Panel 2a. *Rise and Fall of Hubs along the Maritime Silk Route*
Wednesday November 18, 2015
Chair: John Miksic

**Quanzhou/Zayton (718-1549): Landmarking the Rise and Fall of a City Port through history**

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Route of Seeing: Jacob d’Ancona (1254-1324), Marco Polo (1254-1324), Friar Odoric (1265-1331) and Ibn Battuta (1304-68/9)'s Travelogues

Chronological note of Quanzhou with Maritime Silk Route Period (718-1549)

Dehong: See the images of historic buildings in the city from their description

Zheng He’s Seven Voyages (1405-1433) and Tianfei/Tianhou Temple

Conclusion: The Fall and Why

China map in the Song dynasty (960-1279).

Tang dynasty (618-907) witnessed the Rebellion of An&Shi, and the blockage of Silk Route on the land. The sea became the main form of transportation, and only overseas trade department was set up in Guangzhou (Canton).

In Song, Emperor Shenzhong requested to set up the overseas trade department at Quanzhou in 1087. Since then the rapid development of the port city by sending ships out for trade caught up with Guangzhou.
In 1270 a Jewish merchant Jacob d'Ancona set out on a voyage from Italy. A year later, he arrived in China at the coastal metropolis of Zaitun, the "City of Light" (now known as Quanzhou), four years before Marco Polo arrived at Xanadu in 1275.

Jacob d'Ancona's account of his travels, a remarkable manuscript that had been hidden from public view for more than seven centuries. The account was praised as providing an unparalleled insight into life in the medieval world.

Vivid and insightful, this account has great historical significance. It not only describes the adventures of a medieval trader, but also comments on Chinese society and manners through the eyes of a European man of learning. The City of Light brings spectacularly to life d'Ancona’s encounter with one of the world’s great civilizations.
The Travels Of Marco Polo

Marco Polo (1254-1324), the son of a Venetian merchant, set out in 1271 on a journey along the silk route to Xanadu (Shangdu), capital of the Mongol empire, where he was reputed to have stayed for over 20 years. He was not the first European to visit China, but he travelled much more extensively than his predecessors. On returning to Venice in 1295, he published an account of his travels which was a huge bestseller even though much of the book was regarded as fiction by contemporary readers.

“You arrive at the noble and handsome city of Zai-tun, which has a port on the sea-coast celebrated for the resort of shipping, loaded with merchandise, that is afterwards distributed through every part of the province of Manji. The quantity of pepper imported there is so considerable that what is carried to Alexandra to supply the demand of the western parts if the world, is trifling in comparison, perhaps not more than the hundredth part”.

Marco Polo believed Zai-tun “to be one of the two greatest commodious ports in the world.
Ibn Battuta (1304-68/9) embarked on a 75,000 mile journey traversing the Islamic world from Africa, across the interior of Asia, and then onto China. Returning finally to Morocco in 1354, he dictated an account of his travels which was then forgotten, even in the Islamic world, until recently when its rediscovery and translation into English belatedly sealed his reputation as the greatest of medieval travelers and the most reliable chronicler.

Friar Odoric (1265-1331) travelled to China in 1322. He called Quanzhou Zayton.

“Passing through many cities and towns, I came to a certain noble city which is called Zayton...and in it are many monasteries of devotees, idol-worshippers every man of them. In one of those monasteries which I visited there were 3000 monks ...the place is one of the best in the world.”

The Franciscan monk Giovanni de Montecorvino mentions in a letter written in 1305 that a church had been built in Quanzhou with funds from an Armenian woman. This he used as the metropolitan cathedral.
Route of Seeing: Marco Polo (1254-1324) and Ibn Battuta (1304-1377)'s Travelogues

Chronological note of Quanzhou with Maritime Silk Route Period (718-1549)

The City of Quanzhou, Fujian, Marco Polo’s Zaitun, scale 1:40,000, After maps drawn in 1944 and 1983

Decode the images of historic buildings in the city from their description

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Conclusion: The Fall and Why
At the location of the present-day Quanzhou a landing and a trading port were already mentioned in the sixth century. In 686 the Kaiyuan Temple (A) was founded here. It later became an important Buddhist center.

The main hall of the Kaiyuan Temple, first built in 686 and extended in the Song dynasty. The Asoka Pagoda in front is dated 1145.
An administrative center was established nearby in 718 and a 1 square *li* enclosure (B) was constructed south of the office compound (B1).

In 906 the wall of the inner city was reported to be 3 *li* and 160 *bu* long=1958.9m according to the Song *li*=554.4m. This would still be equivalent to the 4*li* of the Tang inner city, the one *li* square.

At the same time the outer wall (D) was counted as 20*li*, but this is equivalent only to the Tang measure and equals about 9 km, a figure that can also be derived from the modern maps.

There is a third wall, however, which may have been constructed sometime later, a new wall about 3.8 km in length (C) surrounding the offices and the inner city of the Tang.
The increasing prosperity of the port attracted a number of foreign merchants to Quanzhou, which soon developed a considerable community of traders from India and the Middle East. In 1009 the Muslim community built its own mosque in Arabian style, the oldest still extant mosque in China (E). The mosque in Quanzhou, Fujian, built in 1009 in Arabian style by the Muslim community of traders. Above the entrance hall was a room for the museum instead of a minaret.
In 1087 a maritime customs office was established here. When the Kaiyuan Temple was reconstructed and extended in the thirteenth century, columns from a Hindu temple were used to extend the Great Hall, an example of the Indian influence here.

The temple’s two pagodas were reconstructed in 1228 and 1237 to replace the old wooden structures dating to 865 and 916.

The eastern pagoda of the Kaiyuan Temple in Quanzhou, Fujian. It was originally built in 865 as a timber structure and was built in stone in 1237, imitating the timber construction with its cantilever details under the roofs. Its height is 48m.
The city of Quanzhou, scale 1:80,000

The existent three city gate among seven

The description, vivid as it is, can only be explained if the whole area between the harbor, which was in Houzhou (1) at the bay of Quanzhou and today’s city are included in the urban area, distance of about 9 km and a width of 5 km (2). In the north-western part of this area there is a Muslim cemetery (3) with graves from as early as the seventh century and later ones. The Moslem community lived south of the mosque (4) in the suburb (5).
Confucius Temple in Quanzhou/Zaytun

Wenmiao Temple, Song dynasty

Conclusion: The Fall and Why
Daoist Temples in Quanzhou/Zaytun

Yuanmiao Temple, Tang 705

Laojun Rock, Song dynasty

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Conclusion: The Fall and Why
Buddhist Temple

Cheng Tian Temple, Tang dynasty, 957-958

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When Ibn Battuta, the Arabian traveler, visited Quanzhou in its heyday (1325-1354) he wrote: “The port of Zayton is one of the largest in the world, or perhaps the very largest. I saw in it about a hundred large junks; as for small junks, they could not be counted for multitude. It is formed by a large inlet of the sea which penetrates the land to the point where it unites with the great river. In this city, as in all Chinese towns, a man will have a fruit garden and a field with his houses set in the middle of it...For this reason their towns are extensive. The Muslims live in a town apart from the others.”
The mosque in Quanzhou, Fujian. A view from the entrance of the prayer hall to the mahram, the prayer niche, pointing to Mecca, a remarkable achievement of the surveyor’s craft.

Note the Arabian inscription on the lintel above the entrance gate.

The irregular pattern of the street network may also indicate foreign influence.

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Zheng He’s Seven Voyages (1405-1433) and Tianfei/Tianhou Temple

Conclusion: The Fall and Why
It is a city of light. When night falls, countless lamps and torches light up all the streets and lanes, and the whole city, viewed from afar, turns into a sea of lights.

_ Jacob d’Ancona, *The City of Light_

You should strive for knowledge even as far as China.

_an Islamic commandment in the *Koran*

In one of those monasteries which I visited there were 3000 monks ...the place is one of the best in the world.

_Odoric, The Travels of Friar Odoric_
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Zheng He's Seven Voyages (1405-1433) and Tianfei/Tianhou Temple

Conclusion: The Fall and Why

Zhao Rugua (1170-1231)  Wang Dayuan (1311-?)  Zheng He (1371-1433)  Severn Voyages (1405-1433)
Route of Seeing: Marco Polo (1254-1324) and Ibn Battuta (1304-68/9)'s Travelogues

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Houses and Construction in Quanzhou, Ming dynasty
Color eyes people’s armed rebellion in Quanzhou at the end of Yuan dynasty

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Ming Emperors