable of conducting ocean-going trade: Mrauk-U already had these capabilities. All the Portuguese brought to the capital were new styles of defense, which had yet to be tested. The Arakanese had already had a secure and capable port before the Portuguese arrived:

Geographically speaking, the situation of Mrauk-U is peculiar. It lies sixty miles from the coast, but the largest ocean-going ships of that period could reach it through a network of deep creeks by which it is surrounded. This gave it the advantages of a port, without the attending risk of surprise by an enemy fleet. A large rice growing area immediately enveloped it. From behind, an old road ran over the mountains of Burma proper, while on the north-west there was easy communication with India. It was a natural focus for trade on the easterly shore of the Bay of Bengal.<sup>158</sup>

This description of Mrauk-U indicates that the best advantages that the Arakanese capital had, both in trade and defense, already existed before the Portuguese even arrived; the strength of the capital came from Arakanese foresight rather than as the gift of the Portuguese in

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<sup>156</sup> Victor Lieberman, “Europeans, Trade, and the Unification of Burma, c. 1540-1620,” *Oriens Extremus* 27, no. 2 (1980): 207.

<sup>157</sup> Collis & San Shwe Bu, “Arakan’s Place in the Civilization of the Bay,” 41.

<sup>158</sup> Maurice Collis, “The City of Mrauk-U,” *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 13 (1923): 244.

Arakanese employ. Further, the Arakanese purposefully did not build their city in the traditional “circular” pattern usually followed by their neighbors (such as the plan of the city of Mandalay), or even the plan of Portuguese fortresses, in which a city was surrounded by rectangular walls. Instead, the Arakanese set up a virtual maze of defense-works, rivers with false outlets, and a myriad of lakes and canals, “calculated to baffle the enemy.”<sup>159</sup>

Although the Portuguese constructed the moats, they were designed, and traditionally used, by the Arakanese. These moats, for example, were unique to Arakan, and were of extremely ingenious design in terms of defense-purposes. The moats were extremely deep and were designed to accommodate tidal waters. Huge reservoirs of water were connected to these moats as well, but were blocked off by sluices. The purpose of this design was to thwart besieging armies:

These were so built with dams and sluices that if an enemy had succeeded in breaking through the eastern moats and penetrating into the city, the waters would have been let loose, flooding the town and drowning the invaders. The King with his army could take refuge on the citadel safely above the flood.<sup>160</sup>

Further, the Arakanese took measures to protect the Buddhist monks and other noncombatants. In the case of the Buddhist monks, four huge pagodas, the Dukkanthein, the Lemyekhna, the Andaw, and the Shittaungparā, were built to serve as the “last retreat for the ecclesiastics:”

Into them all the monks in Mrauk-U could flee. Each stood on a mound at least forty feet above the mean level of the city and so out of danger of inundation from the reservoirs. In the first instance, therefore, these temples were the priest’s citadel. The Dukkan-thein had only one door; its walls were twelve feet thick of solid stone; once the priests were within, not even cannon could have dislodged them.<sup>161</sup>

Specifically, the Shittaungparā was designed as a redoubt for the Arakanese royal family and royal bodyguard as well. The “temple premises can hold a large garrison” and besides the walls of the pagoda

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 246.

<sup>161</sup> Collis, “The City of Mrauk-U,” 247; for a more thorough discussion of the Dukkanthein pagoda, see Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, 26-31.

being fifteen feet thick, the roof of the pagoda was strengthened further by up to ten foot layers of brick. As Forchhammer points out, Min bin had the threat of western cannon in mind.<sup>162</sup> As a whole, these defenses were designed by the Arakanese themselves to protect non-combatants; such considerations were not even followed by the Portuguese themselves in the construction of their own fortresses elsewhere. Further, Min Bin was also using traditional Arakanese religious defenses to strengthen the Shittaung-parā, and other pagodas throughout his kingdom, when he installed in them “numerous” copies of the Candasara image in 1536.<sup>163</sup>

The Portuguese forged “modern” cannon for the Arakanese army and they also mounted them on the city walls of Mrauk-U.<sup>164</sup> The importance of the Portuguese influence in this case, however, should not be overrated: Portuguese guns were only marginally superior to those which the Arakanese and other mainland Southeast Asian rulers already had.<sup>165</sup> There is no reason to assume, for example, that the guns which the Portuguese brought to Arakan were any better than the guns which the Portuguese brought to Ava and Pegu. In case of the guns brought to Ava and Pegu, they were not the “massive siege guns such as rendered medieval stone walls and old-style castles untenable after about 1450”<sup>166</sup> elsewhere. Rather the guns brought by the Portuguese were extremely small, and their most effective use was in their placement on hills or towers and fired at the defenders inside besieged fortresses. Although the Portuguese guns were less likely to burst (and were less accurate),<sup>167</sup> than the guns that the Avan, Peguan, and probably Arakanese rulers already had, this can be better attributed to the age of the guns rather than to superior Portuguese design or the skill of the gunners. Indeed, in both Burma and in Arakan, the majority of the gunners who handled the Portuguese guns were not Portuguese but Indian,<sup>168</sup> or from the local populations.

Min Bin also used Portuguese help in developing a new Arakanese army. The Portuguese were used as Arakanese army officers. The Portuguese were given the duty of training Arakanese troops. Min

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<sup>162</sup> Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, 20.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>164</sup> Collis & San Shwe Bu, “Arakan’s Place in the Civilization of the Bay,” 41.

<sup>165</sup> Lieberman, “Europeans, Trade, and the Unification of Burma, c. 1540-1620,” 211.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

Bin also built a new mercenary army with foreign and domestic troops,<sup>169</sup> including a regiment of Portuguese palace guards.<sup>170</sup> But, again, this was only one unit of guards among many others. Indian mercenaries or Arakanese made up the bulk of Min Bin's palace guard. Min Bin's use of the Portuguese in his palace guard was probably not due to their superior military skill, but rather to the prestige which the Portuguese had won for themselves as soldiers elsewhere: they were a status symbol of sorts. Since Avan, Peguan, and other leaders had contingents of Portuguese in their armies and in their palace guards, the Arakanese kings probably felt that if they were to be considered the equals of other kings they too had to have Portuguese guard units.

Perhaps the most important use to which the Portuguese were put by Min Bin, was in the construction of a new Arakanese navy. While the crews of the Arakanese ships were mostly Arakanese, the ships were, for the most part, "guided and stiffened" by Portuguese shipmen. As Collis observes, "Min Bin in this way became master of a powerful modern weapon."<sup>171</sup> Soon, this Arakanese fleet consisted of over two hundred seagoing ships,<sup>172</sup> and by the first decade of the seventeenth century, William Finch noted that the king of Arakan possessed "infinite numbers of small Barkes."<sup>173</sup> It should not be thought, however, that the Arakanese were new to naval warfare: indeed the Arakanese had been known for centuries for their sea-going abilities.<sup>174</sup>

But Min Bin was not naive. The Arakanese realized that if they allowed themselves to become too dependent upon the Portuguese, they would give these foreigners an opportunity to become kingmakers in Arakan. The the Arakanese thus had good reason to make sure that, at least in the Arakanese fleet, Arakanese remained firmly in control. Also, the Portuguese presence in the Arakanese army was countered by the presence of mercenaries from other lands as well, including Japanese, Afghans, and Burmese.<sup>175</sup>

Significantly, one of the most important new developments in Arakan, during this period of intensive Portuguese influence, was not in

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<sup>169</sup> Collis & San Shwe Bu, "Arakan's Place in the Civilization of the Bay," 41.

<sup>170</sup> Maurice Collis, *The Land of the Great Image: Being the Experiences of Friar Manrique in Arakan*, (London: Readers Union, 1946): 88.

<sup>171</sup> Collis & San Shwe Bu, "Arakan's Place in the Civilization of the Bay," 41.

<sup>172</sup> Lach, *op. cit.*, 552.

<sup>173</sup> William Finch, "Observations of William Finch, Merchant, taken out of his large Journall," in Samuel Purchas (ed.), *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, vol. 4, (New York: AMS Press, 1965): 71.

<sup>174</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 140.

<sup>175</sup> Collis, *The Land of the Great Image*, 96.

the Arakanese armed forces, but in Arakanese jurisprudence. The great advisor to the Arakanese kings of this period was Maha Pyinnya-gyaw, who also had led the Arakanese forces against the first Portuguese invasion of Arakan. Maha Pyinnya-gyaw, who was later known as the lord of Chittagong, compiled Arakanese legal precedents into the *Maha Pyinnya-gyaw pyatton*, which “placed the interpretation of the *Manu dhammathats* on a definitely Buddhist basis.” This work became of great importance, not only in Arakan, but throughout Burma.<sup>176</sup> This achievement is important, because it shows us again that Arakanese were not only in command in their adaptation of cultural influences, but that they also consciously maintained and improved aspects of their traditional culture which they thought were important to keep.

### **The Character of the Portuguese**

What type of people were the Portuguese who came to Arakan as traders and mercenaries? For one thing, these Portuguese can probably be best described as desperados than as adventurers, as Portuguese chroniclers are apt to describe them. These were men who were unhappy with the moralist restrictions of life in Goa, which were actually very minimal, or they were criminals escaping punishment. More than likely, these men were also members of the *soldado* class, who had either been mistreated by the government or believed they could do better in piracy than as government servants. It should be observed, however, that the Portuguese in government service engaged in piracy on a regular basis, and this was recognized by the government as a legitimate activity when the victim did not possess a Portuguese pass. Even so, the Portuguese who populated the rim of the Bay of Bengal were too independent for the government at Goa, which, from time to time, unsuccessfully tried to bring its exiles back under its control.<sup>177</sup> The Portuguese who served in the Arakanese navy or who traded at Chittagong and Dianga, then, were by their nature rebellious and probably would forsake any obligation they might have to the Arakanese if an opportunity for greater profit arose.

### **War With Tabinshweti**

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<sup>176</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 141.

<sup>177</sup> In the early 1540s, for example, the viceroy of Goa, Dom Garcia de Noronha, ordered Manuel de Gama to forcibly remove the entire Portuguese population of São Tomé to the west coast of India, under closer government scrutiny. The project failed when Gama died and eventually Goa gave up its attempts to extend official control over the Bay of Bengal Portuguese. See Winius, “The ‘Shadow Empire,’” 87-8.

Min Bin's new army and navy soon received their first test. Tabinshweti of Toungoo was at work conquering one state of Burma after another in his effort to reassemble the Burmese empire. In 1542, he turned on the still-independent Prome. A Shan force which came to relieve the beleaguered city was crushed by Tabinshweti's son, Bayinnaung. Soon, the king of Prome turned to Arakan, since his daughter had earlier married Min Bin. Min Bin was probably eager to save Prome from Tabinshweti for two reasons: (1) If Prome fell, Arakan would most likely be Tabinshweti's next target, and (2) This was a good opportunity for Min Bin to test his new army and navy.

Further, Min Bin was under the impression that his new forces and his new defenses were indestructible and that he had no reason to worry about opening up a new period of warfare between Arakan and Burma. As Caesar Frederici noted:

[T]he greatest enemie [the King of Arakan] hath is the King of Pegu: which king of Pegu deviseth night and day how to make this king...his subject, but by no meanes hee is able to doe it: because the king of Pegu hath no power nor armie by Sea. And this king...may arme two hundreth Galleyes or Fusts by Sea, and by land he hath certaine sluses with the which when the king of Pegu pretendeth any harme towards him, hee may at his pleasure drowne a great part of the Countrey. So that by this meanes hee cutteth off the way whereby the king of Pegu should come with his power to hurt him.<sup>178</sup>

Min Bin divided his forces and sent an army overland through the Padaung pass. Bayinnaung, however, forged a letter from the king of Prome to Min Bin and sent it to the approaching Arakanese army. When Min Bin's army entered the pass, Bayinnaung ambushed it and routed the Arakanese force. Min Bin's navy, entering the Irrawaddy river, was informed at Bassein of the defeat of the Arakanese army. The Arakanese returned home and Prome fell several months afterwards.<sup>179</sup>

Min Bin's army and navy thus suffered a temporary setback, but Min Bin's new defenses soon received their first test as well: in 1544, Tabinshweti began a three year assault on Arakan in revenge for their attack earlier, and to remove a threat to Toungoo's power. The Burmese army first attacked Sandoway in the south. The governor of Sandoway, Min Bin's cousin Aung Hla, commanded a great defense and

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<sup>178</sup> Frederici, *op. cit.*, 260.

<sup>179</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 157.

Tabinshweti's armies suffered an initial defeat.<sup>180</sup> The Arakanese army could not take advantage of this victory, because troops were needed elsewhere: the Tippera tribes began raiding Chittagong and Ramu.<sup>181</sup> Although the Arakanese repulsed the *raja* of Tippera at Ramu and recaptured Chittagong,<sup>182</sup> the Burmese attempted to invade Arakan a second time, in 1545, with Tabinshweti personally leading his troops. The Arakanese defeated the Burmese at Sandoway again, and the Arakanese army counterattacked and "turned it into a rout."<sup>183</sup>

In 1546, Tabinshweti attacked Arakan for a third time. Now, however, Tabinshweti attacked Arakan from two directions. His main army, under Bayinnaung, marched through the Kyangin pass "clearing a track as they went." This force consisted of mainly Burmans from Upper Burma.<sup>184</sup> Tabinshweti personally led his secondary force, mostly of Mons, but supplemented a strong Portuguese mercenary contingent and two Portuguese ships under Diogo Soares de Mello. Tabinshweti was able to land at Sandoway, since the governor, who was Min Bin's uncle, agreed to support Tabinshweti if Tabinshweti would make him the new ruler of Arakan.<sup>185</sup> North of Sandoway, Tabinshweti's forces joined Bayinnaung's forces, and the combined army marched on Mrauk-U.<sup>186</sup> But the Arakanese cut off the Burmese food supply by burning the paddy crops behind them. The Arakanese lured sections of the Burmese army into little skirmishes, defeating the Burmese in each battle: first on the island of Pokre-gyun, then at Ranaung island, then at Daing-gyi island.<sup>187</sup> At Mrauk-U, Tabinshweti was in for a surprise: when the Burmese army broke through the outer perimeter of the city walls, for example, the sluices were opened and the attackers were flooded out.<sup>188</sup> At Daing-gyi island, Tabinshweti was surrounded and captured. Min Bin was now truly a king of international standing. Although Min Bin freed Tabinshweti, Tabinshweti bought his freedom with "rich presents," as

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<sup>180</sup> San Baw U, "My Rambles," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 16 (1926): 41.

<sup>181</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 140.

<sup>182</sup> Phayre, *History of Burma*, 79-80.

<sup>183</sup> San Baw U, "My Rambles," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 16 (1926): 41.

<sup>184</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 158.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*; Phayre, however has a different view of of this incident: "His brother, discontented, had fled to Pegu, and like other royal refugees in the countries of Indochina, offered, if placed on the throne of Arakan, to hold it as a tributary." See Phayre, *History of Burma*, 100.

<sup>186</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 158.

<sup>187</sup> San Baw U, "My Rambles," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 16 (1926): 41.

<sup>188</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 140.

well as a princess from Min Bin's old ally and Tabinshweti's new vassal, Prome.<sup>189</sup>

### **The Expansion of Arakanese Military Power**

Min Bin had successfully integrated Portuguese influences into a mainly Arakanese style of defensive strategy, for which the Arakanese remembered him as Min Bah Gri, or "the Great."<sup>190</sup> The reigns of Min Bin's two sons who succeeded him, Dikha (r. 1553-1555) and then Sawhla (r. 1555-1564), whose reign is notable only for his impressive temple-building program,<sup>191</sup> form somewhat of a hiatus in the expansion of Arakanese military might. But the new Arakanese armed forces which Min Bin created with Portuguese help were put to even greater use by Min Bin's grandson, Min Setya (r. 1564-1571). But first, Min Setya had other problems to contend with. While Arakan's eastern borders were protected by the formidable Arakan Yoma mountain range, Arakan had no natural boundaries on its northwest border with Bengal to afford it similar protection. After the Bengalese empire fell, the Mughal Empire had taken over central and western Bengal. Min Setya's territories in eastern Bengal thus continued to be threatened; Akbar, the Mughal ruler, considered all of Bengal to be within his domain. Min Setya, however, felt that the regular Arakanese army was either not big enough or strong enough to adequately defend his western frontier from the Mughal threat. Instead, Min Setya established a new policy of arranging with independent Portuguese traders to guard his border.<sup>192</sup> This was a major departure for the Arakanese, since the Portuguese at Chittagong and on Sundiva island were often hostile to the Arakanese, once Arakan established control over Chittagong during the Bengalese collapse in the 1540s and 1550s.<sup>193</sup>

The first independent Portuguese establishment used by Min Setya, as part of his new plan to have Portuguese traders participate in the defense of Arakan's northwestern border, was the Portuguese settlement at Dianga. To win the friendship of the Portuguese settlement

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<sup>189</sup> San Baw U, "My Rambles," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 16 (1926): 41.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>191</sup> Sawhla (Zawhla) built the Alayceti, the Myaukceti, the Dukkankyaung, the Taungkyaung, and the Kulamyokyaung. See Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, 15.

<sup>192</sup> Collis & San Shwe Bu, "Arakan's Place in the Civilization of the Bay," 41.

<sup>193</sup> S.M. Ali argues that Chittagong was under Arakanese control at least by 1542, when it was ruled by the governor, Chandilah Raja. However, he mentions that Chittagong fell under the control of various invaders periodically throughout the 1550s. See Ali, *op. cit.*, 338.



of Dianga, near Chittagong, Min Setya sent an emissary in 1569, “proffering friendship.”<sup>194</sup> Min Setya did this at a very good time, since the governor of Chittagong, Nusrat Khan, who had been giving Min Setya trouble, was fighting the Portuguese there as well and was killed by these Portuguese.<sup>195</sup> As Caesar Frederici explained:

The people are Moores, and the king a very good man of a Moore king, for if he had bin a tyrant as others be, he might have robbed us of all, because the Portugall captaine of Chatigan [Chittagong] was in arms against the Retor of that place, & every day there were some slaine, at which newes we rested there with no smal feare, keeping good watch and ward aboard every night...but the governour of the towne [on Sundiva Island said] we should feare nothing [since] although the Portugales of Chatigan had slaine the governour of that City...we were not culpable in that fact.<sup>196</sup>

The Portuguese received Min Setya’s offer of an alliance by the time that Frederici arrived at Chittagong:

[We] came to Chatigan the great port of Bengala, at the same time when the Portugales had made peace and taken a truce with the governours of the towne, with this condition that the chiefe Captaine of the Portugales with his ship should depart without any lading; for there were then at that time 18 ships of Portugales great and small...[He] contented to depart...rather than hee should seeke to hinder so many of his friends as were there...In this time there came a messenger from the king of Rachim [Arakan] to this Portugal Captaine, who saide in behalfe of his king, that hee had heard of the courage and valure of him, desiring him gently that he would vouchsafe to come with the ship into his port [Mrauk-U], and comming thither he should be very wel intreated. This Portugal went thither and was very well satisfied of this King.<sup>197</sup>

A great crisis was thus used to great advantage by Min Setya to foster a new relationship with the Portuguese traders at Chittagong. Indeed, in this manner Arakan showed how it could deal with various Portuguese and attract them into their service. But Min Setya probably realized that

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<sup>194</sup> Lach, *op. cit.*, 552.

<sup>195</sup> Ali, *op. cit.*, 339.

<sup>196</sup> Frederici, *op. cit.*, 259.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

these tactics would not be successful in all cases and he seemed determined to establish a more permanent relationship.

In exchange for their help in guarding his border, Min Setya provided these Portuguese with trade concessions.<sup>198</sup> Further, the Portuguese at Dianga were not simply traders, but raided the Bengalese coast for slaves, which they now sold to the King of Arakan,<sup>199</sup> whose growing wealth and power demanded the control of ever-increasing numbers of people. The Portuguese at Dianga were tied to the Arakanese king in an arrangement surprisingly reminiscent of feudal Europe:

[T]he Magh kings...grant[ed] the best of them the rank of Captain and conferring on them Bilatas, or revenue-producing lands, on the understanding that they maintained a certain force of their countrymen and also Gelias...They are usually propelled by thirty-eight rowers who live on the Bilatas or estates of those Captains, under the obligation of serving whenever called upon.<sup>200</sup>

But Min Setya keenly observed that these Portuguese might not fulfill the agreement or might take advantage of it to attack him. Min Setya thus was careful to select a loyal relative as the new governor at Chittagong (to replace the one killed by the Portuguese), in order to “watch the Portuguese and see that they played fair.”<sup>201</sup> An Arakanese contingent of troops was always present, as well. These Arakanese troops served a tour of duty for an entire year before they would be replaced by another Arakanese detachment, with one hundred ships and new supplies of gunpowder and cannon-balls.<sup>202</sup> The Portuguese were also inclined to help Arakan against the Mughals for the glory which it afforded. As Father Manrique justified it:

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<sup>198</sup> Collis and San Shwe Bu, “Arakan’s Place in the Civilization of the Bay,” 42.

<sup>199</sup> Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*, 270.

<sup>200</sup> Fray Sebastien Manrique, *Travels of Fray Sebastien Manrique 1629-1643*, 2 vols., translated from the *Itinerario de las Misiones Orientales*, with a introduction and notes, by C. Eckford Luard, with assistance by Father H. Hosten, (Oxford: Hakluyt Society, 1927): vol. I, 285.

<sup>201</sup> The government of the twelve northern Arakanese states which Min Bin had taken from Bengal was left to twelve local rajas who were tributary to the *myoza* of Chittagong, possession of the Chittagong *Myo* was thus a strong and dangerously autonomous position. Thus, the Arakanese king had to be sure of the loyalty of the Chittagong *myoza* for reasons which were beyond keeping an eye on the Portuguese at Dianga. See Collis & Bu, “Arakan’s Place in the Civilization of the Bay,” 42.

<sup>202</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 141.

[T]he Portuguese in defending the frontier of Arakan against the Mughal were, in effect, continuing the age-long crusade against the Moslem infidel, which had been the glory of Portugal for so many centuries and had inspired da Gama in his voyages eastward.<sup>203</sup>

It should also be noted that Chittagong, despite the trade privileges given to the Portuguese traders resident there, was as much an economic asset as it was a linchpin in Arakan's northwestern defense system: the Arakanese taxed imports, exports, fishing, salt, and fruit; royal monopolies were held on teak and minerals; and numerous fees entered royal coffers for the construction of irrigation, bridges, and temples.<sup>204</sup>

### **Arakan and the Expected Burmese Invasion, 1581**<sup>205</sup>

The Arakanese, however, did not see their new army or navy or the Portuguese help they received as the only way in which they could solve their problems. Again, Arakanese society was syncretic and the Arakanese maintained traditional beliefs alongside new ones. One

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<sup>203</sup> As summarized by Collis in *The Land of the Great Image*, 90.

<sup>204</sup> Ali, *op. cit.*, 341.

<sup>205</sup> An interesting story of this attempted invasion involves Gonçalo Vaz de Camoens. Vaz had been ordered by the viceroy of Goa to take two ships at the port of Mazulapatan in 1581. The first ship, belonging to the Sultan of Aceh, had advanced warning of the impending attack and fled. The other, belonging to Bayinnaung, fled and Vaz and four ships followed it. A skirmish with Malabar pirates off the coast of Pegu, however, led to the loss of Francis Serram's ship and Frenando de Lima's galliot. The two remaining Portuguese ships caught Bayinnang's ship entering the mouth of the Negrais river and in a two day battle captured her and her crew. The ship sank soon after, but not before the Portuguese had taken on much of her cargo. Interestingly however, they happened upon the Peguan invasion fleet of 1300 ships sailing for the attack on Sandoway. Nan-dá-bayin tried to capture the Portuguese ships and a naval engagement ensued. Some of the Peguan ships were rendered inoperative and others were boarded, with many prisoners and eighteen cannon taken by the Portuguese. Vaz's force then "making all the Sail they could and plying their Oars," fled to Mrauk-U before the Peguan force could overcome them. The Min Phalaung was extremely happy at the news of the Portuguese victory against his prospective invaders, and his pleasure was enhanced when Vaz made him a present of the Mons that the Portuguese had captured. In return, Min Phalaung released some Portuguese "he had long kept in prison." See Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 269-70.

example of this is Bayinnaung's planned invasion of Arakan during the reign of King Min Palaung (r. 1571-1593).<sup>206</sup>

Bayinnaung saw the growing power of Arakan as a threat to his position in Burma and decided to destroy Arakan before it became too strong for him to oppose. Realizing the difficulty which had prevented the success of previous invasions of Arakan, Bayinnaung supposedly sent ambassadors to Akbar at the Mughal Court in 1579,<sup>207</sup> who had conquered Bengal three years before.<sup>208</sup> King Min Palaung heard of this embassy and tried to finish the fortifications begun by Min Bin.<sup>209</sup> In addition, Min Palaung decided to utilize the power of the nats, "in order to make the requisite preparations to defend his country." Min Palaung went to the Temple of Wunti and asked for her guidance. San Shwe Bu has carefully explained what Min Palaung believed was Wunti's response:

She replied that it was unnecessary for a powerful King like himself to go to all that trouble and expense of raising an army, but that, when nations were at war, the opposing deities...first engaged themselves in conflict and decided the fate of contending armies beforehand...

With her numerous followers, she arrived at the palace of Bueng Naung at about midnight. She not only found the whole palace wrapped in slumber...she entered the Royal Chamber, and, standing at the head of the bed for a moment, she raised her five fingers above the recumbent King...

On the following morning, five large carbuncles appeared round the neck of the Burmese King, from the effects of which he subsequently died...<sup>210</sup>

Shortly after Bayinnaung's advance forces had occupied Sandoway, he died.<sup>211</sup> Thus, the Arakanese believed that they were saved by Min Palaung's timely consultation with Wunti, showing that the Arakanese

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<sup>206</sup> Min Palaung did not engage in any large temple-building programs, although he built the Ratanapōn pagoda and "repaired" the Urittaung and Mahati pagodas. See Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, 15-6; 26.

<sup>207</sup> San Shwe Bu, "Wunti," 53; Collis, "The City of Golden Mrauk-U," 244; I have said that the mission was "supposedly" sent to Akbar's court, because Hall has made a good argument that the mission was probably sent to the "Viceroy of Bengal." See Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*, 295.

<sup>208</sup> Van Leur, *op. cit.*, 171.

<sup>209</sup> San Shwe Bu, "Wunti," 53; Collis, "The City of Golden Mrauk-U," 244.

<sup>210</sup> San Shwe Bu, "Wunti," 53.

<sup>211</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 174.

merely viewed their help from the Portuguese as simply one of many recourses to solving their problems, and not as a singular deliverance from any sort of indigenous “backwardness.”

### **War With Tippera, 1585**

Arakan was also gaining a very good reputation among the Portuguese in the Bay of Bengal region due to the good relations it had with its Portuguese mercenaries. This attraction of Arakan for Portuguese mercenaries was clearly evident in the invasion of Arakan by the king of Tippera, Amar Manikya in 1585. Manikya sent his son Rajdharnarayan and a large invasion force, including a contingent of Portuguese mercenaries. Taking Chittagong, the invasion force proceeded to Ramu, and took several Arakanese army camps *en route*. The Portuguese, perhaps questioning the value of working for the king of Tippera, compared to Arakanese employment, switched sides and surrendered the Tipperan camps to the Arakanese. The Arakanese then encircled the Tipperan force and although the Tipperans broke out and began a quick retreat back to Chittagong, the Arakanese followed in pursuit and “decimated them mercilessly.”<sup>212</sup> The Portuguese mercenaries then helped the Arakanese retake Chittagong.<sup>213</sup>

### **Sundiva**

The Arakanese succeeded in employing Portuguese mercenaries in its armies and navy, so that by 1598, there were over twenty-five hundred Portuguese in Arakan.<sup>214</sup> But while the Arakanese made mutual defense pacts with the Portuguese traders at Dianga, other independent Portuguese traders often caused trouble for the Arakanese king. The case in which a Portuguese trader in Chittagong had killed the Arakanese governor has already been mentioned, but a better example can be found in the events in the last decade of the sixteenth century at Chittagong and Sundiva island. Although we are not clear on the causes, we know that in 1590, the Portuguese at Chittagong fought the Arakanese there, under their new governor, Min Nala,<sup>215</sup> and captured the fortress of Chittagong. Antonio de Souza Godinho, who had led the attack, soon

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<sup>212</sup> Ali, *op. cit.*, 39.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid

<sup>214</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 104.

<sup>215</sup> Min Nala was the son of the Arakanese king, Min Palaung. See Ali, *op. cit.*, 340.

forced the island of Sundiva to be “tributary” to the Portuguese establishment at Chittagong. While the Arakanese and the Portuguese traders at Chittagong did make peace, the island of Sundiva remained in hazy submission to the Chittagong Portuguese.<sup>216</sup>

### **Conclusion**

What was the true nature of the relationship between the Portuguese and the Arakanese? Further, how had the world-view of the Arakanese changed and what role did their relationship with the Portuguese play in the adaptation of the Arakanese to the changing political climate of the Bengal-Burmese region?

Some authors view the relationship between the Portuguese mercenaries and the indigenous rulers of the Burmese region as something that was determined solely by the Portuguese. The Portuguese, they argue, entered the region and through superior weaponry and skill, outfought and outwitted the local rulers. This view is held by Portuguese historians such as Bocarro, Faria y Sousa, and Mousinho. Danvers and Harvey share this view as well. The accounts of these historians often border on the ridiculous: scores of Portuguese are said to have defeated tens of thousands of indigenous troops on land and a handful of Portuguese galleys was claimed to have defeated thousands of indigenous ships. In these accounts, no credit is given to indigenous help, although we know from both Portuguese and indigenous sources that De Brito and Gonçalves, for example, depended upon the help of thousands of indigenous troops.

Other authors have argued that the local rulers took advantage of the Portuguese and used their superior weaponry and skills for their own purposes. One example of this point of view, is Victor Lieberman’s argument in “Europeans, Trade, and the Unification of Burma, c. 1540-1620,” regarding the effect of Portuguese mercenaries in Burma in the sixteenth century. Lieberman argues that superior Portuguese military weaponry and skill was a key factor in the struggle between Ava, Pegu, and the Shan states for dominance in the Irrawaddy basin. Although Lieberman notes that Portuguese superiority should not be overestimated, Lieberman sees the ability of a ruler to make use of Portuguese weapons and mercenaries as pivotal in their ability to win wars against other rulers. This view is similar to the view that the Portuguese came into the Burmese region as superior warriors in their relationship with local rulers, but this view instead concedes that the

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<sup>216</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 67.

local rulers were at least equal partners in their relationship with the Portuguese.<sup>217</sup>

My own view is that neither view is completely correct. I do not think that in the Arakanese case that Portuguese weaponry or seafaring skills were adopted simply for their superiority. Indeed, the Arakanese seem to have made a point of maintaining their own techniques both at sea and on land. Portuguese were used to train Arakanese troops and to guide Arakanese ships, but I think that this Portuguese technology and skills were only applied in a few minor cases. Arakanese, for example, remained in control of their ships, both as commanders and as the crews, and the Portuguese were only a few among many different nationalities of mercenaries hired to supplement and not to replace Arakanese military forces or leadership. The primary reason that the Portuguese were used, it seems to me, is that they were the status symbol for indigenous Southeast Asian rulers of that time. All of the kingdoms of the Burmese region had Portuguese mercenaries, and they seemed to have become popular due to Portuguese military exploits elsewhere, usually at the expense of unarmed or poorly-armed Indian ocean fleets. While Portuguese were used to drill indigenous troops and to build walls for fortresses, the Arakanese troops continued to fight in traditional ways and the walls of the fortresses built by the Portuguese were no more effective than the traditional walls.

On the other hand, the Portuguese in Arakan seem to have been outwitted by the Arakanese rather than *vice-versa*. In exchange for trade concessions that were mutually beneficial to both parties, the Portuguese at Chittagong took on the responsibility of guarding Arakan's western frontier against Arakan's biggest threat, the Mughal empire. Further, Arakan's use of Portuguese mercenaries presented a tremendous drain on the already low number of Portuguese troops available to the *Estado da India*. This drain, which, when we consider all of the Portuguese mercenaries in the employ of mainland Southeast Asian rulers, must have represented well-over a thousand men, was tremendous when we remember that at its height, the *Estado da India* had less than ten thousand men at its disposal throughout Asia, from Madagascar to Japan.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Lieberman, "Europeans, Trade, and the Unification of Burma," *passim*.

<sup>218</sup> Charles Ralph Boxer explains that "it is doubtful if there was ever as many as 10,000 able-bodied Europeans and Eurasians available for military and naval service between Moçambique and Macao." See Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire 1415-1825*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969): 53.<sup>219</sup> J. Talboys Wheeler, *A Short History of India and of the Frontier States of Afghanistan, Nipal, and Burma*, (London: MacMillan & Co. 1880): 503.

It is also important to note that the Arakanese were responsible for their changing view of the world around them. The threat posed by the Mughal empire and the growing Peguan empire seems to have been responsible for “shaking” the Arakanese out of their former inward-looking perspective. The Arakanese realized that they had to change or they would be conquered by one or the other of their powerful neighbors. It is also clear that the Arakanese were responsible for reaching out to the Portuguese. The Portuguese, for example, after Silveira’s misunderstanding of Arakanese intentions, might never have been seen in Arakan again if it had not been for Min Bin’s efforts and offers of friendship and employment. At least at this stage in the relationship between the Arakanese and the Portuguese, it is clear that the Arakanese were dominant in this relationship and the development of Arakanese imperial might was almost totally an Arakanese conception and creation.



### **Chapter III** **Collapse of the Burmese World, 1590-1602**

This richly favoured country [Burma] has been exposed from a remote period to cruel oppressions and bloody wars. It was anciently parcelled out, like India, amongst petty kings, who waged frequent wars on each other. There was constant rivalry between the Burmese people of Ava on the upper valley of the Irawadi and the Talains of Pegu on the lower valley. Other kings warred against each other in like manner; whilst ever and anon an invading army from China or Siam swept over the whole country, and deluged the land with blood. Sometimes there were insurrections under a rebel prince or schismatic monk, followed by sack and massacre without a parallel in recorded history. except amongst Tatar nations, To this day the whole region of Pegu and Ava bears the marks of these desolating contests; and vast tracts of culturable lands lie utterly waste from sheer want of population.

J. Talboys Wheeler<sup>219</sup>

The History of the different Kings that reigned in Burma, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries...is a round of wars and revolts, of treacheries and murders. Its chief interest is derived from the appearance of Europeans upon the scene. Two adventurers, a Portuguese and a Spaniard, played important parts in Burma during the early years of the seventeenth century. The story of their lives is worth telling. It shows how easily lawless Europeans could establish a rule over timid Asiatics by a display of reckless audacity.

Albert Fytche<sup>220</sup>

Several questions can be drawn from these quotations. Why, for example, was Pegu the target of Arakanese expansion at the end of the sixteenth century? Was Pegu suffering a short-term period of anarchy or was this its natural condition? Why were the Mons willing to accept foreigners as their kings? What was the Mon requirement for kingship and how had the former regime lost legitimacy?

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<sup>220</sup> Albert Fytche, *Burma Past and Present with Personal Reminiscences of the Country*, 2 vols., (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1878): vol. I, 50-51.

### The Great Coastal Empire: Arakanese Expansion Eastwards

Having secured their frontier in the west against the Mughal threat, the Arakanese under Min Yazagyi, or Naradhipati, (r. 1593-1612)<sup>221</sup> decided to use their new military might to expand their empire eastwards at the expense of an old enemy: Pegu. This was a very opportune time for Arakan to attack Pegu, since it was now in anarchy. In an attempt to maintain the vastly overextended empire created by his father, Nan-dá-bayin (r. 1581-1599), the King of Pegu, had waged an endless series of bloody wars against rebel provinces. Since Nan-dá-bayin directly controlled only Lower Burma, Lower Burma provided the most resources for Nan-dá-bayin's campaigns.<sup>222</sup> The surrounding Mons soon raised revolts against Nan-dá-bayin, one of which in 1594 led to Ayudhya's capture of Pegu's possessions on the Kra isthmus.<sup>223</sup> Mons also left Burma altogether and many of them fled to Arakan.<sup>224</sup> Nan-dá-bayin's other vassals throughout Burma began to break away as well, and soon the "supreme king was abandoned by all who might have supported him."<sup>225</sup> One of these rebellious vassals, the Toungoo *bayin*, refused to send any more agricultural produce to Pegu after 1596.<sup>226</sup> Further, the Toungoo *bayin* took advantage of Nan-dá-bayin's decreasing credibility as a just ruler of Lower Burma to set himself up as the legitimate ruler, "promi[sing] Life, Liberty and Estates to all that would come over to him."<sup>227</sup> This was not an entirely radical turn of events, since Mon monks had previously suggested to the Chiengmai *bayin* that if he overthrew Nan-dá-bayin, and set himself up as the Great King, it "would be an entirely legitimate act."<sup>228</sup>

The Toungoo *bayin* realized, however, that he still had to decisively crush Nan-dá-bayin, who mustered most of his remaining levies for the defense of his capital at Pegu, if he wanted to make himself the new legitimate ruler of Burma. The Toungoo *bayin* was not in a position to raise the strength necessary to do so and to protect his own kingdom from the other rebel provinces; he desperately needed an ally. At the same time, however, he did not want to ally himself with another

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<sup>221</sup> Also known as Salim Shah I. See Luard's notes in Manrique, *op. cit.*, vol. I, xxiii.

<sup>222</sup> Lieberman, "Europeans, Trade, and the Unification of Burma," 217.

<sup>223</sup> Lieberman, *Burmese Administrative Cycles*, 43.

<sup>224</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 180.

<sup>225</sup> Phayre, *History of Burma*, 122.

<sup>226</sup> Lieberman, *Burmese Administrative Cycles*, 43.

<sup>227</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 121.

<sup>228</sup> Lieberman, *Burmese Administrative Cycles*, 42.

Burmese bayin who might turn around and crush him after they destroyed Pegu. Thus the Toungoo *bayin* looked abroad for help. Again, however, the foreign state likely to help Toungoo in crushing Pegu was Ayudhya, but if the growing power of Naresuan's Ayudhya were brought into Burma, it would be very difficult to get them out after Pegu was crushed. Indeed, Naresuan had the "apparent intention of converting Nan-dá-bayin into a vassal of Ayudhya in reverse of the traditional relation."<sup>229</sup> The Toungoo *bayin's* ally, then, had to be found elsewhere.

The Toungoo *bayin* now looked at Arakan. In the short space of two or three generations, Arakan had grown from an inward-looking, petty state on the fringe of the mainland Southeast Asian world, to a powerful state with a great navy and a large army. The Arakanese also seemed to orient her imperial designs towards Bengal, on the border of which most of Arakan's Portuguese mercenaries and her best armies were concentrated. The Toungoo *bayin* believed that he found the ideal ally for his planned imperial venture: (1) Arakan had a powerful fleet which could blockade Pegu and (2) Arakan would not be likely to threaten the Toungoo *bayin's* "own aspirations" of becoming to "Great King of Burma." The Toungoo *bayin* thus sent emissaries to propose an alliance with Arakan with the idea of a joint attack on Pegu.<sup>230</sup>

The Toungoo *bayin* probably did not know that Min Yazagyi had made several attempts to establish some claim to the wealth of Pegu and to involve himself in Pegu's affairs. One attempt had even come close to success: Min Yazagyi had sent ambassadors to request the hand in marriage of Nan-dá-bayin's daughter in the late 1590s, at a time when Nan-dá-bayin needed as many allies as possible to stave off his destruction at the hands of his rebel *bayins*. Nan-dá-bayin gave the Arakanese delegation an audience and the Mon advisors of Nan-dá-bayin seem to have been very impressed. After the audience, the Mon advisors in council with Nan-dá-bayin made a strong case for obtaining the help of Arakan to offset the problems of destruction and depopulation which were making Lower Burma an inadequate resource base for Nan-dá-bayin: an alliance with Arakan would bring the support of Arakan's considerable maritime strength, which could command the riverine communication and transportation system of Lower Burma. With Min Yazagyi's help, the Mon advisors argued, Nan-dá-bayin could slowly rebuild his empire. Nan-dá-bayin, however, was "indignant" to the thought of marrying his daughter to the ruler of the Arakanese upstarts. After responding to his advisors angrily: "I do not think that I should give

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<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid; Nai Thien (tr.), "Intercourse Between Burma and Siam As Recorded in Hmannan Yazawindawgyi," *Journal of the Siam Society* 8 (1911): 54.

my daughter to a dog." Nan-dá-bayin then ordered the Arakanese delegation to return immediately to Arakan.<sup>231</sup>

The Toungoo negotiation team arrived at a good time: Min Yazagyi had just received his delegation to Pegu and was infuriated by Nan-dá-bayin's response. Min Yazagyi wanted revenge and realized that he had to act quickly in order to take advantage of the anarchious situation in Pegu.<sup>232</sup> Min Yazagyi thus decided that the proposed alliance with the Toungoo *bayin* was a good vehicle for his revenge and or the realization of his imperial designs upon Lower Burma. In order to aid Toungoo in the capture of Nan-dá-bayin's capital of Pegu, Min Yazagyi came with his son, Min Khamaung, and a large Arakanese fleet of six hundred *jalias* to invade Lower Burma.<sup>233</sup> If we can trust the Mon history of Syriam translated by Furnivall, the Arakanese forces first attacked Nan-dá-bayin's western-most port of Bassein. Nan-dá-bayin responded by sending six "war boats" to Bassein, as well as three "war boats" to Syriam, and ordered a royal granary to be built at Bassein, presumably in preparation for the expected siege. Other preparations were ordered for the defense of Bassein as well: the "city...had to supply cocoanuts, earth, oil, iron, timber and cord for binding...[w]hen the royal war boats became unserviceable the oarsmen and watchmen had to help one another to repair them."<sup>234</sup> Presumably, the Arakanese won the siege and took the port, for Min Yazagyi and his son soon went to Syriam, from which the remaining Arakanese force would proceed upriver to Pegu. The Toungoo *bayin* likewise sent an army by land, joined the Arakanese force at Pegu, which the two forces then besieged by the beginning of 1598.<sup>235</sup> The siege lines were formed quickly, with the Arakanese to the

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<sup>231</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 121-2.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, 122.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, 121-2.

<sup>234</sup> J.S. Furnivall (ed. & tr.), "The History of Syriam--Syriam ya-zawin," *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, pt. 3 (1915): 142-3.

<sup>235</sup> Lieberman has provided a different date for the siege, 1598, for which he does not seem to be too confident. But the *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi* mentions Arakanese troops and Toungoo forces marching on Pegu in the spring of 1597 and indicates that Pegu was under siege by 1598. See Na Thien's translation (54). I have chosen to accept 1597/8 as the date of the siege for a number of other reasons. First, I think that this is the most logical year for the siege by my understanding of the sequence of events before and after the siege for which we do have dates. Second, a number of sources imply dates for the siege, such as Boves letter written on 28 March, 1600, which mentions the siege of Pegu as a recent event. See Nicolas Pimenta, "Jesuit Observations of India," in Samuel Purchas (ed.), *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, (New York: AMS Press, 1965): 216; Phayre, *History of Burma*, 122-123.

south of Pegu, the king of Toungoo to the east, and Nat-Shin-Naung, the *upayaza* (heir-apparent) of Toungoo to the north of Pegu.<sup>236</sup>

Nan-dá-bayin attempted to organize a defense, but it was hopeless; “fifteen years of incessant military recruitment, famine, and social dislocation” drained Nan-dá-bayin’s territories of their resources.<sup>237</sup> Further, while Nan-dá-bayin still possessed numerous European artillery, 150 pieces of which were of Portuguese origin, they were ineffective “without strong conventional support forces.”<sup>238</sup> The Arakanese and Toungoo forces tightened their siege lines around Pegu until Nan-dá-bayin could only count on supplies of rice and other goods brought in by Portuguese ships which had been sent from Goa by the viceroy, the Conde da Vidigueira, under the command of Dom Pedro Manuel. Min Khamaung intercepted Dom Pedro Manuel’s ships on several occasions, but did not seize their supplies or punish the Portuguese captains, probably because he did not want to alienate Goa from the Arakanese cause. But after Dom Pedro Manuel’s persistence led to a skirmish between Min Khamaung’s ship and a Portuguese vessel, a battle ensued, damaging many Arakanese vessels and leaving the Portuguese bottled up in Pegu.<sup>239</sup>

The siege continued for some time and political problems back in Mrauk-U forced Min Yazagyi to quit the siege with a large part of his forces for the rest of the winter of 1598-1599, with the promise that he would return in the summer of 1599. Min Khamaung, however, was left in command of a large number of Arakanese ships to help the king of Toungoo. Before Min Yazagyi could return, however, the defense of Pegu was quickly falling apart. The *upayaza* of Pegu, Minyé Kyawzwa, lost ten of his popular officers to desertion to the Toungoos and Arakanese and he soon followed them in 1599.<sup>240</sup> Hearing of his son’s desertion, Nan-dá-bayin decided to surrender as well and asked only that he be allowed to join the *sangha*.<sup>241</sup> Although the human and agricultural resources of Pegu were spent, much material wealth remained for plunder. The Toungoo *bayin*, for example, used twelve caravans of seven hundred

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<sup>236</sup> Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 54-5.

<sup>237</sup> Lieberman, “Europeans, Trade, and the Unification of Burma,” 217; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 122.

<sup>238</sup> Lieberman, *Burmese Administrative Cycles*, 43.

<sup>239</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 123-4.

<sup>240</sup> The *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi* records that Minyé-kyawzwa was murdered at Toungoo shortly after by the Toungoo *upayaza*, Nat-Shin-Naung, and his mother. See Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 55.

<sup>241</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 124.

elephants and horses to carry the treasure,<sup>242</sup> but he still could not remove all of the gold and the jewels. The Toungoo force left Pegu to Arakanese occupation under Min Khamaung. Min Khamaung then joined in gathering the plunder and removed “above Three Millions, and a great Train of large Cannon.”<sup>243</sup>

### **Naresuan’s Invasion**<sup>244</sup>

Naresuan launched an attack against Pegu in order to capture Ayudhya’s great enemy, Nan-dá-bayin. The approach of the Ayudhyan army was reported to the king of Toungoo, who called a council of his ministers to decide what they should do. Some of his advisors thought that it would be better to remain at Pegu, where the Arakanese forces would be of immense value in their defense. Other advisors, however, thought that it would be better to go to Toungoo, and that the Arakanese forces should remain at Pegu and “attack the Siamese as opportunity offered.”<sup>245</sup> The king of Toungoo decided against remaining at Pegu and his forces left for Toungoo in March 1600.<sup>246</sup> But the Arakanese occupation force under Min Khamaung remained at the fallen capital of Nan-dá-bayin. The defenses of Pegu were now in no position to withstand another siege, and the Arakanese occupation force was not strong enough to face the massive armies under the veteran military leader and now king, Naresuan. Min Khamaung thus had his forces burn the rest of Pegu so they would leave nothing to the Ayudhyans: “they consigned to the flames all the big and splendid buildings, edifices and monasteries, starting with the golden palace itself.” The Arakanese forces then took refuge in the forests.<sup>247</sup>

Naresuan, finding Pegu burned to the ground, then proceeded to Toungoo to take Nan-dá-bayin into his custody. The king of Toungoo had

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<sup>242</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 121; Bocarro, however, says that moving the spoils from Pegu to Toungoo took one thousand ships and one thousand wagons five months of continuous transportation, even though Toungoo was only five days journey from Pegu. See Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 125.

<sup>243</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 121.

<sup>244</sup> At this point, I will begin to refer to the various Burmese *bayins* as kings, since their relationship with the ‘Great King’ at Pegu as *bayins* was ended when the ‘Great King,’ Nan-dá-bayin, was overthrown. Now the various Burmese bayins were independent kings.

<sup>245</sup> Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 57.

<sup>246</sup> The king of Toungoo was also careful to bring the Buddha’s tooth relic and the *tripitaka* back to Toungoo. Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 57.

<sup>247</sup> Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 57.

prepared for this possibility and he strengthened the defenses of Toungoo and mounted artillery on the walls.<sup>248</sup> Meanwhile, the Ayudhyan army marched up along the banks of the Sittang river to Toungoo and from outside of the walls of the city, Naresuan demanded that the king of Toungoo hand Nan-dá-bayin over to him. Naresuan explained that he wanted to worship Nan-dá-bayin, since he had recently joined the Buddhist *sangha*. The king of Toungoo refused to surrender Nan-dá-bayin, claiming that he wanted to worship Nan-dá-bayin in the same way, forcing Naresuan to besiege Toungoo. While Naresuan made Kywé-magu-kyun-gyaung his base of operations, he ordered the Ayudhyan army besieging Toungoo to dig a channel, the Yodaya, to the Paunglaung river to drain Toungoo's moat.<sup>249</sup> Further, the Ayudhyan army "mounted guns on ramparts built by them, and shelled the city every day." The Toungoo defenses, however, proved to be too strong to allow an Ayudhyan victory.<sup>250</sup>

Min Khamaung's forces, however, came to Toungoo's aid. Since Naresuan supplied his forces with "[m]unitions and supplies" brought up the Sittang river on boats, Min Khamaung attacked and captured these ships. While Toungoo repulsed repeated Ayudhyan assaults on their city, the Ayudhyan officers hesitated in informing Naresuan of the supply problem and he soon found that his army was "eating all kinds of unclean meat, and had come even to the flesh of their own men."<sup>251</sup> After a month without supplies, Naresuan was forced to withdraw with extremely heavy casualties in May 1600. As the Ayudhyan army retreated back down along the banks of the Sittang River, Naresuan became the brunt of guerrilla attacks by the Arakanese, similar to those which Naresuan used to defeat three Burmese invasions of Ayudhya several years earlier. The Arakanese ambushed Ayudhyan units near Pegu, quickening the pace of Naresuan's retreat and his losses. When Naresuan reached Martaban where the Arakanese ambushes ceased.<sup>252</sup> Naresuan set up a Mon as the governor, with the title of Binnya Dala, who was tributary to Ayudhya.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>249</sup> Harvey, *op. cit.*, 183; Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 57.

<sup>250</sup> Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 57.

<sup>251</sup> Mousinho, MacGregor trans., "A Brief Account of the Kingdom of Pegu," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 16, no. 2 (1916): 112.

<sup>252</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 183; Mousinho, MacGregor trans., *op. cit.*, 112.

<sup>253</sup> Phayre, *History of Burma*, 123; Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 57; The *Chulasakaraj* 686-966 mentions Naresuan's failed siege of Toungoo briefly: "In the 11th month, when the sun was standing between Virgo and Libra, on Wednesday the 10th of the 4th waxing moon, the King reached Tong U, and he established his army about 30 sen from Tong U. After

Nan-dá-bayin would die not at the hands of Naresuan, but by the hands of his own sister, the queen of Toungoo. When Nan-dá-bayin was brought to Toungoo, the king of Toungoo had “presented” Nan-dá-bayin to his wife, Nan-dá-bayin’s sister, but she had him killed in November 1600:

[I]t was thought [that she] would comfort [him, but] used him Reproachfully, and afterwards seeing the King her Husband inclined to Mercy, caused him to be beaten to Death.<sup>254</sup>

The unifying king of Burma was dead and now his legacy opened up Lower Burma to whoever wished to attempt to build his own empire: lower Burma was fractured into a number of rival states in a near-anarchic political climate:

Thus the great empire of united Pegu and Burma, which a generation before had excited the wonder of European travellers. was utterly broken up’ and the wide delta of the Irawâdi, with a soil fertile as Egypt, and in a geographical position commanding the outlet of a great natural highway, was abandoned by those who might claim to represent the ancient rulers, and left to be parcelled out by petty local chiefs, and European adventurers.<sup>255</sup>

### **Arakanese Establishment at Syriam**

Min Yazagyi soon disagreed with the king of Toungoo because he felt that he was cheated in the division of spoils in Pegu. As Boves commented in March, 1600, it appeared that the king of Toungoo completely ignored the earlier agreement which he made with Min Yazagyi:

After [the King of Toungoo had gone] to the Tower where the Kings treasure was kept, which was so much that scarcely six hundred Elephants and as many Horses were sufficient to carrie away the Gold and Gemmes onely. For I say nothing of the Silver and other Metals, as things of no price. The King of Arracan then absent, hear[d] that the King of Tangu against his agreement with him had

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the army had been there for two months, a famine broke out and many people died for want of food. On Wednesday the 6th of the 6th waning moon the army of the King returned to Ayuddhya.” See O. Frankfurter, “Events in Ayuddhya From Chulasakaraj 686-966., a Translation.” *Journal of the Siam Society* 6 (1909): 18.

<sup>254</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 121; Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 58.

<sup>255</sup> Phayre, *History of Burma*, 123.



taken all this treasure for himselfe, and dismissed the Armie without his Knowledge.<sup>256</sup>

Min Yazagyi determined to take what he thought was rightfully his. In addition, Min Yazagyi had no intention of abandoning Syriam,<sup>257</sup> which his forces passed during their attack against Nan-dá-bayin a year earlier. Syriam, to Min Yazagyi, represented something which the Arakanese wanted for some time. The Arakanese capital served as an adequate and easily defensible port, but Pegu was previously the chief port-of-call for international traders. Since Syriam was located geographically in a position to dominate the trading potentials of Pegu, the good natural harbor of Syriam, provided Arakan with the ability to expand its international trade opportunities. Further, Syriam could serve as a foothold, from which Min Yazagyi could expand Arakanese power throughout the Burmese region and further down the coast towards Tavoy and Tenasserim. Since Min Yazagyi's forces in Pegu were depleted by the recent fighting with Naresuan and were in no condition to enforce Min Yazagyi's claims against Toungoo: Min Yazagyi gathered his army and navy and his Portuguese mercenaries under the command of Philip de Brito and sailed for the late king of Pegu's fortress, Macao, on the Pegu river (not to be confused with Macao in China).<sup>258</sup>

### **De Brito is Placed in Command at Syriam**

Min Yazagyi's force stopped at Syriam before it went on to the rubble of Nan-dá-bayin's fortress of Macao. The condition of the the surrounding country indicated the extent of the damage that Nan-dá-bayin's continual wars had done to Lower Burma:

It is a lamentable spectacle to see the bankes of the Rivers set with infinite fruit-bearing trees, now overwhelmed with ruines of gilded

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<sup>256</sup> Pimenta, *op. cit.*, 216.

<sup>257</sup> Fytche explains that Syriam is "a corruption of the Burmese word Than-hlyeng." Another name for Syriam is the Pali "Khoddha-dippa." See Fytche, *op. cit.*, 52f; Danvers refers to Syriam as Sirião. See F. C. Danvers, *Report to the Secretary of State For India Council on the Portuguese Records Relating to the East Indies, Contained in the Archivo Da Torre Do Tombo, and the Public Libraries at Lisbon and Evora*, (Amsterdam: N. Israel. 1892. 1966): 20.

<sup>258</sup> In the sixteenth century, the city of Macao on the Pegu river, somewhere between Syriam and the city of Pegu, was an important trading center in Lower Burma. It was visited by most of the early Portuguese travelers in Burma, and it was also the location of Nan-dá-bayin's fortress and treasure house. For information on the major references to Macao, see Yule & Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, 402.

Temples, and noble edifices; the wayes and fields full of skulls and bones of wretched Peguans, killed or famished and cast into the River, in such numbers that the multitude of carkasses prohibiteth the way and passage of any ship; to omit the burnings and massacres committed by this the cruellist of Tyrants that ever breathed.<sup>259</sup>

Pegu's desolate and disunified condition allowed Min Yazagyi to "easily ma[k]e himsef Master of the Towne and Countrey."<sup>260</sup> Min Yazagyi then placed De Brito and his Portuguese contingent at Syriam to secure the port while the rest of the Arakanese force attacked Toungoo.<sup>261</sup> The king of Toungoo, however, sent ambassadors offering to begin negotiations to settle the dispute between Arakan and Toungoo.<sup>262</sup>

While Min Yazagyi also allowed the Portuguese to conduct trade there, Min Yazagyi still expected a share of the profits of this venture. Min Yazagyi also feared that if he left Mons in charge of Syriam, they might easily switch loyalties to the Thai, who made overtures under Naresuan to extend Ayudhyan protection over the now anarchuous Peguan region.<sup>263</sup> Leaving Portuguese mercenaries in charge of such a strategic location was nothing new to the king of Arakan, since this was a policy which he followed to maintain his border with Bengal.<sup>264</sup> In any case, Min Yazagyi left De Brito in charge of Syriam with three thousand Arakanese and three frigates, and one hundred smaller vessels, "thinking that the Portuguese were skillful in the use of firearms, big and small, and so the Mons would be afraid and not give any trouble."<sup>265</sup> De Brito convinced Min Yazagyi of the necessity of erecting a *feitoria* (customs house or factory) at the river-mouth to collect revenues. De Brito planned, however, to build a fort there and seize the area for the Portuguese.<sup>266</sup>

One man who was to become extremely important to De Brito's enterprise was Salvador Ribeyro de Sousa. Ribeyro was a Portuguese and

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<sup>259</sup> Pimenta, *op. cit.*, 216.

<sup>260</sup> Verhoeff, *op. cit.*, 327.

<sup>261</sup> Damrong Rajanubhab, Prince "Our Wars," translated by U Aung Thein, *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 40, no. 2 (1957): 205.

<sup>262</sup> Verhoeff, *op. cit.*, 327.

<sup>263</sup> Damrong., *op. cit.*, 205.

<sup>264</sup> Lieberman, "Europeans, Trade, and the Unification of Burma, c. 1540-1620," 218.

<sup>265</sup> Damrong, *op. cit.*, 205; Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 65.

<sup>266</sup> Faria y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 127.

served for some time as a captain in the Arakanese army.<sup>267</sup> Ribeyro arrived at the port of Syriam due to adverse weather conditions and found Min Yazagyi in possession of the port and accompanied by De Brito's Portuguese mercenaries. De Brito felt that he could trust Ribeyro and had Ribeyro take on the responsibility of building the fortress, while De Brito went on a mission for Min Yazagyi.

### **Negotiations With Toungoo**

Min Yazagyi thus reinforced the Arakanese presence in Lower Burma. But Min Yazagyi was also not hasty and he decided that he would seek a peaceful solution to his disagreement with the king of Toungoo. Thus, Min Yazagyi ordered De Brito to go to Toungoo as his ambassador and negotiate with the king of Toungoo for the rest of his share of the booty of Pegu.<sup>268</sup>

The king of Toungoo was inclined not to resist Min Yazagyi's demands for several reasons. One reason was that Min Yazagyi's new force was present just south of Toungoo, ready to assault Toungoo if negotiations did not go the way Min Yazagyi wanted them to. Another reason was that Naresuan was still a potential threat to Toungoo, and he had only been beaten back into Ayudhya with Arakanese help. Further, the king of Chiengmai had now begun attacking Toungoo, "to despoile him of his spoiles."<sup>269</sup> After nearly six months of negotiations,<sup>270</sup> the king of Toungoo agreed to recompense Min Yazagyi and send Min Yazagyi the things that he wanted. Min Yazagyi was given the white elephant, half of the captured artillery, and any Mons that he wanted to take. The daughter of Nan-dá-bayin, who was the king of Toungoo's niece, was also sent to Min Yazagyi for marriage.<sup>271</sup>

Min Yazagyi accepted the king of Toungoo's offer. To bring these goods back, Min Yazagyi sent a huge fleet upriver, consisting of 600 *jalias* (small ships), with biers and gilded windowpanes, under the command of Philip de Brito and the Arakanese *corangary* (admiral). Once the fleet had reached Toungoo, the king of Toungoo turned over his niece

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<sup>267</sup> Danvers, *op. cit.*, 20.

<sup>268</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 126

<sup>269</sup> Pimenta, *op. cit.*, 217.

<sup>270</sup> Mousinho, MacGregor trans., *op. cit.*, 114.

<sup>271</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 126; Pieter Willemszoon Verhoeff saw both the princess and the elephant when he visited Arakan in 1608. See Peter Floris (Pieter Willemszoon Verhoeff), *Peter Floris: His Voyage to the East Indies in the Globe 1611-1615*, edited and translated by W. H. Moreland, Hakluyt Society, 1931, (Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1967): 54., 327.

to De Brito, but he now expressed reluctance for her marriage to Min Yazagyi. It seems that he felt that Min Yazagyi was only a lucky man, who only obtained a large realm by chance, whereas the king of Toungoo's niece was the widow of the great emperor of Pegu. The king of Toungoo, however, realized that the Arakanese were too strong for him to oppose at the moment and he kept his promises.<sup>272</sup> In addition, Min Yazagyi, following the traditional practice of Southeast Asian warfare, as well as reflecting Arakan's growing power and its concomitant need for an increased population, deported large numbers of Mons for resettlement in Arakan.<sup>273</sup>

### **Min Yazagyi Returns to Arakan**

Min Yazagyi had established a secure Arakanese position at Syriam, but he now returned to Arakan to ensure the strength of the Arakanese position on the western frontier in Bengal. Min Yazagyi decided to leave De Brito in charge of a Portuguese detachment at Syriam. But Min Yazagyi was wary of leaving the Portuguese alone at such a vital position on his new expanded eastern flank at Pegu. Min Yazagyi thus left a much larger Muslim mercenary force there as well, under the command of a local Mon lord, Binnya Dala. Interestingly, De Brito was very worried about the presence of these other mercenaries. Min Yazagyi was told by the Portuguese that "once they (the Muslims) had got a footing they were ill to throw out." Min Yazagyi responded that these troops posed no threat to either him or to the Portuguese. To put an end to the Portuguese protests, Min Yazagyi pointed out that his local representatives were there to monitor the situation and would evict the Muslims if they showed any signs of revolt.<sup>274</sup> The Portuguese, however, whether out of fear for their safety or as part of some plan to strengthen their own position against their Arakanese overlords, began to firmly entrench themselves by building fortifications.<sup>275</sup>

### **Events at Sundiva, 1602**

It was mentioned in the last chapter, the Portuguese trader, Antonio de Souza Godinho, forced the island of Sundiva into a tributary relationship with the Portuguese traders at Chittagong in 1590. But Sundiva remained a virtual non-man's land, with Portuguese authority in some

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<sup>272</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 126-127.

<sup>273</sup> Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*, 300.

<sup>274</sup> Mousinho, MacGregor trans., *op. cit.*, 114-115.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

places, and Mughal control, as well as a Mughal fort, elsewhere.<sup>276</sup> Further, Kedar Rai, the Bengalese lord at Sripur who had been dispossessed of Sundiva island by the Mughals, still maintained his claim to the island's income. Kedar Rai, a Hindu, ruled in the name of his father Chand Rai, one of the twelve Bara Bhuyas of southeastern Bengal who maintained their independence despite the Mughal conquest of the rest of the region.<sup>277</sup> He had only taken Sundiva island recently and he must have watched events at Sundiva carefully waiting for an opportunity to reassert his control.

In 1602, the Mughals were defeated and Sundiva was brought under complete Portuguese control by Domingos Carvalho, one of Kedar Rai's Portuguese employees. The Sundivanese, however, rebelled against the Portuguese soon after and were besieged in the former Mughal fortress. Carvalho was forced to ask the Portuguese at Chittagong and Dianga for help. Manuel de Mattos, the leader of the Portuguese at Dianga, led four hundred men in support of Carvalho, who made an assault from the shore and drove the islanders into the countryside. Since Carvalho and Mattos had together defeated the islanders, they each took half of the island to govern.<sup>278</sup> Carvalho wrote to the Portuguese government offering Sundiva as a new Portuguese possession.<sup>279</sup> The viceroy accepted and he had expectations that Carvalho and Mattos would attempt to bring the large number of scattered and autonomous Portuguese in Bengala back into the service of the *Estado da India*.<sup>280</sup> The Portuguese king, as a reward, presented to them the Order of Christ as well as making them *Fidalgos da Casa Real*.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 67-8.

<sup>277</sup> Shumbhoo Chunder Dev, "The Bara Bhuyas of Bengal," *Calcutta Review* 111, no. 221 (July, 1900): 119.

<sup>278</sup> Fernão Guerreiro, *Relação Anual das Coisas Que Fizeram os Padres Da Companhia de Jesus Nas Suas Missões do Japão, China, Cataio, Tidore, Ternate, Ambóino, Pegu, Bengala, Bisnagá, Maduré, Costa da Pescaria, Manar, Ceilão, Travancor, Malabar, Sodomala, Goa, Salcete, Lahor, Diu, Etiopia a alta ou Preste João, Monomotapa, Angola, Guiné, Serra Leoa, Cabo Verde e Brasil nos Anos de 1600 a 1609 e do Processo da Conversão e Cristandade daquelas Partes: Tirada das Cartas que os Missionários de lá Escreveram*, edited and with a preface by Artur Viegas. (Coimbra, Portugal: University of Coimbra, 1930): vol. I, 286.

<sup>279</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 67-8.

<sup>280</sup> Documento 5, 2 March 1605, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of India, Dom Martin Affonso de Castro, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 25.

<sup>281</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 67-8.

Min Yazagyi, however, was furious that the Portuguese traders had taken Sundiva. The stated reason was that the Portuguese at Chittagong and Dianga had benefited for years, in land grants and forgiven rent worth over thirty thousand *cruzados*, from being in the service of the Arakanese royal house; the Portuguese, however, took Sundiva, to which Arakan seems to have also had some claim, without his knowledge or permission.<sup>282</sup> The most important reason for Min Yazagyi's anger, however, seems to be that Min Yazagyi felt that he could leave Philip de Brito in possession of a powerful fort in the east because there was also stationed there a rival mercenary contingent; but the Portuguese who now occupied Sundiva were relatively unchallenged and had no reason to follow the orders of the king of Arakan. To have such a potential threat to the security of his northwestern border was too much for Min Yazagyi to accept.<sup>283</sup> Min Yazagyi was also influenced to a large extent by his Moslem advisors in his court, "who wished nothing more than to see the Portuguese name and Christianity in all the Orient extinguished."<sup>284</sup> Angry at the Portuguese, and fearful of being stuck between two different Portuguese strongholds,<sup>285</sup> Min Yazagyi now sent a force of 150 *jalias* "in which there some captures and other great ships, with many *falcões* and *cameletes*."<sup>286</sup> Further, Kedar Rai made an alliance with Min Yazagyi and sent 100 *cosces*,<sup>287</sup> ("light boats suitable for fighting on the rivers and not at sea.") against Sundiva as well.<sup>288</sup>

The Portuguese traders throughout northern Arakan sensed that a general reprisal against the Portuguese was about to take place. The Portuguese traders at Caranja and Dianga loaded up their ships with their trade goods and fled. Although Min Yazagyi's uncle, the governor of Chittagong, reassured the Portuguese there that they were under no danger, the Chittagong Portuguese gathered things and began to flee as well.<sup>289</sup> Manuel de Mattos' *foist* and several other poorly fitted out *jalias* were not able to escape from Dianga before the Arakanese fleet blocked them in port in November 1602. Mattos' ship soon found itself alone in

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<sup>282</sup> Guerreiro, translation of the author, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 286.

<sup>283</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 67-8.

<sup>284</sup> "os quais nenhuma coisa mais desejam que ver extinguido o nome português e cristão em todo Oriente." Guerreiro, translation of the author, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 286.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>286</sup> Guerreiro, translation of the author, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 286; *cameletes* and *falcões* are two different varieties of small cannon.

<sup>287</sup> Guerreiro, translation of the author, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 286.

<sup>288</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 69.

<sup>289</sup> Guerreiro, translation of the author, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 286-7.

the middle of the Arakanese fleet, but in the heavy fighting that followed Mattos' ship inflicted a great number of Arakanese deaths. The Portuguese lost one dead and seven lightly wounded, including Mattos. The Arakanese, however, offset their losses in men by the capture of four Portuguese vessels, with all the people and goods that were in them, thus making it appear that the Arakanese won the fight.<sup>290</sup>

The Arakanese, however, forgot about the remaining Portuguese after what they felt was a great Arakanese victory. For the next two days, until November 10, the Arakanese crews spent their time "plundering the vast booty of the naus" or on shore eating and drinking well into each night. The preoccupied Arakanese did not notice the arrival of Carvalho and a relief force from Sundiva. With Mattos' force, the combined force of the Portuguese amounted to fifty ships, including "two *foists*, four *caturs*, three *batéis*," and forty-one *jalias*. A surprise attack at eight a.m., caught the Arakanese naval force of 149 ships off-guard. Many of the Arakanese were killed, including the governor of Chittagong, Sinabadi, who was also Min Yazagyi's brother-in-law. Those Arakanese who were not killed jumped off their ships and swam ashore. The Portuguese also captured all the Arakanese ships as well as guns, rockets, and artillery, including twelve "peças, cameletes and falcões."<sup>291</sup>

The Arakanese at Chittagong, now feared a Portuguese reprisal. Much of the population fled, carrying their most valuable possessions. Sinabadi's widow fled on an elephant. But the Portuguese did not follow up their victory and missed a great opportunity to seize undefended Chittagong. Min Yazagyi, however, still furious, took revenge on those Portuguese who had not yet left Arakan. Portuguese houses in the Portuguese trading stations were sacked and all Portuguese men, women, and children were thrown into prison. Portuguese Jesuit and Dominican missionaries were also harassed. Francisco Fernandes, of the Company of Jesus, for example, was stripped, blinded, shackled, and then thrown into prison where he died on November 14.<sup>292</sup> Min Yazagyi, however, soon must have realized that he had overreacted and that his kingdom was placed in great danger by his hasty actions. He signed a peace treaty with the Portuguese and attempted to make amends by having the church and the residence of the Dominicans, which he ordered destroyed, rebuilt with Arakanese funds. Min Yazagyi also asked the missionaries to remain in Arakan.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 288.

<sup>293</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 70.

But Min Yazagyi only made peace with the Portuguese in Arakan and he determined to wipe out the autonomous Portuguese on strategic Sundiva. Carvalho, with sixteen ships, soon faced a huge Arakanese naval force. Carvalho, however, was victorious, putting 130 Arakanese ships out of action. Min Yazagyi was now even more furious than he was at his first defeat at Sundiva. This time, however, Min Yazagyi took out his anger against his admirals and captains. His captains, for example, were made to wear “women’s clothes as they behaved so effeminately.” Carvalho’s fleet, however, had suffered much damage and he realized that he could not withstand any more attacks by the Arakanese. The Portuguese and Christian islanders gathered their possessions and set up trade in other Bengalese ports. Even the four fathers of the Jesuit mission on Sundiva, led by Father Blasio Nunes, abandoned their church and reestablished themselves in Bengal. Min Yazagyi, however, was soon to meet Carvalho again, since a petty king of Chandican, eager to win the support of Min Yazagyi, beheaded Carvalho and sent the head to Mrauk-U.<sup>294</sup>

### **Chapter Conclusion**

There are many views of why Lower Burma was such an easy target for Portuguese intervention. Phayre and Harvey seem to feel that De Brito had exploited the weakness of Lower Burma to seize control against the will of the Mons. Lieberman, however, seems to argue that while De Brito had taken advantage of Lower Burma’s disorganized state, his state fit into the traditional model of a coastal polity of Burma. Both views, in other words, seem to agree that the weakness of Lower Burma was taken advantage of by De Brito, but De Brito’s role is seen differently: for Phayre and Harvey,<sup>295</sup> De Brito is an outsider in the eyes of the Mons; but Lieberman seems to imply that De Brito could potentially become an indigenous-style coastal ruler with indigenous Mon support if he could overcome his “political isolation” and abandon “his self-conscious patronage of Christianity.”<sup>296</sup> Lieberman is probably correct and I have adopted his perspective: I have argued that De Brito was seen by the Mons as potentially a legitimate ruler if only he could provide stability to Lower Burma and organized government conducive to both the survival

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<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>295</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 185-189, passim; Phayre, *History of Burma*, 124-129, passim.

<sup>296</sup> Lieberman, *op. cit.*, 204, 218.



of the people as well as the continued survival of the Buddhist *sangha*.<sup>297</sup>

Nan-dá-bayin was not viewed by the Mons as a Mon leader, but rather as a Buddhist king. If the Mons would accept Thai, Burman, or even Arakanese leadership, why not Portuguese leadership? In the anarchy which now enveloped Lower Burma, the Mons were willing to be satisfied if some of the requirements for leadership were met and reserved some requirements for later when stability and safety had been achieved. De Brito, for example, may not have been Buddhist, but perhaps the Mons could accept him if he was the leader who could provide organized government and provide for the safe continuance of the Buddhist religion. Indeed, De Brito at this time only held Syriam and he would still have to prove whether or not he could provide for stability throughout Lower Burma and thus achieve legitimacy. But it seems clear that De Brito was seen as a possibility by the Mons. Nan-dá-bayin, a Mon, had failed to live up to the requirements of Buddhist kingship, now the Mons were willing to give someone, anyone, a chance.

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<sup>297</sup> Charney, *op. cit.*, passim.<sup>298</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 127.

#### **Chapter IV**

### **The First Portuguese Revolt Against Arakan, 1603**

Xilimixa King of Arracam, who had possessed himself of the Crown of Pegu, to express his Gratitude to the Portugueses that served him, gave them the Port of Siriam, at the mouth of the River of the same Name...This Grant was obtained of the King for the Portugueses by Philip de Brito & Nicote, who most ingratly proved false to that Prince, that had raised him from a vile Collier to his Favour and Esteem.

Fariah y Sousa<sup>298</sup>

De Brito had conceived the not altogether unstatesmanlike project of building up in Lower Burma a province of the Portuguese Empire. He seems to have been of the stuff of empire-builders...de Brito managed to maintain his hold upon Syriam for thirteen years from 1600 to 1613, and to confine all Burma's sea-borne commerce to that port alone.

D.G.E. Hall<sup>299</sup>

These quotations indicate a controversy regarding the activities of the Portuguese mercenaries in Arakan's pay at Syriam. How were the Portuguese at Syriam able to rebel against their Arakanese overlords? Why, at the height of Arakanese power, did Arakan suffer its greatest setback? After the steady growth of the Arakanese empire for a half-century, how were a handful of Portuguese mercenaries able to remove Arakanese overlordship?

In order to answer these questions, the Portuguese revolt at Syriam and how Min Yazagyi reacted to it should be examined. It is important to determine whether De Brito was able to do this because of problems in Min Yazagyi's plans for expanding the Arakanese empire or because of other factors beyond Min Yazagyi's control.

#### **Min Yazagyi the Conqueror**

Before examining the Portuguese revolt at Syriam, however, it is necessary to first look at how Min Yazagyi was reacting to his conquests. The Arakanese had come a long way, from the isolated inland state of Min Bin to the new expansive empire of Min Yazagyi. The Arakanese successfully adapted the Portuguese model to the Arakanese style of

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<sup>299</sup> D.G.E. Hall, "English Relations with Burma 1587-1686," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 17, 1 (1927): 9.

warfare and military technology and now possessed large numbers of Portuguese mercenaries whom the Arakanese now used to garrison both their western and their eastern frontiers. Min Yazagyi was in no rush to pursue further conquests; he now wanted to relax and enjoy the fruits of his conquests, especially his new Mon queen.<sup>300</sup>

Shin-nhoung was more than just a woman to Min Yazagyi. She was the representative of the First Toungoo Dynasty that had threatened Arakan for almost a century and had almost succeeded in conquering Mrauk-U in the mid-sixteenth century. Min Yazagyi perhaps saw her in the same way that the Arakanese kings before him viewed the stone figures that supposedly contained the spirits of the kings of their enemies: her submission to Min Yazagyi was a submission of all First Toungoo kings to his power. At the same time, however, Shin-nhoung also represented world recognition of Min Yazagyi's new status as a Buddhist world-conqueror, a *chakravartan*. That she brought Min Yazagyi new prestige among the neighboring kings was shown by the king of Toungoo's near-refusal of her to Min Yazagyi, since Shin-nhoung, and what she represented, was too good for the lowly Arakanese king. Min Yazagyi's success in winning her, however, thus seemed to make Min Yazagyi's greatness clear to everyone.

Min Yazagyi thus went to great lengths to please his new royal symbol. When Shin-nhoung was about to arrive at Mrauk-U, she refused to enter the city along the same path as Arakanese "commoners" did.<sup>301</sup> Min Yazagyi responded by having a thirty-foot deep passage dug through Sanga-doung Hill.<sup>302</sup> He also said nothing when Shin-nhoung ordered "huge celebrations that had never been seen before in his kingdom,"<sup>303</sup> which must have presented a great strain on the treasury of the Arakanese state, but at the same time reinforced Min Yazagyi's belief in his new-found greatness. Later when Shin-nhoung began to miss her homeland of Pegu, Min Yazagyi had a scaled-down version of the Shwe-maw-daw Pagoda of Pegu built to allay her sadness. Shin-nhoung continued to express discontent at being in Mrauk-U, so Min Yazagyi had

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<sup>300</sup> To be fair to Min Yazagyi, he was not totally negligent of some of his traditional kingly duties: repaired some of the pagodas of his predecessors, such as the Andaw, Sandaw, and Nandaw *cetis* at Sandoway, and even built a new pagoda, the Parabo pagoda. See Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, 16.

<sup>301</sup> She also made a fuss about her treatment relative to Min Yazagyi's chief queen, who was at his honored right hand, while Shin-nhoung was at Min Yazagyi's left. See Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 187.

<sup>302</sup> San Baw U, "My Rambles," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 11 (1921): 165-166.

<sup>303</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol I, 127.

a huge pleasure park, the Mvin-mho-daung, built. This park was enormous and probably required an enormous amount of labor to build:

Mvin-mho-daung represent[ed] Mount Meru, surrounded by four large islands, and seven circular ranges of mountains varied in heights lower and lower until the last and the lowest one reaches the edges of the five great oceans, into which the waters of the five hundred rivers flow unceasingly. To this pleasure ground the King, his queen and Royal Household often used to repair and bathed in the cool and crystal waters of its lakes.<sup>304</sup>

Min Yazagyi also indulged in other luxuries. A good example is that of Min Yazagyi's treasured pleasure boat, which was kept on the river next to Mrauk-U. As Fariah y Sousa has described it:

[It was] a ship which he kept in that Port for to take his Pleasure. It was of a vast bigness, and wonderful Workmanship, with several Apartments like a Palace, all covered with Gold and Ivory, and yet the curiosity of the Work surpassed all the rest.<sup>305</sup>

This boat was certainly a status symbol, or a piece of royal regalia, which probably enhanced the royal aura of Min Yazagyi and thus helped the perception of his legitimacy. But this ship also represents Min Yazagyi's overwhelming preoccupation with himself at the expense of the good governance and leadership of his kingdom.

As Min Yazagyi began to involve himself more in the glory of his own personage, he also began to let the actual governance of his kingdom slip out of his hands and into the hands of his ministers and members of the royal family. This was dangerous: the advisors who surrounded him were not the same capable ministers who guided Min Bin and his other predecessors. Indeed, after Min Yazagyi returned from his conquest of Pegu, his prime minister, Maha Pyinnya-gyaw, who had guided Min Bin and succeeding kings in their reconstruction of the Arakanese military, died.<sup>306</sup> Maha Pyinnya-gyaw had played a large part in the quick build-up of Arakanese strength and without him a vacuum

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<sup>304</sup> San Baw U, "My Rambles," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 11 (1921): 165-166.

<sup>305</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 161.

<sup>306</sup> Maha Pyinnya-gyaw was buried at Cape Negrais and a pagoda was built above his grave "in proof of the high esteem and respect shewn for him, and to commemorate his successful operations in Hanthawaddy." The exact location of this pagoda on Cape Negrais became known as Pagoda Point. See San Baw U, "My Rambles," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 11 (1921): 167.

of authority developed under Min Yazagyi, which could not easily be filled adequately. Since Min Yazagyi now left his state to the control of his ministers, these ministers and members of the royal family engaged in court intrigues and plots to seize power were hatched by many in the Arakanese administration.

One example of the erosion of Arakanese solidarity under the king could be found within the royal family itself. As I mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, the poet Ugga Byan was the tutor of the royal prince Min Khamaung. These two men were not content to simply live at the palace in a relaxed state of luxury and sexual debauchery:

The prince, Min-Kamaung, was wild and he found in his tutor a boon companion. They had a band of youthful supporters, Nga Ru, Nga Piu, Nga Gru, ten of them, and they lived that life of erudition and of the imagination wedded to fighting, brawling, feats of arms and of endurance, the tradition of which is familiar to us from a study of the European Renaissance.<sup>307</sup>

A few years before Min Yazagyi invaded Pegu, Ugga Byan, Prince Min-Kamaung, and their ten supporters had tried to overthrow Min Yazagyi. The plot was discovered, however, and this band of royal rebels fled to Pegu. Ugga Byan's poetry was popular with the people, however, and so was Min Khamaung, so Min Yazagyi forgave them and allowed them to return to Mrauk-U. During the siege of Pegu, however, these men rebelled a second time and crossed the lines to join the defense of Pegu. When it was clear that Pegu would fall, however, this band of rebels "cut their way out again." Min Yazagyi was so impressed by this "feat" that he again pardoned them.<sup>308</sup>

Ugga Byan and Min Khamaung now saw that Min Yazagyi was losing control over his kingdom to his ministers and decided to raise a general rebellion against him. Their band went to Sandoway, Min Bin's old *myo*, which was "full of Pagoda slaves, Mahomedan prisoners of war confined there to sweep out the three sacred shrines," Andaw, Sandaw, and Nandaw.<sup>309</sup> Other forces hostile to Min Yazagyi were present at Sandoway as well: thousands of Mons captured by Min Yazagyi during the Arakanese conquest of Lower Burma were resettled here, and one thousand of them previously escaped, but had been caught and returned.<sup>310</sup> Freeing them, Ugga Byan and Min Khamaung led the rebel

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<sup>307</sup> Collis, "An Arakanese Poem of the 16th Century," 221.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 221-2.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>310</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 141.

army against Mrauk-U. Min Yazagyi was shaken out of his retirement from the duties of the state when he heard that his son and Ugga Byan, who he had two times before pardoned for rebellion, were ready to unseat him. Min Yazagyi gathered an army and crushed the rebel army.<sup>311</sup> Min Yazagyi forgave his son, Min Khamaung, and instead of putting Ugga Byan to death, lopped off his hands and made him a slave to the Mahamuni shrine.<sup>312</sup> Maurice Collis explains, however, that Ugga Byan's punishment was much more tragic than it would immediately appear:

It is difficult for us to understand the full significance of that punishment. It was the most complete social downfall that could overtake a man. For one who had strutted in King's Courts, a poet and a hero, the equal of princes, it was death, and Ugga Byan accepted it as such.<sup>313</sup>

Min Yazagyi then returned his undivided attention away from his kingdom and back to his queen.

Min Yazagyi began to indulge in his "aura of greatness" and was beginning to lose touch with the kingdom that Min Bin and his other predecessors had so carefully built. Certainly Min Yazagyi was among the most powerful Arakanese kings, but he was not the most capable. Further, the kingdom of Arakan was slipping out of his hands, and without the great prime minister who held everything together from king to king for a half-century, everything was about ready to fall apart. Indeed, Min Yazagyi's empire was now characterized by court intrigues in Mrauk-U and the defense of his eastern and western frontiers was left to autonomous groups of Portuguese mercenaries who were likely, if the opportunity arose, to overthrow Arakanese tutelage.

### **Court Intrigues**

Many in Arakan saw Min Yazagyi's growing disinterest in directly managing his empire and they probably saw the unsavoriness of the Portuguese whose power and influence began to grow unchecked by

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<sup>311</sup> It may be possible that Philip de Brito and his Portuguese, who formed part of the royal bodyguard, had played a major role in saving Min Yazagyi's position on the throne. Guerreiro, for example, says vaguely that De Brito "twice restored him to his throne, when he had been driven from it by his rebellious subjects." See Guerreiro, Payne trans., op. cit., 194.

<sup>312</sup> Collis, "An Arakanese Poem of the 16th Century," 222; See Harvey, *History of Burma*, 141 for the condemnation of Ugga Byan to have his hands cut off.

<sup>313</sup> Collis, "An Arakanese Poem of the 16th Century," 222.

royal restrictions. They were worried about leaving Syriam in the hands of Portuguese mercenaries and De Brito's increasing wealth and power may have provoked jealousy on the part of not a few Arakanese courtiers. Min Yazagyi was advised by Arakanese courtiers and others to attack the Portuguese as soon as possible, before the Portuguese position at Syriam was too strong for Min Yazagyi to maintain his control over the important port. One of those who tried to push Min Yazagyi against De Brito was a Min Yazagyi favorite, called Rume. Rume was aided in his efforts by Moslems present in the Arakanese court as well as by representatives of the king of Massulipatam ( a maritime state in Eastern India). The anti-Portuguese faction at the Arakanese court grew after the king of Massulipatam's representatives bribed important officials at the Arakanese court with "large presents."<sup>314</sup>

Min Yazagyi became interested in their advice when they told him that if the Portuguese were removed from Syriam and an Islamic community was established, a pro-Arakanese Islamic community of over twenty thousand Moslems could be established within two years. As a further enticement, it was suggested by these courtiers that this Islamic community would send an annual tribute of two "bares" to Min Yazagyi. The anti-De Brito faction at the Arakanese court also persuaded Min Yazagyi to believe that the material wealth of Pegu was too great to place into the trust of the Portuguese, who they claimed were "very difficult to dislodge from a place where they had taken root:"

The country, they said, had lost its population, but not its mines of gold and silver and precious stones, and the rivers which enriched its soil still ran to the sea. His majesty should, therefore, consider well into whose hands he delivered this port. The Moors, he knew, would always be garibos, that is very submissive, with no other desire but to live under his protection.<sup>315</sup>

The anti-De Brito faction made the argument that if Arakanese forces would retake Syriam, and then place it under Islamic local government, a valuable alliance with the king of Massulipatam could be maintained "forever."<sup>316</sup>

De Brito soon came to the Arakanese court to quiet the rumors of his plans to rebel against Min Yazagyi. De Brito claimed that the

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<sup>314</sup> Father Fernão Guerreiro, "The Mission to Pegu," In *Jahangir and the Jesuits With an Account of the Travels of Benedict Goes and The Mission to Pegu: From the Relations of Father Fernão Guerreiro*, translated by C. H. Payne, (New York: Robert M. McBride & company, 1930): 195-196.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid

<sup>316</sup> Ibid

Moslems at Syriam were the real threat to Min Yazagyi's power. De Brito explained that the Islamic power of Akbar the Great was ready to seize Arakanese possessions in Bengal and the Min Yazagyi depended upon Portuguese help to secure his kingdom. On the other hand, De Brito argued, if Min Yazagyi decided to attack the Portuguese at Syriam, he could not hope to win since the Portuguese were "lords of the sea." While Min Yazagyi might kill the fifty Portuguese at Syriam, "a thousand would come to take their place; so that there would be perpetual warfare until he was destroyed." De Brito's argument was supported when the viceroy of Goa's ambassador, Gaspar da Silva, arrived at the Arakanese court during De Brito's visit. In order to further persuade Min Yazagyi of the necessities of remaining on good terms with the Portuguese, Da Silva made an open suggestion to De Brito that he should go to Goa and obtain a Portuguese fleet to fight Akbar in Bengal on Min Yazagyi's behalf.<sup>317</sup>

Once De Brito and Da Silva had left, however, the anti-De Brito faction at the Arakanese court recommenced their claims that De Brito was about to rebel. This time, they pointed out that De Brito was constructing fortifications. Min Yazagyi was not entirely convinced, but to be safe, he sent messengers with a letter which ordered De Brito to "pull down all that he had built." De Brito took advantage of the court politics in Arakan by playing the game as the king of Massulipatam was. De Brito first bribed Min Yazagyi's messengers to tell Min Yazagyi that he could not hope to defeat the Portuguese position at Syriam. Second, De Brito bribed important members of the Arakanese government who were close to Min Yazagyi. De Brito also tried to win Min Yazagyi's favor by sending him a present with a golden girdle, which together were worth thirty-two thousand *cruzados*.<sup>318</sup>

### **Binnya Dala**

Min Yazagyi's representative at Syriam, a Mon named Binnya Dala,<sup>319</sup> was suspicious of De Brito's actions. Binnya Dala was the lord of the local town of Dala and had his own ambitions for local power, which made him extremely cautious in his dealings with the Portuguese mercenaries.<sup>320</sup> Binnya Dala guessed correctly that De Brito and his Portuguese mercenary contingent had their own plans independent of

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid., 196-197.

<sup>319</sup> *Binnya* is the Mon title for "lord of the land." See Guerreiro, Payne trans., op. cit., 261f.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid., 198.



Arakanese policy, and his fears were confirmed in his eyes by the Portuguese request that he and the Moslem mercenary contingent be removed from Syriam. He apparently felt that Min Yazagyi would not believe him, since Min Yazagyi did not seem inclined to waste his energy to investigate Binnya Dala's warnings. Binnya Dala thus decided to secure his own position at Syriam independent of the Portuguese: he built a small fortress, with sentry-boxes, and refused to allow any Portuguese to enter it, with the sole exception of a single Dominican priest, Frei Belchior da Luz, whom Binnya Dala trusted.<sup>321</sup>

De Brito saw his plans for taking control of Syriam away from the Arakanese endangered: he decided to get rid of Binnya Dala before Binnya Dala's defense works were completely finished. De Brito gathered fifty Portuguese mercenaries<sup>322</sup> and with three Portuguese officers, João d'Oliva, Paulo do Rego, and Salvador Ribeyro, planned to surprise Binnya Dala and take over Binnya Dala's fortress. Binnya Dala, however, realized what the Portuguese were up to and decided to get them first. At night, with six hundred men led by large "flaming carts," Binnya Dala encircled and then assaulted the Portuguese fortress and the San Dominican church. Binnya Dala's attack was successful and the Portuguese were driven out of their *feitoria* (factory).<sup>323</sup> A Portuguese counterattack on 27 February 1602, however, left thirty of Binnya Dala's men dead. The Portuguese captured ninety more Moslems as well as twelve of Binnya Dala's ships, twenty horses, and all of Binnya Dala's supplies.<sup>324</sup> The Portuguese forced Binnya Dala to retreat to the small island of Delá which was not too far distant. There, Binnya Dala erected another fortress with about one thousand of his men.<sup>325</sup>

Min Yazagyi was told of what happened and belatedly decided to act: he prepared a large Arakanese fleet to relieve Binnya Dala. Further, Min Yazagyi planned to send this fleet under the leadership of Min Khamaung, who would be crowned as the new emperor of Pegu once the Portuguese had been thrown out of Syriam.<sup>326</sup> Binnya Dala, however, had made the mistake of seizing the treasury of the Digão (Digan) Pagoda in order to buy supplies for his men. This mistake gave De Brito the evidence that he needed to convince Min Yazagyi that the skirmish was Binnya Dala's fault. Philip de Brito went quickly to Mrauk-U with this

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<sup>321</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 127-8; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 128.

<sup>322</sup> Each to be paid a quartel of one hundred *pardaos*. See Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 128.

<sup>323</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 127-128; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 129.

<sup>324</sup> Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 198; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 129.

<sup>325</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 127-128.

<sup>326</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 130.

information informed Min Yazagyi as well as repeating the earlier Portuguese demands for Binnya Dala's removal. At the same time that De Brito was accusing Binnya Dala of being a "a robber that steals from the house of God"<sup>327</sup> to Min Yazagyi, however, De Brito was preparing to send word to various Mon princes that this was the time to rebel, under Portuguese leadership, against Arakanese control.<sup>328</sup> De Brito kept his true intentions secret, and he accepted Min Yazagyi's suggestion that good relations between the Portuguese and Binnya Dala should be resumed. To help the two parties negotiate, Min Yazagyi sent an escort of forty *jalias* with De Brito as well as several Arakanese princes to serve as intermediaries. Friendly relations between Binnya Dala and the Portuguese were resumed shortly after De Brito's arrival at Syriam, although the Portuguese seem to be clearly established as the dominant party there.<sup>329</sup>

For the next two years, from 1601 to 1603, the Portuguese *feitoria* at Syriam collected the duties from passing ships. A large share of these duties went directly to Min Yazagyi and substantially increased the supply of wealth for redistribution by Min Yazagyi to his subjects. De Brito collected duties on trade going up and down the river and sent them to Min Yazagyi. At the same time, however, De Brito engaged in private trade, the profits of which made him very wealthy. Although De Brito only had fifty other Portuguese,<sup>330</sup> his growing wealth soon attracted other Portuguese to Syriam, warranting De Brito's invitation for representatives of the Society of Jesus to come to service the religious needs of the growing Portuguese population.<sup>331</sup> The Arakanese military also benefited from using Syriam as a way-station, since the Portuguese *feitoria* not only possessed accommodations for the Portuguese mercenaries, foreign traders, and San Dominicans, but also accommodated Arakanese naval captains.<sup>332</sup>

De Brito realized, however, that it would not be very long before Min Yazagyi's advisers would be able to persuade him to attack Syriam directly. At the same time, De Brito felt that the Portuguese had

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<sup>327</sup> "um Ladrão que roubou a casa do mesmo Deus," See Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 130.

<sup>328</sup> Mousinho, MacGregor trans., *op. cit.*, 115; Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 128-129; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 130.

<sup>329</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 130.

<sup>330</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 185.

<sup>331</sup> Boves, "Indian Observations," in Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 217.

<sup>332</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 130-1.

succeeded in erecting great defense works,<sup>333</sup> and that he was now in a position to make himself an independent lord. De Brito sent representatives to local Mon *myóza* asking for alliances and peace pacts, while warning them not to ally themselves to Min Yazagyi, who was “the common enemy of all.” De Brito’s representatives were successful in obtaining promises for peace and mutual defense aid from the kings of Prome, Chiengmai,<sup>334</sup> and several other smaller states. The representative sent to Ayudhya, however, met with failure: a Portuguese advisor at the Siamese court, Martim de Torres, warned the king of Ayudhya “to have nothing to do with Felipe de Brito.” While the king of Ayudhya made no promises of friendship to De Brito, he tried to avoid making De Brito an enemy: the Ayudhyans sent De Brito forty Portuguese, whom they held as captives.<sup>335</sup> De Brito decided to go to Goa to convince the viceroy that further Portuguese help was needed, with the argument that this was an excellent opportunity for the Portuguese to take over the whole of Bengal as well.<sup>336</sup>

### **Ribeyro Takes Control of Syriam**

Min Yazagyi, however, now knew that he had been tricked. He was informed of the Portuguese fortifications and that he had been wrong to trust the Portuguese, “as such a great fabric could no longer hide itself under the name of merchants’ warehouse.” Min Yazagyi realized that he should have listened to the protests of the Moslems and requested that the king of Prome and Binnya Dala defeat the Portuguese at Syriam. To support this effort, Min Yazagyi sent a fleet of fifty *jalias* “with orders to take the new fortress of Serião, and kill all the Portuguese that were in it.”<sup>337</sup> Binnya Dala’s son-in-law, Binnya Lao, led a large army to crush the Portuguese and the king of Prome subsequently sent six thousand men in a fleet under the command of Binnya Dala to unseat the Portuguese.<sup>338</sup> Min Yazagyi hoped that this would be done before Philip de Brito returned: he hoped that “when Philip de Brito returned from India with his new new collection of forces, they (the Arakanese) would

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<sup>333</sup> The Portuguese fortress at this time, however, was only “a stronghold of wood filled in with earth.” See Mousinho, Macgregor trans., *op. cit.*, 114.

<sup>334</sup> Various Portuguese accounts refer to Chiengmai as Jangoma. See Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 261f, note 10.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>336</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 128-129.

<sup>337</sup> “com ordem que tomassem a nova fortaleza de Serião, e matassem todos os portuguezes que n’ella estavam.” See Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 131.

<sup>338</sup> Mousinho, Macgregor trans., *op. cit.*, 115.

thus be able to capture him and all those he brought with him more easily.”<sup>339</sup>

De Brito had already left for Goa, according to his plan mentioned earlier. In his place, Salvador Ribeyro now commanded the Portuguese mercenaries at Syriam. Salvador Ribeyro blocked the Arakanese fleet's path with three trading ships that were available at Syriam. The Portuguese were armed with “firearms, jars of powder, and fire-lances, for there were no cannon.” Ribeyro was determined to make a point of the coming skirmish:

He decided that in this first encounter with the native foe it imported much to show by his valour the small account in which he held them, and that the Portuguese should attack fiercely and fight with generous mettle to maintain the reputation they held all over the East; a reputation which, acquired by astonishing exploits, had made them the terror of wide provinces and warlike peoples, Persians, Moguls, Tartars and others whose valour oft in ancient times checked the current of Roman victory, and today sufficiently embarrasses the conquering Turk.<sup>340</sup>

Ribeyro placed his ships at the narrowest part of the river to concentrate his firepower on the mass of enemy ships. He took the Arakanese by surprise:

[They were] attacked with such fury and determination that defend themselves as they might, they were caught before they knew it, and under a deadly shower of bullets and powder jars obliged to take to inglorious flight. Some threw themselves into the water, others jumped ashore, while those farther off took to their oars for safety and returned the way they had come, but with very different speed.<sup>341</sup>

The Portuguese destroyed forty Arakanese ships, killing many Arakanese and routing the rest of the Arakanese fleet. The Portuguese victory soon forced some of the indigenous population to question who was really in charge at Syriam:

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<sup>339</sup> “quando Philippe de Brito voltasse da India não todos os que comsigo trouxesse.” See Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 131.

<sup>340</sup> Mousinho, MacGregor trans., *op. cit.*, vol. I, 115-116.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

The story soon reached the neighboring Kingdoms, and produced various effects on their Princes, every one of whom felt sick with the fear which the Portuguese arms engendered forseeing that the little flame might end in a conflagration which would consume everything.<sup>342</sup>

Ribeyro subsequently returned to the fort to prepare the defense-works for later attacks. Twenty days later Binnya Lao attacked Syriam again with six thousand men. Since the Portuguese seemed invincible by sea, Binnya Lao determined to attack the Portuguese by land. He also convinced the king of Prome to join him in the attack on Syriam. Before they had joined forces, however, Ribeyro captured a boat, sent by the king of Prome to Binnya Lao to inform him that Prome's army was on its way. Ribeyro sank the boat and beheaded its crew and officers. Binnya Lao was threatened by the king of Toungoo as well, since the king of Toungoo had attacked him earlier in order to subject him to Toungoo's control. While Binnya Lao had defeated the Toungoo army, he felt that it was probable that they would attack again. Making his headquarters near a "small tidal creek" near the fort of Syriam, Binnya Lao hesitated, waiting for the king of Prome's army in order to attack Syriam while at the same time preparing to defend himself from the king of Toungoo.<sup>343</sup>

Ribeyro decided to attack Binnya Lao since his army was obviously in disarray. He placed four wounded Portuguese near Binnya Lao's headquarters at night and instructed them to beat drums and set off carbines when they saw rockets explode in the enemy camp. Ribeyro and his remaining men prepared to attack Binnya Lao, who expected the least trouble from the Portuguese since he knew of their small numbers: Binnya Lao had not even posted any sentries to watch for a possible Portuguese attack. The Portuguese snuck through Binnya Lao's camp while everyone was asleep and, Ribeyro, entering Binnya Lao's quarters, killed the Arakanese leader. The Portuguese fired a signal rocket and the four wounded Portuguese began to beat drums and fire the carbines, leading the Arakanese to believe that they were being attacked by the king of Toungoo fled in disarray. The Portuguese then burned down the enemy encampment. The king of Prome retreated from his position when heard of Binnya Lao's death. He also recanted his alliance with Binnya Lao:

When the fame of it spread, the King of Prome sent an envoy to Captain Salvador Ribeyro to assure him that the orders of his army were not to injure him but to fight the dead Lao, for setting up,

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<sup>342</sup> Ibid

<sup>343</sup> Ibid., 116-7

private subject as he was, to be King of Pegu; wherefore he thanked our Captain for ridding him of such an enemy, and cutting down in time the arrogance of a man hated by all for his ill-founded designs.<sup>344</sup>

### **Binnya Dala's Siege**

Binnya Dala was furious and wanted to revenge the death of his son-in-law Binnya Lao. He gathered munitions, supplies, and over eight thousand men and surrounded Syriam. In order to prevent an easy Portuguese victory, Binnya Dala took great precautions:

To guard against the fury of the sudden attacks which he was told it was their habit to make when hard beset, he made another fort close to ours, exceeding ours greatly in size, but not less strong; for he had a great number of men, and every day more joined him, so that it might be called a veritable town rather than a fort. There were wide roads in it, and spacious squares, and public buildings for the residence both of Banha Dalá and the Ximins, or captains, and other officers of war and justice. It was enclosed by a massive palisade of wood, bound by two courses of timber and filled in with earth, and was so strong between the courses that it threw back the balls of the cannon which battered it...At its base was a hollow that ran all the way round; with raised approaches of firm earth to the gates required for the convenience of the inhabitants; these gates being watched during the day and shut at night, and always in charge of a good and trusty guard.<sup>345</sup>

Binnya Dala's siege continued for eight months. His attacks on the Portuguese came every night and only when it was dark, so as to minimize the effect of cannon, hand-grenades or "hand-bombs," and musket-fire. In addition, the Portuguese were unable to concentrate their firepower since Binnya Dala's men attacked from all sides at once. The effect of Binnya Dala's siege was terrifying for the Portuguese:

The enemy employed every possible artifice to inflict loss on our men. Sometimes they would first of all discharge thirteen pieces of artillery which they had in their fort, and with which they overshot ours if they took elevated aim; next followed a great noise of shouting, beating of kettledrums and other instruments of war, and rattle of musketry, and presently the enemy themselves would come

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<sup>344</sup> Ibid., 117-118.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid., 119-120.

with a rush under cover of strong mantles made of wood, and some with a kind of pavases, or broad shields, and passing the hollow not without many losses would begin to come up our walls, only with great trouble to be beaten back. At other times they crept up in silence, unperceived until they began at close quarters to strike at the little band of soldiers...<sup>346</sup>

The Portuguese defenders had become demoralized. They were afraid that since the fort at Syriam had not been built with the blessing of Goa, that no help would come. Soon, many of the Portuguese began to desert. The remaining Portuguese soldiers “took a mutinous tone” demanding that they abandon the fort since they could not defend it for very much longer. But Ribeyro encouraged his remaining followers. He argued that the viceroy would send help and if he did not, then Ribeyro would abandon the fort and they would all depart. As a guarantee against desertion *en masse*, Ribeyro had the ships in the port burned, blaming it on the enemy.<sup>347</sup>

After eight months of siege, however, reinforcements arrived. Although it is unclear whether these were reinforcements sent by Goa or a chance passing of Portuguese ships, the defenders at Syriam were saved.<sup>348</sup> A Portuguese merchant ship arrived at the sandbar and a few days later, so did seven more Portuguese merchant ships as well as five Portuguese galleys. The Portuguese ships brought eight hundred Portuguese mercenaries. Help came from the Mons as well, and in one case a Mon *ximin* (captain), Barragao, joined the Portuguese with fifteen hundred of his men.<sup>349</sup> With his new men and supplies, Ribeyro felt that he was strong enough to lift the siege.<sup>350</sup>

Ribeyro quickly prepared for an attack on Binnya Dala’s camp. He gathered together all the adventurers and made them pledge to follow his orders. Then Ribeyro,

got in order plenty of ladders and broad and strong planks, to afford the soldiers a way across the hollow to the enemy’s fort, and prepared a great quantity of powder-jars in cases, for the orderlies to carry among those who had to throw them. He also gave orders to

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid

<sup>347</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>348</sup> Scott argues that these Portuguese forces may have only been an “opportune passing call by some of the viceroy’s ships, for they soon left.” See J.G. Scott, *Burma From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, (London: T. Ficher Unwin Ltd., 1924): 128.

<sup>349</sup> Mousinho, MacGregor trans., *op. cit.*, 213-214.

<sup>350</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 130.

rough-hew several thick logs, what the ancients called *arietes*, and with rams, to break in the gates when that time came.<sup>351</sup>

Although the preparations for the attack had been conducted in secrecy, a Moslem “of the king of Arakan’s following” told Binnya Dala of what Ribeyro was planning. Binnya Dala then evacuated all the women and non-essential personnel from his fort. Since the powder-jars would likely inflict the most damage upon his forces, Binnya Dala had huge posts set up inside his walls and strung between them huge nets which would catch the powder-jars and send them flying back at the Portuguese when they attacked.<sup>352</sup>

Ribeyro divided his forces into three sections. The first (and the main) section consisted of five hundred Portuguese and was under the command of João Pereyra, although Ribeyro would accompany this section as well. The first section also carried the equipment necessary to scale the walls. The second section consisted of one hundred and fifty Portuguese and was under the joint-command of Jorge de Barros de Azevedo and Sebastião Serrao de Anaya. This section was to occupy the ruined pagodas in front of the enemy’s main gate, in order to prevent any major counterattack against the main section. The third section also consisted of one hundred and fifty Portuguese, as well as one thousand Mons, under the command of Simão Barbosa Aranha. This section was to make a show of force from the tidal creek in a feint and thus draw off a large portion of the enemy from the main area of attack.<sup>353</sup>

The morning of the attack, just before dawn, the three sections left the fort by different gates. When the attack began, however, the Portuguese were taken by surprise by the preparations Binnya Dala made after being warned of the impending attack by the Arakanese informant. When Captain João Pereyra’s section scaled the enemy walls, the powder-jars they had thrown came flying back, killing many, including Pereyra, and causing many other Portuguese to retreat. In order to prevent a full-scale rout, Ribeyro joined the fighting, scaled the walls, and had his men cut through the netting, which allowed the powder-jars to fall in. After the powder-jars had taken their effect, Ribeyro and his men jumped into the fort. With men inside the fort, covered by musket-fire and powder-jars from their compatriots still on the enemy’s walls, the Portuguese took the main gate and opened it to the remaining Portuguese of the main section. The section under Simão Barbosa Aranha, which was posted at the tidal creek waited while

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<sup>351</sup> Mousinho, MacGregor trans., *op. cit.*, 125.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid

<sup>353</sup> Ibid



Ribeyro's section attacked. Becoming impatient, however, Aranha attacked, leading the enemy to think that he was being attacked from all sides. Since Barbosa's forces were mainly Mons, Binnya Dala's forces felt that it would be easier to get through them than through Ribeyro's Portuguese. Thus the enemy and Binnya Dala overran the forces at the tidal creek in order to make their escape.<sup>354</sup>

### **Binnya Dala's Counterattack**

The Portuguese force, however, soon diminished in numbers. First, the barter-trade between the Portuguese, Toungoo, and Prome merchants was now finishing up for the year and these merchants soon left.<sup>355</sup> Further, feeling that Portuguese might no longer be challenged in Pegu, Ribeyro released all of his men to do as they wished; only two hundred of the men which the viceroy had sent remained.<sup>356</sup> In addition, Ribeyro could depend upon Ximin Barragao and his Mon contingent.<sup>357</sup>

The Arakanese returned again, however, "with many moving Castles, and several forts of fireworks."<sup>358</sup> These "moving castles" must have been very frightening to the Portuguese:

[Binnya Dala] constructed many huge cars of three and four storeys, supported on strongest axles with enormous wheels, to be pushed along, or pulled with ropes, by a great number of men protected by long thick shields to enable them to lay the machine close alongside our Fort wall in spite of carbines and burning powder-jars. These tall towers were made of very dry timber, and stuffed with pitch, tar, and powder, so to blaze freely when set on fire close to the walls of the Portuguese Fort, which likewise were of wood...Moreover the Banha provided many men with mattocks, baskets, shovels and other instruments to fill in the hollow.<sup>359</sup>

Ribeyro's men, however, were short of gun-powder and powder-jars. Despite this, Ribeyro gave inspiring speeches to his men and set about preparing any materials he could for defense. Boiling cauldrons of oil and water were begun, rocks were gathered to drop on the enemy, and missiles were prepared. In addition, Ribeyro saw to the aid of the Ximin

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<sup>354</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>356</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 130.

<sup>357</sup> Mousinho, MacGregor trans., *op. cit.*, 128.

<sup>358</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 130.

<sup>359</sup> Mousinho, MacGregor trans., *op. cit.*, 128-129.

Barragao, who kept residence in defense-works which adjoined the Portuguese fort to the south, along the river. Many Portuguese were stationed here and Ribeyro sometimes helped in person.<sup>360</sup>

Binnya Dala, however, realized that the section of the Portuguese fortress occupied by Ximin Barragao was the least fortified part of the Portuguese defense works and determined to make his main strike here. Binnya Dala began his attack after sunset. Five hundred enemy horsemen gathered on a ridge in front of the fort and then eight thousand soldiers of Binnya Dala's army approached "with a din and hubbub of shouts, war-cries, and martial instruments of every kind." Subsequently, Binnya Dala's men drew up on all sides of the Portuguese fort and threw spears, fired their arquebuses and threw fire-bombs. Meanwhile, Binnya Dala had many of his men gather in small boats in order to sneak upon Barragao's section of the fort. Although Binnya Dala's men succeeded two times in entering Barragao's defense-works they were repulsed both times.<sup>361</sup>

Ribeyro had fifty of his men established as a reinforcement brigade under his command. This brigade went around the fort looking for weak spots in the defense. Since he saw Barragao's section as the most vulnerable part of the fortress, Ribeyro had several huge trenches dug to prevent the approach of Binnya Dala's moving castles. So vital were the Mons to his defense that Ribeyro often stationed himself among them during the fighting.<sup>362</sup>

As the Portuguese position became desperate, a "fiery meteor" appeared which frightened all of the Arakanese into retreat. As one Portuguese observer interpreted the meteor:

...when the enemy's attack was hottest and our men stood bravely to their ramparts, the Divine Majesty caused to appear above the Fort a wheel of fire equal to the circuit of the walls. Little by little it rose, growing ever larger, and then settled down with bright and burning flames upon the machines and the encampment of the enemy, to their great fear, and great comfort of our men, who seeing in the marvel the mercy of God's pitiful hand, gave thanks and discharged their carbines and cannon with loud cries of joy and gladness. The assailants, interpreting the sign for a sure and veritable token of their own destruction, in the greatest terror abandoned their proud machines and their encampment with all their munitions, which our soldiers burned. The Banha, in despair

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<sup>360</sup> Ibid., 129-130.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid

<sup>362</sup> Ibid

of attaining to royal dignity and fear of losing his own lordship. withdrew dejected to places of safety...<sup>363</sup>

The Arakanese left behind their moving castles and fireworks, which the Portuguese destroyed.<sup>364</sup>

Binnya Dala first fled to his own territory of Dala, but local chieftains associated with Ribeyro harassed him into seeking refuge with the King of Prome. Other Arakanese and First Toungoo refugees from the Portuguese victory, fled to the ruler of Chismim (Bassein), which was a vassal of the king of Arakan. When this vassal ruler heard that the Portuguese had revolted against Arakan, he had his city and his feitoria fortified and entered into negotiations with the king of Arakan about what he should do. Min Yazagyi must have worried about losing his last foothold in Lower Burma, for he soon sent small pieces of artillery and musketeers to the Binnya of Cosmim so that the Portuguese would not be able to take over his city.<sup>365</sup>

Ribeyro, for his part, made public declarations to the effect that all who had fought against him would be forgiven if they gave him their loyalty. He also took economic measures to reestablish the prosperity of Pegu.<sup>366</sup> As the result of Ribeyro's victory and his subsequent reforms, the Portuguese now won the support of many of the people of Pegu. Soon, the Portuguese had the support of over two thousand Mon men, who brought their families with them to settle in Syriam.<sup>367</sup>

### **The Defeat of King Massinga**

In May, ships from Goa arrived. They carried letters from the viceroy and the King of Portugal. In these letters, De Brito was mistakenly given credit for Ribeyro's victories, even though De Brito was in Goa the whole time. Ribeyro, however, felt that once the truth were known, he would be credited, and he continued to maintain the Portuguese position at Syriam. Ribeyro sent his own accounts of all that had happened to the viceroy.<sup>368</sup>

At the same time, the Portuguese won a victory over King Massinga of Camelan. Binnya Lao wrote to Massinga, telling him of the poor condition of Pegu and how, if the king would come with an army, he

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<sup>363</sup> Mousinho, MacGregor trans., *op. cit.*, 130.

<sup>364</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 130.

<sup>365</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 132.

<sup>366</sup> Mousinho, MacGregor trans., *op. cit.*, 133.

<sup>367</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 132.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, 131.

could make himself king of Pegu as well. Binnya Lao pledged his support, as well as that of the native inhabitants. Massinga saw this as a great opportunity to take the throne of Pegu, to which he seems to have had some right: he is said to have been “of the royal line of Pegu.”<sup>369</sup> He brought his “family and household,” ten thousand soldiers, as well as attendants and women, in 150 ships to Pegu. Massinga stopped, however, at an important pagoda about a league from the Portuguese fort for ceremonies to inaugurate his takeover.<sup>370</sup>

Ribeyro heard of Massinga’s landing and decided that his men, Portuguese or Mon, would not be able to stand another siege. Thus, Ribeyro decided to attack Massinga before Massinga could attack him. Leaving one hundred Portuguese in the fort, Ribeyro took one hundred and fifty men armed with carbines and artillery, in fifteen small boats down-river. There they waited along the rivers-edge, unseen by Massinga’s boats. Ribeyro sneaked upon Massinga’s fleet at a time that most of Massinga’s men were at the pagoda in ceremony. Massinga, however, had finished opening the ceremony and had returned to his fleet, defended by only a fraction of his men. Ribeyro’s men easily defeated them.<sup>371</sup>

Our men attacked with great noise of carbines and artillery, but hardly had need of their wonted dash on occasions of the kind, for the unexpected alarm threw the enemy in a panic and they fled after very little resistance. In the victor’s hands were left the multitude of nearly empty boats and seven pieces of artillery. Those who had landed, not feeling safe where they were, left their devotions and took to the jungle, trusting to its dense thickets to escape with their lives.<sup>372</sup>

Massinga was killed and his territories were devastated so much, that no further threat was expected from this area.<sup>373</sup>

As a result of this victory, Ribeyro soon accepted the support of fifteen *binnyas* and two hundred or so *ximins*, as well as that of thousands of Mon refugees who now came to Syriam for safety. By October 1613, Syriam had around fifteen thousand people engaged in agriculture.<sup>374</sup> Ribeyro then received offers of friendship from the

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<sup>369</sup> Mousinho, MacGregor trans., *op. cit.*, 132.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>373</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 130-131.

<sup>374</sup> Mousinho, MacGregor trans., *op. cit.*, 133; Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 195.

Burmese kingdoms as well. The king of Toungoo, for example, sent an ambassador with five hundred horses and a gold headpiece inscribed with “King Massinga,” as a trophy for Ribeyro. The king of Ava sent “three pieces of orange-coloured damask.” The king of Chiengmai sent six golden roses and the king of Prome sent a congratulatory gift as well.<sup>375</sup> With the help of the increased population around Syriam, as well as that of the masons and quarriers sent from Goa, Ribeyro built a new fortress at Syriam. While Min Yazagyi was frantically trying to rebuild his military forces, which he had allowed to be destroyed fruitlessly under poor military commanders, five thousand Mons and Portuguese worked on their new fortress at Syriam each day. Soon the Portuguese fortress seemed impregnable:

[Ribeyro] marked a hillock which overlooked the wide and spacious plain on the bank of the river, having near it a well with a plentiful flow of good water. There he commenced the foundations of a good Fort, which he built almost in the form of a square, with a bastion at each corner...he made a double bastion, which as it stands higher and is constructed bigger, appears as the citadel of that Fort...The walls of the bastions are eleven spans thick, filled in with earth up to the artillery platform with its necessary portholes. The walls elsewhere are made of stone...the waves...break against our two bastions of Santa Cruz and S. Filippe, and between them the ship that come to that harbour can discharge and take in cargo in perfect safety under the protection of the artillery...the result is a Fort which, as it cannot be commanded by hostile artillery, can with ease not only defend itself but also take the offensive against the enemy.<sup>376</sup>

### **De Brito in Goa**

But Ribeyro was not to rule Syriam for long: shortly after his final battle with Binnya Dala, De Brito was preparing to return to Syriam from Goa. Before he had left Goa, De Brito had won the favor of the viceroy. But for some time, the viceroy’s advisors were divided about what the viceroy should do. Some argued that the Portuguese had no right to Syriam, while others said that obtaining Syriam for the *Estado da India* was too great of an opportunity to pass up. Some even argued that the Portuguese fortress at Syriam should be razed and control of the city given to the king of Chiengmai who, as Nan-dá-bayin’s brother, was the legitimate heir to the throne of Pegu. The viceroy arrived at a compromise

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<sup>375</sup> Mousinho, MacGregor trans., *op. cit.*, 135.

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-7.

and ordered an ambassador to the court of Chiengmai, with the provision that the Portuguese would remain in control of Syriam, but that the income belonged to the king of Chiengmai (presumably with the deduction of the costs of the Portuguese occupation).<sup>377</sup> The viceroy, seeing great returns from the seemingly blessed De Brito, allowed De Brito to marry his niece.<sup>378</sup> These “great returns” were manifold and have been provided by Guerreiro. A closer connection between De Brito and Goa, for example, would bring thousands of Portuguese “outlaws and refugees in this area” back within the Portuguese fold. Such a connection would increase government revenues by the establishment of new factories. Pegu was also a rich timber region, providing quality shipbuilding timber at a cheap cost. Pegu and Bengala, Guerreiro continues, could also serve as a base from which arms and supplies could be sent in any season to Portuguese possessions in the archipelago.<sup>379</sup> The viceroy gave De Brito the titles of General of the Conquest of Pegu as well as Commander of Syriam and much war material, soldiers,<sup>380</sup> and six ships (three *galeotas*, one *galé*, and two *navios*),<sup>381</sup> with many good captains, including Mathias de Rez, Bernardo Soares de Albergaria, João Zuzarte Tição, Antonio Zombo d’Almeida, Francisco Mendes de Crasto, and Paulo do Rego.<sup>382</sup> Further, priests for the “administration of Christianity” and “instructors for casting artillery” were also provided by the viceroy.<sup>383</sup> De Brito wanted the crown of Pegu for himself, although he would claim it in the name of his own king, the king of Portugal and Spain.<sup>384</sup> De Brito was also

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<sup>377</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 133.

<sup>378</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III., 131.

<sup>379</sup> Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 201-3.

<sup>380</sup> Maung Htin Aung, *op. cit.*, 136.

<sup>381</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 133; Ayres de Saldhana, however, seems to have reported that the six ships given to De Brito were really five *navios* and one *galé*. One of the uses for these ships seems to have been Saldhana’s order to De Brito to subjugate the “neighboring ports.” See Documento 5, 2 March 1605, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of India, Dom Martin Affonso de Castro, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 23.

<sup>382</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 133.

<sup>383</sup> Documento 5, 2 March 1605, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of India, Dom Martin Affonso de Castro, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 24. The cannon foundries at Goa were well-known for their high quality work under the direction of members of the Dias and Tavares Bocarro family. See Charles Ralph Boxer, “Asian Potentates and European Artillery in the 16th-18th Centuries: A Footnote to Gibson-Hill,” *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 38, pt. 2 (December, 1965): 159.

<sup>384</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 131.

given jurisdiction over Bengala in return for his promise to bring the Portuguese renegades living there back into the service of the *Estado da India*.<sup>385</sup>

### Chapter Conclusion

The Portuguese revolt at Syriam seems to indicate that there were problems in the way in which Min Yazagyi built his empire or in the way he decided to maintain it. An important problem was that Min Yazagyi became too dependent upon mercenaries to maintain his control of Arakan's new possessions. He probably did this because the Portuguese and other mercenaries were considered to be the only forces a king had who would be directly loyal to the central court, as explained earlier. While previous Arakanese kings made effective use of mercenaries, these mercenaries never before replaced actual Arakanese garrisons. In the case of Chittagong, for example, a Portuguese settlement was already established and these Portuguese were eager to obtain the trade concessions which the Arakanese had offered. The Portuguese at Chittagong, then, had a reason to remain loyal to Arakan. The Portuguese at Syriam, however, merely handled the official trade for the Arakanese. Placing autonomous Portuguese mercenaries in a rich region, it seems to me, was a mistake on the part of Min Yazagyi, since it would only be a matter of time before greed would affect the loyalty of these Portuguese. Further, even at Chittagong, the Arakanese maintained a large Arakanese garrison. At Syriam, by contrast, the Portuguese were accompanied by other mercenaries who were often at odds with the Portuguese.

While Min Yazagyi thus had no means of guaranteeing mercenary loyalty so far from Arakan, he was also placing too much trust in the Portuguese. There had been several indications that the Portuguese intended to revolt against his authority, but Min Yazagyi chose to ignore the warning signals. He refused to take precautions when Binnya Dala warned him of what the Portuguese were planning to do. And when the Portuguese openly revolted and planned to attack the Moslem mercenaries, Min Yazagyi chose instead to believe De Brito. This overwhelming trust in Portuguese good faith was a clear departure from the traditional caution which previous Arakanese kings took in using their Portuguese mercenaries.

At the same time that Min Yazagyi was allowing his Portuguese mercenaries more autonomy, Min Yazagyi was also leaving the affairs of

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<sup>385</sup> Documento 80, 28 March 1608, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of India, Dom Francisco d'Almeida, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 243.<sup>386</sup> Hall, "English Relations with Burma," 9.

his kingdom increasingly to courtiers, while he played in a pleasure palace with his Mon queen. Min Yazagyi had no plans for expanding his empire after taking Pegu. Indeed, Min Yazagyi felt that this one victory, the sacking of his traditional enemy Pegu, had brought him both Arakanese and worldly legitimacy as a king. This is all that he wanted and he settled down to enjoy the fruits of his labors rather than assuring Arakan continued control of his expanded empire. Min Yazagyi then abandoned all of his concerns of the maintenance of the Arakanese state to his ministers. Unfortunately, he did not realize that these were not the same, capable group of men who had surrounded Min Bin. Min Yazagyi overestimated the loyalty of his Portuguese mercenaries: The Portuguese acted treacherously when they revolted against Min Yazagyi, since he had treated them well and had trusted them with holding Syriam for him. On the other hand, Min Yazagyi was negligent in giving the Portuguese the opportunity to revolt.

Arakanese attempts to retake Syriam were hampered by Min Yazagyi's lack of care in selecting capable leaders for these expeditions or even in allocating sufficient resources for such a campaign. At no time, for example, did Min Yazagyi send sufficient naval support for his troops when they attempted to retake Syriam and he left the command of the whole operation to Binnya Dala and Binnya Lao, who had already shown themselves to be incompetent as a military commanders. These two commanders wasted their best men in poorly-coordinated attacks and often simply attacked with no clear plan at all. Men and ships were rarely used in any sort of joint-assault on the Portuguese fortress and the Arakanese military leadership did not take advantage of their superior numbers in terms of either men or guns. At the same time, the Portuguese at Syriam were led by a very capable military leader who knew how to use a combination of Portuguese firepower and Mon auxiliaries effectively. Ribeyro won his victories with strategic concentrations of small numbers of troops, such as his placement of Portuguese vessels at the narrowest part of the river, or was due to the skillful use of surprise attacks. Ribeyro's victories were the result of strategic and not tactical superiority, since Ribeyro won skirmishes even when his men had no cannon or lacked sufficient firearms. Further, Ribeyro's plans were usually made possible with the help of Mon troops armed with traditional weapons, such as arrows and spears. The help of these Mon troops, for example, was essential during Binnya Dala's siege of the Portuguese fortress and Ribeyro depended upon them so much that they were placed at the weakest points of the Portuguese fortress. The Portuguese victory was thus due Ribeyro's ability to effectively coordinate the fighting skill of these Mons with Portuguese ships and firepower.





**Chapter V**  
**The Great War: De Brito's Kingdom and the Drain on Arakanese Resources, 1603-1607**

De Brito had conceived the not altogether unstatesmanlike project of building up in Lower Burma a province of the Portuguese Empire. He seems to have been of the stuff of empire-builders...de Brito managed to maintain his hold upon Syriam for thirteen years from 1600 to 1613, and to confine all Burma's sea-borne commerce to that port alone.

D.G.E. Hall<sup>386</sup>

After 1600 a change for the worse overcame the Portuguese. When their country was united with Spain and her resources were squandered on the European struggle in the Netherlands, she was unable to reinforce her eastern shipmen. The Dutch and English had arrived and threatened trade rivalry. In consequence the Portuguese were transformed from assured traders into cut-off and desperate adventurers. They realized that their empire of the sea was doomed, that being unable to look for help from Europe, they had only their own wits and swords to uphold them and that situated on the borders of great oriental states, so many thousand miles from home, the duration of their prosperity could but be short. They became pirates. The Viceroy of Goa's control over them, always slight, now disappeared.

Maurice Collis and San Shwe Bu<sup>387</sup>

These quotations indicate that De Brito was able to win some sort of legitimacy as the king of Syriam and that he was able to expand and strengthen his hold over Lower Burma. But how did De Brito expand his control of Lower Burma in the face of strong Arakanese attacks on his position over a four-year period and by what means did he ensure his political, military, and economic position at Syriam? Further, what did De Brito's success, and Min Yazagyi's failure, mean to Arakan?

**The Return of De Brito**

De Brito left Goa for Syriam in December 1603 with sixteen galleys and three hundred Portuguese soldiers.<sup>388</sup> Upon his return to Syriam, De

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<sup>387</sup> Collis & San Shwe Bu, "Arakan's Place in the Civilization of the Bay," 44.

<sup>388</sup> Guerreiro, Payne's trans., *op. cit.*, 199-200.

Brito attempted to put things in order. He strengthened the fort, built a church and “marked out the boundaries of his capital.”<sup>389</sup> Through his spies, Min Yazagyi soon learned of Philip de Brito’s return and, despite his attacks on Ribeyro, sent his greetings to De Brito as well as promises of rewards and honors.<sup>390</sup> When Bartholomew Nogueira, the ambassador of the viceroy of Goa, arrived at Mrauk-U from Syriam, Min Yazagyi pretended that nothing was wrong and kept up the appearances of an undefeated conqueror. Min Yazagyi greeted Nogueira “with demonstrations of great happiness and love,” without indicating his hatred for De Brito.<sup>391</sup>

De Brito arranged the *feitoria*’s (customhouse or factory) regulations according to instructions he carried from the viceroy<sup>392</sup> and ordered that all ships attempting to trade with Pegu or to use the waters to “make their entries” at Syriam. De Brito had the orders requiring Portuguese and other maritime merchant traffic to stop at Syriam published throughout the major ports of Southeast Asia, including Martaban, Tavoy, Tenasserim, and Junkceylon island.<sup>393</sup> When some trading ships from the Coromandel coast refused to comply, De Brito sent Dom Francis de Moura with six ships, which successfully captured the vessels. A similar action was taken off the Tenessarim coast against

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<sup>389</sup> Scott, *op. cit.*, 129.

<sup>390</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 134.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, 135.

<sup>392</sup> By these orders, De Brito was rewarded with a third of the income of the *feitoria* and control of the *feitoria* for life. In the case of his death, his wife, Dona Luiza de Saldhana would receive compensation as deemed necessary by the viceroy of India. Further, Dona Luiza would then be remarried at the “pleasure of the viceroy” to a man of “quality” who would serve as captain of the fortress. De Brito’s son, however, would be taken care of until he was an adult. Then, De Brito’s son by Dona Luiza would take over control of the *feitoria*. See Document 5, 2 March 1605, Letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of India, Dom Martin Affonso de Castro, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 23; Document 27, 23 January 1607, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of India, Dom Martin Affonso de Castro, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 111.

<sup>393</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, 135; these orders were clarified by the king of Portugal in a provision made on 13 September 1608, in which all ships of the Estado da India, east of the Coromandel coast were required to stop at Syriam and pay taxes. See Document 352, 15 March 1613. Letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of India, Dom Jeronymo de Azevedo, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. II, 394.

two trading vessels from Aceh.<sup>394</sup> De Brito's forces took ships from other nations as well, including Cambay, Surrat, and Massulipatam:<sup>395</sup>

Most of [De Brito's] energy went in preventing smuggling; that is to say, in order to get his customs tolls, he kept ships cruising to prevent foreign craft from putting in anywhere in Burma save at Syriam. Syriam was already the chief port for the interior and now she became the only one. It made his fortune, but it disgusted the interior which had to pay increased prices on all foreign goods owing to such unprecedented customs efficiency.<sup>396</sup>

Further, De Brito was ordered to prevent the Moslems, Turks, and Dutch from taking possession of the port of Syriam and presumably to prevent them from participating in the trade at Syriam as well.<sup>397</sup> De Brito's monopoly of trade of Lower Burma was so effective that:

It was not expected...that during the period of his ascendancy the [English] East India Company would entertain any serious thought of trading to Burma.<sup>398</sup>

Philip de Brito's success seems to have fostered a poor state of affairs between Goa and Chiengmai: although the Portuguese representative, frei Francisco da Annuniação, had promised the revenues of Syriam to the king of Chiengmai, De Brito had not yet provided them, and it did not appear as if De Brito ever would.<sup>399</sup>

### **The Arakanese-Toungoo Alliance**

Min Yazagyi, who lost the eastern section of his empire to the Portuguese while he was busy with his Mon queen, now decided to recapture his lost provinces in Lower Burma. At the end of 1603, the king of Toungoo complained to Min Yazagyi because he heard of De Brito's plans to seize

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<sup>394</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 131-132; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 134.

<sup>395</sup> Document 120, 20 February 1610, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of Goa, as reprinted in the letter of the viceroy, Ruy Lourenço de Tavora to the king of Portugal, 29 December 1610, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 353.

<sup>396</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 186.

<sup>397</sup> Document 5, 2 March 1605, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of India, Dom Martin Affonso de Castro, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 23.

<sup>398</sup> Hall, "English Relations with Burma," 9.

<sup>399</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 136.

some of his “outlying provinces” which were near Syriam.<sup>400</sup> Min Yazagyi then proposed to the king of Toungoo that they make an alliance against De Brito, since De Brito was really a threat to them both.<sup>401</sup> The proposal was carried to Toungoo by an ambassador and twenty small ships.<sup>402</sup> The two kings agreed to attack De Brito together: Min Yazagyi would attack Syriam by sea, while the king of Toungoo would attack Syriam by land.<sup>403</sup> The king of Toungoo then prepared an army of three hundred elephants, three thousand horses, and fifty thousand men,<sup>404</sup> who would be led by the *upayaza*, Nat-shin-naung.<sup>405</sup> The Toungoo force “crossed the hills” and was to march along the Irrawaddy “to insure that Prome kept faith and joined in the venture.”<sup>406</sup> Min Yazagyi’s force consisted of one hundred warships and one hundred transport ships, under the command of Min Yazagyi’s eldest son, Min Khamaung, the Arakanese *upayaza*.<sup>407</sup>

To support Min Khamaung, Min Yazagyi took a big risk and sent the cream of the Arakanese military command, including his captain-

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<sup>400</sup> Damrong, “Our Wars,” 206; It is interesting that the king of Toungoo would seek Min Yazagyi’s help at this time, because it appears that Min Yazagyi’s fighting abilities were now questioned in Lower Burma. Indeed, Philip de Brito observed that “as far as the King of Arracam is concerned, even the Pegus in our fortress go out and seize his cattle, there being none to protect them.” See Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 205.

<sup>401</sup> Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 65.

<sup>402</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 132-133.

<sup>403</sup> Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 65.

<sup>404</sup> I doubt the size of the Toungoo army was really as great as we are told in *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi*. (Nai Thien tr., 65). De Brito, for example, around this time estimated the king of Toungoo’s forces to be about three thousand Mons, fifteen thousand Burmese, and eight hundred cavalry, although no mention is made of elephants. I would guess that the actual figure for the Toungoo invasion force was probably one-fifth that given by *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi*. See Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 204.

<sup>405</sup> Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 65. I cannot imagine that the Toungoo force was equipped for siege operations, since, despite Toungoo’s possession of large numbers of artillery, “including even camelets,” it possessed little gunpowder, given to it by Min Yazagyi. See Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 204.

<sup>406</sup> Scott, *op. cit.*, 129.

<sup>407</sup> Nai Thien *op. cit.*, 65; De Brito, however, in a letter sent to the king of Portugal, dated 17 October 1605, claimed that the Arakanese forces consisted of seven hundred ships and seventeen thousand men: a clear exaggeration. The king of Portugal refers to this letter in his letter to the viceroy of India, Dom Francisco d’Almeida. See Document 80, 4 January 1608, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 173.

general and “all the chief captains of his kingdom.”<sup>408</sup> Min Khamaung was also accompanied by some people who were potential political leaders of Pegu and who were strongly pro-Arakanese, Nan-dá-bayin’s sons, Ximicolia and Marequestão (as they were known by the Portuguese).<sup>409</sup> Further, over one thousand Arakanese army irregulars, mostly Mons and Burmans, and a contingent of elephants, accompanied the Arakanese force. This major Arakanese military force planned to first stop at the Arakanese vassal of Chismim and then move on to take Syriam.<sup>410</sup> At first, De Brito doubted his ability to defend himself against such a powerful host. He thus decided to escape and had his ships armed with cannon and supplied with great stores of ammunition. After some reconsideration, however, De Brito decided to stay and fight.<sup>411</sup>

### **Min Khamaung’s Failed Invasion**

To prevent the juncture of the forces of Arakan and Toungoo, De Brito sent Bartholomew Ferreyra and a naval force.<sup>412</sup> The Portuguese surprised an advance squadron of ten Arakanese ships, sent ahead by Min Khamaung, off the cape of Negrais. After capturing this advance squadron, including much Arakanese artillery and munitions, the Portuguese squadron waited near the island of Caça for the remainder of Min Khamaung’s force. Min Khamaung soon learned of the Portuguese deployment and he gathered his scattered ships together and organized two tight formations. The Arakanese retreated and counterattacked three times. Since the Portuguese ships were much larger and better armed than the small Arakanese *jalias*, the Portuguese easily destroyed many of them from a distance. Soon, the Portuguese had killed over one thousand Arakanese and captured five hundred others. Taking advantage of the deeper draught of the Portuguese ships, Min Khamaung had his fleet pull up close to the shore and retreated beyond the reach of Portuguese guns. The Arakanese also damaged the Portuguese ships, which returned to Syriam to make repairs.<sup>413</sup> The Arakanese then went to Chismim<sup>414</sup> to reassemble their forces.<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>408</sup> Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 211.

<sup>409</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 136.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, 137.

<sup>411</sup> Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 65.

<sup>412</sup> Damrong, *op. cit.*, 206.

<sup>413</sup> Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 212.

<sup>414</sup> This is another name for Bassein, Lower Burma’s western port.

Once Min Khamaung's fleet entered the river, however, many of his ships became caught on sandbanks. Min Khamaung's fleet made repairs, which gave the Portuguese four days in which to prepare for an attack upon the Arakanese fleet as it passed Syriam.<sup>416</sup> The Portuguese fleet took up positions around the point of Degu, less than a mile from Syriam.<sup>417</sup> On 28 January 1605, the Arakanese fleet passing Syriam was caught by a Portuguese fleet of seven ships, and many smaller boats, under Paul del Rego Pinnero. The Portuguese force was soon supplemented by the timely arrival of two ships which returned from a raiding mission near Martaban.<sup>418</sup> The battle began to turn against the Arakanese and Min Khamaung, in retreat up river, accidentally took to a side-stream. Being thus cornered, the prince abandoned his fleet and over one thousand dead and fled overland.<sup>419</sup> The Portuguese captured the abandoned Arakanese navy and its artillery, while the Arakanese force, which still amounted to three thousand men, including nine hundred musketeers, split up.<sup>420</sup> Some of Min Khamaung's men tried to make it back to Arakan on foot, while others fled to Prome and Toungoo. Others, "driven by hunger and the many other hardships which they had to suffer" surrendered to the Portuguese. Soon, out of Min Khamaung's original force, only a few thousand were left.<sup>421</sup>

### **The Portuguese Capture of Chismim and Min Khamaung**

While Min Khamaung's forces took refuge in the forests, the Portuguese determined to take the undermanned city of Chismim, a vassal of Arakan. Paulo do Rego was sent with a major Portuguese force and he soon took it, as well as many prisoners, including Binnya Dala's wife.<sup>422</sup> The city was sacked and everything which could be taken onto the Portuguese ships was taken as booty. While Paulo do Rego's men were

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<sup>415</sup> Estimates of the size of Min Khamaung's force vary. Damrong has put it at 4,000 men, while it was thought to be about 17,000 men by the Portuguese government. See Damrong, *op. cit.*, 206; Document 60, 4 January 1608, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of Goa, Dom Francisco d'Almeida, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 173.

<sup>416</sup> Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 213.

<sup>417</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 138.

<sup>418</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 132-3; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, 138.

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. III, 132-133.

<sup>420</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 138.

<sup>421</sup> Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 212-3.

<sup>422</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 132-133; Chismim remains in the possession of the Portuguese and forms the western base for De Brito's "kingdom." See Nai Thein, *op. cit.*, 67.

loading the booty, Philip de Brito's force, including fourteen *jalias* with sixty Portuguese and two hundred Mons, arrived in pursuit of Min Khamaung's men. There, Philip de Brito received information regarding the whereabouts of Min Khamaung and subsequently resumed his search for the Arakanese prince.<sup>423</sup>

De Brito called a council of his captains to decide what to do when they reached the vicinity of Min Khamaung's refuge. While De Brito argued for caution, Dom Francisco de Moura, one of his captains, argued that the prince should be taken immediately. De Brito agreed and placed De Moura in charge of the assault force. De Moura was not entirely reckless and he had a Mon, called Chimitoto, and seven other Mons climb into some trees to watch for Min Khamaung, while De Moura and the rest of his force would lie in wait for the Arakanese force. The Mons captured a few of the Arakanese and from them De Moura knew the position of Min Khamaung. De Moura then attacked the Arakanese force, consisting of thirty-one hundred regular footsoldiers and nine hundred musketeers. The Mons in De Moura's force attacked first, followed by the Portuguese; the Arakanese were taken by surprise.<sup>424</sup> In the battle, Chimitoto, though wounded himself, slashed Min Khamaung in the face and captured him. Min Khamaung, wounded and defeated, was handed over to De Moura.<sup>425</sup> In an attempt to rescue Min Khamaung, two thousand men of the king of Prome attacked but were repulsed.<sup>426</sup> Min Khamaung realized that there was not much more he could do and offered to order an end to the fighting and his personal good behavior as a captive in exchange for the safety of his wives who had accompanied him. De Moura agreed, and the prince ordered his men to stop their attacks. De Moura and a Mon took Min Khamaung by the hand to De Brito.<sup>427</sup>

In his defeat, however, Min Khamaung showed himself to be a natural and popular leader of his men. When his men saw him captured and being taken on the Portuguese ships, they dropped their weapons and loyally surrendered as well "to follow him a prisoner, as they had followed him in liberty."<sup>428</sup> De Brito saw Min Khamaung's natural leadership abilities and treated his prisoner with a great deal of respect

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<sup>423</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 139-140; Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 133.

<sup>424</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 140-1.

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, 142.

<sup>426</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 133; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 142.

<sup>427</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 142.

<sup>428</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 133-4.



and care.<sup>429</sup> The Portuguese now had thousands of Arakanese prisoners, as well as the crown prince, a bastard son of the king of Prome, and the captain-general of the Arakanese army. Further, the Portuguese captured over one thousand pieces of artillery.<sup>430</sup> Nat-shin-naung, the *upayaza* of Toungoo, had not gotten further than Macao (Nan-dá-bayin's old fortress) when he heard of what befell the Arakanese fleet. Since there was nothing that he could do, Nat-shin-naung decided to wait at Macao for "further developments."<sup>431</sup>

De Brito's fair treatment of Min Khamaung helped him to win further support from Mons:

Nicote may...be a President to all Men, how to use their victories; for he not forgetting he had been a slave to the Prince now his Prisoner, served him with the same respect now, as he had done then. He watched him sleeping, holding his Buskins in his Hands with Arms across, a Ceremony used by the meanest with their Kings in those Parts, and himself attended him upon all Occasions. This generosity may well equal him with great Men, and purchased him together with other the like Proceedings, the Name of Changa, which...signifies Good Man.<sup>432</sup>

De Brito, however, put Min Khamaung's presence in Syriam to its greatest use as propaganda. Finding the fortress at Syriam in the charge of Dom Martin Affonso de Castro, who had brought three more ships from Goa to help supplement De Brito's forces, De Brito was received with "great festivities." Min Khamaung, his important prisoner, was brought into the fortress in grand style by being carried on a gilded throne, with young maids who were given to him to fulfill his every pleasure.<sup>433</sup> By doing this, Philip de Brito probably wanted to make his victory appear even more glorious: while previous Portuguese victories had left Arakanese seamen and possibly Arakanese captains as captives of the Portuguese, Philip de Brito's forces were now defeating and capturing princes, admirals, generals and other major military leaders of the Arakanese kingdom.

But the continual wars with Arakan had taken their toll: De Brito informed the king of Portugal that he was unable to fulfill his promise of bringing the renegade Portuguese in Bengala back under the sway of

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<sup>429</sup> Ibid.

<sup>430</sup> Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 212-4.

<sup>431</sup> Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 66.

<sup>432</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol III, 133-134.

<sup>433</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 143.

Goa. Further, De Brito was forced to make excuses for the low profits earned by the feitoria at Syriam; he blamed the continual wars and the fact that the feitoria was very new and had not had sufficient time to make itself an attractive port of call. The solution which De Brito proposed was for the king of Portugal to forbid traders from going to Tenasserim, Martaban, Tavoy, and the island of Junkceylon, so that they would come to Syriam instead.<sup>434</sup>

Min Yazagyi, practically alone in Mrauk-U among much less capable Arakanese leaders, realized that he needed Min Khamaung to help him keep his kingdom together. Min Yazagyi thus decided to negotiate with De Brito, and ask for Min Khamaung's release. Min Yazagyi, however, seems to have doubted De Brito's generosity in future negotiations for the release of his son, and instead Min Yazagyi asked the viceroy of India, Dom Frei Aleixo de Meneses, to intercede on the behalf of Min Khamaung. When the viceroy of Goa heard that De Brito had captured Min Khamaung, he demanded that De Brito release the prince without ransom or anything else except for peace and the use of the fortress as a post for the soldiers of the king of Portugal.<sup>435</sup> De Meneses probably wanted the conditions of the release of Min Khamaung to be as light as possible for the Arakanese since Portuguese trade with Arakan was growing despite the continual war between De Brito and Min Yazagyi in Lower Burma. As Scott explains, the viceroy took this position because "[t]here was not a little Portuguese trade with Arakan."<sup>436</sup> De Brito, however, was not inclined to surrender Min Khamaung to Min Yazagyi without forcing Arakan to pay a huge ransom. De Brito demanded fifty thousand *cruzados* despite the viceroy's orders, "pretending that it was the Charge of the Fleet the King had obliged him to fit out."

For over a year, the negotiation teams of Arakan and Syriam haggled over technicalities, and different offers and counteroffers were made. At first, Min Yazagyi was willing to pay a smaller ransom without taking an oath to maintain peaceful relations with De Brito. Later, Min Yazagyi offered to transfer control of the lands of Ugila, neighboring Chittagong, to De Brito as well as a small ransom.<sup>437</sup> Soon, however, Min Yazagyi had second thoughts about paying any ransom at all and De Brito's refusal to proceed with the release of his son as the viceroy had

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<sup>434</sup> Document 60, 4 January 1608, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of Goa, Dom Francisco d'Almeida, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 174-5.

<sup>435</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 144.

<sup>436</sup> Scott, *op. cit.*, 129.

<sup>437</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 144.

promised offended Min Yazagyi,<sup>438</sup> who now gathered another invasion force to send against Syriam.<sup>439</sup>

While Minyazagyi was fitting out the new expedition, a storm developed over Mrauk-U, during which lightning struck Min Yazagyi's royal palace, the white elephant's stall, and several important temples. Min Yazagyi's Buddhist monks, the *talapoins*, saw this as an omen and they chastised Min Yazagyi for breaking his treaty with De Brito, prophetizing Min Yazagyi's death. Min Yazagyi responded by putting thirty of the chief *talapoins* to death.<sup>440</sup>

### **The Battle of Negrais, 31 March 1607**

Min Yazagyi planned to personally lead a huge Arakanese fleet: there were eight hundred oared ships (*galeotas*, *jalias*, etc.) and thirty-five hundred pieces of artillery. The crews of the ships reflected the diversity of Arakanese mercenaries, consisting of "Moors, Patans, Persians, and Malabars."<sup>441</sup> In all, Min Yazagyi gathered more than ten thousand men, many of whom were musketeers for this military expedition, and was also joined by the forces of the Arakanese dependency, Chocoria. In response to reports that Min Yazagyi had begun to amass this fleet, De Brito quickly brought together an attack fleet of eight *galliois* and four *sanguicels*, along with 240 Portuguese and many Mons. Paulo do Rego Pinheiro was placed in command of this force. Before the Arakanese fleet could leave Arakan, however, Do Rego raided the Arakanese coast, burning "every maritime town which he entered, and putting the inhabitants to the sword."<sup>442</sup> Using this as bait, Do Rego pulled his forces back to the point of Negrais and sat in waiting for the Arakanese fleet. When Min Yazagyi's fleet arrived,<sup>443</sup> the Arakanese saw Do Rego waiting for them and placed their ships close to shore in a easily defensible position:

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<sup>438</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 139; or as Scott explains the "king preferred to risk the killing of his son to paying the money." see Scott, *op. cit.*, 129.

<sup>439</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 139.

<sup>440</sup> De Brito was warned by the king of Prome of Min Yazagyi's preparations and De Brito sent Natal Salerno to Melaka, where the viceroy of Goa had gone temporarily, to get help. The viceroy sent De Brito two *gales* and six *navios*. See Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 220-1, 224.

<sup>441</sup> Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 225.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>443</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 145; Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 225-6.

[The Arakanese] King declined the challenge, and taking shelter under the land, placed himself amongst the rocks and sandbanks, a position which gave him security whilst it was full of danger for our ships.<sup>444</sup>

Soon, several of Min Yazagyi's supply ships approached, not realizing that the main fleet was in hiding, and the Portuguese attacked them. A favorite of Min Yazagyi, Captain Maruja, led some *jalias* out of hiding to save the supply ships, but was killed in the process.<sup>445</sup>

On 31 March 1607, Min Yazagyi decided to begin a formal battle with the Portuguese. Although Min Yazagyi ordered his fleet to attack at 2 p.m., a terrible rainstorm delayed the attack until 4 p.m. The Portuguese, however, realized that their small numbers were no match for the Arakanese fleet in an open, traditional battle, since "the very sea seemed to be hidden by the multitude of the King's ships." Instead, Paulo Do Rego turned the bulky size of his otherwise fast ships to his advantage: the Portuguese drove through the Arakanese ships, firing and ramming as they went:

...they assailed the enemy with the utmost impetuosity. Flinging themselves on that forest of ships, they penetrated it from van to rear, dealing destruction as they went. There was nothing which came in their way that they did not destroy, and many of the King's galliots were left burning, or stranded, or sinking...Finding they had reached the rear of the enemy's fleet, our ships turned about and renewed the attack with the same vigour as before, passing through the midst of the King's ships and destroying all that lay in their path...<sup>446</sup>

The Portuguese ceased their attack at 10 p.m., because Paulo Do Rego thought that it was unwise to continue the battle to long after nightfall. The Battle of Negrais left the Arakanese fleet in wreckage: large numbers of *jalias* and other light vessels were destroyed, and of Min Yazagyi's larger ships, four of the large *galliots* were sunk, three were on fire, and fourteen others had run aground. Min Yazagyi's naval command was nearly wiped out, with his chief admiral, the chief commander of his Islamic mercenaries, and many of his best captains all dead. Further,

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<sup>444</sup> Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 225-6.

<sup>445</sup> Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 226.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

eighteen hundred of Min Yazagyi's naval personnel were dead and two thousand others were wounded.<sup>447</sup>

Min Yazagyi was determined, however, to wipe out the Portuguese. Within six days he reassembled much of his fleet and repaired much of the damage done in the second battle of Negrais.<sup>448</sup> At the same time, Min Yazagyi persuaded the king of Toungoo to besiege Syriam by land and to block up the port with forces,<sup>449</sup> under the command of the king of Toungoo's son, *Maha Upayaza* Nat-shin-naung.<sup>450</sup> Min Yazagyi's portion of the fleet was divided into four squadrons to attack the Portuguese fleet in port.<sup>451</sup> Paulo do Rego was sent out with eighty ships to meet the Arakanese and Toungoo force at the point of Degu.<sup>452</sup> The Arakanese fleet, however, had already reached that point and Do Rego approached so quickly that he found himself surrounded by the Arakanese. Further, his ship lodged on some submerged piles and could not escape as the Arakanese and Toungos "from every side bombarded [the] ship with grenades and canisters of gunpowder." Since Do Rego's ship was also the magazine for the Portuguese fleet, it carried a great quantity of gunpowder on board, which now caught fire. A Portuguese captain who had come to Do Rego's aid, the Catholic priest Natal Salerno, Do Rego, Do Rego's ship, and all of his men were all killed or destroyed by the explosion.<sup>453</sup>

### **The Second Siege of Syriam**

The Portuguese were devastated by what happened to Do Rego, and the Portuguese fleet, without its great admiral, retreated back to Syriam to be repaired. In port, however, the Portuguese ships took on water as they were all "badly damaged by bombards," from the Arakanese and the Toungos. Important men fell on both sides, including Min Yazagyi's vassal, the *bayin* of Chocoria. But the condition of the Portuguese defenders, with the fortress of Syriam effectively blockaded, the Portuguese fleet nearly destroyed, and the large numbers of Portuguese dead, seemed to indicate to the Arakanese and the Toungos that the

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<sup>447</sup> Ibid., 227-8.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid

<sup>449</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 139.

<sup>450</sup> Damrong, *op. cit.*, 206; Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 66.

<sup>451</sup> Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 228.

<sup>452</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 139; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 145.

<sup>453</sup> Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 229; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 145.

Portuguese were finished.<sup>454</sup> Soon, Syriam was surrounded by land as well as by sea, with fewer than two hundred Portuguese and three thousand Mon defenders.<sup>455</sup>

Min Yazagyi sent a representative to ask De Brito to come out of the fort and seek terms with Min Yazagyi in person. Min Yazagyi promised that De Brito would be well-treated, in consideration of the good treatment which Min Khamaung had received as a prisoner of De Brito. Min Khamaung urged De Brito to accept Min Yazagyi's offer, since Paulo Do Rego was dead and the Portuguese situation was tenuous. Min Khamaung also promised that "he himself would intercede for him, in return for the kind treatment he had received." In response to Min Yazagyi's offer, De Brito insulted Min Yazagyi:

To the King he replied that his promises of peace were only made to be broken...of the coming of the Princes of Tangu he made no account, for experience had taught him that their forces, like those of the King himself, were of little worth; that he would be only too pleased if he would summon other friendly kings to his aid, so that there might be some credit in holding the fortress, within which, he said, he had every expectation of entertaining His Majesty, as on a previous occasion he had entertained his son.<sup>456</sup>

Min Yazagyi was furious. He swore his generals to an oath by which they would kill De Brito or die themselves. The Arakanese now adopted a policy of continuous attacks on the Portuguese fleet and the fortress of Syriam in order to wipe out the Portuguese by attrition. After three more Portuguese ships had been destroyed, De Brito realized what was happening and had all the remaining Portuguese ships pulled up onto the shore and added the crews to his land forces, making "preparations to meet the enemy henceforward in the field." Min Yazagyi landed many of his men on shore as well, but kept the Arakanese fleet operational. While Arakanese and Toungoo land forces made continued assaults on the fortress at Syriam, Min Yazagyi's fleet bombarded the Portuguese positions. For a month, the fighting was back and forth.<sup>457</sup>

After two months, the siege had drained Syriam of supplies and the defenders were threatened by hunger. The Mons in Syriam were losing hope of winning against the Arakanese and De Brito realized that he would have to do something before he faced a desertion *en masse* of

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<sup>454</sup> Ibid

<sup>455</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 146.

<sup>456</sup> Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 232.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid., 232-3.

his Mon auxiliaries. De Brito tried a new strategy and had all the remaining supplies in Syriam brought out for a great feast, which he held within the sight of several Arakanese prisoners. By doing this, De Brito made it seem as if the siege had no effect and that the Portuguese were well-prepared to hold out for several more months. And after that he sent the same Arakanese prisoners with a letter to Min Yazagyi. In the letter De Brito taunted Min Yazagyi:

Very high and powerful king of Arakan, lord of the two white elephants. Do not toil in this siege because I expect by God to have you in this fortress as I have the prince your son. Your highness says to me that many people will die purely from hunger...look here at the supply to your ladies; since they have been captured...they are very fat and beautiful. And because I hope by God that soon your highness will be as your son, I will say nothing else.<sup>458</sup>

This letter was read in front of the king and his captains and Min Yazagyi was so angered that he called De Brito a “son of a whore” and commanded his officers to “bring him to me, so that I can give him the punishment that he deserves.”<sup>459</sup> While the officers planned the day and hour to take the fortress, Min Yazagyi personally questioned the Arakanese captives whom De Brito had dispatched with the letter. Min Yazagyi was most concerned with De Brito’s food supply and the state of the fortress. The released captives, however, informed the probably greatly disappointed Min Yazagyi that De Brito could hold out for possibly five more months, as De Brito hoped they would say. Min Yazagyi then left the siege under the command of his subordinates and left to spend the rainy season in Arakan, hoping that Syriam would fall to famine by the time he returned.<sup>460</sup>

The king of Toungoo, however, misunderstood Min Yazagyi’s plans, and believed that the Arakanese were going to leave him alone to continue the siege. Thus, after a feint attack against the Portuguese fortress on 9 May 1607, the Toungoo force raised camp and secretly returned to Toungoo. The Mon defenders of Syriam happily went out from the fortress, surveyed the abandoned Toungoo camp and defense-lines, and reported to De Brito that the Toungoos were gone. De Brito immediately had his men gather the abandoned food supplies and other

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<sup>458</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 146-7.

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid*, vol. I, 147.

<sup>460</sup> *Ibid*

spoils, including artillery, that the Toungoo force was not able to bring with it.<sup>461</sup>

Further De Brito realized that this was an opportunity to surprise the remaining Arakanese forces, which had not been informed of the king of Toungoo's retreat. A large number of Portuguese and Mons were sent out of Syriam, led by flags, fifes, and drums along the sides of the river, while other forces were deployed on the river, towards the Arakanese forces. The Arakanese were surprised by this as well as by the lack of any "trace of or signal from" the king of Toungoo.<sup>462</sup> Min Yazagyi decided, on 10 May 1607, to lift the blockade and negotiate with De Brito. Min Yazagyi had previously made the release of Min Khamaung as the condition for the lifting of the siege. In his demands, however, Min Yazagyi referred to De Brito as his "subject" or literally as his slave. De Brito was angered by this and demanded to be addressed as an independent king as a condition for his release of Min Khamaung. Min Yazagyi and the king of Toungoo agreed to De Brito's demand, since they feared that since De Brito's son, Simon, was married to the daughter of Binnya Dala of Martaban, and since the king of Ayudhya was allied to Binnya Dala, that De Brito could count on the armed help of both Ayudhya and Martaban. But De Brito was also in no position to continue his defenses and agreed to surrender Min Khamaung if Min Yazagyi would withdraw and agree to no longer attack Syriam, as well as pay the indemnity which De Brito had previously demanded.<sup>463</sup>

Once the Arakanese fleet returned home, De Brito had Min Khamaung put into a royal *jalia* and took him to Ranaung island, from where Min Khamaung would go to Mrauk-U unattended by Portuguese ships. De Brito's men fired a volley salute as they left Min Khamaung's ship. A stray pellet from the volley, however, killed Min Khamaung's helmsman, which made Min Khamaung very suspicious of De Brito and, from then on, Min Khamaung planned De Brito's annihilation.<sup>464</sup> However, Min Yazagyi had agreed to consider Syriam as an independent state, which marks the end of his control over this eastern section of the Arakanese empire.

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<sup>461</sup> Ibid., vol. I, 148; The captured Toungoo artillery likely took their place alongside De Brito's guns cast at Goa and at his own foundry. This was a common practice throughout the *Estado da India*. As Boxer explains, for example, the artillery captured from an Achinese fleet in 1630 was redistributed throughout the *Estado da India* to Portuguese ports to supplement their own artillery reserves. See Boxer, "Asian Potentates and European Artillery," 165.

<sup>462</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 147-8.

<sup>463</sup> Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 66-7.

<sup>464</sup> See Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 144; Payne's notes to Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 267f.



The second siege of Syriam left all the major powers of Lower Burma with depleted military strength. Min Yazagyi was forced to run many of his ships aground and abandon them due to lack of men to man them. These losses meant that Min Yazagyi returned home with 262 ships out of the force of twelve hundred with which he had begun his attack. Most of the Arakanese artillery had been lost, either in battle, or in the mud of Lower Burma. Min Yazagyi had also lost many of his Moslem mercenaries, bringing the total Arakanese dead to ten thousand men. Toungoo's losses included Toungoo's best captains, fifteen hundred men, six elephants, and forty horses.<sup>465</sup>

The Portuguese were in a desperate position. Almost one hundred Portuguese were killed, including ten captains and the admiral Paulo do Rego. Large numbers of De Brito's Mon allies were killed as well. The fortress of Syriam was in shambles, "[n]umbers of houses were destroyed, and churches, and many were wounded." Earlier, De Brito, to strengthen himself further by alliances, had married Simon, his son by a previous wife, to a daughter of the governor of Martaban, Binnya Dala.<sup>466</sup> Now, however, this and other alliances were in danger if De Brito could not show that he was still an important power in Lower Burma. First, De Brito built a Portuguese fortress near Pagoda point at the Cape of Negrais.<sup>467</sup> After quick repair work to the fortress, De Brito had the remainder of his fleet put out to sea and the Portuguese combed the Bay of Bengal for ships. In one case, when an Islamic trading ship "very richly laden" refused to surrender, the Portuguese boarded it and killed all on board. After further acts of "piracy," De Brito's men felt that they had made their presence felt in the region again and brought back a large amount of booty to Syriam.<sup>468</sup> On 12 January 1608, however, a fire burned the entire Portuguese fort to the ground. De Brito himself suffered major burns on one of his legs and his wife was almost killed. The fire destroyed the accumulated wealth of De Brito's tiny kingdom:

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<sup>465</sup> Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 236-7.

<sup>466</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 139-140; it is not clear whether Binnya Dala was Thai or Mon. See Scott, *op. cit.*, 130. Payne has suggested that this was the same man who had fought De Brito for leadership of the customs-house at Syriam. I think that this is probably not the same Binnya Dala. Indeed, it is a title, not a personal name: *binnya* refers to a vassal king, and Dala can refer to the town of Dala or a number of other things. The title emerges from time to time throughout Burmese history, leading me to believe that it is quite common and that the similarity of names between the Mon leader at Syriam and the king of Martaban is simply a coincidence.

<sup>467</sup> See Document 120, 20 February 1610, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of Goa, Ruy Lourenço de Tavora, reprinted in the letter of the same viceroy to the king, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 355.

<sup>468</sup> Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 237.

All the goods and the treasure which were in the fortress perished. Houses, churches and their ornaments, provision stores, munitions stores--all were destroyed. Apart from these losses, the seriousness of which it would be impossible to exaggerate, the fortress was now rendered completely untenable.<sup>469</sup>

### **Chapter Conclusion**

De Brito was able to win legitimacy as the king of Syriam and was able to expand and strengthen both his economic and political hold over Lower Burma. But how did De Brito expand his control of Lower Burma in the face of strong Arakanese attacks on his position over a four-year period and what by what means did he ensure his political, military, and economic position at Syriam? Further, what did De Brito's success, and Min Yazagyi's failure mean to Arakan?

De Brito was able to win legitimacy just as Ribeyro had: by playing a Southeast Asian game. That is, De Brito set himself up as a local leader of the Mons and acted as other Mon, and Burmese for that matter, leaders did. De Brito did not seek territorial delineation and refused to waste men occupying useless territorial positions. Rather, like other maritime kingdoms of Lower Burma, De Brito based his strength on seapower and the ability to dominate trade and direct it to his power-base, Syriam. Indeed, De Brito could not have hoped to maintain his influence on his own, and he sought marriage alliances and mutual defense treaties with other local leaders. Through effective use of indigenous models of statecraft, De Brito was able to win the support, though not direct control over, local *myózas* (local administrators). It is true, however, that sometime after 1607, De Brito changed his policies, began a strong forced Catholicization program and thus alienated his Mon subjects and allies, leading to his eventual downfall. But for the moment, De Brito truly was a local indigenous-style leader of Lower Burma and his influence spread over the eastern Irrawaddy delta.

What did this mean to Min Yazagyi? For one thing, De Brito's ability to maintain his economic, political and military strength meant that Lower Burma was no longer an easy target for Arakanese political and economic imperialism. The political and military coalition that brought down Nan-dá-bayin and made Pegu a relatively open region for Min Yazagyi's expansion could not be brought together again, especially as Ava's strength began to grow in the north and this threat prevented Prome, Toungoo, or even Chiangmai from committing sufficient aid to

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<sup>469</sup> Ibid., 238.<sup>470</sup> Jadu-Nath Sarkar, *The History of Bengal: Muslim Period, 1200-1757*, (Patna: Academica Asiatica, 1973): 363.

Arakan to crush De Brito. But more importantly, De Brito's strength, based on a strong Portuguese mercenary fleet, supported by thousands of Mon troops, and protected by a strong, strategically located fortress, meant that Min Yazagyi was simply "throwing men away," as well as creating a terrible drain on the economic resources of Arakan, in his repeated assaults. Min Yazagyi too easily allowed less capable men to lead his armies, especially when Min Khamaung, his son and possibly best military leader, was captured through a chance error and remained a prisoner during the two most vital years of the war. As the capable captains, crews, and soldiers on which Min Yazagyi's earlier victories had depended were lost at sea or in useless assaults on Syriam, Min Yazagyi had to replace them quickly with less well-trained and less capable men. Indeed, by the time that Min Khamaung had been captured, it is possible that the effects of Arakanese losses under Binnya Dala, and others like him, had already taken place. When the decreasing effectiveness of the Arakanese armed forces was combined with the temporary loss of Min Khamaung, who had organized the brilliant harassment of Naresuan's forces in 1600, the effect was devastating: Min Yazagyi was forced to abandon the Irrawaddy delta to De Brito and focus on events beginning to take place on his northwestern border. The damage which Min Yazagyi had done to his armed forces will be seen more clearly in the events taking place here after 1607, as will be shown in the following chapters.

**Chapter VI**  
**Sebastião Gonçalves y Tibao, “King” of Sundiva and the Eclipse of**  
**Arakanese power in Bengal, 1607-1612**

[Gonçalves’] infamous career covered a brief period of ten years. Gonsalves had the making of a great leader, but his training and environments made of him a pirate of the lower type. For unrelieved cruelty and treachery his record had hardly any parallel, but with better education under more favourable circumstances, he might have been a Raleigh or a Drake.

Jadu-Nath Sarkar<sup>470</sup>

The decline and fall of the maritime state of Arakan must have contributed powerfully to [the] liberation of Bengali commerce. Contemporary Bengali literature is strewn with echoes of the dread produced in southern Bengal by the Maghs of Arakan and their allies the Portuguese freebooters. This alliance however was far from being smooth...Razagri [Min Yazagyi] feared, with reason, that de Brito would use Dianga...to overthrow the Arakan monarchy. He therefore attacked Dianga and drove the Portuguese out of it in 1607. The Portuguese regrouped as an out and out pirate force in the island of Sundiva...under ‘king’ Sebastian Gonzales Tibao...Mughal expansion into the eastern coastal tracts of Noakhali...might have produced an alliance but Tibao preferred traitorously to capture the Arakan fleet ... The Sundiva Portuguese then raided up to the very walls of Mrohaung.

Ashin Das Gupta and M.N. Pearson<sup>471</sup>

These quotations indicate a general belief that Gonçalves was both of local importance in Arakan and Bengal and was treacherous. But what does this “pirate” have to do with the collapse of Min Yazagyi’s power in the west (Bengal)?

In order to understand Gonçalves’ significance to Arakan, it should be remembered that while De Brito, by 1607, seemed to have succeeded in his venture to control Lower Burma economically, if not politically, he still faced the king of Arakan: Min Yazagyi still claimed suzerainty over Lower Burma, regardless of overt signs of friendship which he showed to De Brito. Arakan still had time to invade, defeat De Brito, and reclaim control over Syriam. But Gonçalves would prove to be

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<sup>471</sup> Ashin Das Gupta and M.N. Pearson (eds.), *India and the Indian Ocean 1500-1800*, (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1987): 36.

a greater threat to Min Yazagyi than De Brito was. Further, Gonçalves would render Min Yazagyi's stratagems for gaining control of Lower Burma defunct.

Several questions can be asked regarding the rise of Gonçalves and how it affected the political climate in Lower Burma. How did Gonçalves come to power and why did he become an enemy of Min Yazagyi? Was Gonçalves following De Brito's example, or was he forging a new style of leadership which did not follow indigenous traditions of political leaders? How did the distraction of Arakanese attention away from de Brito affect Arakan's chances of reclaiming its recently-won eastern empire in Pegu? Was Portuguese control over Arakan's former territories' trade and society increased or at least consolidated?

### **Arakanese Dianga**

While De Brito controlled Syriam, another important trading center, Dianga remained under Min Yazagyi's control. Dianga, as mentioned earlier, was the port near Chittagong that Min Bin used to guard his northwestern frontier in exchange for trading concessions to the Portuguese. The Portuguese here profited from legitimate trade with Bengalese ports but often engaged in piracy as well.<sup>472</sup> While De Brito's example might seem likely to have influenced the Portuguese at Dianga, they made no signs of wishing to rebel against Min Yazagyi and for the moment Min Yazagyi made no sign that he feared losing Dianga to the Portuguese.

Min Yazagyi soon had reason to worry, however, and his relationship with the Portuguese traders at Dianga changed significantly. De Brito decided that in order to govern the lower Irrawaddy River basin effectively, he would have to take Dianga from Arakan. This would prevent a rival trading base so close to Syriam from preventing his absolute control of Lower Burmese trade. De Brito thus hinted to Min Yazagyi that he wanted the port, and Min Yazagyi hinted that the transfer of control would be acceptable if De Brito officially requested it.<sup>473</sup> De Brito was then "induced to send a number of Portuguese to settle" at Dianga by Min Yazagyi. A naval force was then sent by De Brito carrying his son, Marcos de Brito, as his ambassador in order to take

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<sup>472</sup> Phayre, *History of Burma*, 173.

<sup>473</sup> Guerreiro, however, seems to be under the impression that Min Yazagyi had agreed to transfer Dianga to Portuguese control under the treaty by which Min Khamaung was returned and by which Min Yazagyi agreed to recognize De Brito's independence. I have reservations about this. I think that it is perhaps more likely that whatever promise Min Yazagyi may have made was misinterpreted by De Brito. See Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 220.

possession of the port. Some of the Portuguese living at Dianga, however, persuaded Min Yazagyi that De Brito intended to steal the kingdom of Arakan from him.<sup>474</sup> Min Yazagyi summoned De Brito's son and the accompanying Portuguese officers to his court and then killed them. Before this slaughter became known to the rest of the Portuguese, Min Yazagyi sent some forces to seize the Portuguese ships, which were taken and burned.<sup>475</sup>

By now, Min Yazagyi had lost all patience with Portuguese tricks and, to further ensure that there would be no Portuguese threat to his kingdom, he attacked the Portuguese living in Dianga. The seven hundred or so Portuguese traders, as well as their wives and children and Catholic priests, were secretly surrounded by Arakanese soldiers and then put to "sword and to fire."<sup>476</sup> Some of the Portuguese escaped into the woods, and nine or ten ships were able to make for sea. One of the Portuguese who escaped was Sebastião Gonçalves,<sup>477</sup> who arrived at Dianga from the Megna river with salt for trade just before the Arakanese slaughter.<sup>478</sup> Gonçalves and the rest of the survivors who had escaped in the nine ships became pirates, robbing Arakanese traders and selling

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<sup>474</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 154; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 431; Fytche, however, believes that the King of Arakan had planned to betray De Brito from the beginning of this episode and that this was simply "the old tale of Asiatic treachery." See Fytche, *op. cit.*, 53.

<sup>475</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 154; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, 432; See Document 120, 20 February 1610, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of Goa, Ruy Lourenço de Tavora, reprinted in the letter of the same viceroy to the king, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 348-9.

<sup>476</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 432; Indeed, throughout Arakan, five thousand Christians were imprisoned and supposedly treated with "barbarous cruelty." See Guerreiro, Payne trans., *op. cit.*, 220.

<sup>477</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 154; Gonçalves came to Southeast Asia from Portugal in 1605, and served as a soldier in Bengal. After a year or so, he saved enough money to buy his own boat, which he used to trade along the Bengalese coast. See Phayre, *History of Burma*, 174. J. Talboys Wheeler, however, argues that Gonçalves was also a deserter from the Portuguese. See Wheeler, *op. cit.*, 504. I see no reason to disagree with either scholar. Indeed, it is quite probable that Gonçalves deserted from Portuguese service, considering the short tenure of his service. Bocarro adds further information, stating that Gonçalves was a "native of Santo Antonio do Tojal," in Portugal, "of humble parents." Gonçalves bought his ship with money he had earned as a foreman of some salt-ships. Gonçalves seems to have been expanding his trade from salt to other goods, for he was carrying cloth for sale in Dianga. See Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 431.

<sup>478</sup> Phayre, *History of Burma*, 174.

the booty in the ports of the king of Bacala, who was friendly to these Portuguese.<sup>479</sup>

### **Dutch-Arakanese Alliance**

Min Yazagyi saw that he could not control or even trust the Portuguese and had now taken steps to eradicate their power. But De Brito's earlier successes against Arakanese forces seemed to indicate that he was in no position to fight the Portuguese upstarts alone. Thus, Min Yazagyi turned to the new rising European power in Southeast Asia: the Dutch.

Min Yazagyi asked the Dutch to trade in his country, hoping to "secure their aid," against De Brito. Min Yazagyi as early as 1607 allowed Pieter Willemszoon Verhoeff to enter Arakan with his trade items from Masulipatam.<sup>480</sup> A further mission was sent by the Dutch under Jan Gerritsz Ruyll in the same year.<sup>481</sup> In order to make his gestures for an alliance more appealing, however, Min Yazagyi gave the Dutch permission to trade in neighboring areas over which he claimed suzerainty, but which he did not actually control: Bengal and Pegu.<sup>482</sup> As Verhoeff remarked:

So would he give us to wit the aforesaid Castle in Pegu, the island of Sundiva, Chittagong, Dianga, or any other places in Bengal, as he had given the same previously to the Portuguese.<sup>483</sup>

Verhoeff, greeted these offers of economic opportunities and suggested to the V.O.C. that trade factories should be set up in Pegu.<sup>484</sup> Min Yazagyi's negotiations with the Dutch worried the Portuguese, especially since it was believed in Lisbon that the transfer of Chittagong and Sundiva to the Dutch had already been accomplished.<sup>485</sup>

Min Yazagyi was soon disappointed. The V.O.C. did set up a factory at Mrauk-U, but did not take advantage of the offer to trade in

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<sup>479</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 155.

<sup>480</sup> D. W. Davies, *A Primer of Dutch Seventeenth Century Overseas Trade*. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. 1961): 86.

<sup>481</sup> Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*, 416.

<sup>482</sup> Davies, *op. cit.*, 86.

<sup>483</sup> De Jonge, *Opkomst van het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie (1595-1610)*, III, 287-91, cited in Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*, 416.

<sup>484</sup> Davies, *op. cit.*, 86.

<sup>485</sup> See Document 120, 20 February 1610, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of Goa, Ruy Lourenço de Tavora, reprinted in the letter of the same viceroy to the king, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 347-9.

Pegu. This was not what Min Yazagyi wanted: he desperately wanted to shake De Brito's control of Syriam and was willing to risk further European occupation of Syriam as long as it was not held by the Portuguese. Min Yazagyi intensified his offer by "present[ing]" San Iago (Syriam) to the Dutch, even though it was held by the Portuguese under Philip de Brito. Still, the Dutch made no efforts to trade in Pegu until 1635.<sup>486</sup> Min Yazagyi could thus only depend upon Dutch help against the Portuguese in Arakan: his claims to hold suzerainty over Lower Burma remained simply claims.

### **The Reestablishment of Arakan's Portuguese on Sundiva**

One of those who died at Dianga was Manuel de Mattos, commander of Dianga, who was also the "Lord of Sundiva," since the death of Domingos Carvalho. Mattos had left Sundiva, as well as his young son, under the protection of Pero Gomes.<sup>487</sup> Pero Gomes seems to have been a very poor administrator, since the king of Portugal refers to him as a "vile man of less substance than that of the conquistadores." Gomes was of such a poor reputation that the king of Portugal suggested to the viceroy of India, Dom Francisco d'Almeida, that he should consider taking over direct administration of Sundiva if Mattos continued to leave Gomes in a position of authority.<sup>488</sup> When Fateh Khan, a Moslem employed by the Portuguese, heard of Mattos' death, however, he decided to make himself the new lord of Sundiva and usurped power from the unpopular Pero Gomes. To guarantee his control, Fateh Khan had all of the thirty Portuguese traders on Sundiva, as well as their families, killed. All of the indigenous Christians and their wives and children were killed as well. Fateh Khan then gathered his "Moors" and Patanis and created his own fleet of forty ships, which he maintained with the revenue of the prosperous island.<sup>489</sup>

Fateh Khan felt that he had a mission and displayed it prominently as an inscription on his flag: "Fateh Khan, by the grace of God, Lord of Sandwip, shedder of Christian blood and destroyer of the

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<sup>486</sup> Davies, *op. cit.*, 86.

<sup>487</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 82.

<sup>488</sup> The king also suggested that Sundiva could be used as a base to bring the scattered Portuguese renegades in Bengal back under Goa's control, presumably with the belief that De Brito in Syriam was not able to keep his promise to do the same. See Document 60, 4 January 1608, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of India, Dom Francisco d'Almeida, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 176.

<sup>489</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 155-156; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, 432; Document 120, 20 February 1610, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of India, Ruy Louenço de Tavora, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 347-8.



Portuguese nation.”<sup>490</sup> Fateh Khan determined to wipe out Gonçaves’ Portuguese as well.<sup>491</sup> Fateh Khan’s fleet circled the area looking for Gonçaves and the other survivors of the Dianga massacre. Finally, Fateh Khan found the Portuguese on Dakhin Shahbazpur island (or Deccan Shabazpore), which belonged to the king of Bacala, dividing the wealth they had captured in a year or so of local piracy.<sup>492</sup> The Portuguese were in the midst of a heated debate over the division of spoils, with the primary contenders being Gonçaves and one of his subordinate *jalia* commanders, Sebastião Pinto. Sebastião Pinto decided to break away from the rest of the Portuguese and began to leave. As Fateh Khan was about to surprise the Portuguese, then, Pinto saw Fateh Khan’s forces and fired his guns at it. This noise of this bombardment warned the rest of Gonçaves’ men.<sup>493</sup> Gonçaves attacked and the two forces fought throughout the night. Gonçaves’ forces consisted of ten ships and eighty Portuguese against Fateh Khan’s forty ships and eight hundred men.<sup>494</sup> The two forces fought until morning revealed that Fateh Khan was dead and his entire force either destroyed or captured.<sup>495</sup> We are not told how the Portuguese managed to achieve this amazing victory, but I suspect that better arms and the fact that Fateh Khan’s men were inexperienced in battle, while Gonçaves’ men were professional ‘warriors’ may have gone a long way to ‘tip the scales’ in their favor.

The Portuguese decided to take Fateh Khan’s leaderless domain, the island of Sundiva. However, Philip de Brito, in a letter to the king of Portugal had suggested that he should seize control of the region and make a fortress at Chittagong which would allow him to bring the Portuguese desperados in Bengala back under Goa’s control, albeit indirect. Further, De Brito would set up a *feitoria* at Chittagong and thereby assume control over the trade of the northeastern section of the Bay of Bengal. Gonçaves, however, was moving more quickly than the correspondence between Syriam and Lisbon.<sup>496</sup> To further his own plans, Gonçaves now had additional Portuguese recruits from Bengala and other ports, many of them being refugees from Min Yazagyi’s *pogroms*. Further, Gonçaves persuaded the king of Bacala to join in the

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<sup>490</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 82.

<sup>491</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 155-156.

<sup>492</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 82.

<sup>493</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 433.

<sup>494</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 155-156.

<sup>495</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 82.

<sup>496</sup> Document 120, 20 February 1610, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of Goa, Ruy Lourenço de Tavora, *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 349-50.

conquest, promising that “he would give him half the revenue of the island if he assisted him to conquer it.” By March 1609, Gonçalves had over forty *jalias*, a few oared *navios*, and four hundred Portuguese as well as a contingent of men and two hundred horses from the king of Bacala.<sup>497</sup>

The Moslem fortress at Sundiva was well-prepared for defense by Fateh Khan’s brother. But Sundiva was a large island and the Moslems had no way of knowing at which point Gonçalves’ men would invade. Fateh Khan’s brother thus waited with a large number of men outside of the fortress, prepared to meet the Portuguese at the beaches as soon as the Portuguese ships appeared at sea. When the Portuguese made a beachhead and disembarked the Moslems quickly attacked them.<sup>498</sup> The Moslems fought determinedly, since they “expected no quarter,”<sup>499</sup> but they were forced back by the Portuguese landing, and fled to their fort, three leagues further inland. The Portuguese laid siege to the fort but, after two months, they were running low on supplies and ammunition which they could not bring up from their ships. The reason for this failure to maintain a sufficient supply line from the shore to the siege lines was that while the Moslems inside of the fortress made daily sallies outside and harried the besiegers, one thousand indigenous soldiers and two hundred Patani cavalry were lying in wait in the three league-long area between Gonçalves’ men and his ships. As the besiegers became the besieged in this manner, the Portuguese were hemmed in with the few remaining supplies they had brought with them. Further, noting the desperate Portuguese situation, the Moslem forces inside and outside of the fortress became more courageous.<sup>500</sup>

The Portuguese were released from the impending danger of a final, massive counterattack against both their front and their rear, which they would probably lose, by Gaspar de Pina. Pina was a Castillian, the captain of some Portuguese mercenaries who served who served in the armies of some indigenous kings, and arrived at the port in his *navio* and some other ships. Pina’s forces included thirty musketeers as well as other soldiers, and was well-prepared for the skirmish with the Moslems which ensued when he and his men disembarked on shore at night. Pina and fifty of his men, including some of his mariners, marched the three leagues to Gonçalves’ siege lines, bringing the supplies to the

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<sup>497</sup> Ibid; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 435.

<sup>498</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 436.

<sup>499</sup> Charles Stewart, 1813, *The History of Bengal from the First Mohammedan Invasion until the Virtual Conquest of that Countrey by the English, a.d. 1757*, (Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1971): 208.

<sup>500</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 436.

Portuguese. To make his forces seem more considerable, Pina had his men carry numerous banners and torches and had them play trumpets and tambourines,<sup>501</sup> which made the “moors” believe that the Portuguese were being joined by an even greater force. Gonçalves’ and Pina’s men subsequently overran the fort and killed all of the defenders, who numbered over one thousand.<sup>502</sup>

Before Fateh Khan’s *coup*, the local inhabitants of Sundiva had lived under the Portuguese and they now begrudgingly accepted Gonçalves as their new leader. Gonçalves promised that he would not hurt any of them or their property, provided that they bring all of the remaining Moslems on the island to him. When the local population returned with over one thousand captured Moslems, Gonçalves’ men beheaded them.<sup>503</sup> Gonçalves thus became the independent lord of Sundiva, “an absolute Lord independent of any Prince, and his Orders had the force of Laws.”<sup>504</sup> In other words, Gonçalves became the “king” of Sundiva island.<sup>505</sup> “King” Gonçalves at first divided the land of Sundiva amongst his men as spoils, but subsequently took it back. Further, instead of giving the king of Bacala the promised half of the island’s revenues, Gonçalves attacked him and won.<sup>506</sup> Further, Campos claims that Gonçalves also possessed “lands on the coast of Arakan.”<sup>507</sup>

Gonçalves now commanded a sizable army and navy. His army included over one thousand Portuguese, two thousand indigenous troops, and a two-hundred-man cavalry. Gonçalves’ navy was just as considerable: it consisted of twenty oared *navios*, with metal-plated bows, which were armed with big *falcões*; seventy war *jalias*, not including the two hundred and fifty *jalias* and barges used by merchants; three big, oared *galeotas*, each one with two twenty-five pound guns, and each one having mounted *falcões*.<sup>508</sup> Gonçalves subsequently built a *feitoria* which served as the official source of revenue for the island (another source was piracy). Gonçalves also seemed to be the rising power in the region and many other neighboring rulers sought alliances with him. Gonçalves expanded his control by seizing the islands of Xavapur

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<sup>501</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 436-7.

<sup>502</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 156-157.

<sup>503</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 437.

<sup>504</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 156-157.

<sup>505</sup> Hall, *Europe and Burma*, 37.

<sup>506</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 157.

<sup>507</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 84.

<sup>508</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 138.

(Dakhin Shahbazpur?) and Patelbanga from the king of Bacala and lands from other rulers as well.<sup>509</sup> Gonçaves and his Portuguese had thus repeated what Ribeyro and De Brito had done at Syriam: Min Yazagyi was now threatened by rebellious Portuguese in the west as well as in the east. Fortunately for Min Yazagyi, however, the Portuguese at Sundiva and at Syriam would probably make no actions in concert against Arakan, since Gonçaves refused to recognize De Brito as his overlord as ordered by Goa and this fostered a hostility between these two Portuguese that was never overcome.<sup>510</sup>

### **Anaporam's Revolt**

Gonçaves soon became an even greater threat to Arakan than Min Yazagyi expected. Sundiva, for example, was geographically very close to Chittagong, much closer to Chittagong than Mrauk-U or even Ramu was. Given the traditional autonomy of Chittagong, and the tendency of the *myozas* there to be at odds with the king at Mrauk-U, Gonçaves had ample opportunity to attempt to destabilize Arakan politically. An occasion for this political intervention came in 1609, when Min Yazagyi and the *governor* of Chittagong, Anaporam, had a disagreement. Supposedly, Minyazagyi demanded that Anaporam give him an elephant that Anaporam possessed, which was said to be the greatest in all of Arakan. Anaporam refused to give the elephant up and Min Yazagyi, probably having made the demand in the first place as a test of Anaporam's loyalty, sent an army against Chittagong. Anaporam allied himself to Gonçaves, who demanded Anaporam's sister in return as his wife. With the terms of alliance agreed upon, Gonçaves and Anaporam attacked the Arakanese army unsuccessfully.<sup>511</sup> With the Arakanese quickly approaching Chittagong, Gonçaves and De Brito consulted on how to manage the situation and it was decided to bring Anaporam and

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<sup>509</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 158; These two islands were probably more of strategic value than anything else. As Stewart explains, "[T]heir only productions [are] rice and salt; and their climate is supposed to be unfavourable to European constitutions." See Stewart, *op. cit.*, 27f. Perhaps Stewart was only referring to Patelbanga, for Manrique has referred to Xavapur as containing "a large number of thorny fruits, mainly limes of various species and of enormous size, which owing to the fertility of the soil are independent of the care of skilled gardeners and horticulturalists." Indeed Luard notes in 1927, that the island had 400 villages and 270,000 inhabitants. See Manrique, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 394f-395.

<sup>510</sup> Document 352, 15 March 1613, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of India, Dom Jeronymo de Azevedo, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. II, 391.

<sup>511</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 158.

his family back to Sundiva.<sup>512</sup> Anaporam brought his fortune, his elephants, and his family to Sundiva, where he lived as an exile until his death, “not without suspicion of poison,” shortly afterward.<sup>513</sup>

This brief attempt at intervening directly in Arakan was unsuccessful, but it was of major importance. Min Yazagyi faced a new threat on his northwestern border, possibly a greater threat than De Brito posed in Pegu. Min Yazagyi could also no longer depend upon his *myozas* for absolute loyalty, since they could depend upon Gonçaves’ support if they chose to rebel against central Arakanese control. Further, Arakanese military resources now had to be committed increasingly to defense rather than expansion, and even if Min Yazagyi chose to conduct any military campaigns at home or abroad he had to find some way to neutralize the threat posed by Sundiva. Gonçaves also had a ‘trump card’ which he might play given the right situation: he possessed a queen of the Arakanese royal house, the widow of Anaporam, whom he was now trying to marry to his brother, Antonio Tibao.<sup>514</sup> Gonçaves was soon able to play this ‘trump card,’ due to problems which Min Yazagyi was having on his border with Bengal.

### **The Sundiva-Arakanese Alliance**

The Mughal governor of Bengal, Sheikh Islam Khan, however, was attempting to conquer the Kingdom of Balua, the territory east of the Megna river. Since this kingdom was close to Sundiva, Min Yazagyi convinced Gonçaves to join him in a military campaign against the Mughals, who were threatening them both. Min Yazagyi gathered eighty thousand men, mostly musketeers, ten thousand Mon swordsmen, and seven hundred castled elephants. In return for the return of Anaporam’s widow, Min Yazagyi also sent two hundred ships with naval personnel amounting to four thousand men to join Gonçaves’ fleet, under the supreme command of Gonçaves. The plan of action was that Gonçaves would hold off the Mughals until Min Yazagyi could get there. Gonçaves and Min Yazagyi would then divide the kingdom of Balua between them.

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<sup>512</sup> See Document 120, 29 December 1610, letter from the viceroy of Goa, Ruy Lourenço de Tavora, to the king of Portugal, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. I, 356.

<sup>513</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 158-9; Bocarro seems to believe that Gonçaves may have been the culprit since he had a great motive. In the case of Anaporam’s death, for example, Gonçaves would inherit all of Anaporam’s considerable wealth. See Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 439.

<sup>514</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 158-9; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 439.

To guarantee his promise to Min Yazagyi, Gonçaves provided his nephew and the sons of some of the Sundivanese Portuguese as hostages.<sup>515</sup>

The arrangement went well at first. The Mughals were driven out of Balua and the Arakanese captured Lakhipur, “while Gonçaves barred their advance from the sea.”<sup>516</sup> But Gonçaves for some reason did not keep the rest of the bargain. Gonçaves left the Dangatiar rivermouth and entered a creek on Defiarta island. Then Gonçaves had the captains of the Arakanese ships brought together in a great council and murdered them all. The Portuguese also slaughtered much of the Arakanese crews, making slaves of the survivors. Gonçaves then returned to Sundiva.<sup>517</sup> Without Gonçaves’ blockade, the Mughal army was able to reach Balua by river. Min Yazagyi, who faced the Mughals alone, was severely defeated in a counterattack when the main Mughal force approached.<sup>518</sup> Min Yazagyi and his army took refuge in the Tippera forests, but the king of Tippera saw this as a good time to rebel and the Arakanese nobles were “put to the sword.” Min Yazagyi abandoned his army, and “mounted on a swift elephant,” fled to Chittagong,<sup>519</sup> where he left “a strong garrison” and then returned to his capital.<sup>520</sup> This was a major defeat for the Arakanese, since the Mughals had taken Bengal up to Chittagong and even Dianga was now threatened.<sup>521</sup>

### **Gonçaves’ Invasion of Arakan**

Gonçaves then attacked the weakened Arakanese kingdom. Since much of the kingdom’s soldiers had been lost against the Mughal armies and since most in Arakan had not heard of Gonçaves’ failure to comply with the peace agreement, the Arakanese were easily surprised, as well as “totally unprotected.”<sup>522</sup> Gonçaves destroyed all of Arakan’s coastal forts,<sup>523</sup> including the major Arakanese installations at Ramu,

<sup>515</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 159-160.

<sup>516</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 87.

<sup>517</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 159-160; The Arakanese captives were auctioned off in Sundiva at low prices to buyers from India and Melaka. See Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 442.

<sup>518</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 159-160.

<sup>519</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 87; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 442.

<sup>520</sup> Phayre, *History of Burma*, 175; Bocarro, *op. cit.*, 442.

<sup>521</sup> Maurice Collis and San Shwe Bu, “Dom Martin, 1606-1643: the First Burman to Visit Europe,” *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 16, pt. 1 (1926): 11.

<sup>522</sup> Stewart, *op. cit.*, 218.

<sup>523</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 161.

Chittagong, and Maju.<sup>524</sup> Then Gonçaves sailed up the Lemro river and destroyed merchant ships from many countries,<sup>525</sup> as well as capturing European merchant ships which were “probably Dutch.”<sup>526</sup> But the Arakanese repulsed Gonçaves before too much damage was done,<sup>527</sup> although Min Yazagyi lost his personal pleasure-boat. In anger, Min Yazagyi had Gonçaves’ nephew impaled upon a spike and hung at a high point in Mrauk-U so that Gonçaves could see the body.<sup>528</sup>

It was now clear that there was no possibility of future cooperation between Gonçaves and Min Yazagyi. Min Yazagyi now faced a strong Portuguese enemy on Sundiva island and the advanced forces of the Mughals in Bengal as a result of Gonçaves’ treachery. Further, the king of Tippera had joined the large number of enemies of Arakan. For the time being, Min Yazagyi could only gather his remaining forces, those not destroyed by Gonçaves or his enemies in Bengal, and strengthen key positions in the Arakanese defense system. Without the Portuguese at Dianga, Arakanese forces now had to be committed to the defense of Arakan’s northwest frontier in Bengala and Min Yazagyi moved a large fleet, with artillery to Chittagong and left it there while he returned to Mrauk-U to hold his court together. It is clear from the correspondence between Goa and Europe that there must have been some confusion about whom these new forces would be directed against. It was suggested that the Arakanese forces at Chittagong would be used to recapture the twelve Bengalese states, annexed by Min Bin generations before, from the Mughals, but an attack on the kingdom of Tippera seemed possible as well. Further, these forces might also have been designated for the capture of the island of Sundiva, which could then be fortified as an extension of Arakanese defenses against Mughal expansion.<sup>529</sup> In any case, it is possible that Min Yazagyi did not know what to do with these forces, other than to maintain his control over Chittagong, to prevent yet another disastrous loss for Arakan.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

Who was Gonçaves and what effect did he have upon Min Yazagyi’s empire? The general consensus seems to be that Gonçaves was simply a

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<sup>524</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 87.

<sup>525</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 161.

<sup>526</sup> Phayre, *History of Burma*, 175.

<sup>527</sup> Stewart, *op. cit.*, 218.

<sup>528</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 161.

<sup>529</sup> Document 268, 19 March 1612, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of India, Dom Jeronymo de Azevedo, in *Documentos Remmettidos*, vol. II, 226.

pirate and that any attempt to see him as a local ruler is ill-informed. This view is supported by Das Gupta and Pearson as well as Fariah y Sousa. There is evidence, however, which was admitted by, or can be inferred from, the works of the above authors as well as the works of many others, that both Portuguese and indigenous people in Sundiva saw him as a legitimate ruler. Some called him “king,” others called him “lord,” but all who joined him or negotiated with him saw Gonçaves as a local leader of some importance. As Maurice Collis and San Shwe Bu explain:

It must be insisted that Tibau’s sovereignty was real. The Viceroy of Goa had no control nor aspired to any control over him. By 1610 he had become so prominent and important a figure in the Bay that Razagiri...invited Tibau to co-operate with him.<sup>530</sup>

How then should we view Gonçaves? My own view is that Gonçaves was less of a king than a pirate. Gonçaves came to power because he had won the support of survivors from the Dianga massacre. But it is clear that these survivors did not act out of revenge when they organized and attempted to control the Arakanese coast. Instead these Portuguese survivors were motivated by a number of other things. First, the Portuguese at Dianga were typically deserters or adventurers who found life elsewhere in the Estado da India unbearable or distasteful and had no intention of going back to Goa or Portugal. Some, who could do so, probably went to other Portuguese trading stations. But a large number did not or could not go elsewhere and thus decided to join Gonçaves who offered them a way of continuing to live as they had at Dianga. Second, the Portuguese at Dianga probably realized that the lack of direct Portuguese government influence in the Bay of Bengal, and the absence of other large-scale European operations, meant that someone like Gonçaves, given men and ships, might easily control maritime trade off the Arakanese coast. Third, since the Portuguese at Dianga had traditionally lived outside of the pale of Goa’s control and were autonomous in Arakan, these men probably had little difficulty in accepting a life of piracy.

But Gonçaves was not De Brito and was not following his example. I see no evidence that Gonçaves saw any real importance in being called “king” or “lord.” Nor was Gonçaves interested in setting up feudal-like political arrangements with local potentates as De Brito was.

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<sup>530</sup> Maurice Collis and San Shwe Bu, “Dom Martin, 1606-1643,” 12.<sup>531</sup> The authors are referring here to the period of Arakanese history between 1638 and 1785, I am using it, however, for this comparison because I think that it accurately describes Min Yazagyi’s reign. See Collis & Bu, “Arakan’s Place in the Civilization of the Bay,” 44.



Possibly this was due to the fact that Gonçaves did not rule over a substantial indigenous population on Sundiva as De Brito did at Syriam and thus needed no ideology to win local support. But neither did Gonçaves attempt to gain territory or political control elsewhere. I think this is evident by Gonçaves' assaults on Arakan, which seemed to be directed more at reducing the Arakanese military capacity, rather than winning territorial control.

Regardless of who Gonçaves was and why he did what he did in Arakan, however, it is clear that his actions had a tremendous impact on Min Yazagyi's dream of making Arakan the preeminent power in Bengal and Lower Burma. First, Gonçaves spread Portuguese influence further afield on mainland Southeast Asia and confirmed the growing indigenous belief that the Portuguese were invincible and that Arakan was simply just another petty kingdom. Second, Gonçaves' rise to power had set up another, closer Portuguese center than Goa, from which De Brito, who now controlled Arakan's eastern territories in Pegu, might receive aid and supplies. But most importantly, the physical damage incurred from Gonçaves' attacks upon Arakan and the continued threat he posed effectively removed Arakan as an actor in the politics of Lower Burma. Gonçaves' treacherous actions also made sure that Min Yazagyi lost his position in Bengal bringing another threatening force to bear upon Arakan: the expanding Mughal empire.

Min Yazagyi's empire was collapsing around him, but much of this was not Min Yazagyi's fault. He inherited a relationship between the Arakanese and their Portuguese mercenaries based on mutual trust. His predecessors depended upon Portuguese help for generations and for him to be suddenly wary of his Portuguese mercenaries is too much to expect. But something changed in their relationship and it took some time before Min Yazagyi realized it: Portuguese power in the east was declining rapidly and the Portuguese who now served the Arakanese were oriented more towards quick profit, rather than long-term planning and long-term loyalties or relationships with indigenous rulers. Min Yazagyi is at fault for attacking Dianga, when it is clear that the Portuguese at Dianga were not ready to rebel so easily as De Brito had been. Further, Min Yazagyi can be blamed for allowing a bad situation grow worse: many times he continued to trust the Portuguese after they had already proven to be untrustworthy. But then again, the changing political climate, the encroaching Mughal Empire and the anarchic situation in Pegu, often made it necessary for Min Yazagyi to seek Portuguese help even when it was not certain whether he would be tricked by them.

**Chapter VII**  
**Arakan Rises Again, 1612-1622**

The causes that make men rich are often the same as ruin them. What a gambler has won he may lose by an identical throw. Mrauk-U was glorious because wise kings took advantage of a strong alliance against distracted border states. It fell into poverty and contempt because weak kings were falsely served by their allies against united border states.

Maurice Collis & San Shwe Bu<sup>531</sup>

[T]he strength of Arakan lay mainly in the woods and swamps...Had the Kings of Arakan trusted to these defenses, and been content to remain in obscure independence at home, they might long have remained secure from landward foes. But, electing to become unnecessarily aggressive, their country lay at the mercy of foes on both sides.

A. Ruxton MacMahon<sup>532</sup>

These two quotations accurately describe two men: the first can be applied to Min Yazagyi, while the second accurately depicts the temperament of Min Khamaung, Min Yazagyi's son and successor. By comparing these characterizations, two very different personalities are evident. While Min Yazagyi left the maintenance of his empire to others, Min Khamaung was a fighter. If we can keep their personalities in mind, they will be useful in examining how Min Khamaung faced the problems that had developed in Min Yazagyi's reign.

Several questions should be asked. How did the Min Khamaung overcome the problems caused by Min Yazagyi's reign? Why did Min Khamaung's able leadership lead to the destruction of the Portuguese? Was this a revival of Arakanese imperial might? I think that an examination of the fall of Min Yazagyi and the rise of Min Khamaung to power will help us to answer these questions.

**The Eclipse of Min Yazagyi's power**

Min Yazagyi's empire was now shaken by two Portuguese mercenary revolts. But Min Yazagyi was to face yet another revolt involving the Portuguese. With Portuguese support, Min Mangri, Min Yazagyi's

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<sup>532</sup> A. Ruxton MacMahon, *Far Cathay and Farther India*, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1893): 159-160.

youngest son, revolted against his father, who he and other members of the royal family had increasingly come to see as a weak and ineffective ruler. Significantly, Min Yazagyi would again depend upon his oldest son, Min Khamaung, to lead his armies in crushing the revolt. Min Yazagyi had not resumed active participation in the activities of his army, or his state for that matter, and Arakan was now being run by courtiers and rival princes of the royal family.

One event in 1610, however, may have crystallized the Arakanese view that Min Yazagyi was bringing about the destruction of his kingdom. This was the refusal of other Burmese states to have anything to do with Arakan, indicating that Min Yazagyi's credibility as a potential ally was low in Burma. Min Yazagyi, for example, proposed an alliance with the growing kingdom of Ava in northern Burma against Philip de Brito. But Min Yazagyi's attempts "met with a rebuff."<sup>533</sup> Although Min Yazagyi's attempts at an alliance with Ava met with failure, news of the "come and go of embassies" worried the Portuguese at Syriam enough so that Philip de Brito sought and gained an alliance with Nat-shin-naung of Toungoo.<sup>534</sup> Since Toungoo already submitted as a vassal to Ava, this brought about a direct conflict between Ava and De Brito, a struggle which engulfed Lower Burma and precluded Arakanese intervention.

At the same time that Min Yazagyi was losing control of his government, we can see the increasing power of Min Khamaung. Min Khamaung was a fighter and a very capable military commander and political leader. Although he had led three unsuccessful attempts to overthrow Min Yazagyi in the past, Min Khamaung was now working within the Min Yazagyi administration to build up his own power-base. One of the obstacles that stood between him and the kingship, however, was his younger brother Min Mangri.

### **Min Mangri**

Min Yazagyi slowly began to realize that he was losing his grip over his empire and that Arakan was being whittled away by its enemies, both foreign and domestic. More importantly, he probably realized that he was also losing the world recognition of his kingship that he had tried so hard to gain. To strengthen his empire, Min Yazagyi tried to find weak points in the territories which remained under his control. Min Yazagyi no longer controlled lower Burma, but he could still save Arakan from the Mughals. Anaporam's flight left Chittagong without a governor and now to secure Arakan's border with Bengal, Min Yazagyi appointed his

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<sup>533</sup> J. S. Furnivall (ed. & trans.), "A Forgotten Chronicle," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 2, pt. 2 (1912): 164.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid.

promising younger son, Min Mangri, as the new governor of Chittagong, with the title Alamanja (or Alaman the governor).<sup>535</sup> This decision was made because of Min Yazagyi's observation of Min Mangri's loyalty to him. The heir apparent Min Khamaung did not like Min Mangri, which was another reason that Min Yazagyi made his choice:

[H]e sent him off...in order to obviate the growing enmity which existed between the two brothers, before it led to an actual rupture. This young and sagacious Prince had no doubt that the cause of his being made to leave the Court and his home by his father was the little love his elder brother had for him. This was due to the affection and admiration which his elder brother saw that he received from his father and every one, on account of his good qualities...<sup>536</sup>

Min Mangri believed that when Min Khamaung took the throne Min Khamaung would have him killed. Min Mangri, considering the three revolts of Min Khamaung against his father, Min Yazagyi, argued that "an individual upon whom family ties lay so lightly, would make short work of him."<sup>537</sup> Min Mangri could also see that his father's administration was weak and that if he moved quickly, he could grab the kingship for himself. Min Mangri decided to get an ally who could support his challenge to the throne of Arakan, and turned to Sebastião Gonçalves y Tibao. He sent an embassy requesting that a pact of alliance be made,<sup>538</sup> and they agreed to seal the alliance with the marriage of Mangri's daughter to Gonçalves' son.<sup>539</sup>

### **Chittagong Rebels**

In 1612, eighteen months after Min Mangri allied himself to Gonçalves, he revolted against his father.<sup>540</sup> This must have presented Arakan with

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<sup>535</sup> See Luard's note in Manrique, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 301f.

<sup>536</sup> Manrique, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 301.

<sup>537</sup> Collis & San Shwe Bu, "Dom Martin 1606-1643," 12.

<sup>538</sup> Manrique, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 304.

<sup>539</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, 304.

<sup>540</sup> This is Collis & Bu's account of the events of the revolt of Chittagong and its governor, Min Mangri, which they say is based on Arakanese chronicles. Fariah y Sousa, working on contemporary hearsay has provided a different account of the events and a different chronology. Sousa says that "Anaporam" the brother of Min Khamaung was simply defending himself when Min Khamaung demanded Anaporam's great elephant, "to which all other elephants of that Country were said to allow a sort of superiority."

a crisis of disastrous proportions; not only had Arakan lost Lower Burma, the bulk of its navy, its noble class in Tippera, and the island of Sundiva, now the entire northern third of the country, as well as its most profitable port, was in revolt. Min Yazagyi lost all sympathy for his son and unleashed his eldest son, Min Khamaung, with an army to defeat Min Mangri. Min Khamaung marched along the shore of the Bay of Bengal towards Chittagong. Min Khamaung was a good military commander and took the precaution of having his fleet move slowly along the shore “in order to preserve daily communication with the army.”<sup>541</sup> Min Khamaung’s army suffered a temporary setback when it was attacked and routed by the forces of the *raja* of Tippera, which took positions between Chittagong and Ramu.<sup>542</sup>

Min Khamaung tried again and this time succeeded in pushing his army up the coast until they soon began to lay siege to Chittagong.<sup>543</sup> After four months, the people of Chittagong were starving and sent messages to Min Yazagyi that they would surrender, but Min Mangri and the Portuguese would not let them. As the defenses weakened, Min Mangri personally led the members of his court around the walls to bolster his men. While doing so, Min Mangri was mortally wounded by a bullet. Min Mangri told the Portuguese not to let the people surrender because his children would be murdered if they did so. The Portuguese, realizing that all was lost, took Min Mangri’s son and daughter to Hughli in the Mughal kingdom for protection. Min Mangri, protected by his chief eunuch, refused to be baptized before his death and remained a Buddhist.<sup>544</sup>

Min Khamaung then entered Chittagong unopposed. He took time to attend the funeral of Min Mangri, but then hurried back to Mrauk-U. Gonçaves was able to remove some of Min Mangri’s wealth and elephants while Min Yazagyi, who might have continued his assaults on Gonçaves in earlier years, remained surprisingly uninterested in Gonçaves for the moment and ordered no attacks. It must have been

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Anaporam supposedly then fled to Sundiva and giving Gonçaves his sister in marriage, the two leaders launched a failed invasion attempt. Sousa then says that Anaporam then died, with the suspicion of poison (Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 157-158.). Campos, in his *The Portuguese in Bengal*, (84-5), supports Sousa’s claim, citing similar accounts in other Portuguese histories. I have treated these differing accounts separately, because, after reviewing the evidence, I have come to the conclusion that they were indeed separate revolts. It is probable that Min Mangri was established as the governor of Chittagong to replace Anaporam in 1609-10.

<sup>541</sup> Phayre, *History of Burma*, 175.

<sup>542</sup> Stuart, *op. cit.*, 69.

<sup>543</sup> Collis & Bu, “Dom Martin,” 12.

<sup>544</sup> Manrique, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 310-4.

clear to Min Yazagyi that he was in no condition, after losing his eastern empire in Pegu to De Brito, to risk losing his western empire in Bengal to yet another Portuguese upstart by futilely throwing men and resources without a good stratagem for victory. Instead, Min Yazagyi seems to have decided to postpone his revenge on Gonçalves in order to strengthen his administration and find out what he was doing wrong in the management of his kingdom and his armies. Unfortunately, Min Yazagyi no longer had time to launch any major reforms, since he died within months, leaving Min Khamaung as Arakan's new king.

### **Min Khamaung Rebuilds Arakanese Might**

Min Khamaung had defeated Min Mangri, and his father, Min Yazagyi, was dead. As the new king of Arakan, Min Khamaung<sup>545</sup> was free to make the military and administrative reforms that he felt were necessary. In order to do so, Min Khamaung realized that he needed the support of capable advisors and administrators. Thus, Min Khamaung requested that his old tutor, Ugga Byan, join him in his administration. Ugga Byan, however, refused because he was disgraced in Arakanese society and would only lessen Min Khamaung's legitimacy by serving him:

Public opinion, immemorial custom weighed on him. Once a pagoda-slave, always a pagoda-slave. It would have required a much greater King than Min-Kamaung to have overcome that conviction and to have reintroduced Ugga Byan into society. He was a disgraced man and in this utter degradation he remained for the rest of his life.<sup>546</sup>

Min Khamaung's plans for reform thus suffered a setback, since he planned on making use of the advice of Ugga Byan, who seemed far more capable than those members of the Arakanese court would have won positions in the government through court intrigue rather than ability. Although Min Khamaung would not have the help of Ugga Byan, he immediately began to rebuild the prestige and religious aura of the Arakanese kingship, which had decreased dramatically under Min Yazagyi. Min Khamaung engaged in a large and impressive temple-building program, which included the construction of the Thuparamaceti, Shwepara, and Ngwepara pagodas.<sup>547</sup>

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<sup>545</sup> As king, Min Khamaung (r. 1612-1622) was also known as Husain Shah. See Luard's notes in Manrique, *op. cit.*, vol. I, xxiii.

<sup>546</sup> Collis, "An Arakanese Poem," 222.

<sup>547</sup> Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, 16.

Further, Min Yazagyi's years of allowing the government and military of Arakan to slip into the hands of corrupt ministers, to say nothing of the factional infighting of the royal family, had created a situation in which Min Khamaung was unable to push through reforms as quickly as his sixteenth century predecessors, such as Min Bin, had done. Min Khamaung's first administrative reform was to end Chittagong's traditional semi-autonomy and to bring it directly under the Arakanese king's control. This was extremely important, because Chittagong was the linchpin in Arakan's defense strategy on the western frontier in Bengal. Chittagong's semi-autonomy, under a governor, had allowed it to rebel under Min Mangri and it was also dangerously close to the autonomous Portuguese settlement at Dianga. After Min Mangri's death, Min Khamaung did not replace him with another governor, but instead appointed Min Soa as a viceroy "strictly under the control of the king of Arakan."<sup>548</sup> Min Khamaung could be sure of this man's loyalty: he was a "grandee" of Arakan, and was a son of the late Nan-dá-bayin of Pegu, who had been a prisoner of De Brito, perhaps at the same time as Min Khamaung. As Manrique comments, this "man had tried his utmost to obtain this governorship, simply in order to be revenged on the Portuguese, whom he hated intensely."<sup>549</sup> Further, the new viceroy of Chittagong was tied to the ruling house by his marriage to Anaporam's widow, who had fallen back into Arakanese hands.<sup>550</sup>

### **Collapse of the Portuguese at Syriam**

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide an account of Philip de Brito's activities at Syriam from 1608 to 1612, during which time Arakan had little to do with De Brito. But Syriam again took interest in Portuguese Syriam in 1613, when Anaukpetlun, the king of Ava, attacked Syriam with an army of 120,000 men and a navy of four hundred ships and six thousand Moslem mercenaries. De Brito's forces consisted of about one hundred Portuguese and two thousand Mons. Further, De Brito's forces lacked sufficient gunpowder.<sup>551</sup> The siege was not lifted by any help from Goa,<sup>552</sup> and during a general assault

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<sup>548</sup> Collis and Bu, "Dom Martin," 17.

<sup>549</sup> Manrique, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 88.

<sup>550</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 158-9.

<sup>551</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. III, 191-192.

<sup>552</sup> No help came from Goa to De Brito despite orders from the king of Portugal to do so. See Document 397, 20 December 1613, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of India, Dom Jeronymo de Azevedo, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. II, 465.

ordered by Anaukpetlun on 7 April 1612, the outer perimeter of wooden walls was lost and the Portuguese were restricted to a brick redoubt.<sup>553</sup>

Min Khamaung probably thought that this was an ideal situation in which he could reintroduce Arakanese influence into Lower Burma. De Brito, for example, had been so degraded, that he might happily submit to Arakanese control in order to save himself from Avan revenge for his sacrilege against Buddhism. Min Khamaung thus sent an Arakanese fleet of fifty ships to relieve Syriam. These ships, however, were captured by Anaukpetlun's navy. De Brito's forces were defeated soon after and De Brito was spitted on an iron spike, while his men were taken to the interior of Burma where they were resettled. This group of Portuguese were given local wives, producing a hereditary class of Burmese artillerymen who served the Burmese army for the next three centuries.

De Brito's fall actually benefited Min Khamaung and Arakan in some very important ways. First, Ava's destruction of Syriam freed up Lower Burmese trade from the Portuguese restrictions which had led to its decline for almost a generation.<sup>554</sup> Arakan had suffered from the economic blockade by De Brito and Gonçaves and now this blockade was broken. Second, the loss of the Portuguese fortress under De Brito rendered Gonçaves' position less intimidating, since the only rival to Arakanese naval might in the area was now that of Gonçaves rather than the huge naval forces which De Brito and Gonçaves could muster together. Third, the image of Portuguese invincibility, which had grown through many years of Arakanese defeats was now broken, and psychologically at least, an Arakanese victory could revive the declining image that the Arakanese had of their own military prowess.

### **Arakanese-Dutch Alliance**

The Portuguese at Sundiva were an immediate threat to the Arakanese kingdom, and Min Khamaung needed an immediate solution to the decay of Arakanese imperial might. Thus Min Khamaung took advantage of Min

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<sup>553</sup> Nai Thien, *op. cit.*, 69; Harvey, *History of Burma*, 188. Interestingly, orders were sent by the king of Portugal on 15 March 1613, for all Portuguese ships trading in the Bay of Bengal to stop at Syriam and pay taxes. The orders probably did not reach Goa before De Brito was killed. See Document 352, 15 March 1613, letter from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of India, Dom Jeronymo de Azevedo, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. II, 391-5.

<sup>554</sup> Indeed, Pieter Willemszoon Verhoeff observed that as far away as Masulipatan, the "Moores...rejoice greatly at this conquest, hoping to get the trade of Pegu into their hands again," see Peter Floris (Pieter Willemszoon Verhoeff), *Peter Floris: His Voyage to the East Indies in the Globe 1611-1615*, edited and translated by W. H. Moreland. (London: Hakluyt Society. 1934): 336.



Yazagyi's earlier attempts to win Dutch help against De Brito. Min Khamaung made overtures to the Dutch to help him crush Gonçalves. The Dutch were in no position to refuse Min Khamaung's requests, because they were becoming heavily dependent on trade relations with Arakan:

As there was a constant demand for slaves in the Dutch factories in the Archipelago, Dutch merchants soon became the King's chief customers for these unhappy human beings (Bengalese prisoners of war). They also came to Arakan for rice. Their factories in the spice-growing districts were in constant need of food supplies, and their agents were constantly busy wherever rice was to be had, and especially in Siam and Arakan.<sup>555</sup>

The Dutch thus agreed to help Min Khamaung and sent a fleet and Dutch military advisors to aid the Arakanese army and navy.

I think that Min Khamaung's dependence upon Dutch help to reform Arakan indicates the depths to which Min Yazagyi's misguided reign had taken Arakan. The guiding principle of the Arakanese kings in the sixteenth century had always been to make use of foreigners and foreign models. These kings realized that they had to adapt foreign models to their culture and use them in an Arakanese way. Further, foreigners were used by the Arakanese kings in the development of the Arakanese army and fleet, but they had always made sure to keep a firm Arakanese hold over these men. Min Yazagyi failed to maintain a firm control over either his own court or his Portuguese mercenaries, and his kingdom crumbled around him. Min Khamaung inherited this poor state of affairs, and before he could adequately repair the damage done by Min Yazagyi, he had to find another foreign model and set it against the Portuguese.

### **Gonçalves Invades Arakan**

Gonçalves' position was endangered by Min Khamaung's control of Chittagong. Realizing that the Arakanese would soon attack him, Gonçalves tried to hit Arakan first with some deadly blow which would forestall their plans. He decided to sack the Arakanese capital, Mrauk-U in 1615, but he needed more help and sent a representative to Dom Jeromyno de Azevedo, the viceroy of Goa.<sup>556</sup>

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<sup>555</sup> D.G.E. Hall, "Studies in Dutch Relations With Arakan," *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 26, (1936): 3.

<sup>556</sup> Collis & Bu, "Dom Martin," 12.

Gonçalves never before recognized Goa's sovereignty over his "kingdom," but now he proposed to subject himself to Portugal's control. In return for official Portuguese help, Gonçalves promised to send the viceroy one galley of rice each year as tribute. Gonçalves also excused his previous treachery against Min Yazagyi as simply revenge for the Dianga massacre. What really won the viceroy's support, however, was Gonçalves' hint that the viceroy would get a share of the king of Arakan's vast treasure.<sup>557</sup> The viceroy, Don Jeronymo de Azvedo, won the sanction of the Portuguese court for his support of Gonçalves, and for his recommendation of a reward for Gonçalves by the Portuguese court for his activities at Sundiva.<sup>558</sup> The viceroy, however, was as dishonest as Gonçalves was. Although he prepared a fleet to invade Arakan, he ordered the commander, the former governor of Ceylon, Dom Francis de Meneses Roxo, to attack without waiting for Gonçalves, since he "did not sufficiently appreciate the value of the assistance to be expected of the pirate." The Goan fleet of fourteen "large galliots," one flyboat (an extremely fast, light vessel), and one 'pink' (a warship with a narrow stern, providing it with greater speed and maneuverability) then left in mid-September 1615 for Arakan. On 3 October 1615, the Goan fleet arrived off the coast of Arakan and the captains made a council to decide what to do next.<sup>559</sup>

Min Khamaung, however, heard of the Portuguese arrival and decided to strike the Portuguese first. On 15 October 1615, the surprised Portuguese were confronted with an Arakanese fleet so large "they could not see the end of it." The Portuguese were also surprised to see that the Arakanese had been careful to secure the aid of their new European enemy in the Indian ocean: among the Arakanese craft was a Dutch pink and several ships carrying Dutch seamen. But the Portuguese realized too late that they were no match for the the Arakanese force. The Dutch pink fired first, followed by the Arakanese. The first four Portuguese ships suffered a great deal of damage and their "Captains and many soldiers were killed." The battle lasted a whole day, and at nightfall, the Portuguese retreated.<sup>560</sup>

Due to the poor condition of his fleet, Meneses remained at bay until the middle of November,<sup>561</sup> when Gonçalves arrived with fifty of his ships and furiously reprimanded Meneses for stupidly attacking without

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<sup>557</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 225-6; Stewart, *op. cit.*, 218-9.

<sup>558</sup> Document 556, 21 February 1615, letter from the king of Portugal to Dom Jeronymo de Azvedo, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. III, 271.

<sup>559</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 225-226; Stewart, *op. cit.*, 219.

<sup>560</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 226; Phayre, *History of Burma*, 176.

<sup>561</sup> Stewart, *op. cit.*, 220.

him. Min Khamaung spent his time furiously preparing for defenses for his capital: he had massive “earthen breastworks” constructed along the shore, to prevent a Portuguese landing; he had enormous numbers of Arakanese musketeers man the walls to shoot down into the Portuguese ships; and he had his fleet wait protected in an inlet.<sup>562</sup> Min Khamaung also had the Dutch ships stand between the river and his fleet, anchoring them in such a way “so as to bring their broadside guns to bear on the assailants.”<sup>563</sup> On 15 November, the combined Portuguese fleets began to sail upriver to attack Mrauk-U, the Arakanese capital. The Portuguese fleet was then split into two sections, one under Gonçalves and the other under Meneses. Once the Portuguese were alongside the Arakanese capital, however, they discovered that they had walked into Min Khamaung’s trap.<sup>564</sup>

At noon, three squadrons of Arakanese ships attacked the Portuguese fleet. At first, the Portuguese seemed to be winning: Gonçalves’ squadron, facing the Arakanese left, repulsed the ships sent against it and the Portuguese pink defeated the Dutch pink. But Roxo’s squadron of the Portuguese fleet, facing the Arakanese right, was not as lucky. One Portuguese ship, commanded by Gaspar de Abreu had to be abandoned with everyone on board dead, while Roxo himself was killed after taking one musket-ball in the forehead and another in his left eye. Gonçalves, now sole commander of the Portuguese fleet, realized that Min Khamaung had outwitted him and signaled the retreat. The Portuguese fleet fled down the river as fast as it could to the rivermouth. Here it paused to bury some two hundred Portuguese at sea. After electing Dom Luis de Azevedo as Roxo’s replacement, the Portuguese fled: the Goan fleet for Goa and Gonçalves for Sundiva.<sup>565</sup> As a warning to the Portuguese, Min Khamaung had the Portuguese captured by the Arakanese beheaded. Their heads were then placed on spears and lined up on the shore.<sup>566</sup>

Min Khamaung had saved Arakan with Dutch help and Gonçalves’ kingdom was in no position to exist for very much longer. Gonçalves had lost even more men due to desertion than he did in battle. Many of his men, for example, joined Azevedo’s fleet on its return to Goa because Gonçalves’ “tyranny and oppression had alienated most of his

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<sup>562</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 227-228; Phayre, *History of Burma*, 176; Stewart, *op. cit.*, 220.

<sup>563</sup> Phayre, *op. cit.*, 176.

<sup>564</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 227-228; Phayre, *History of Burma*, 176; Stewart, *op. cit.*, 220.

<sup>565</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 227-228.

<sup>566</sup> Fytche, *op. cit.*, 58.

adherents.” The deserters “were glad to be rid of their hard-hearted master.”<sup>567</sup> Gonçaves was desperate for more men to maintain his island kingdom and even begged Azevedo to leave behind his wounded. A similar occasion occurred soon after, when Dom Francisco’s fleet stayed at Sundiva during the monsoon. Min Yazagyi made various offers to the captains of this fleet to stay with him, but they refused. Gonçaves was so desperate that he even accepted an offer from the Mughal *nawab* (governor) of Bengal, in which Gonçaves would aid a Mughal attempt to take Chittagong, for which Gonçaves would receive two hundred thousand *tangus* (a local unit of currency). Some of the Portuguese captains and men mutinied against this proposal and many of them left, spreading the word of Gonçaves’ plans to help the Mughals.<sup>568</sup>

### **The Burmese Distraction, 1615**

Min Khamaung thus defeated a major Portuguese invasion, just as Min Bin did almost a century before. Min Khamaung was determined to follow up his victory by crushing Gonçaves at his base on Sundiva. Indeed, he seemed to be in a good position to do so: the Arakanese navy, which Gonçaves almost wiped out in 1612, had been largely rebuilt and now Arakan had the added support of the Dutch. But this favorable state of affairs was largely an illusion. Gonçaves had killed many of Arakan’s most experienced and capable naval commanders and these losses could not be replaced in so short a time. Further, the Dutch helped the Arakanese at Mrauk-U, because they were there trading, rather than purposely seeking a fight: the “Dutch were too busy with their own struggles with the Portuguese and with various native powers in the Archipelago to be willing to add to their commitments.”<sup>569</sup> Min Khamaung thus had to depend upon his own devices in order to destroy Gonçaves’ stronghold.

Min Khamaung first looked to Burma, which had defeated its own band of Portuguese mercenaries under De Brito and was now unified under the rule of Anaukpetlun. In order to outflank Gonçaves’ extensive island empire in the Bay of Bengal, Min Khamaung requested that Anaukpetlun cede some islands on the Burmese-Arakanese border to him. Anaukpetlun was furious, and in response sent his navy to raid Sandoway.<sup>570</sup> Indeed, Anaukpetlun soon appeared to be the new great threat to Arakan. While Arakan was still fighting the Portuguese in the

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<sup>567</sup> Sarkar, *op. cit.*, 363.

<sup>568</sup> Bocarro, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 456, 477.

<sup>569</sup> D.G.E. Hall, “Studies in Dutch Relations With Arakan,” 12.

<sup>570</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 189.

northwest, Anaukpetlun, who crushed De Brito in 1613 at Syriam, now, in 1616, sought a Portuguese-Burmese alliance. Anaukpetlun worried that the rival kingdoms of Ayudhya and Arakan might ally themselves with the Portuguese against him, and decided that he would win Portuguese support before they could. Anaukpetlun thus sent an embassy to Goa asking for peace and apologizing for the destruction of Syriam. Further, Anaukpetlun promised to return all of the Portuguese prisoners whom he had captured and resettled in the interior of Burma, presumably including the viceroy's niece, whom Anaukpetlun made a slave. In a manner surprisingly similar to the proposals made by De Brito and Gonçaves to earlier viceroys, indicating that Anaukpetlun had probably learned something of the European 'game' just as De Brito had played the Burmese 'game,' Anaukpetlun promised that if the Portuguese joined him in an invasion of Arakan, the Portuguese could keep all of Min Khamaung's treasure, with the exception of the white elephant.<sup>571</sup>

Min Khamaung must have heard of these events and was probably very worried, so much so that his assault on Sundiva was delayed for a year. But Min Khamaung was under no real threat from Burma, since Anaukpetlun seems to have changed his mind about an alliance with the Portuguese. The viceroy of Goa accepted Anaukpetlun's offers and sent his ambassador, Martin de Costa Falcam, to Burma to sign an official treaty. Anaukpetlun, however, avoided meeting Falcam, and Falcam spent many wasted hours waiting for his audience with the king:

He spent many Days in solliciting an hour's Audience, at length it was appointed at Midnight, and he was led in the dark to a Place where they ordered him to speak, for the King heard; he spoke and saw no King, nor heard no answer...He signified the desire he had of seeing the King, and was ordered to wait his going abroad. He went one Day upon an Elephant, and knowing Falcam waited in the Street to see him, never so much as turned his Eyes that way.<sup>572</sup>

Falcam thus returned to Goa. If Min Khamaung heard of these events he should have been very relieved for he was now free to wipe out his old enemy, Gonçaves.

### **Threat From Bengal**

Before Min Khamaung could turn his attention against Gonçaves, however, he was temporarily distracted by events in Bengal. In 1616, the Mughals attempted to take advantage of Arakan's problems with

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<sup>571</sup> Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 255.

<sup>572</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. III, 255-6.

Gonçalves and with Burma, by sending a large army of cavalry, musketeers, elephants, and one thousand ships against Chittagong. Min Khamaung responded by dividing his available forces into two sections. The first section, which he placed under the command of his chief general, consisted of 100,000 men, four hundred elephants, and one thousand ships. Min Khamaung sent this force ahead to fortify the strategic village of Kathgar, twenty miles to the northwest of Chittagong. Min Khamaung returned to Mrauk-U and gathered his second force, which consisted of 300,000 men, ten thousand cavalry, and elephants. Min Khamaung then marched up the coast to secure Chittagong.<sup>573</sup>

In May, 1616, the first Arakanese force was attacked before it completed its fortifications. At first the Arakanese were nearly defeated, but the Mughal army hesitated in delivering the final attack, giving the Arakanese time to strengthen their positions. Soon, the Arakanese forced the Mughal army into retreat and captured the Mughal heavy artillery.<sup>574</sup> Min Khamaung now moved quickly to destroy Sundiva before any further Mughal attacks could be made.

### **The Final Battle, 1617**

Finally in 1617, Min Khamaung gathered together a force of Arakanese ships and attacked Sundiva. He took the island, had most of the Portuguese inhabitants killed, and had the Portuguese defense-works torn-down. The indigenous population, which now numbered over six thousand Christians, was resettled at Dianga.<sup>575</sup> Gonçalves escaped, but, according to a dispatch to Lisbon sent by the Count of Redondo, he died later in 1617 at Hughli in Bengala.<sup>576</sup> After taking Sundiva, Min Khamaung went on to take other strategic islands in the western Sundurbunds.<sup>577</sup> Min Khamaung took the few remaining Portuguese survivors and forced them into his armies.<sup>578</sup> All of the former Portuguese strongholds in northern Arakan were now retaken by Min

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<sup>573</sup> Sarkar, *op. cit.*, 297.

<sup>574</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

<sup>575</sup> Letter no. 51, 8 February 1618, letter from the Count of Redondo to the king of Portugal, in *Documentos Remettidos*, vol. IV, 251-2.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibid.*; E. Rehatsek, however, believes that Gonçalves was captured on Sundiva and was beheaded. See E. Rehatsek, "Historical Sketch of Portuguese India," *Calcutta Review* 73 (1881): 321-362.

<sup>577</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 155.

<sup>578</sup> Stuart, *op. cit.*, 70.

Khamaung, and while Portuguese trade resumed in this area, it was from now on under strict Arakanese control.<sup>579</sup>

Min Khamaung now turned all of his attention onto pushing Arakanese conquests into Bengal. He gathered a naval force of supposedly four thousand *jalias*, as well as seven hundred “floating batteries,” and attacked Mughal villages along the Megna river.<sup>580</sup> Further on along the coast, Min Khamaung pushed Arakanese conquests to Dacca.<sup>581</sup> But the Bengalese soon seemed ready to counterattack, with cavalry as well as a naval force as large as that of Min Khamaung. Min Khamaung, however, seems to have had no intention of making the same mistake of over-extending his territory that Min Yazagyi had, and avoided a large battle. Instead Min Khamaung withdrew back into Arakanese territory, leaving one thousand *jalias* “for the protection of his border.”<sup>582</sup>

### **A New Relationship**

Min Khamaung was “keen” on improving Arakan’s exports and his efforts were successful, though not until 1623, one year after Min Khamaung’s death. The trade relationship between Arakan and the Dutch after 1623 grew significantly. While the Dutch factory at Mrauk-U which was established temporarily during the reign of King Min Yazagyi, under Jacob Dirckszoon Cortenhoof,<sup>583</sup> was withdrawn in 1617, and in 1623 it was replaced by a more permanent trading station. The Dutch withdrew their factory in 1617 for several reasons:

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<sup>579</sup> The Portuguese, who probably resented the fact that Min Khamaung had undeniably beaten the Portuguese in northwestern Arakan and on Sundiva island, spread stories to undermine Min Khamaung’s credibility in their histories. One of these stories is found in Fariah y Sousa. It tells how when the victorious Min Khamaung returned to Chittagong, the Portuguese traders offered his white elephant a “bough thick fet with Figs.” The elephant would not eat it when it was said to bless the king of Ava, the Mughal emperor, or even for Min Khamaung. But when the bough was offered for the king of Portugal, “the Elephant joyfully fnatched it in his Trunk.” Min Khamaung then punished the traitorous elephant by taken away its ornaments, its gold feed dish, and its gold chain. But the elephant would not eat without its royal trappings, and Min Khamang was forced to return the elephants’ possessions. See Fariah y Sousa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 296.

<sup>580</sup> Sarkar, *op. cit.*, 303.

<sup>581</sup> Stuart, *op. cit.*, 70.

<sup>582</sup> Sarkar, *op. cit.*, 303.

<sup>583</sup> Gehl, *Cambridge History of India*, v, 34, cited in Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*, 416.

[because] of the small profits, which could be made there, and the great expenses the Company must first be put to, in order to establish the king again in his kingdom, which at present is much in trouble.<sup>584</sup>

But Min Khamaung stabilized the situation later in the same year and, by 1623, the Dutch felt safe increasing their presence in the region.

The Dutch had a pressing need to become reinvolved in Arakanese trade: they were interested in Arakan's new export commodity: slaves. While the Arakanese forces began to raid Mughal territories and the Indian coast, the "vast numbers of captives" were brought back to Arakan. The Portuguese who were removed from Sundiva and resettled around Chittagong played a key role in the raiding. As Manrique observed:

[T]hey were authorized 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...and besides removing all the most valuable things they found, would also take captive any people with whom they came into 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.<sup>585</sup>

Some of the captives were picked by the king to become Arakanese slaves, while the remainder were sold to the Dutch who were "the chief customers" for the slaves, since the Dutch needed them in Batavia, which had been established in 1611.<sup>586</sup> The growing importance of Arakanese slaves as an export commodity was felt in other markets as well: Arakan became a chief source of Aceh's "servile labour."<sup>587</sup> Indeed, between 1621 and 1624, Portuguese slavers brought forty-two thousand slaves for sale to Chittagong alone.<sup>588</sup> Min Khamaung also began to sell rice to the Dutch, who needed supplies of rice to support the Dutch factories in the spice-growing districts.<sup>589</sup> The Dutch

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<sup>584</sup> J.E. Heeres, *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum*, vol. I, 412, cited in Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*, 416.

<sup>585</sup> Manrique, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 285.

<sup>586</sup> Furnivall, "Studies in Dutch Relations With Arakan," 2-3, 12

<sup>587</sup> Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450-1680*, vol. I, *The Lands Below the Winds*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988): 133.

<sup>588</sup> Campos, *op. cit.*, 105.

<sup>589</sup> Furnivall, "Studies in Dutch Relations With Arakan," 2-3, 12



relationship with Arakan grew closer, but remained one of caution, as William Methwold observed in the early seventeenth century:

[Min Khamaung] hath also divers times invited the Dutch and English to resort unto his countrey, but the Dutch by good experience, having had sometimes a factory there...avoyd his importunity; yet continue good correspondence with him and his people, as knowing it a plentifull country, and not inconvenient to supply themselves with many necessaries, if difference with nations should enforce them to that extremity...I have knowne divers Hollanders, that having expired their covenanted time of service with the East India Company, and so purchased...their freedome, have gone to serve this King, and received good countenance and content in his employment of them.<sup>590</sup>

But Min Khamaung could not expect further Dutch military aid. Indeed, the Dutch “skillfully avoided giving [Min Khamaung] any aid against the Mughal.”<sup>591</sup> But the Arakanese were determined to commit more resources to ending the Mughal threat which plagued them for generations and Min Khamaung now arranged for a new Arakanese-Portuguese relationship. Min Khamaung looked to the captured Portuguese who had been resettled at Chittagong. Many were now used in the Arakanese navy, which was then used to spread Min Khamaung’s power over Sundiva island and the western Sunderbund delta, while Min Khamaung’s army conquered the districts of Noakhali, Backergunge, and the territory up to Murshidabad and Dacca, as well as forcing Tippera into vassalage.<sup>592</sup> The Arakanese were now truly the masters in their relationship with the Portuguese.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

How did the Arakanese overcome the problems caused by Min Yazagyi’s reign? How did Min Khamaung’s able leadership lead to the destruction of the Portuguese? Was this a revival of Arakanese imperial might?

Min Khamaung was a very different leader than Min Yazagyi. He was, for example, a fighter and not the “lazy,” self-important, and incapable king that Min Yazagyi seems to have been. We have seen how Min Yazagyi focused his attentions on his new queen rather than on the

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<sup>590</sup> William Methwold, *op. cit.*, 42-3.

<sup>591</sup> Furnivall, “Studies in Dutch Relations With Arakan,” 13.

<sup>592</sup> Harvey, *History of Burma*, 143.<sup>593</sup> Victor B. Lieberman, “The Transfer of the Burmese Capital From Pegu to Ava,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, no. 1 (1980): 76.

safety of his kingdom in a previous chapter. But in the case of Min Khamaung, we see a king whose prime considerations were the strength and the safety of his realm. Min Khamaung, for example, did not engage in the building of useless passages through hills and the construction of huge pleasure palaces as Min Yazagyi did. Min Khamaung, both as a prince and a king, personally led his armies into battle, while Min Yazagyi conducted his wars from his throne. Further, Min Khamaung kept a watchful eye out for developments at the court regarding court intrigue and plots, which Min Yazagyi had failed to do. I think that Min Khamaung was more of a realist than Min Yazagyi, since Min Khamaung appears to have been less concerned with the superficial trappings of kingship, such as elephants and prestige, than Min Yazagyi had been. Another example of Min Yazagyi's lack of realism is in his handling of Min Khamaung: Min Khamaung rebelled three times and was forgiven each time. I think that if the same thing had happened to Min Khamaung, Min Khamaung would not have been so lenient.

Min Khamaung, however, did not have sufficient time to reform Arakan in the way that he might have wanted to. He died in 1622, five years after he conquered Sundiva. This time was too short to repair all the damage done by Min Yazagyi. Indeed, Min Khamaung had to look for help abroad to save Arakan from a simple pirate "lord." But Min Khamaung's use of the Dutch was in many ways similar to Min Bin's use of the Portuguese almost a century earlier. The Dutch were given trade opportunities and Dutch fleets were used to help bolster and reconstruct the Arakanese navy. But unlike Min Yazagyi, Min Khamaung did not allow the Dutch to build up independent power-bases within Arakanese territory and did not let them play too great a role in Arakanese affairs outside of military reform. I think that we can almost see a cycle in this comparison: Min Khamaung shared Min Bin's world-view and had he been followed by kings as capable as those who had followed Min Bin, I think that Arakan might have adopted Dutch military influences and technologies into their own system.

Min Khamaung's reign marked a revival in Arakanese strength. Min Khamaung had conquered Sundiva, which had never really been under Arakanese control, and he now held Dianga more firmly than the Arakanese had in their sixteenth century relationship with the Portuguese traders there. Further, in the 1620s, Min Khamaung pushed Arakanese power much deeper into Bengal than Arakan had ever done before. But Arakan was never to regain its hold over Pegu. Anaukpetlun, the Avan king had crushed De Brito in 1613 at Syriam and Pegu fell under Burmese control until the British conquest of Lower Burma in the nineteenth century. But in 1613, De Brito held Syriam with less than a hundred men and even then it took many months for the Avan king to defeat him. I think that if Syriam had remained under the control of the

Arakanese, with a well-led Arakanese garrison and an Arakanese administration, then Arakan would have been able to maintain its hold over Pegu for several centuries.

Min Khamaung had thus repaired much of the damage that Min Yazagyi had done and a brief revival of Arakanese imperial strength ensued. But this revival was cut short in the mid-seventeenth century, as the Mughal Empire displaced the Arakanese in Bengal. Arakan then fell into a steep decline, losing territories in both the east and the west. This decline continued until 1784 when Arakan was conquered by the Burmese. Min Khamaung had repaired the damage done by Min Yazagyi in the short-term, but the long-term effects of Min Yazagyi's reign were irreparable.

### **Thesis Conclusion**

I think it is clear that many factors were involved in Arakan's development from an isolated state to an extensive empire. The Arakanese took advantage of the political and economic disorganization of the rival empires around them, Bengal in the mid-sixteenth century, and Pegu almost fifty years later. At the same time that the world around them was becoming more accessible, the Arakanese increasingly made their presence felt in maritime trade, especially that of the once Bengalese-controlled Bay of Bengal. The increased trade was furthered by Arakan's growing relationship with the Portuguese trading world, just as Arakan's military might grew with the help of Portuguese mercenaries which the increased trade revenues made possible. This scenario is strikingly similar to that posed by Victor Lieberman in regard to First Toungoo Dynasty's short-lived, but powerful, empire of the last half of the sixteenth century. As Lieberman argues:

Lower Burma's success in the sixteenth century derived from a unique and basically unstable combination of factors which helped to compensate for its demographic inferiority: at roughly the same time as intensive Shan raids and the unchecked growth of tax-free religious estates disorganized the northern polity, the arrival of Portuguese guns and a gradual increase in Indian Ocean commerce strengthened the military and political position of the south. Under Bayin-naung, indigenous forces from the south, augmented by Portuguese and Muslim gunners, subjugated the lowlands around Ava and a vast arc of Tai-speaking states in an unprecedentedly short period.<sup>593</sup>

But an explanation such as this, which attributes an expansion of political power only after economic growth and access to Portuguese military technology, does not tell us everything. Indeed, while I have argued that the disorganization of the Bengal, and then Burma, as well as the growing access to Arakan of Bay of Bengal maritime trade was pivotal to Arakan's growth of power, I have argued that this process of political expansion preceded the beginning of economic expansion and the arrival of the Portuguese. It is true that mercenaries played a large, if sometimes exaggerated, role in the development of Arakanese power. But if we adapt Lieberman's argument to Arakan, we are left empty-handed when we try to account for the goals of the Arakanese in this process.

I have argued that the Arakanese played a fundamental role in determining their economic growth. That is, from the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Arakanese, cut-off from land based trade

opportunities sought new maritime opportunities. At first, Arakanese economic growth was targeted at Chittagong, which was a rich port. More importantly, Chittagong was tied into the Portuguese trading system in the Bay of Bengal and thus promised important economic opportunities. The employment of Portuguese mercenaries, and especially the defense arrangement with the Portuguese at Dianga, also brought Arakan closer to the the Portuguese trading system. Thus, while Lieberman seems to indicate that indigenous rulers saw the opportunity for political and economic expansion *after* the employment of Portuguese mercenaries and increased trade was available, I have argued that the Arakanese sought out an economic and military relationship with the Portuguese *before* maritime trade and Portuguese mercenaries or arms were available: Arakanese political expansion began in order to make possible Arakanese access to maritime trade and the employment of Portuguese mercenaries and traders, and thus a trade relationship with the Portuguese. In other words, it is true that increased revenues from maritime trade made the employment of further numbers of Portuguese mercenaries possible, but the Arakanese had fostered their relationship with the Portuguese much earlier in order to increase their access to maritime trade.

Further, the question remains, how did problems in the Arakanese-Portuguese relationship bring about the temporary eclipse of Arakanese power under Min Yazagyi? I think it is clear that the economic and administrative problems in Min Yazagyi's reign were pivotal. Arakan had grown much faster territorially than the Arakanese capacity to administer it effectively. Important political and economic centers, such as Chittagong, remained autonomous, while strategic areas such as Lower Burma depended upon the unchecked loyalty of Portuguese and Moslem mercenaries and local political leaders. Further, Lower Burma, devastated under Nan-dá-bayin, could not provide the economic resources necessary to offset the drain on Arakanese royal coffers to keep it and certainly not to recapture it when it later fell under De Brito's control. These problems clearly led to the opportunities for the Portuguese rebellions at Syriam and later at Sundiva. But there was also a seeming contradiction in Min Yazagyi's reign, because at the same time that these rebellions seemed to indicate Arakanese weakness, Arakan had just reached its greatest territorial growth and presumably its zenith of power. The question that needs to be answered, then, is why did this seeming contradiction develop in Min Yazagyi's reign and how did his son and successor, Min Khamaung, deal with it?

The basis for the relationship between the Arakanese and the Portuguese mercenaries can be found in the reign of Min Bin, one half-century before Min Yazagyi's reign. Min Bin ruled an Arakanese state and society which had developed an approach to adapting to the outside

world in which they combined isolation and, at the same time, a receptivity to foreign cultural, religious, and political models. The Arakanese effectively used the isolated nature of their society, behind mountain ranges and swamplands, to prevent gigantic neighboring empires, such as Pegu and Bengal, from conquering their civilization. The Arakanese were also receptive to foreign models with which they came into contact due to Arakan's location on important mainland trade routes. The Arakanese, and especially the Arakanese royal house, also came into contact with, and took advantage of, foreign models through their involvement in maritime trade, which they conducted from the relative safety of their capital, Mrauk-U, which was on a river, sixty miles inland.

This Arakanese approach to the world allowed the Arakanese to import foreign models and yet keep them under firm Arakanese control. The Arakanese used foreign religions, as well as their own animism, in a syncretic fashion, in order to express thoughts and basic beliefs which they already had, but which necessitated new rules of religious or social legitimation and new vocabularies. The same approach was applied to kingship, in which the Arakanese kings used a variety of old and new ideas of kingly legitimation. The most important use of the Arakanese world-view in Min Bin's reign, however, was their adaptation of Portuguese models of warfare and Portuguese technology: while Portuguese models, and even Portuguese mercenaries were used by the Arakanese, the Arakanese were careful never to let the Arakanese basis of their military or society disappear or fall under the control of their Portuguese employees.

While this Arakanese world-view allowed Arakan to develop from a small, isolated state to a great empire, which in 1600 stretched for one thousand miles along the mainland Southeast Asian coast at a depth of 150-200 miles inland,<sup>594</sup> something happened during the reign of Min Yazagyi. While the Arakanese kings throughout the sixteenth century had maintained a firm grip over their government and their Portuguese mercenaries, Min Yazagyi was caught up in his new-found prestige as a *chakravartan*, or at the very least a ruler of great importance. He increasingly devoted his time to casual pursuits and let the governance of his kingdom fall into the hands of less capable men. At the same time that the Arakanese royal court split into rival factions, each with their own political and economic agendas, Min Yazagyi's Portuguese mercenaries, especially at Syriam, were given autonomous control of their stations. The Portuguese decided to overthrow Arakanese tutelage while Min Yazagyi ignored the warnings of local commanders until it was too late to reverse the situation.

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<sup>594</sup> Collis & San Shwe Bu, "Arakan's Place in the Civilization of the Bay," 43.

Until Min Yazagyi's reign, then, I think that the Arakanese were the dominant partner in the Arakanese-Portuguese relationship. When Min Yazagyi forgot the importance of the Arakanese king's role in maintaining this dominance in their relationship, however, the Portuguese were given the opportunity to declare themselves independent. In response, Min Yazagyi, preoccupied with himself and his royal regalia, allowed his royal court to "fall prey" to factionalism and wasted the best of the Arakanese military forces in poorly-crafted campaigns under the command of local military leaders of doubtful abilities. This hurt Arakan's credibility as a powerful empire and weakened the international alliance system, which had been carefully constructed by past Arakanese kings. Further, the repeated Arakanese military disasters presented a tremendous drain on Arakanese economic resources which Min Yazagyi was not able to remedy. The collapse of Arakanese dominance in the Arakanese-Portuguese relationship, however, was short-lived. Min Khamaung, Min Yazagyi's son and successor, brought the Arakanese government back firmly under monarchical control through his careful selection of new, capable military and civilian leaders. Min Yazagyi, in the tradition of Min Bin, sought a new foreign model, the Dutch, to help him defeat the Portuguese. But Min Khamaung deserves full credit for crushing the rebellious Portuguese who served the pirate "king" Sebastião Gonsalves y Tibau and brought an end to the last of the Portuguese rebellions. In Pegu, however, Min Khamaung was too late to reassert Arakanese dominance, since the Avan king, Anaukpetlun, had already crushed De Brito at Syriam and had brought Pegu under firm Avan control. Thus, a combination of new Arakanese leaders, the selection of a new foreign model, the resurrection of the nearly-destroyed maritime-based Arakanese economy, and Min Khamaung's military genius, saved Arakan at least partially from the damage it had suffered under Min Yazagyi and the attendant Portuguese revolts.

I think it should also be mentioned that the Portuguese mercenaries captured in both Syriam and the Sundiva campaigns, by Ava and Arakan, were forced to continue their service to both kingdoms as slaves. Anaukpetlun turned his Portuguese captives into a hereditary class of artillerymen whose descendants served in the Avan army for several centuries.<sup>595</sup> In the case of Arakan, Min Khamaung, once himself a prisoner of the Portuguese, placed his Portuguese captives into Arakanese military units which guarded the northwestern border of Arakan in Bengal. The Arakanese-Portuguese relationship thus can be seen as a continuum of Arakanese dominance, with the exception of the hiatus of the reign of Min Yazagyi.

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<sup>595</sup> Lieberman, *Burmese Administrative Cycles*, 53.

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