

The Role of Religions  
in the European  
Perception of Insular  
and Mainland  
Southeast Asia



# The Role of Religions in the European Perception of Insular and Mainland Southeast Asia:

*Travel Accounts of the 16th  
to the 21st Century*

Edited by

Monika Arnez and Jürgen Sarnowsky

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The Role of Religions in the European Perception of Insular and  
Mainland Southeast Asia: Travel Accounts of the 16th to the 21st Century

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface .....	vii
Introduction .....	1
<b>Part One: European Journeys to Southeast Asia from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century</b>	
Chapter One.....	13
Duarte Barbosa’s View of Religions Jürgen Sarnowsky	
Chapter Two .....	35
Islam and Christianity in Ludovico de Varthema’s Travel Account (1510) Sebastian Kubon	
Chapter Three .....	49
João de Barros and his View of Buddhism in Siam Singha Grabowsky	
Chapter Four.....	67
Bigotry and Tolerance: Two Seventeenth Century Reactions to Thai Buddhist Rituals Barend Terwiel	
Chapter Five .....	91
Religion, Rejection and Cultural Adaptation in Official Travel Accounts from the VOC Period Hans Hägerdal	
Chapter Six .....	111
A German VOC Servant’s Encounters with “Curious Things” and the Devil Monika Arnez	

Chapter Seven.....	133
Accommodating Buddhism: European Travellers and Siamese Religion in the 18 <sup>th</sup> Century Sven Trakulhun	
<b>Part Two: European journeys to Southeast Asia from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</b>	
Chapter Eight.....	159
Hugo Schuchardt's Strolls around Insular Southeast Asia: The Interrelationship between Language and Religion Isabella Mataushek	
Chapter Nine.....	175
Franz Junghuhn's Three-Dimensional and Transcendental Java Ulbe Bosma	
Chapter Ten .....	207
Buddhism and Animism in Northern Thailand (Lan Na): Western Perceptions of the Late 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Volker Grabowsky	
Chapter Eleven .....	227
Pedro Alejandro Paterno's <i>La antigua civilización tagálog</i> (1887): An Attempt to (Re)construct One's Own Religious Past Imke Rath	
Chapter Twelve .....	239
Going Abroad Without Leaving Home: The Malaysian Muslim Message in Muharikah's 2015 Manga Edwin Wieringa	
Bibliography .....	261
List of Contributors .....	289

## PREFACE

The papers presented in this volume mainly derive from the proceedings of the conference “The mutual perception of Europe and insular Southeast Asia in travel reports: the role of religions”, which was held at Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from 30-31 August 2013. Several contributions could not be included for various reasons, namely those of Sri Margana, Hendrik E. Niemeijer, Uji Nugroho, Wening Udasmoro, Widya Fitria Ningsih, and Gulnara Mendikulova. One of the papers by Isabella Matauschek, who passed away after a long sickness in March 2016, is published posthumously.

The editors are grateful that several colleagues kindly agreed to contribute additional papers, four on mainland Southeast Asia by Singkha Grabowsky, Volker Grabowsky, Barend Jan Terwiel, and Sven Trakulhun, and an additional one on insular Southeast Asia by Hans Hägerdal. Last but not least Edwin Wieringa contributed a paper presented on the occasion of a second workshop in Hamburg from 13-14 November 2015.

This book, which resulted from the project *Perception of Religion in maritime Southeast Asia in Travel Reports* (funding programme: Initiation of International Cooperation; 2013-2015) would not have been possible without the financial support of the German Research Foundation (DFG). We would like to thank DFG for their support of our project. Moreover, we would like to express our gratitude to Anthony Mellor-Stapelberg for his diligent and careful revision of the contributions and the introduction, as well as the publisher, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, for accepting and publishing this collective volume.

Hamburg, 1 April 2016  
Monika Arnez  
Jürgen Sarnowsky





# INTRODUCTION

MONIKA ARNEZ AND JÜRGEN SARNOWSKY

For people nowadays, the constant exchange of people, goods and ideas and their interaction across wide distances are a part of everyday life. However, such encounters and interregional links are by no means only a recent phenomenon, although the forms they have taken in the course of history have varied. It goes without saying that travel to distant regions was spurred by various interests, first and foremost economic and imperialist policies, which reached an initial climax around 1500 with the European expansion to the Americas and into the Indian Ocean. The motivations of European travellers for venturing to the regions of maritime and mainland Southeast Asia which are the focus of the studies presented in this volume were manifold, ranging from the pursuit of power, commercial exploitation, intellectual curiosity and the aspiration to proselytize among indigenous people. European powers had an early interest in controlling trade. An important development in this regard was the arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean after Vasco da Gama had opened a sea trade route to India. Soon they tried to take control of the trade that met the demand for spices such as cloves, pepper and nutmeg in Europe. Although they failed to establish a monopoly, they succeeded in building up their trading posts and forts along the Indian Ocean (in East Africa, in Hormuz, Diu and Goa, on Sri Lanka and in Malacca) in the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Furthermore, they explored seaways to China and were active in intra-Asian trade.

Shortly before 1600 the Dutch and the British followed in the footsteps of the Portuguese, first in their service, and later on independently. In the course of European expansion trading posts and military bases were first erected. Subsequently, small colonies evolved in the form of closed territories, especially in the case of the Netherlands Indies around Batavia. The great trading companies such as the *English East India Company*<sup>1</sup> (EEIC, founded in 1600) and the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC, founded in 1602) set in motion an endless flow of personnel from other European countries to Southeast Asia.<sup>2</sup> They had to make sure that they had adequate European personnel available to enable them to control

the spice trade. At the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the British and the Dutch challenged the Portuguese monopoly in the intercontinental trade and expelled them from their trading posts. In 1757, subsequent to the Battle of Plassey, the British East India Company became a military as well as a commercial power, and by around 1800 the Dutch controlled Java and Ceylon.

However, regardless of the diverse motivations of the numerous European travellers for venturing out to Southeast Asia, many of them would share common experiences such as a long and exhausting voyage on a badly equipped ship, arrival in an unknown environment, and encounters with people whose looks, clothing, languages, customs and religions were unfamiliar to them. In preparation for their journeys, some travellers collected as much information as possible about their target areas prior to departure. Apart from the rather technical rutters<sup>3</sup> and logbooks, prospective travellers were able to refer to travel accounts and reports published with the objective of celebrating colonial achievements.

Travel accounts are interesting sources for historians for various reasons.<sup>4</sup> In the first place, these writings are shaped by their authors' experiences, their preconceptions, prejudices and values. They are also influenced by other European sources such as administrative reports, and some of the texts demonstrate deeply rooted stereotypes about foreign cultures. In many cases, the travellers tried to find parallels between European and Southeast Asian cultures, in an attempt to render them more comprehensible to the European readership they were targeting. Secondly, travel accounts are important sources which allow the attentive reader to uncover the history of cultural, commercial, religious and political contacts through the ages, and thus of early globalization. The travellers each had their own sources of information, which they gathered both from Europeans who had already visited different areas in the East and from indigenous people with whom they came into contact. Thus these texts were first-hand accounts of encounters between Europeans and Asians, and they may even contain information that has been lost in today's regional and local traditions.<sup>5</sup> These observations hold true not only for the early reports, but also for later periods, when administrators, missionaries, scientific discoverers and settlers came to Southeast Asia.<sup>6</sup> An interesting example of encounters in the 19<sup>th</sup> century can be found in the travelogues of the German geographer Franz-Wilhelm Junghuhn, which he wrote on behalf of the Dutch colonial government.<sup>7</sup> But there were also "armchair travellers" like the Austrian linguist Hugo Schuchardt.<sup>8</sup>

Modern historical writing mainly deals with the European experience in Southeast Asia in a rather general way. Cases in point are studies by

Abdul Kohar Rony und António Pinto da França on the Portuguese,<sup>9</sup> and – mainly for the later periods – by Eric M. Beekman, Ulbe Bosma and Remco Raben on the Dutch in Southeast Asia.<sup>10</sup> Travelogues are used for these studies, but in contrast to the major role they play in Joan-Pau Rubiés's study on the perception of foreign culture and religion in South India they are not at the centre of discussion. Moreover, they leave mainland and insular Southeast Asia aside. This leads us to point out the twofold purpose of this book. Firstly, it contributes to our knowledge on travel, travel experiences and travel writing by Europeans in mainland and insular Southeast Asia from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, based on specific case studies. Secondly, it pursues the aim of demonstrating how Europeans perceived religion in the region presently known as Southeast Asia. Working on the assumption that many of the European traders, seafarers, explorers and administrators arriving in Southeast Asia came as Christians, convinced of the superiority of their religion, the contributors to this volume analyse their encounters with Muslims, who had been their long-standing enemies in the Mediterranean, and with Hindus, Buddhists, and adherents of local religions. They involve themselves closely with the travelogues and the role of religions therein, and in doing so reveal the ways in which religion influenced the travellers' understanding of societies in maritime and mainland Southeast Asia. One question addressed in this volume is: How did European travellers perceive religion in different regions of Southeast Asia, such as Java, the islands of eastern Indonesia, Siam and the Philippines, in different historical periods? Another interesting question is that as to how the administrators, the missionaries, the natural historians and the explorers positioned themselves vis-à-vis Islam and Buddhism on Java and in Siam. And what do travel accounts tell us about the way Southeast Asian people perceived the Europeans?

In providing an analysis of selected travelogues from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this book presents in-depth insights into the travellers' perceptions of religion, the roles of stereotypes and the extent to which the Catholic or Protestant backgrounds of the travellers informed and shaped their perceptions of indigenous people in Southeast Asia. The papers are organized in roughly chronological order. Part one, which deals with European journeys to Southeast Asia from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, begins with Jürgen Sarnowsky's discussion of Duarte Barbosa's book on the world of the Indian Ocean. This book displays quite a neutral attitude both towards Muslims and towards Hindus and Buddhists. The analysis of this travel account reveals that Barbosa's description of religion in India and maritime Southeast Asia tends to be positive or at least neutral in

places where he believes he has found friends and allies of the Portuguese king. According to Jürgen Sarnowsky, Barbosa's positive description of those he terms "Gentiles" is not only related to rather superficial similarities between their beliefs and Christian doctrines and customs. Rather, hoping for possible allies in the Portuguese struggle for maritime dominance, his depiction is influenced by his anticipation that these people might be more easily converted to the Christian faith.

Sebastian Kubon's contribution analyses the widely disseminated report of the Italian Ludovico de Varthema, who came to India via Mecca, and included some descriptions of Siam and parts of present-day Indonesia, such as Sumatra, Java and the Moluccas. His account is characterized by a certain ambivalent attitude, particularly with regard to Christianity. Travelling disguised as a Muslim during most of his account, Ludovico de Varthema describes Islam or Muslims in a negative way only when he refers to the intra-Islamic conflicts between Sunnites and Shiites. His rare descriptions of Christianity in most of the account stand in contrast with the positive remarks about the Christian Portuguese in the final part of the text.

While neither Barbosa nor Varthema probably ever reached Southeast Asia themselves, but rather drew on information gathered from indigenous people in South India, the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Portuguese historiographer João de Barros used his reports to convey some basic ideas about Buddhism to his countrymen, as is shown by Singkha Grabowsky. With its analysis of *Décadas da Ásia de Iom de Barros*, a travel account by João de Barros, this contribution investigates the factors accounting for the rather positive description of Siamese people and religion in one of the first European accounts covering these issues. It shows that by highlighting the positive aspects of Buddhist Siam the Portuguese created a counter-model to their perceived enemies, the Muslim vassal states. Moreover, Buddhists were thought to be easier to convert to Christianity than Muslims and were more likely to be regarded as allies of the Portuguese. This corresponds to what Jürgen Sarnowsky noted with regard to Duarte Barbosa. Another interesting aspect mentioned in this contribution is the surprising detail with which Buddhist religious practices are described in Barros's text, which may have been related to his aim of introducing his readership to an exotic and foreign culture.

We also find precise portrayals of Buddhism in Siam in records by Gijsbert Heeck and Engelbert Kaempfer, two physicians who were in service of the VOC for several years and are the subjects of Baas Terwiel's contribution. Baas Terwiel reveals how these two physicians came to completely different conclusions about Buddhism in Siam in the

17<sup>th</sup> century, although they had much in common. Both of them were Protestant Christians, but whereas Heeck strongly rejected Buddhism, Kaempfer displayed quite a tolerant attitude towards it. Moreover, the latter described Buddhist religious practices, for example a cremation he witnessed, in great detail. Baas Terwiel shows that Heeck's Dutch Calvinist creed did not allow him to accept other religious practices, whereas Kaempfer was tolerant not only with regard to different types of Christianity but also to Siamese Buddhism. This contribution also reveals that both physicians wrote their diaries with the aim of entertaining and even thrilling their readers; but unlike Heeck, Kaempfer had a further purpose in collecting information in the East, namely to increase knowledge about this region. It should be noted here that until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century European knowledge about Siam was still largely based on travel reports produced shortly prior to Kaempfer's stay in Siam, the period Osterhammel calls the short "diplomatic flirt" between Louis XIV and King Narai (1673-1688).<sup>11</sup>

Moving on to maritime Southeast Asia, particularly eastern Indonesia, with examples from Timor, Savu, Solor and Central and South Maluku, Hans Hägerdal's essay adds to our knowledge about the perception of religion in official travel reports written by VOC representatives in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. He reveals how religious matters interact with the attempts of the VOC to oversee and govern the dependent islands of the East Indies. Using the daily notes (*Dagregisters*) and travel reports that Dutch Residents and Commissioners kept when touring the dependencies of the East India Company, Hans Hägerdal demonstrates that the Dutch officials attended rituals and ceremonies, and had to play along with local religious customs in order to fulfil their role as mediators and arbiters.

The subsequent contribution by Monika Arnez analyzes a travel account by Ernst Christoph Barchewitz, a German who was in the service of the VOC for several years and published his account of experiences in the East Indies in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. This report was the first to provide a detailed account of daily life, religion and fauna in certain parts of eastern Indonesia, in particular Leti. Barchewitz, driven by a wandering spirit, was eager to write about wondrous occurrences in Batavia, Banda and the island of Leti, where he was stationed as the island Corporal (administrator) for several years. This contribution demonstrates that although Barchewitz associated local religious practices on Leti with the Devil and thought it was necessary to convert the indigenous people to Christianity, he devoted a considerable part of his narrative to describing these traditions. One example is the depiction of an altar beside a kettledrum on the top of a hill, where the indigenous people made

offerings to Uba Leere, “Grandfather Sun”, and prayed to him for good weather or other blessings. Such episodes about “exotic” practices may well have enhanced the popularity of this travel account, which was republished in Germany several times after Barchewitz’s return.

The following paper by Sven Trakulhun shows how European observers’ perceptions of Siamese religion in the 18<sup>th</sup> century were shaped by a growing interest in Buddhist practices and an atmosphere inconducive to missionary work in Siam after the death of King Narai in 1688. It examines the nexus embracing the rather factional nature of the Christian mission, the spiritual crisis of Siamese Buddhism after the breakdown of the state in 1767 and European knowledge about Buddhism in Siam. Demonstrating that Siamese Buddhism did not arouse renewed interest among Western travellers, missionaries and scholars until the Siamese kingdom had been restored under Rama I and his successors, this contribution illustrates how Western orientalist and Siamese elites pooled their efforts to establish a view of Buddhism as an ancient world religion.

Part two on European journeys to Southeast Asia from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, begins with an essay by Isabella Matauschek. This paper explores the interplay between religion and language in the writings of Hugo Schuchardt, a German linguist and “armchair traveller”, and the impact of religion on his work. This contribution explores the role in language change and development that Schuchardt ascribes theoretically and empirically to religion. It examines the material he used for his linguistic analysis and looks at the ways in which the use of Sanskrit influenced 19<sup>th</sup>-century European and especially German academia. Moreover, it demonstrates how Christian-Muslim conflicts impacted on Schuchardt’s work on Southeast Asia. This work offers a glance at the way a German armchair traveller of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century perceived insular Southeast Asia, while at the same time affording a glimpse of a neglected area of research into the work of this trailblazing scholar whose studies continue to shape today’s scholarship.

The next contribution, by Ulbe Bosma, is devoted to Franz Wilhelm Junghuhn’s image of a Java that matched his ideas about natural religion, while at the same time his scientific work in Java and his encounters with Islam, Freemasonry and the remnants of Buddhism and Hinduism there broadened his perspective on religion and ethics. In this respect, it should be noted that in Junghuhn’s days the discipline of theosophy did not yet exist, and so could not serve as a medium for interreligious discourse as it would in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. For Junghuhn, rationalism was still the idiom of exchange, and like other adherents of the German *Aufklärung* he respected Islam as being more rationalist than Christianity, even though he

was, like many Europeans in Asia, always suspicious of Muslim “fanaticism”. Ulbe Bosma shows how Junghuhn directed the attention of Europeans to Indonesian unity in diversity, with regard to both its natural environment and its peoples, cultures and beliefs.

Volker Grabowsky’s contribution on Buddhism, Animism and Christianity in Northern Thailand deals with the interplay between Presbyterian missionary activity and the local Buddhist population in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. By reference to the examples of William Clifton Dodd, who worked for the Laos Mission, and Lillian S. Curtis, a Presbyterian missionary at Lampang from 1895 to 1899, it connects the missionaries’ lack of success to their failure to comprehend people’s relationship to the Buddhist concepts of merit and demerit: equating “demerit” (*pāpa*) with the Christian concept of “sin” prevented a thorough understanding of Buddhist thinking. Another aspect covered in this contribution is spirit worship, in particular belief in the *phi ka*, a spirit who may attack members of other clans for no apparent reason. People thought to be *phi ka* were driven away from their homes, and numerous supposed *phi ka* converted to Christianity because the missionaries identified them as a target group in their proselytizing efforts. As Volker Grabowsky outlines, Dodd regarded this as a result of the fact that the Devil went too far and drove these people to Christ.

The following essay by Imke Rath deals with Alejandro Paterno’s revision of the Spanish descriptions of the ancient Tagalog religion in his book *La antigua civilización tagálog* (1887). Although Paterno was a native Filipino, he had to rely on Spanish sources in order to describe the Tagalog past. In his attempt to re-indigenize the information he challenged the way some aspects of the religion had been presented, while retaining the Hispano-Catholic pattern in relation to other aspects. The authors of his source documents may be regarded as travellers because they were born in Spain and travelled to the Philippines as missionaries. Additionally, Paterno himself was a traveller who received a Spanish academic education before returning to his native country. This contribution considers the discursive pattern by which Spanish missionaries categorized the ancient Tagalog religion during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and the Christian influence on their descriptions.

Last but not least, the twelfth chapter, the “epilogue” to this volume by Edwin Wieringa, gives a fresh insight into how travellers from Southeast Asia perceive Europe. This essay demonstrates that travelling is not necessarily synonymous with leaving home, nor does it always broaden the mind. Based on the example of *Muharikah; the Comics*, published in 2015, the contribution analyses how a Malay Muslim woman travels to

and studies in Dundee without opening up to Scottish culture. It deals with an interesting recent example of travel that does not involve cultural and religious contacts. It draws attention to the increasing number of travelogues written by Malaysian Muslim academics who leave home with the aim of pursuing their studies abroad while simultaneously attempting to convince the British of the excellence of their Malay Islamic way. A similar phenomenon is apparent in travel accounts published by Indonesian authors. Edwin Wieringa points out that these texts serve the purpose of informing potential future Malay Muslim students about life away from home and also of encouraging their readers to engage in proselytization (*da'wa*) in foreign fields.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The company was known as the British East India Company from 1707 onwards.

<sup>2</sup> On the role of the VOC see: Robert Parthesius, *Dutch ships in tropical waters. The Development of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) Shipping Network in Asia 1595-1660* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010); Roelof van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur. Duitsers in dienst van de VOC (1600-1800)* (Nijmegen: SUN, 1997); Claudia Rei, "Careers and Wages in the Dutch East India Company," *Clometrica* 1 (2014): 27-48. On the EEIC see: K. N. Chaudhuri, *The trading wars of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); Patrick J. N. Tuck, *The East India Company, 1600-1858*. 6 vols (London: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> On the rutter of Francisco Rodrigues see: 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: The Hakluyt Society, 1944).

<sup>4</sup> For early travelling and travel accounts see: Stephen Gosch and Peter Stearns, eds, *Premodern Travel in World History* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Folker Reichert, *Erfahrung der Welt. Reisen und Kulturbegegnung im späten Mittelalter*, (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001); Xenja von Ertzdorff and Dieter Neukirch, eds, *Reisen und Reiseliteratur im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992)

<sup>5</sup> A systematic approach can be found in Joan Pau Rubiés, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance. South India Through European Eyes, 1250-1625* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000). See also: Donald F. Lach and Edwin J. Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, Vol. 3 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> For travel writing in general see: Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Peter Hulme, Russell McDougall, eds, *Writing, Travel and Empire. Colonial Narratives of Other Cultures* (London, New York: I.B.Tauris, 2007); Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (London, New York: Routledge, 2011).



<sup>7</sup> See for instance his *Topographische und naturwissenschaftliche Reisen durch Java* (Magdeburg: E. Baensch [et al.], 1845).

<sup>8</sup> For his work see: T. L. Markey, ed., *Hugo Schuchardt, The ethnography of variation. Selected writings on pidgins and creoles* (Ann Arbor: Karoma, 1979).

<sup>9</sup> Abdul Kohar Rony, *The Portuguese in Southeast Asia: Malacca, Moluccas, East Timor* (Hamburg: Abera Verlag, 1997); António Pinto da França, *A influência portuguesa na Indonésia* (Lisboa: Livros e Revistas, 2003).

<sup>10</sup> Eric M. Beekman, *Troubled pleasures. Dutch colonial literature from the East Indies, 1600-1950* (Oxford, New York: Clarendon Press, 1996); Ulbe Bosma and Remco Raben, *Being "Dutch" in the Indies. A History of Creolisation and Empire, 1500-1920* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press; Singapore: NUS Press, 2008); Ulbe Bosma, Remco Raben and Wim Willems, *De Geschiedenis van Indische Nederlanders* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> See: Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Entzauberung Asiens. Europa und die asiatischen Reiche im 18. Jahrhundert* (München: C. H. Beck, 1998), 101.



**PART ONE**

**EUROPEAN JOURNEYS TO SOUTHEAST ASIA  
FROM THE 16TH TO THE 18TH CENTURY**



## CHAPTER ONE

### DUARTE BARBOSA'S VIEW OF RELIGIONS

JÜRGEN SARNOWSKY

Travellers' reports are important sources for the history of cultural, commercial, religious, and political contacts through the ages. Especially the early reports up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century offer valuable insights into the process of early globalization.<sup>1</sup> The travellers arrive with their own experiences, preconceptions, prejudices and values, often shaped by information from earlier sources, including classical literature. Thus the situation they describe is in large measure determined by their own ways of perception. European travellers usually focus on the societies they visit from a European perspective, often employing parallels to explain the foreign countries and customs to their European public, even if the comparison does not fit adequately. On the other hand, the travellers had their own sources of information from contemporaries, indigenous as well as European or other travellers. Therefore their reports may also convey information which cannot be gathered from surviving regional or local traditions, but reflect the historical situation in the regions they visited.<sup>2</sup>

This holds true even for the earlier reports from the era of European "discoveries" and conquests since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, which were quite often mixed with fantastic or mythological elements. These texts found a wide readership in Europe, also in early printed collections like that of Fracanzano da Montalboddo (from 1507),<sup>3</sup> which were later expanded by more detailed reports, especially in the famous collection of Giovanni Battista Ramusio from the 1550s.<sup>4</sup> One of the earlier reports printed there for the first time was that of the Portuguese Duarte Barbosa, probably finished in 1516. Ramusio published an Italian translation made from the Portuguese in 1550, but the text was already circulating in Spain before 1524 when a translation into Castilian was made,<sup>5</sup> and there is also an early Dutch translation from about 1518.<sup>6</sup> The Portuguese manuscript discovered in Lisbon from about 1558 which is probably now lost did not represent the autograph, while the Spanish translations preserved in manuscripts in Barcelona, Madrid, and (probably) Munich contain slightly

different texts.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, these differences are not of central importance here.

Duarte Barbosa's biography is not very well known. The information we have comes either from his own report or from closely related sources and is not consistent. It seems that there were at least two men named Duarte Barbosa who could have authored the report. This uncertainty starts already with regard to the journey to India.<sup>8</sup> One Duarte Barbosa may have been the son of Diogo Barbosa, who was one of the captains in the fleet of João de Nova in 1501, at least according to the later report of João de Barros.<sup>9</sup> Diogo Barbosa was in the service of Alvaro de Bragança, and it seems that he followed his lord to Castile where he came into contact with Fernão de Magellan. When Magellan left Seville for the first circumnavigation of the world in 1519, he was accompanied by the first Duarte Barbosa, who died only a few days after Magellan had been killed on the Philippines in 1521.

But in connection with the earlier expedition of Pedro Alvarez Cabral we already find another Barbosa, Gonçalo Gil, who was installed by Cabral as the first Portuguese *feitor* in Cochin.<sup>10</sup> Since the route from Africa to India described by Duarte Barbosa in his book resembles that of Cabral in 1500/01, he came probably to India with Cabral's fleet, together with Gonçalo Gil Barbosa, who is said to have been his uncle. In the preface to Barbosa's account in the Ramusio edition, the report is dated 1516,<sup>11</sup> which would fit in with a sixteen-year stay in India as is mentioned in some of the traditions.<sup>12</sup> This second Duarte Barbosa quickly learnt the language of the Malabar Coast, Malayalam, as is confirmed by the version of events in the *Lendas da Índia* of Gaspar Correia.<sup>13</sup> Barbosa served as an interpreter for Francisco and Afonso de Albuquerque,<sup>14</sup> among others, and later as a clerk at the *feitoria* in Cannanore where he even came into conflict with Afonso de Albuquerque.<sup>15</sup> He may have returned to Portugal for some time (and delivered his report there), but is probably found in India again in 1520, 1527 and 1529 or even later.<sup>16</sup> He was probably the author of the report.

The "Book of Duarte Barbosa" is not a traveller's report in the strict sense of the word but rather a series of descriptions of towns and countries on the shores of the Indian Ocean. Nevertheless, these descriptions are organized mainly from West to East, as if on a journey from South Africa to the China Sea, and are more detailed for the regions the author knew himself.<sup>17</sup> The geographical organization of the descriptions makes them easy to follow, and Barbosa always starts with more general remarks on the political systems, religions, social groups, and economy before he goes into detail.<sup>18</sup> He also combines the description of countries and "kingdoms"

– to employ the European parallel used by Barbosa – with that of local structures, settlements and towns, and he inserts details and stories which are clearly intended as entertainment for the readers.

Barbosa gives his main intentions in the preface preserved both in the Lisbon manuscript and in Ramusio's version. After referring to his travels, he declares that he wants to report what he has seen and heard, "many things which I esteemed marvellous and astonishing inasmuch that they had never been seen nor heard by our forefathers". This included "the towns and the bounds of all those kingdoms where I have either been myself, or as to which I have learnt from trustworthy persons; stating which are the kingdoms of the Moors and which of the Heathen, and the customs thereof". He proposed to inform about trading and goods, but also about religious aspects: "I have ever taken pleasure in enquiring from Moors, Christians, and Heathen, regarding the manners and customs of those countries".<sup>19</sup> Barbosa's attention was thus not only directed towards political and economic aspects – which were obviously in the focus of the colonial policies of the Portuguese – but also towards the religions, based both on his own experience and on serious information collected from others.

Already in this passage, the typical tripartite structure of Barbosa's approach to the different religious groups becomes clear which is also found in the reports of other European travellers of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century like Ludovico de Varthema or Tome Pires.<sup>20</sup> The first group are the "Moors", i.e. the Muslims, their collective name being transferred from the Christians' adversaries on the Iberian Peninsula. As is the case for the other groups, there is not much internal differentiation. Thus the second group includes not only Roman Catholics but also the various oriental churches, especially the Saint Thomas Christians.<sup>21</sup> Finally, the third group is even more complex. Barbosa uses the Portuguese term *gentios*, with the purely exclusive meaning of "neither Christian nor Muslim": it covers both Hindus and Buddhists and also many other religious communities, not to mention the diversity of other religions in India as well as in Southeast Asia. Dames<sup>22</sup> translates it as "Heathen" (as in the quotations above), Stanley<sup>23</sup> as "Gentiles"; since the exact connotation is not always clear, the latter term, i.e. "Gentile(s)", will be used in preference to "Heathen" when referring to or translating from Barbosa's report. This tripartite distinction between Muslim, Christian, and Gentile is the basic framework within which Barbosa develops his own perceptions, but there are in fact several passages that render a more nuanced image. The focus of this paper will therefore be on the analysis of Barbosa's view of religions.

As far as we can see, Duarte Barbosa did not travel much beyond the sphere of Portuguese influence on the Malabar Coast. When he turns to insular Southeast Asia, his descriptions become short and more summary. Thus, starting from Sumatra, he first states the distance to Malacca and the rough circumference of Sumatra, and then continues that it has “many very prosperous seaports, the more part of them occupied by Moors, some by Heathen, but for the most part the Heathen dwell inland”.<sup>24</sup> Similar statements on the religion of the inhabitants follow for most of the other islands, as a kind of standard description. Thus for Java, it is said that the Gentiles live in the interior of the island, while the seaports with their great towns and villages are populated by Muslims who have their own kings. Barbosa then adds a late reference to the Hindu empire of Majapahit: Muslims and Gentiles “all are subject to the Heathen King, a very great Lord whom they call Pateudra [Patendra or Patevdara in the Spanish version] who dwells in the interior; some who rise up against him, he subdues again forthwith”.<sup>25</sup>

Since the 15<sup>th</sup> century Majapahit had in fact been only one of several kingdoms on Java, and was also weakened by civil wars and internal upheavals. When the original Rajasa-dynasty ended in 1451 the situation remained unstable, and the new dynasty of the Girindrawardhana could only establish itself slowly after 1456, not being able to restore the former influence of the kingdom. The remaining forces of Majapahit under Girindrawardhana were finally vanquished in about 1527, i.e. after Barbosa had completed his report, by a coalition of North Javanese powers led by the Sultan of Demak.<sup>26</sup> The name of the alleged ruler of Java is not clear: it may refer to the Sultan of Demak, Pate Unus (or Eunus) who ruled in about 1518/1521,<sup>27</sup> or else to a viceroy of Java named Pate Amdura mentioned in the report of Tome Pires written before 1516/1517.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, even though far away in Southwest India, Barbosa had at least a rough idea of the formerly great Hindu kingdom.

The other paragraphs are even briefer. For “Lesser Java”, i.e. Bali, Barbosa mentions that it is inhabited by Gentiles under a Gentile king, and refers to its name as being given by the Muslims, Arabs, and Persians. Timor like many other islands is inhabited by Gentiles and some Muslims, its sandalwood is much esteemed in India and Persia, and also highly valued at the Malabar Coast, in Cambay, and in the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagara in South India. In the Banda Islands, the people again are Gentile and Muslim, but there is no king. They only sometimes submitted themselves to the king of the Moluccas. While Ambon is ruled by a Gentile king, the kings of the Moluccas are Muslims ruling a mixed



population. Finally, the other islands in the West of the Moluccas are all Gentile, mostly ruled by Gentile kings.<sup>29</sup>

Apart from the more general information, Barbosa also reported some details which allow more precise insights into his perception of religions. Since there were no Christians in insular Southeast Asia, Barbosa focused on Muslims and Hindus. Most of his remarks seem quite neutral or at least balanced, not as biased as one would expect in the religious and political situation of the time, and there are no outright sweeping negative statements. With regard to the Gentiles of insular Southeast Asia there is a negative report only concerning the inhabitants of the kingdom of the Ara (Haru) on Sumatra: They eat, to quote from Barbosa, "human flesh, and every foreigner whom they can take, they eat without any pity whatsoever".<sup>30</sup> Though this conforms to European conceptions about heathen peoples,<sup>31</sup> it seems not to be intended as a general invective against Gentiles; it is rather a neutral description of dangers awaiting strangers when they come to Sumatra.

Concerning the more detailed reports about Muslims, there are both negative and positive elements. With regard to Sumatra, Barbosa points out the disloyalty of the Muslim subjects. They would kill their lords and set up other kings in their place.<sup>32</sup> This is complemented by the note on the inhabitants and rulers of Java (probably including both Muslims and Gentiles) that some of them were full of hate against the Portuguese, while others wanted very much to live in peace and friendship with them.<sup>33</sup>

Special attention is also given to the Sultan of Ternate, who is named as Binaracola (or Benarra Sorala, in fact Bayanullah, 1500-1522), and who had been the ruler of the other islands too before they revolted against him and made kings of their own.<sup>34</sup> Barbosa tells us that the Sultan was a Muslim, but was like a Gentile. He had one Muslim wife, and his children with her became Muslims, too, but he also – according to Barbosa – kept 300 or 400 Gentile concubines in his house with whom he had many Gentile sons and daughters. The Portuguese version adds that the Sultan very much desired to serve the King of Portugal, to whom he offered himself as a slave.<sup>35</sup> In fact, Bayanullah did indeed welcome the Portuguese who arrived under Francisco Serrão in 1512, hoping for support from them in his conflicts with his neighbours. He even allowed them to establish a trading post on Ternate; but he may have met internal resistance for his close relations with Serrão, and was killed in 1522. Even if there may be some implicit criticism in the report about Bayanullah's wives – and about the crippled women that had to serve him –<sup>36</sup> as the ally that the Portuguese were seeking he is depicted quite neutrally.

This fits into the general outline of the sections of the book on Southeast Asia. Though religions as well as political structures form basic elements of the descriptions, the characterization as Muslim or Gentile does not imply a value judgment, and there are only a few negative comments in the accounts of people of other religions. Religious beliefs are thus not the most important criteria for the presentation of information. Rather, it is the (anticipated) relationship to the Portuguese Crown that matters most. Whoever is expected to become an ally of the King of Portugal receives positive attention, while the “sworn enemies” – like those on Java who hate the Portuguese – are clearly indicated.

Compared to the other parts of this “Book”, the account of Southeast Asia is relatively short. To make the picture more complete, therefore, it is necessary also to take into consideration the view of religions in the earlier chapters of Barbosa’s report, especially those on Southern India which was much more familiar to him. It is only for this region that the local Saint Thomas Christians come in, so that all three groups mentioned in the preface are present. But the perception of Muslims and Gentiles is also much wider: the customs and rites of the Hindus especially are described in greater detail.

Due to the geographical organization of Barbosa’s Book, Christians appear only quite late in the context of the descriptions. At first, this concerns the role of the Portuguese in India, and though of course they are implicitly present all the time, it is in relation to the fortress at Cannanore (today Kannur) that their religious policies are extensively described. Cannanore is, as Barbosa puts it again, a city in the Kingdom of Cannanore, populated by Muslims and Gentiles who trade with many towns and regions from Hormuz to Ceylon.<sup>37</sup> But there is also the Portuguese fortress. Around it there is a town of Christians from the region, living there with their wives and children. These have been “converted to our Holy Faith” since the erection of the fortress, and, Barbosa concludes, “continue daily to be converted”.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, wherever the Portuguese were able to establish themselves they not only started to reduce the Muslim influence (as in Calicut, Kozhikode, from which many Muslim merchants returned their home countries, as Barbosa also reports),<sup>39</sup> but they also made efforts to convert the local people to the Roman Catholic faith. Thus the same description can be found for the city of Cochin (Kochi), where the Portuguese fortress lay at the mouth of a river, surrounded by a village of Portuguese and newly-baptized Christians.<sup>40</sup> It seems that for Barbosa this is quite natural, and he represents the Portuguese mission as one of the king’s achievements, though without any further comment.

The first note on the Saint Thomas Christians comes from the description of Cranganor. This is no accident, since we have another early document from around 1502, a report based on talks with a Saint Thomas Christian named Joseph, who came from Cranganor, lived in Kerala, went to Portugal with Cabral in 1501, and informed the Roman Catholic Christians (including Pope Alexander VI) about the situation of the oriental Christians in India.<sup>41</sup> Barbosa's short report already makes clear his somehow distant position. In Cochin, he states, there live Muslims, Christians and Indian Gentiles, and these Christians are of the doctrine of Saint Thomas. "They hold there a church dedicated to him, and another to Our Lady; they are very devout Christians, lacking nothing but true doctrine."<sup>42</sup>

Later on, in relation to his description of Quilon (Kollam), Barbosa gives a more detailed report on the Saint Thomas Christians and their history in India. He starts with a church allegedly erected by Saint Thomas himself. When a huge piece of wood was stranded on the sea shore, by a miracle the Saint succeeded in getting it up a hill and was allowed to use it for building the church. By other miracles, he turned sand into rice and pieces of wood into small gold coins to pay for and feed the carpenters working at the church. Though he had only arrived with a few companions, his miracles led many Indians to convert, so that in the end more than 12,000 households (2,000 in the Spanish version) throughout the whole Kingdom of Quilon were Christian.<sup>43</sup> This aroused the fear of the king. He therefore started to persecute Saint Thomas, who found his martyrdom at Mailapur where he is buried.

Barbosa then turns to the later events. When the Apostle had died, the community lived without any priests or doctrine and its members were not baptized.<sup>44</sup> So they decided to seek help, and sent out men who reached Armenia; and the Armenians sent them a bishop and five or six priests. These stayed in India for some years to baptize, say mass and care for the community, and then were replaced by others. This still continued in Barbosa's time, so that he describes the simple dress and strong devotion of the Armenian priests, with the critical remark that they baptize for money and leave the Malabar Coast as rich men while "for lack of money many went unbaptized".<sup>45</sup> The mass is held in Chaldean, since this is the language of their Holy Scriptures, and they celebrate the Eucharist with salt bread and juice squeezed from raisins from Mecca and Hormuz, since there is no wine in India.

This detailed description is supplemented in one of the following sections by some information on the church and grave of Saint Thomas in Mylapore (today part of Chennai, Madras), on his mission and death there,

and on miracles happening at his tomb.<sup>46</sup> Barbosa adds that the church was already decayed at his time.<sup>47</sup> The Portuguese started to establish themselves on the Coromandel Coast only in 1522/23. They founded the trading post of São Tomé at Mylapore and built a new church at the grave of Saint Thomas, later replaced by a British building.

When Vasco da Gama arrived at Calicut in May 1498, according to his Journal his first envoy, the converted Jew João Nunes, when asked why they had come there, answered that they “came in search of Christians and spices”.<sup>48</sup> Therefore it is no surprise that Barbosa’s report is sympathetic where it concerns the Christians in India. He obviously had contact with the Saint Thomas Christians, because he recites some of their ancient traditions. Differences in liturgy and practice are related neutrally, but there is also some criticism. The Saint Thomas Christians are generally described as “deficient in doctrine”,<sup>49</sup> and the Armenian priests – since obviously (obviously, that is, in Barbosa’s view) there were no Indian priests – are said to have taken money for administering the sacrament of baptism. But this does not blur the generally positive line of Barbosa’s report on oriental Christians.

Muslims are mentioned in most of the sections of Barbosa’s report, but in contrast to the relatively few but informative passages on Christians, the information given is either superficial or anecdotal. There are no discussions of doctrine or religious customs, the focus is rather on politics and economy. As in the sections on Southeast Asia, nearly every chapter in the other parts of the book is introduced by an indication of the proportions and influence of Muslims and Gentiles. From time to time, Barbosa points to the expansive tendencies of the Muslim communities. This already starts in the section on northwest India, in respect of Gujarat with its capital Cambay (Khambat).<sup>50</sup> Barbosa states that this kingdom was in former times ruled by Gentiles, but that the Muslims had conquered it by war. He adds a note on Gentile knights who did not give in to Muslim rule, but offered continuous resistance organized from the mountains. According to the Spanish version, the Gentile population is even suppressed and maltreated by the Muslim rulers.<sup>51</sup> A similar example is offered by the report on the Delhi Sultanate (or “Kingdom”).<sup>52</sup> Barbosa here also narrates the Muslim conquest, following earlier Gentile rule – which in fact was the establishment of a new state on the remains of the extinct Ghurid Empire<sup>53</sup> - and he laments the fate of the earlier nobility. As a kind of penance for their defeat by the Muslims and in order not to be subject to the new rulers, they decided to live in poverty and without fixed homes. Thus they wander around begging, in chains, naked, and smeared with ashes as signs of dishonour and the renunciation of worldly goods.

Finally, another, but to some extent different, example for Muslim expansion is Malacca (Melaka).<sup>54</sup> Barbosa reports that the area previously belonged to Siam (Anseão, in fact Ayutthaya), but then the Muslim merchants rebelled and installed a Muslim king. This is certainly tendentious, maybe to justify the Portuguese conquest in 1511, though Barbosa also points to the many mosques and the cultivated Muslim noblemen in the town.<sup>55</sup> In fact, the first king of Malacca was Parameswara or Iskandar Shah, who claimed descent from a royal Sumatran family. At first he paid tribute to Ayutthaya, but strengthened his position by widening diplomatic relations. He probably became a Muslim when establishing trade relations with the Sultanate of Pasai, in 1414, and his successor, Muhammad Shah (1424-1444), also adopted the Muslim faith.

In consequence of his representation of the Sultanates of Cambay, Delhi, and Malacca, Barbosa sees both Christians and Gentiles as being endangered by the Muslim advance. He makes this clear when describing, for example, the different ethnic groups on the Malabar Coast. One group, one-fifth of the inhabitants, are Muslim merchants who organize the trade at the ports. Before the arrival of the King of Portugal, their influence was growing, due also to the conversion of Gentiles to the Muslim faith as a result of internal quarrels, and Barbosa concludes that without the Portuguese presence the region would soon have had a Muslim king.<sup>56</sup> This is confirmed by the immediately following remarks on the foreign Muslim merchants in South India, coming from Arabia, Persia, Gujarat, Khorasan, and the Deccan.<sup>57</sup> They had their own governor who had jurisdiction over them independently of the king. According to Barbosa, “they were so numerous and powerful in the city of Calicut that the Gentiles did not venture to dispute with them”.<sup>58</sup> This only changed with the arrival of the Portuguese in Calicut, so that these foreign merchants were now slowly leaving the country. Another example is the situation in Bengal which had a mixed population of Muslims and Gentiles, ruled by a Muslim king. Barbosa reports that many of the Gentiles in Bengal were converting daily to the Muslim faith just to maintain the favour of the king and his administration.<sup>59</sup> This contrasted with the situation in Siam where the powerful Gentile king did not allow the Muslims to carry weapons.<sup>60</sup>

Sometimes, Barbosa also includes somewhat tendentious accounts of certain aspects of the daily life of Muslims. Thus, for Bengal, he reports that the Muslim merchants would go the interior of the country, buy children from the Gentiles and castrate them completely, to sell them later when they are grown up if they survive.<sup>61</sup> The respectable Muslims also have fine clothing and are, as Barbosa puts it, “luxurious, eat well and

spend freely, and have many other extravagancies as well”.<sup>62</sup> They have three or four women whom they keep shut up while they go out at night to visit friends, to feast, and to drink wine. Similarly, but in a more general way, the Bahmani Sultan Mahmood Shah Bahmani II (1482-1518, in the text as Maamude, Mahamuza) is described as living in “great luxury, leading a very pleasant life”.<sup>63</sup> On a more anecdotal level is the report on the Sultan Mahmud of Gujarat, the father of the reigning Sultan Muzaffar II. (1511-26). Since Mahmud’s father was afraid his son might be poisoned, he brought him up with poison from his childhood. Having started with small and ended up with larger quantities which did not harm him, he was later afraid to stop because otherwise he would die. At the end, he is said to have been so poisonous that many of his wives died during the sexual act.<sup>64</sup> These popular stories, also referred to by Ludovico de Varthema, made him known in Europe as the “Poison Sultan”.<sup>65</sup>

Though the negative elements form an important part of Barbosa’s reports on Muslims, there are also several positive passages. For Gujarat and Cambay, he admires the power of the Sultan and the boldness of his – Muslim and Gentile – riders, the knowledge of languages of the Muslim merchants, Muslim and Gentile workmanship in Cambay, and also the needlework of the Muslim women.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, for the Delhi Sultanate, the men – both Muslim and Gentile – are described as “good fighting men and good riders”,<sup>67</sup> strong and experienced with many kind of weapons. In Dabhol (Dabul), he found many “very worthy merchants”, both Muslim and Gentile,<sup>68</sup> and for Mangalore, Barbosa – if he was the author of this passage – hints not only at the richly built and well-to-do houses of prayer of the Gentiles, but also at the many mosques erected to honour Mohammed.<sup>69</sup>

Even Muslim rulers and administrators receive positive attention. Thus the Muslim governor of Diu, Malik Ayaz (in the text called Malinquans, Melquiaz), is described as a “very good rider, judicious, discreet, industrious and learned; he lives in a very orderly manner”.<sup>70</sup> According to Barbosa, he not only governed his own country well, but was also very attentive to the power of the King of Portugal, giving a good reception to his ships and people as well as to other voyagers. This is obviously related to the report on the Portuguese victory against a Mamluk-Turkish fleet before Diu in 1509.<sup>71</sup> Though Malik Ayaz supported the Mamluks with his own ships, he later tried to conclude peace and friendship with the Portuguese by sending them provisions.<sup>72</sup> A similar case is that of the Muslim Governor of Chaul, Xequ (Xech), who was subject to the Bahmani Sultanate. He is referred to as a keen adherent of the King of Portugal and a great friend of the Portuguese, giving them security as he