

THE PORTUGUESE INFLUENCE IN HOI AN (VIETNAM) IN COMPARISON WITH MALACCA (MALAYSIA) AND AYUTTHAYA (THAILAND) DURING THE 16th AND 17th CENTURIES

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The purpose of this article is to analyse the influence of Portugal in Malacca and Ayutthaya in comparison with Hoi An from the sixteenth century to the seventeenth century in the context of commerce and evangelism. On that basis, this study shows both the similarities and the differences in Portuguese operations in these three ports. Finally, the article makes some observations about the distinct features of Hoi An in the process of trading and of receiving Christianity from merchants and congregations under the patronage of the Portuguese Crown. In order to carry out this study, the main method used was the historical analysis method, combined with comparative research based on relevant sources. In particular, besides monographs, the study also draws on the latest research results which have been published in recent years. The results of the article will encourage further study of the method of establishment of Portuguese power in Malacca, Ayutthaya, and Hoi An in the sixteenth century and the seventeenth century and the distinctiveness of Hoi An in the process of receiving the influence of Portugal.

Keywords: Ayutthaya; Malacca; Hoi An; Portugal; Christianity; Commerce.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, Hoi An was an international port which attracted many merchants to come there to purchase products.¹ During this same

¹ According to the results of recent archaeological and interdisciplinary research, the history of Hoi An can be divided into three periods: Prehistory - Champa - Dai Viet, Dai

historical period, in Europe, the Portuguese with their powerful fleets became the first country to discover a new maritime route to India, Southeast Asia, and the Far East.² As a historical “karma”, with the “open-door policy” of the Nguyen lords³, Hoi An became one of the first places in Cochinchina to

Nam, and Vietnam. Along with the process of opening up territory to the South for the Vietnamese people, in 1471, Hoi An officially became a part of the Dai Viet under the management of the Le So dynasty. In the second half of the sixteenth century, Dai Viet was divided into Tonkin (Đàng Ngoài) and Cochinchina (Đàng Trong). The Nguyen lords developed Hoi An into a famous trade port in Cochinchina from the first half of the seventeenth century. On the history of Hoi An, see NGUYỄN [NGUYEN], C. T. *Cư dân Faifo-Hội An trong lịch sử* [Resident of FaiFo - Hoi An in the History], pp. 31–97; TRẦN [TRAN], V. A. *Di sản văn hóa văn nghệ dân gian Hội An* [Folklore and Cultural Heritage in Hoi An], pp. 20–27. In each historical period, Hoi An had many different names including Faifo, Hoai Pho, Bo, Hai Pho, Ho Bi, Co Trai, Co Tam, Phuy Pho. The name “Hoi An” appeared on the first map which was drawn by Do Cong Luan (Do Ba) around 1630 – 1635 and was printed in the book “Thien Nam Tu Chi Lo Do Thu” from 1630 to 1653 during the Le Dynasty. On the origin and the meaning of the name Hoi An, see NGUYỄN [NGUYEN], P. T. *Hội An di sản thế giới* [Hoi An World Heritage], pp. 7–8. In this study, we use the name Hoi An to refer to Hoi An as a commercial port with a wide geographical area including a sea gate, pre-port, and markets which in this historical period were called Faifo by European merchants.

² In the Age of Discovery, Portugal became a pioneer country in exploring the West African coast, the South African coast, and the maritime route to Calicut (India) in the latter part of the 15th century. From commercial firms along the Indian Ocean coast, Portugal extended their power to Southeast Asia (the successful invasion of Malacca in 1511), China (penetrating into Chinese territory from 1513 to 1520), and Japan (1543). On the process of establishing Portuguese influence in Asia, see DIFFIE, B. W., WINIUS, G. D. *Foundations of the Portuguese Empire, 1415 – 1580*; DISNEY, A. R. *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire*.

³ In Vietnamese history, the Trinh - Nguyen conflict lasted from the mid-sixteenth century to the eighteenth century. The birth of Hoi An old town was the result of an open-door policy to promote foreign trade by the Nguyen lords, which was an effective way to create a balance with the Trinh lords. The Nguyen lords in Cochinchina carried out a flexible political and commercial policy with foreign countries and they sent letters to foreign royal families to invite them to trade in Hoi An. As a result, the Japanese trade areas in Hoi An were established from 1617, which opened up a new period in the commercial development of Hoi An under the Nguyen lords. About history of the Nguyen Lords, see ỦY BAN NHÂN DÂN TỈNH THANH HÓA [PEOPLE’S COMMITTEE OF THANH HOA PROVINCE], HỘI KHOA HỌC LỊCH SỬ VIỆT NAM [VIETNAM ASSOCIATION OF HISTORY SCIENCE]. *Chúa Nguyễn và vương triều Nguyễn trong lịch sử Việt Nam từ thế kỷ XIV đến thế kỷ XIX* [The Nguyen Lords and the Nguyen Dynasty in Vietnamese history from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century]; TRẦN [TRAN], Q. C., TRẦN [TRAN], V. Q. *Các*

establish commercial and religious relationships with the Portugal.⁴ At the same time, the Portuguese were also the first Western merchants in the “Age of Discovery” to establish relationships with Malacca⁵ and Ayutthaya.⁶ Therefore, the influence of this Western country in Hoi An has both similarities and differences in comparison with Malacca and Ayutthaya because of several factors.

After the voyage of Vasco da Gama (1460 – 1524) in 1497, the Portuguese Crown facilitated the discovery of the Indian Ocean by establishing two trading ports namely Goa⁷ and Diu⁸ in the early 16th century. Based on these two

đời vua chúa nhà Nguyễn - chín chúa, mười ba vua [Kings and Lords under the Nguyen dynasty - Nine Lords, Thirteen Kings].

⁴ According to many resources, Portugal had contacts with Cochinchina from the early part of the 16th century. See HOÀNG [HOANG], T. A. D. *Hoạt động thương mại - truyền giáo của Bồ Đào Nha và Pháp ở Việt Nam (thế kỷ XVI-XVIII)* [The Trading - Missionary Activities of Portugal and France to Vietnam (the sixteenth century - the eighteenth century)], Thừa Thiên Huế [Thua Thien Hue]: Luận án Tiến sĩ Lịch sử [Doctoral Dissertation in History], Trường Đại học Khoa học, Đại học Huế [University of Hue, College of Sciences], 2017, p. 38.

⁵ Before the 15th century, Malacca was still a small fishing village, but it had a very important strategic position on the East-West trade route. This kingdom was established thanks to Paramesvara - the prince consort of the Majapahit dynasty (Indonesia) in the early part of the fifteenth century. Along with the acceptance of Islam and a clever diplomatic policy, Malacca developed into a powerful kingdom and was a famous trading port in world commerce. On the history of Malacca, see HALL, D. G. E. *A History of South-East Asia*; SCOTT-ROSS, M. *A Short History of Malacca*.

⁶ Ayutthaya kingdom was established in 1350 including the centre and the lower basin of the Mekong River. The history of the Ayutthaya kingdom was marked by many wars: from the end of the fourteenth century to the middle of the sixteenth century, Ayutthaya had to deal with the threat of the Lanna kingdom in the North and in contrast, they often invaded Cambodia. Also, from the middle of the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century, Ayutthaya continued to be in dispute with Myanmar. About the Ayutthaya history, see BAKER, C., PHONGPAICHIT, P. *A History of Ayutthaya: Siam in the Early Modern World*.

⁷ In 1510, according to advice from Tun Mayya, Afonso de Albuquerque, who was governor of the Estado da India, decided to take over Goa which was a contemporary port under the rule of Yasuf Adil Shah and was an important centre for importing horses to Deccan. On February 28, 1510, the Portuguese navy began its plan to capture Goa. However, because of the strong resistance of Goa, Albuquerque had to seek military reinforcement from Lisbon. On November 25, 1510, Goa fell and officially became a Portuguese colony. On the Portuguese attack on Goa, see DISNEY, A. R. *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire*.

places, the Portuguese found effective ways to penetrate into Southeast Asia – one of the most important spice centres in the world. For the purpose of establishing dominance in maritime commerce, it was necessary to fully control strategic positions,⁹ so in 1511, Afonso de Albuquerque (1453 – 1515)¹⁰ decided to invade Malacca¹¹ which was being ruled by Sultan Mahmud Shah. After many fierce battles, on the 24th of August, 1511, the Portuguese fleet conquered Malacca. This victory was compared to the successful invasion of Tenochtitlan by Hernando Cortés.¹² In order to maintain their power in Malacca, the Portuguese carried out both soft and hard policies. Firstly, they became confederate with the local rulers and persuaded the states to accept their suzerain. Secondly, they used their powerful naval forces to collect taxes from all ships and compelled the Asian merchants to purchase Oriental products from the other traders.¹³

For neighbouring countries which had commercial and political relations with Malacca (including Siam), the Estado da Índia¹⁴ decided to establish a peaceful relationship with them using diplomacy. In 1511, the governor Dom Alfonso d'Albuquerque sent the envoy Duarte Fernandez to Ayutthaya in the

⁸ In the spring of 1509, the Portuguese fleet under the direction of Francisco de Almeida attacked Diu and defeated the Egyptian and Gujarat fleet.

⁹ HALL, D. G. E. *A History of South-East Asia*, p. 218.

¹⁰ Afonso de Albuquerque (1453 – 1515) was a noble, and a Portuguese naval commander. He successfully led military campaigns to establish the Portuguese colonial network in India. For a biography of Afonso de Albuquerque, see ALBUQUERQUE, A. De. *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque: Second Viceroy of India*.

¹¹ Before Portugal arrived in Southeast Asia, Malacca played an important role in maritime commerce because of its strategic position on the “maritime spice route”. The merchants took advantage of the southwest monsoon wind to cross the Indian Ocean and sail to the Spice Islands, but then had to wait for the northwest wind to return. In this port, merchants could easily purchase Chinese goods (porcelain, silk, Chinese mirrors), Indian goods (pearls and fine cotton), Javan and Sumatran goods (grain, rice, onion, garlic, gold, pepper, buffaloes, cows, and weapons), West Asia and Europe (woollen goods), and Southeast Asian local products. See LƯÔNG [LUONG], N. *Lịch sử Thế giới trung đại* [The History of Medieval World], p. 299.

¹² DIFFIE, B. W., WINIUS, G. D. *Foundations of the Portuguese Empire, 1415 – 1580*, p. 256.

¹³ About the Portuguese policy in Malacca, see DIFFIE, B. W., WINIUS, G. D. *Foundations of the Portuguese Empire, 1415 – 1580*.

¹⁴ The term “Estado da Índia” was used to refer to all cities, fortresses and territories which were controlled by the Portuguese in Asia and East Africa. However, sometimes the term “Estado da Índia” was used with a much broader meaning, and included all coastal areas and islands in the Eastern Cape of Good Hope which were located from the extreme southeast of Africa to the lowlands in the Yangtze River.

first official contact between the Portuguese and Rama Thibodi II (1491 – 1529)¹⁵. The second mission was led by Antonio de Miranda de Azevedo, who arrived in Ayutthaya in 1512. In 1516, from Malacca, the Estado government decided to send ambassador Duarte de Coelho on the third trip to Siam. This trip resulted in the conclusion of the “Friendship and Trade Treaty” (1518) between Siam and Portugal. According to this treaty, the Portuguese would supply weapons and ammunition to the Siam government. In return, the King of Siam allowed religious freedom and created good conditions for the Portuguese to establish their settlement and encouraged trade in Ayutthaya, Tenasserim, Mergui, Patani, and Nakhon Sri Thammarat. King Rama Thibodi II demonstrated his religious tolerance by permitting Portugal to erect a wooden crucifix in a prominent place in Ayutthaya.¹⁶

In the process of finding the maritime route linking India and China, the Portuguese had their first contacts with Hoi An - the most important port on the Indochina Peninsula and one of the leading commercial centres in East Asia. On February 1516, the Portuguese governor in India sent a fleet led by Fernão Peres de Andrade to depart from Goa. After stopping in Malacca, in August, this fleet docked in Cochinchina Bay. However, due to the unfavourable winds, they only stayed here for a few days and returned to Malacca.¹⁷ By 1523, the navigator Duarte Coelho Pereira (1485 – 1554) was the first Portuguese to set foot in “Cochinchina” when his ship passed through Cua Han (Da Nang) and visited Cham Island (Pulo Champeiló).¹⁸ More than fifteen years later (1540), a Portuguese trading ship departed from Patani under the command of Captain

¹⁵ During this contact, Duarte Fernandez presented King Rama Thibodi II with the royal letter of Viceroy Afonso de Albuquerque and a precious sword. With his communicative ability and cleverness, Duarte Fernandez answered convincingly on problems that the Siamese king cared about, such as the Malacca occupation as well as the economic potential and military power of Portugal and the power of the Portuguese king at that time. See ĐẶNG [DANG], V. C. *Mối quan hệ Bồ Đào Nha - Xiêm (thông qua công trình L'Europe et le Siam du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle)* [Portuguese - Siamese relations in the sixteenth century (through the work of “L'Europe et le Siam du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle”)]. In *Nghiên cứu châu Âu* [European Studies], 2010, Vol. 113, p. 42.

¹⁶ ĐẶNG [DANG], V. C. *Mối quan hệ Bồ Đào Nha - Xiêm (thông qua công trình L'Europe et le Siam du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle)* [Portuguese - Siamese relations in the sixteenth century (through the work of “L'Europe et le Siam du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle”)]. In *Nghiên cứu châu Âu* [European Studies], 2010, Vol. 113, p. 46.

¹⁷ DANVERS, F. C. *The Portuguese in India: A.D. 1481 – 1571*.

¹⁸ Duarte Coelho Pereira engraved the cross in stone in Cu Lao Cham (Hoi An) with the INRI monogram, his name was COELHO and he came in the year of 1523, see BUI [BUI], D. S. *Giáo hội Công giáo ở Việt Nam* [The Catholic Church in Vietnam]; PINTO, F. M. *The Travels of Mendes Pinto*.

Antonie de Faria (? – 1548) to visit Hoi An port for the third contact. Fernão Mendes Pinto (1510 – 1583), one of the crew members, recorded this memorable journey in Peregrinacao's travel book with a lot of interesting information about Cham Island and Hoi An¹⁹. However, unlike Ayutthaya, after these contacts, the Estado da India was not interested in the establishment of commercial relations with Hoi An. Until the end of the sixteenth century, Hoi An was still the place where Portuguese trade ships stopped for fresh water, firewood, and to rest in a voyage from Goa (India) to trading posts in China and Japan. Until the beginning of the seventeenth century, along with the "open-door" trade policy of the Nguyen lords, the concentration of Japanese and Chinese merchants in Hoi An as well as the pressure from the restrictive foreign trade policy of the bakufu (Japan), the Portuguese traders became one of the important commercial powers in the Hoi An market. From Macao, they brought items such as terracotta, porcelain, silver, candles, sulfur, zinc, and blue and red fabrics to sell in Hoi An and bought local products such as bird's nests, aloe wood, silk, precious wood, cinnamon, and sugar and then they were transported to Macao or Malacca. Compared to other merchants in Hoi An, the Portuguese had to pay the highest import tax.²⁰ However, in comparison with the English or the Dutch merchants in Hoi An, the Portuguese merchants did not establish commercial agents, they only rented offices and residences when they bought products. According to historical records, the "office" of the Portuguese was larger than the other houses in Hoi An with the front for doing business, and the back of the house for storing goods and providing living space for families.²¹ Taking advantage of the benevolence of the Nguyen lords, the Portuguese sought to establish the same commercial monopoly which they had applied in the Indian Ocean, but it was not effective.

Thus, until the early part of the 17th century, the Portuguese maintained their regular presence in Malacca, Ayutthaya, and Hoi An because of the strategic

¹⁹ In Pinto's description Pinto, Hoi An was a moderate-sized town with over 30,000 inhabitants which was surrounded by brick walls with watch-towers and ramparts built into them, with a barbican, and two moats running all around PINTO, F. M. *The Travels of Mendes Pinto*, p. 75.

²⁰ NGUYỄN [NGUYEN], C. T. *Cư dân Faifo-Hội An trong lịch sử* [Residents of FaiFo-Hoi An in History]. Đà Nẵng, p. 98. *Mendes Pinto*, p. 75.

²⁰ NGUYỄN [NGUYEN], C. T. *Cư dân Faifo-Hội An trong lịch sử* [Residents of FaiFo-Hoi An in History] p. 98.

²¹ LI, Q. *The Maritime Silk Road*, p. 157.

maritime trade position of these three places as “*trading port*”.²² In the Portuguese trading port network, although the size and importance of Ayutthaya and Hoi An could not compare with Malacca, both had their own advantages. Being one of the three important gates of the Estado Da India, Malacca was a strategic trading port of the Portuguese Empire. By the end of the sixteenth century, Malacca developed into a bustling port which brought together traders from all over the world, as remarked by Tompkins, who was the accountant of the Portuguese trade agency: “Men cannot estimate the worth of Malacca on account of its greatness and profit”.²³ Therefore, in contrast to Ayutthaya and Hoi An where Portugal maintained a peaceful and friendly relationship with local rulers by asking permission to establish trading ports, they used naval forces and a powerful fleet to invade Malacca. Whereas in Malacca, the Portuguese government built fortresses and established the civil administrative system to cope with their local enemies, in Ayutthaya and Hoi An, the Portuguese merchants only rented warehouses and sheds during the trading season. Besides, in Hoi An and Ayutthaya, the Portuguese received a warm welcome from the rulers of the two governments. Both the Siamese kings and the Nguyen lords allowed the Portuguese to trade freely and spread Christianity moderately. By contrast, in Malacca, because the Portuguese military used violent methods to conquer it, they had to resist a lot of attacks from the Sultan Mohamed’s force from Johore in 1517, 1520, 1521, and 1525. One of the causes of this difference was the irreplaceable importance of Malacca in the Estado da India in both trade and religion. In fact, it was because they wanted to take advantage of the powerful naval force and weapons of the Portuguese in their regional wars that the Siamese kings and the Nguyen lords favoured Portugal.²⁴

²² Term coined by Prof. Denys Lombard (Ecole des hautes etudes, Paris) – According to NGUYỄN [NGUYEN], C. T. *Cư dân Faifo-Hội An trong lịch sử* [Residents of FaiFo-Hoi An in History], p. 53.

²³ HALL, D. G. E. *A History of South-East Asia*. 2. ed., p. 196.

²⁴ After the Trinh - Nguyen war (1627 – 1672), Vietnam was divided into two areas using the Gianh river as the boundary. From the Gianh river to the North was called Tonkin, and from the Gianh river to the South was called Cochinchina. In Cochinchina, cannons were items that the Nguyen lords needed to wage war and they were considered the most important item in the commercial exchange between the Nguyen lords and Portuguese merchants. Portuguese ships often carried guns from Macau to sell to the Nguyen lords and in return, they bought silk, gold, aloe wood, and tobacco in return. On the items in commerce between Portuguese merchants (Macao) and the Nguyen lords (Cochinchina), see LI, T. *Nguyễn Cochinchina: Southern Vietnam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, p. 72; NGUYỄN [NGUYEN], C. T. *Cư dân Faifo-Hội An trong lịch sử* [Residents of FaiFo-Hoi An in History], p. 98. Meanwhile, in Siam, in the

Besides, in all the commercial strategies of the Portuguese in the 16th century, Hoi An was not the priority in comparison with Malacca and Ayutthaya. From 1640, when the Tokugawa shogunate carried out the “closed policy” which made Portuguese merchants lose the Japanese market, Hoi An became an important trading location of the Estado da India. Therefore, the missionary work of the Portuguese priests in Hoi An started later than in Malacca and Ayutthaya.

Although the Portuguese made contact with Cochinchina in the early 16th century, the missionary work of the Portuguese congregations did not begin officially until two Jesuits priests, Francesco Buzomi²⁵ (Italian) and Diego Carvalho²⁶ (Portuguese), came to Hoi An in 1615. In the same year, Hoi An (Residentia Fayfó) became the first official residence of the Portuguese Jesuits. Realizing the potential of Hoi An, in the following years, the Macao diocese continued to send Jesuits priests to this port, including Francisco Barreto and Francisco de Pina²⁷ in 1617 and in 1618, they sent chaplain Pedro Marquez²⁸ and Christophoro Borri.²⁹ In 1622, Giovanni de Leira (Italian), Romano Niti

1540s, there were about 120 Portuguese as guards for King Chairacha. The Portuguese not only joined the Siamese army in the wars with neighbouring kingdoms, they also taught them how to make and use cannons. See BAKER, C., PHONGPAICHIT, P. *A History of Ayutthaya: Siam in the Early Modern World*, pp. 92–93.

²⁵ Francesco Buzomi (1576 – 1639). In 1639, Lord Nguyen Phuc Lan asked Buzomi to return to Macao to help him in some works. However, before the works were finished, he became ill and died in Macao. See ĐỖ [DO], Quang Chính [Quang Chinh]. *Lịch sử chữ Quốc ngữ 1620 – 1659* [History of the Latinized Vietnamese Script 1620 – 1659], p. 24.

²⁶ In 1616, Diego Carvalho (1578 – 1624) arrived in Japan in a difficult context. Finally, on February 22, 1624, he died in Japan. See ĐỖ [DO], Quang Chính [Quang Chinh]. *Lịch sử chữ Quốc ngữ 1620 – 1659* [History of the Latinized Vietnamese Script 1620 – 1659], p. 24.

²⁷ Francisco de Pina was born in 1585, in Guarda, Portugal. In 1605, he became a member of the Jesuits. He went to Cochinchina in 1617 and he spread Christianity from Thuan Hoa to Quy Nhon. At first he lived in Hoi An, and in 1618 he came to the Nuoc Man to live with Buzomi and Borri. On December 15, 1625, Pina drowned in Hoi An’s territorial waters. See ĐỖ [DO], Quang Chính [Quang Chinh]. *Lịch sử chữ Quốc ngữ 1620-1659* [History of the Latinized Vietnamese Script 1620 – 1659], p. 26.

²⁸ Pedro Marquez (1575 – 1670) was Portuguese and his mother was Japanese. He came to Cochinchina six times to spread Christianity. By 1620, he had become the superior of the Jesuits in Hoi An. See CAO [CAO], T. D. *Việt Nam Công giáo sử tân biên (1553 – 2000)* [A New History of Vietnamese Catholicism (1553 – 2000)], p. 388.

²⁹ Christophoro Borri (1583 – 1632) was born in Milan, Italy. He joined the Jesuits in 1601 and went to Cochinchina from 1618 to 1622. Before his death, he left a valuable work about Cochinchina with the title: *Relatione della nuova missione delli PP della*

(Japanese), Emmanuel Borge, and Emmanuel Fernandez came to Hoi An. In 1624, because of the rapid increase in the number of Christians, the Macao diocese sent to Hoi An an additional group of 6 priests who were headed by Gabriel de Mattos. This group included the priest Alexandre de Rhodes³⁰ who played an important role in the invention of the Latinized Vietnamese Script. The first responsibility of these priests was to take care of the spiritual lives of the Japanese Christian community who had to flee their homeland after the edict of 1614. Then, due to the “open religious policy” of the Nguyen lords, the Jesuits were motivated to penetrate into Vietnamese communities.

Similarly, after the first contacts in 1511, 1512, and 1518, the Portuguese were allowed to spread Christianity freely and set up a crucifix at an important position in Ayutthaya thanks to the Siamese king.³¹ But after this event, the Jesuits still only worked with the Portuguese merchant community who came to trade and reside in Ayutthaya. Until 1567, the first two Dominican priests, Jeronimo da Cruz and Sebastio da Canto, had just begun an official mission in Siam. However, due to the war with Burma, this missionary period quickly ended, but Franciscan priests restarted their lofty mission in 1585. Meanwhile, in 1607, a group of Jesuits went to Ayutthaya.³² According to statistics, by 1662, there were about 2,000 Christians in Ayutthaya, mainly foreigners.³³

On the contrary, in Malacca, spreading Christianity was quickly promoted by using mass coercion. After the successful invasion of this port (1511), the Estado government quickly built the first church (Catholic Church) and forced

Compagnia di Gesù al Regno della Cocincina. This work was translated into Vietnamese under the title: *Cochinchina in 1621*. See BORRI, C. *Xứ Đàng Trong năm 1621* [Cochinchina in 1621], p. 9; CAO [CAO], T. D. *Việt Nam Công giáo sử tân biên (1553 – 2000)* [A New History of Vietnamese Catholicism (1553 – 2000)], p. 374.

³⁰ Alexandre de Rhodes (1593 – 1660) arrived in Cochinchina at the beginning of February 1625. Two years later (1627), he moved to Tonkin. However, in May 1630, after being expelled by Lord Trinh Trang, he became professor of theology at Macao (1630 – 1640). Returning to Cochinchina (2/1640), he actively evangelized in the area from Gianh River to Phu Yen. In July 1645, after he was expelled for the second time by Lord Nguyen Phuc Lan, he returned to Macao, then to Rome. He played an important role in the creation of the Latinized Vietnamese Script in Vietnam. See ĐỖ [DO], Q. C. *Tân mạn Lịch sử Giáo hội Công giáo Việt Nam* [A Brief History of the Vietnamese Catholic Church], p. 17.

³¹ ĐẶNG [DANG], V. C. *Mối quan hệ Bồ Đào Nha - Xiêm (thông qua công trình L'Europe et le Siam du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle)* [Portuguese - Siamese relations in the sixteenth century (through the work of “L'Europe et le Siam du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle”)]. In *Nghiên cứu châu Âu* [European Studies], 2010, Vol. 113, p. 46.

³² See PHAN, P. C. *Christianities in Asia*, p. 288.

³³ See FAHLBUSCH, E. et al. *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, p. 348.

all residents of Malacca to convert to Christianity. With resolute measures, until 1557, with the decree “Proexcellenti praesentia”, Malacca became the second diocese of the Roman Church in Asia (after Goa). By the end of the sixteenth century, there were about 7,400 Christians living in this port.³⁴ Thus, in Hoi An and Ayutthaya, the length of time between the Portuguese establishing their diplomatic and commercial relations with local rulers, before the Portuguese congregations spread Christianity was quite long. This situation was different in comparison with Malacca, where “spice and soul” were carried out simultaneously by Estado da India.

Besides being an international port, the origin of citizens in Hoi An was quite diverse, but different nationalities were not segregated as thoroughly as in Malacca and Ayutthaya. In 1614, the Portuguese captain Fernandes de Costa met the Nguyen lord Nguyen Phuc Nguyen and persuaded him to allow trading in Hoi An. They also begged him to allow them to keep their customs and habits in the Portuguese area in Hoi An. The Japanese, Chinese, and Vietnamese Christian communities still had a relatively close relationship; they usually carried out their religious rituals together. In the middle of the 18th century, in Hoi An, there were two churches: one church of the Portuguese Jesuits, and another church of the Spanish Franciscans.³⁵ Meanwhile, in Ayutthaya, the Portuguese merchants were concentrated in Ban Portuget which was located on the south bank of the Chaopraya River. According to many documents, this community increased from 2,000 people in 1516 to 3,000 people in 1653 and then to 6,000 people in 1767.³⁶ The Japanese, Chinese, and Cochinchinese Christians inhabited the respective areas of the city granted to their nations by the kings of Siam and the Portuguese priests could carry out religious rituals using their mother language in each community.³⁷ In Malacca, the different ethnic communities were divided into separate areas with different administrations although they were of the same religion. According to the study by Jarnagin (2012), the residential areas were arranged as follows: the South Indians in the suburb of Upeh and the parish of São Tome; South Chinese people in the São Estavão parish, and the Malay fishing community living in the

³⁴ See SCHRÖTER, S. *Christianity in Indonesia: Perspectives of Power*, p. 55.

³⁵ See TRẦN [TRAN], A. Những thăng trầm của Kitô giáo tại thương cảng Hội An thời trung đại [The vicissitudes of Christianity in the port of Hoi An port in the medieval period]. In *Văn hóa Hội An* [Hoi An Culture], 2007, Vol. 1, p. 50.

³⁶ ROY, E. V. *Siamese Melting Pot: Ethnic Minorities in the Making of Bangkok*, p. 52.

³⁷ ROY, E. V. *Siamese Melting Pot: Ethnic Minorities in the Making of Bangkok*, p. 52.

suburb of Sabak in the parish of São Lourenço. Depending on each parish, priests and religious dignitaries would perform appropriate religious rituals.³⁸

Another similar feature in the process of spreading Christianity in Hoi An and Ayutthaya was the similarity of historical and cultural context. In Hoi An, ancestor worship and polytheism had a profound influence on citizens and became important features of Vietnamese cultural identity. The feudal political system based on Confucianism, shaped and administered Vietnamese society for a long time. Christianity with its strict canons was very difficult to reconcile with the local beliefs. Meanwhile, in Ayutthaya, most of the citizens were Buddhists. This religion had a deep impact on all aspects of their lives and the palace of the Siamese king was built around the Buddhist temple.³⁹ In the Ayutthaya court, both Brahman priests and Buddhist monks were responsible for carrying out the religious rituals which integrated both Brahman and Buddhist thought to maintain royal power.⁴⁰ Therefore, although the Siamese kings and the Nguyen lords wanted to take advantage of the weapons and commercial power of the Portuguese, they controlled the Christians closely. They allowed Christians to carry out their rituals under controlled conditions within the constraints of national culture, local customs, and habits.

Meanwhile, Malacca was a different case because the Portuguese used violence to convert the Muslim citizens to Christianity⁴¹. Therefore, the religious picture during the first period in Malacca was not peaceful as in Hoi An and Ayutthaya. Because of the irreconcilable relationship between Islam and Christianity in Malacca, Muslims had to face a vital choice. If they wanted to survive in this place, they had to convert to Christianity. Therefore, military strength played a decisive role in spreading Christianity in Malacca because the Portuguese did not only need to defeat the Sultan of Malacca, but they also had to eradicate Islam and replace it by the new religion. So, whereas in Ayutthaya and Hoi An, the activities of priests depended mainly on the indigenous government's policy and flexible missionary ways, in Malacca, military strength and violence played a decisive role.

Besides similarities with Ayutthaya, the Hoi An historical context during the first contact with the Portuguese had many other characteristics. Firstly, until

³⁸ JARNAGIN, L. *Portuguese and Luso-Asian Legacies in Southeast Asia, 1511 – 2011: Culture and identity in the Luso-Asian world, tenacities & plasticities*, pp. 24–25.

³⁹ KEOWN, D., PREBISH, C. S. *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, p. 72.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ After successfully occupying the city, the Estado government destroyed all the main Muslim mosques, expelled Muslim merchants and rebuilt the city with typical Christian architecture such as churches, chapels, monasteries, and hermitages. See ANDAYA, B. W., ANDAYA, L. Y. *A History of Early Modern Southeast Asia, 1400 – 1830*, p. 151.

the first half of the 16th century, Confucianism was still the dominant ideology and it controlled Vietnamese society totally. Although in Cochinchina, the Nguyen lords carried out the “open policy” to encourage commerce, they still used Confucianism to administer society. Therefore, the Nguyen lords allowed the Portuguese to trade freely, but missionary work was limited to a certain sphere. The Portuguese priests were expelled from Hoi An many times⁴². It can be said that “ups and downs” were the most accurate words to describe the missionary work of the Portuguese priests in Cochinchina in general, and in Hoi An in particular. The small Christian group which existed among the large Vietnamese and Chinese communities who practised Confucianism was the dominant factor in spreading Christianity. Secondly, compared to Ayutthaya and Malacca, the Japanese Christians played an important role in the process of spreading Christianity in Hoi An. According to Nguyen Chi Trung, in the first part of the 16th century, there were about 200 or 300 Japanese people in Hoi An⁴³ and by 1619, there were about 500 Japanese Christians living in Hoi An.⁴⁴ Especially, with the overwhelming majority of the Japanese Christians, the number of Japanese priests was only exceeded by Portuguese priests. According to statistics from 1615 to 1621, among the 14 priests officiating in Cochinchina, there were 4 Japanese priests, including: Miguel Maki, José Tsuchimochi, Paulo Saito, and Romao Nishi.⁴⁵ The Japanese people were not only an important part of the community, they also created favourable conditions for promoting the missionary work of the Portuguese in Hoi An.

Moreover, Japanese people supported the Jesuit priests who were in the process of creating a Vietnamese script. Firstly, Japanese people who had lived in Hoi An for a long time became intermediaries to help communication between European priests and local Vietnamese people. Secondly, because some Jesuits priests in Hoi An did not know Chinese writing, which was the

⁴² Under Lord Nguyen Phuc Nguyen (1615 – 1635), he promulgated an ordinance to expel priests in 1617 and 1625 (in Quang Nam in 1629), 1629, 1630, and 1635. Under Lord Nguyen Phuc Tan (1648 – 1687), he banned Christianity in 1558, 1661, 1664, and 1665. Under Lord Nguyen Phuc Tran (1687 – 1691), he strictly forbade Christianity through the decree in 1690. See CAO [CAO], T. D. *Việt Nam Công giáo sử tân biên (1553 – 2000)* [A New History of Vietnamese Catholicism (1553 – 2000)].

⁴³ NGUYỄN [NGUYEN], C. T. *Cư dân Faifo-Hội An trong lịch sử* [Resident of FaiFo-Hoi An in the History], p. 91.

⁴⁴ See TAKASHI, G. Vietnam, Christianity, and Japan, “Surrounding missionary issues in Central Vietnam in the 17th and 18th centuries”. In *Annual Report of the Institute of General Cultural Studies of Aoyama Women's College*, 2012, Vol. 16, pp. 44–55.

⁴⁵ See ĐỖ [DO], Q. C. *Đồng Tên trong xã hội Đại Việt 1615 – 1773* [The Jesuits in Dai Viet Society 1615 – 1773], 2008.

only writing in Vietnamese society, the Jesuits priests asked for help from Japanese priests to translate documents from Chinese into Latin, which was the official script of congregations around the world. Then, Jesuits priests used the phonetics of Japanese and Chinese, transliterated into the Latin alphabet and based on the system of Chinese tones to identify the vowel, consonants and rhythm of the Vietnamese language. Thus, the system of phonetics developed for the Vietnamese language using Latin characters would be completed.⁴⁶

Malacca and Ayutthaya identified Christianity as a religion, but the Christian community in Cochinchina identified “Christianity” as “Portuguese”. When Malacca was invaded by the Netherlands in 1641, most of the Portuguese fled to Makassar and later to Ayutthaya, where they continued to maintain religious festivals as an essential mean of preserving unity in their communities. By contrast, in Hoi An, most citizens thought that Christianity was “the Portuguese Law” because most of the priests spoke the Portuguese language and they had come there in Portuguese commercial ships.⁴⁷ Importantly, this Christian community wanted to change the Christian rituals to be in tune with local culture. It led to conflicts between congregations and priests about how Christianity should be spread. It is evidence of the creative acculturation of the Christians in Hoi An based on cultural layers in history. Thus, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Quang Nam via the port town of Hoi An became a key gateway for the foreign economic policies of the Nguyen lords, and a bridge in trading activities. It also facilitated the spread of Christianity by Western congregations to Cochinchina.

This is the reason why, although Hoi An was not an important missionary centre of the Roman Catholic Church, Jesuits priests such as Francesco Buzomi, Diego Carvalho, Alexandre de Rhodes (before 1624), and Christoforo Borri made important contributions to creating the Latinized Vietnamese Script. In many recent conferences, most of the researchers have agreed that Hoi An was one of three “cradles” (with Nuoc Man, Quy Nhon province and Thanh Chiem, Quang Nam province) of learning the Vietnamese language as well as the birthplace of the Latinized Vietnamese Script. It can be seen that compared to Latinized works and later studies in Vietnamese in Cochinchina and even Tonkin in the early stage of 1620 – 1626, the work of F. de Pina conducted in

⁴⁶ See BỘ VĂN HÓA, THỂ THAO VÀ DU LỊCH [MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM], ỦY BAN NHÂN DÂN TỈNH QUẢNG NAM [PEOPLE’S COMMITTEE OF QUANG NAM PROVINCE], BỘ KHOA HỌC VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ [MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]. *Dinh trấn Thanh Chiêm và chữ Quốc ngữ* [Thanh Chiem palace and the Latinized Vietnamese Script], pp. 776–777.

⁴⁷ See JARNAGIN, L. *Portuguese and Luso-Asian Legacies in Southeast Asia, 1511 – 2011: Culture and identity in the Luso-Asian world, tenacities & plasticities*, p. 25.

Hoi An and Thanh Chiem palace was the earliest to lay the first foundations for the introduction of the Vietnamese alphabet in Latin characters.⁴⁸ Thus, the Latinized Vietnamese script from a kind of writing for missionary work to becoming the official national script was a long process of development carried out by Portuguese priests. Hoi An with its various cultural layers, along with the “open policy” of the Nguyen Lords and the development of its function as the international commercial port created favourable conditions in the process of inventing the Latinized Vietnamese Script. Because of the existence of many citizen communities who came from Japan, China, Portugal, Southeast Asia, and local people, the priests faced a lot of challenges in learning the Vietnamese language (due to the hybridization of language), but it was also an opportunity for the priests to learn a new language by different methods. The support of the Vietnamese Christians not only played an essential role in the birth of Vietnamese script, it was also the proof of the Portuguese acculturation in the Vietnamese community in Hoi An. The publication of the book Vietnamese – Portuguese – Latin dictionary (1651) by Alexandre de Rhodes left the indelible mark of the Portuguese in Hoi An in particular and Vietnam in general.⁴⁹

As one of the pioneer countries opening up the new maritime route which connected strategic points in Asia, the Portuguese came to Malacca, Ayutthaya, and Hoi An in the first part of the 16th century. By different methods, the Portuguese established their power in two forms: commerce and evangelism. Whereas in Malacca, the Portuguese used military force to invade, a more flexible method was applied in Ayutthaya and Hoi An. In addition, the operations of the Portuguese in Malacca, Ayutthaya, and Hoi An show some of the important characteristics of the strategy and purpose of the Portuguese empire in Asia. Therefore, the comparison of similarities and differences in the process of establishing the Portuguese in Malacca, Ayutthaya, and Hoi An can show the diversity in methods they used to penetrate into Southeast Asia.

The Nguyen Lords in Hoi An established commercial and missionary relationships with the Portuguese in this volatile historical period. Although it was not an important trading port of the Portuguese empire, the missionary work of the Jesuits had left a profound mark in Hoi An's society and culture with the creation of the Latinized Vietnamese Script. And now, the Portuguese influence in Hoi An still survives in historical and cultural sites, language,

⁴⁸ See BỘ VĂN HÓA, THỂ THAO VÀ DU LỊCH [MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM], ỦY BAN NHÂN DÂN TỈNH QUẢNG NAM [PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE OF QUANG NAM PROVINCE], BỘ KHOA HỌC VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ [MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]. *Dinh trấn Thanh Chiêm và chữ Quốc ngữ* [Thanh Chiem palace and the Latinized Vietnamese Script], pp. 299–300.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

customs, and habits as a “mark” in the process of cultural acculturation of the people of Hoi An.

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