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Roderich Ptak

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Zhou Yunzhong, 周运中 : Zhongguo Nanyang gudai jiaotong shi 中国南洋古”背栖梨, Xiamen : Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 2015, Series “Haishang sichou zhi lu yanjiu congshu” 海上丝绸之路研究丛书, 4 + 4 + 442 pages, ill., ISBN : 978-7-5615-5415-9 (paperbound)

1 This ambitious book, in short characters, with a preface by Wang Rigen 王日根, the series editor, can almost be read as a sequel to Zhou Yunzhong's earlier monograph, *Zheng He xia Xiyang xin kao* 和下西洋新考 (Beijing 2013), reviewed for *Archipel* 89 (2015). While the focus of the earlier work is on Chinese navigation under the Ming dynasty and the so-called Zheng He map, the new monograph investigates the long period from the late Zhou through to the fourteenth century, up to the decades preceding the great Ming expeditions. As in the previous case, the author is mostly interested in the issue of sea routes and the identification of Chinese toponyms found in a multitude of traditional sources. The last point is essential because without an adequate knowledge of geographical names and political entities, just by looking at thousands of archaeological puzzle pieces, it remains quite difficult to assemble a structured panorama of Southeast Asia's early history and the relations between China and the maritime world during this age. However, old Chinese toponyms raise many questions and in hundreds of cases historians have suggested several choices for the explanation of a particular name. Scholars working with the standard dictionary by Chen Jiarong 陈佳荣 et al., *Gudai Nanhai diming huishi* 古代南海地名汇释 (Beijing 1986), are familiar with these problems. The dilemma with geographical names extends to practically all ancient Chinese records : the compact corpus of pre-Han texts, various sections in the

dynastic annals, the "usual" set of ethnographic records, local chronicles, scattered references in poems, anecdotes and other categories, and of course also ancient maps. The difficulties become even worse, if one considers the editorial history of individual works, which is often under debate, and the fact that most sources rely on each other for important information.

2 Zhou Yunzhong, well aware of these dimensions, has embarked on a fresh reconnaissance tour through the dense jungle of place names and ethnographic data, cutting down not only thorny twigs and branches, but trying to fell huge trees as well. While reading his book, one encounters dozens of passages in which he tells us that x or y would be wrong in his or her conclusions for such and such a reason. Indeed, it may be difficult to find a modern "maritime" book with more "gunfire". One may add, the overall layout of Zhou's study is designed to attract specialists of maritime history, but learned readers with broader interests may also try to use his work. Moreover, in his footnotes, Zhou cites representative Chinese and Japanese secondary sources, besides essential contributions in European languages and a few translations (for example, Chinese versions of the old studies by Ferrand and Pelliot)...

3 The book starts with a long summary of earlier research. It establishes five categories of Chinese "primary" sources and then lists influential scholars (along with short bio-data) who have substantially contributed to the field of Chinese maritime history. This includes Chinese, Japanese and some "older" European names. That in turn is followed by an outline of the book's agenda. Already in these introductory segments readers will find some critical remarks, for example in regard to the works by G. Coedès, P. Wheatley, and others. It also transpires from these pages that Zhou is not satisfied with a simple summary of the past ; rather, he wishes to redraw some parts of Southeast Asia's history, in terms of both spatial categories and time segments, and especially by reconsidering Chinese toponyms and the gradual emergence of international sea routes.

4 The main body of Zhou's book follows a chronological order and serves to accomplish these aims. For the sake of convenience the results will be outlined first, before we shall then proceed to discuss individual points. Chinese texts of the earliest periods provide very little in regard to the maritime world, but later sources tell us that Funan 扶南 became a major player from the Eastern Han dynasty onwards. Thereafter Linyi 林邑 began to challenge Funan. With the rise of Wu (in the Sanguo period), more Chinese merchants involved themselves in parts of Southeast Asia. Initially, there was overland trade across the Malay peninsula ; in the course of time sailing around the peninsula's southern tip became a regular feature. During the Nanbei chao era migrants from northern China reinforced the coastal population of southern China and one also sees the rise of small polities in the Malay world ; this constellation, along with other factors, led to increased exchange, mostly in the form of tribute embassies. Various alterations also concern the position of Funan, Zhenla 真腊 and other continental powers. In the ninth or tenth century, Kalimantan and parts of the Philippines appear on the scene and the so-called eastern route – from Guangdong and Fujian to the world beyond Taiwan – becomes clearly visible. Under the Southern Song, and especially in Mongol times, activities along that corridor expand rapidly. Song vessels also serve on a direct axis between the Vietnam coast and Java, via the Natuna group and northwestern Kalimantan. This goes along with the decline of Srivijaya, which until then exerted control over much of the trade between the Malay world and the Indian

Ocean. Taking together these findings, Zhou proposes to define five distinct phases in the history of Sino-Southeast Asian exchange : (1) an early stage, called the "Gulf Period", in which the sea of Siam was the key zone and Yetiao 叶调 the only major polity on both sides of the Melaka Strait ; (2) a "Transit Period", roughly in line with the Nanbei chao era, marked by the rise of small states in that region, the presence of Zhubu 诸薄 on eastern Sumatra, and a gradual expansion of Chinese trade towards the Malay world ; (3) the "Straits period", with Srivijaya as the principal polity ; (4) from the mid-Tang onwards, a "Turning Period", characterized by the rise of Java ; (5) and finally, an "Island Period", under the Mongols, when new ports and kingdoms along both the eastern and western routes appear on stage.

5 While this general outline is in part compatible with conventional approaches, there are several points that are not so common, for example the importance of the direct link between Vietnam and Java, which, according to Zhou, was decisive for the decline of Srivijaya. The different models for the internal setting of Srivijaya, easily available through a multitude of scholarly works, do not seem crucial for the discussion. However, one could certainly add some more of the archaeological findings from Natuna to the overall picture ; perhaps that would increase the weight to Zhou's statements. Another issue is the perception of oceans as seen through the eyes of early Chinese authors. Again, there are hundreds of learned works on these questions ; basically they agree in stating that one can observe a gradual emergence of two major spatial entities, the Xiyang 西洋 and the Dongyang 东洋 (Western and Eastern Ocean). Both may appear in association with subordinated spaces, while the imagined dividing lines between them vary from one period to the next. Zhou follows these scholarly conventions. But the tripartite arrangement of seas (Nanyang 南洋, Xiyang, Dongyang) suggested for much of the Song period, mainly based on his readings of *Lingwai dai da* 岭外代答 (1178) and *Zhufan zhi* 诸番志 (1225), is not quite as common. That also includes several remarks on the internal arrangement of both these texts (pp. 258, 266-267). By contrast, it seems easier to identify a complex structure underlying the *Daoyi zhilüe* 岛夷志略 of the Yuan period, which evokes very early geographical concepts ultimately related to the ideas of Zou Yan 邹(驺)衍 (as outlined in *Shi ji* 史记), but Zhou did not get lost in these spheres, and perhaps one ought not bother him with that...

6 Here we can briefly turn to selected points in the main body of his book. The first chapter, starting with p. 24, is dedicated to very early times. The agenda includes China's coastal waters and several ethnonyms / toponyms (for example, Nei Yue 内越 / Wai Yue 外越, Baishuilang 白水郎, etc.), old terms for boats and ships, and various conceptual issues. In a number of cases, Zhou takes advantage of his past research, published in the form of articles, for instance when he explores possible references to Taiwan (see *Guojia hanghai* 国家航海 6 [2014]). In such contexts he frequently draws attention to the *Yuejue shu* 越绝书, besides quoting familiar passages from *Shi ji*, *Zhuangzi* 庄子, and so on. He also considers possible phonetic bridges between the old readings of certain characters and local expressions, and even their Malay equivalents (although we cannot be sure of how non-Han people would then pronounce particular terms). Furthermore, the discussion includes interesting remarks on the Kuroshio and giant whirls (pp. 55 et seq.). Here Zhou briefly jumps to the Manchu period, which provides much material on currents and tides. One may add that Qing chronicles related to Penghu and Taiwan form a treasure box in that regard. Some observations in

these sources are indirectly confirmed through modern geographical research on the intrusion of the Kuroshio's waters into the South China Sea. Naturally, one may also look at whirls, currents, fairy islands and other "exotic locations" in distant lands, near the limits of the then known world, from the vantage point of mythology, or literature, because such elements surface in many cultures. An early European study on China, which falls into that category, is Wolfgang Bauer's *China und die Hoffnung auf Glück. Paradiese, Utopien, Idealvorstellungen in der Geistesgeschichte Chinas* (Munich 1974).

7 Chapter two outlines the role of modern Guangdong in Qin and Han times, the position of Hepu 合浦 in trade to Southeast Asia, and the emergence of the route to India. This entails a discussion of land-based exchange across the Malay peninsula and the location of Huangzhi 黄支. Other parts of that chapter deal with Dunxun 顿逊 (different spellings), Pizong 皮宗 and "related" entities, which are familiar through the works by Paul Wheatley (frequently quoted), Jacq-Hergoualc'h and others. One conclusion is that transisthmic trade contributed to a segmentation of space (similar to the ideas developed by K. N. Chaudhuri) – an assumption which implies that merchants from the Nanyang region rarely moved to the Indian Ocean, while those from the "West" avoided going beyond the Malay peninsula. The final part of chapter two comments on an animal described in the *Shenyi jing* 神异经. Zhou believes the creature in question should be the babyrousa (*babirusa*, etc.), now mainly distributed in parts of Sulawesi and some adjacent islands.

8 Chapter three examines the southbound expansion of Funan, the maritime initiatives of the Wu state, including the Yizhou 夷洲 campaign (Yizhou is identified as Taiwan), the term Kunlun 昆仑 and the ships of Kunlun, the role of Zhu Ying 朱应 and Kang Tai 康泰, the relations between Eastern Jin and Southeast Asia, and a large set of toponyms found in the dynastic annals, fragments collected from *Taiping yulan* 太平御览, the account associated with Fa Xian's 法显 voyage (of the latter there is a huge annotated German translation by Max Deeg), and other works. Regarding these names, Zhou offers several unusual interpretations. One case is Puluozhong 蒲罗中. The *Shendan jing* 神丹经 says this would be a location full of cannibals ; Zhou links the name to Barus, a site familiar to European scholars through the work of Claude Guillot and his colleagues. Another toponym is Mawu zhou 马五洲. Here, Zhou suggests Bangka Island. As was said in the beginning, for many place names one finds different explanations in earlier research, as for example in the books and articles by Chen Jiarong, Han Zhenhua 韩振华, Su Jiqing 苏继卿, and others.

9 Chapter four begins with the southern expansion of the Sui state and then turns to the development of maritime trade under the Tang. One highlight is the discussion of Chinese place names possibly related to the Singapore area. In this context one may also cite a different study with new ideas on the name Singapore : Peter Borschberg's "The Singapore Straits in the Latter Middle Ages and Early Modern Period (c. 13th to 17th Centuries). Facts, Fancy and Historiographical Challenges", *Journal of Asian History* 46.2 (2012). The other parts of chapter four in Zhou's book examine various polities on Java, Sumatra and the Malay peninsula, the shipping route between Java and what is now Myanmar, the role of Arab navigation, and the embassy of Yang Liangyao 杨良瑶, on which Angela Schottenhammer has come out with a small book : *Yang Liangyaos Reise von 785 n.Chr. zum Kalifen von Bagdad. Eine Mission im Zeichen einer frühen sino-arabischen Mächte-Allianz ?* (Gossenberg 2014). There is also a long section on Tang ports involved in southbound trade. This is a very useful survey because most historians are only

interested in Guangzhou and the Fujianese ports, without thinking of Yangzhou 扬州, Mingzhou 明州, the various anchorages around Hainan, etc.

10 Chapter five outlines the development of trade under the Song. One part deals with Cengtan 层檀, a site east of Shihr, on the southern shore of the Arabian peninsula, if we follow Zhou's interpretation. Other segments look at the Cholas and various descriptions in *Lingwai dai* and *Zhufan zhi*. Furthermore, Zhou tries to structure the many scattered references to sea routes in both these texts with the aim of drawing an integrated panorama of Song trade across the Indian Ocean and the maritime zones of Southeast Asia. Although the Song chapter is rather compact, it becomes evident, especially through selected citations from *Song huiyao* 宋会要, *Pingzhou ketan* 萍洲可谈 and other sources, that maritime technology and exchange experienced rapid progress during this period.

11 Chapter six deals with the Mongol era ; it summarizes the maritime expeditions ordered by Khublai Khan (mainly to Java) and later diplomatic activities, then briefly comments on Zhou Daguan 周达观 and his work, the role of Hormuz, non-Chinese travellers, diverse ports, especially Quanzhou 泉州, its rise and decline, the merchant communities in that city, as well as other aspects. In the parts on Quanzhou, the author also refers to the Song, often citing Wang Xiangzhi's 王象之 *Yudi jisheng* 輿地纪胜 (d. 1221), but he is not so much concerned with secondary sources.

12 Chapter seven, perhaps the most remarkable part of the book, sketches the emergence of the eastern route. This connects to Taiwan, the Pisheye 毗舍耶 problem, and other issues. Zhou believes the Philippines were first in touch with China via the route along northern Kalimantan and Champa. According to some scholars, he adds, Arab merchants planned to open trade from the Philippines via Taiwan to Japan (p. 308), thus trying to avoid China's coastal regions which suffered from unrest during the Tang-Wudai-Song transition. Later, the short direct link across the space between southern Taiwan and Luzon became important, especially from the Song period onwards. Another point of concern is the Pratas group (Dongsha qundao 东沙群岛 in modern texts). Ming and Qing sources call these islands Nan'aoqi 南澳气. But some works, notably the *Haiguo wenjian lu* 海国见闻录, also seem to apply this name to the so-called Taiwan qiantan 台湾浅滩, a shallow area with corals and hidden banks. That in turn is important for our understanding of how geographers perceived the long belt of islands and shoals "in front" of China's southern shore. Here Zhou briefly turns to several old names for the Xisha qundao 西沙群岛 (Paracel Islands) and other groups ; these are familiar topics. He then also draws attention to a route shown on the so-called Selden map (early seventeenth century), which indicates a direct connection between eastern Guangdong and the Philippines, bypassing Nan'aoqi. It is not clear, however, when that corridor first came into use and to what extent it competed with the eastern alley, i.e., with the Fujian-Luzon axis via Penghu and southern Taiwan.

13 Chapter eight is an effort to integrate two major aspects : the rise of certain sea routes and the segmentation of maritime space into larger zones, mainly as seen through the eyes of Yuan writers. As expected, there is a lengthy discussion of the place names found in Chen Dazhen's 陈大震 *Dade Nanhai zhi* 大德南海志 (1304), a fragmentary chronicle of Guangzhou. One problem with the arrangement of the names in that work concerns the character *guan* 管, which appears in several phrases of the form "country x *guan* ocean y : location a, b, c, etc." Until today it has remained unclear how to read *guan*, whether this verb should imply some kind of political or administrative control

over a particular region, whether it indicates commercial predominance, or simply means that x was the leading entity in area y. The next part of that chapter investigates important toponyms in *Daoyi zhilüe*. Zhou disagrees with several proposals made by earlier commentators, but I shall only mention one or two examples. He thinks that Malilu 麻里魯 should represent Bolinao on the western shore of Luzon and not the Polillo group on the eastern side of that island ; this matters because through such an interpretation one reduces the possibility of trade from the Aparri region down along the Pacific shore. Furthermore, he identifies Xialaiwu 遐来勿 with the Calamian Islands to the northeast of Palawan, and not with the Klabat region on Sulawesi. If correct, we would lose an important landmark near the southern segment of the eastern route, on the way from Sulu through the Celebes Sea to the Moluccan Islands, Banda and eventually Timor. Finally, Zhou also believes that Wang Dayuan 汪大渊, the author of the *Daoyi zhilüe*, made no clear distinction between Cape Comorin and Calicut ; the name Gulifo 古里佛, he explains, could imply both locations, and not just Calicut as is commonly thought. There are further cases, where Zhou deviates substantially from earlier interpretations, but what matters more, he tries to find out which ports and islands Wang Dayuan had seen himself. The conclusion is that he may not have sailed beyond Cape Comorin and that he only visited the western half of Southeast Asia. Of course, certain assumptions associated with this hypothesis can easily be challenged. Finally, there is a long discussion of the Wakwak problem. Here, the author refers to the famous Ming world map of the late fourteenth century and other cartographic documents. The Chinese toponym in question is Wa'awa 哇阿哇. This involves Magadascar and the adjacent areas, which figure prominently in the huge work by Philippe Beaujard, *Les Mondes de l'Océan Indien…* (Paris 2012). The last parts of chapter eight provide additional details in regard to place names (found on the said map and in the aforementioned sources). There is also a conveniently arranged table, which summarizes the essential results.

14 It is a pity that a major monograph such as this, full of details and new ideas, some of which do have a good chance of finding general acceptance, does not carry an index. Fortunately the book is clearly structured, finely written and nicely printed ; therefore, searching names may not cause too many inconveniences. One should also be grateful for the many modern maps inserted into the text. In sum, this is a broad panorama that combines hundreds of puzzle pieces from a viewpoint dominated by Chinese material. It is an item that Southeast Asianists should not ignore, even if they may think that some of Zhou's statements are similar to those one can encounter in European and other language works.