

Prologue

In 1946, a rectangular, weathered stone block bearing nearly indecipherable inscriptions was discovered in the ancient city of Quanzhou (泉州) on China's southeastern coast (Figure 1).¹ Found by Wu Wenliang (吴文良) (1903–69), a local high school teacher, it is one of several hundred stone elements that collectively reflect the rich history of medieval Quanzhou's Muslim, Christian, Manichaeian, Buddhist, and Hindu communities.² Initially, Wu's inability to make sense of the inscriptions and the gravely weathered engraving made deciphering the text challenging.³ Nevertheless, as will be discussed further, two partial transcriptions published in the following decade identified the block as the tombstone of Andrew of Perugia (?–1332?), a Franciscan and the third Latin bishop of Zayton, the name by which Quanzhou was known to medieval visitors.⁴ This tombstone remains the only tangible evidence attesting to the short-lived Franciscan mission in fourteenth-century China.⁵

Tracing the Franciscan presence in this important Chinese port city and Latin bishopric where a handful of friars lived and interacted with Quanzhou's cosmopolitan denizens reveals fascinating and intricate intersections among peoples across ethnic, religious, and other boundaries.⁶ Each group contributed its own experiences, customs, and ideologies to this vibrant tableau. New relationships were formed, while preexisting antagonisms and prejudices from past encounters are reflected in letters and travelogues written by the Franciscans themselves and by other visitors such as Marco Polo (1254–1324), Rashid al-Din (1247–1318), and Ibn Battutah (1304–68/9).⁷ Inevitably, every text is influenced by its author's lived experience, personal background, and inherent preconceptions. These writings are augmented by hundreds of inscriptions on Quanzhou's medieval tombstones, evidence of how many of its visitors eventually settled in this city.

¹ Wu, *Quanzhou zongjiao shike*, 29.

² For Wu Wenliang, see Lieu, “Wu Wenliang 吴文良 and the Discovery of Christian and Manichaeian Remains in Quanzhou”; and Steinhardt, *China's Early Mosques*, 38. For Hinduism and Manichaeism in medieval Quanzhou, see Guy, “Quanzhou: Cosmopolitan City of Faiths,” 166–72. For Zayton's Tamil merchants, who were mostly Hindu along with some Buddhists and Muslims, see Guy, “Tamil Merchant Guilds and the Quanzhou Trade.”

³ Wu, *Quanzhou Gudai Shikeji Qianyan*, 10; and Wu and Wu, *Quanzhou zongjiao shike*, 373.

⁴ For the name Zayton (variously spelled as Zaitun, Zaiton, Çaiton, etc.), see Lieu, “Quanzhou 泉州 (Zayton),” 1, n. 3 and n. 4; Foster, “Crosses from the Walls of Zaitun,” 17–20; and Hambis, “Les Cimetières de la region de Zaiton,” 216–21.

⁵ Sella, “I *Mirabilia Mundi* nei viaggi e nelle permanenze dei primi frati minori in Cina (secoli XIII–XIV).”

⁶ Pope Clement V created the archbishopric in Khanbaliq “with ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the entire Mongol world.” The bishopric of Zayton was the only other diocese in fourteenth-century China. Jackson, *The Mongols and the West*, 298–9.

⁷ On Zayton, see Polo, *The Description of the World*, 140–1; Thackston, *Compendium of Chronicles*, 445; and Mackintosh-Smith, *The Travels*, 264–5.



Figure 1 Tombstone of Andrew of Perugia (d. 1332?)
 Quanzhou, Quanzhou Maritime Museum
 Photo: Nancy Wu

These epitaphs were carved in a broad, diverse spectrum of languages – Arabic, Latin, Phags-pa, Syro-Turkic, Uighur, and occasionally the locally predominant Chinese – and they offer a glimpse of a dynamic, multicultural society characterized by varying degrees of cohabitation and assimilation.⁸

These lapidary remains mostly range in date from 1171 to 1387 and, numerically, Arabic is the dominant language for their inscriptions, a reflection of the Islamic practice of the city’s largest foreign community.⁹ The remaining stones mark Christian interments, as identified either by the image of the cross or by inscriptions in Phags-pa, Uighur, or Syro-Turkic, sometimes both. These languages were used by members of the Church of the East (or the East Syriac Church), commonly referred to as “Nestorians,” who first arrived in

⁸ For the complex and fluid group of languages spoken in Yuan China, see Rossabi, “The Reign of Khubilai Khan,” 465–8.

⁹ For transcriptions and translations of the Islamic tombstones, see Chen, *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Shike*; and Wu and Wu, “Islamic Inscriptions,” in *Quanzhou zongjiao shike*, 311–64. For the history of Quanzhou’s Muslim communities, see *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Yanjiuliumwenxuan*; and Ding and Lin, *Zhanghai Shengzhong: Fujian yu Bosi Alabuo*.

A Franciscan Tombstone in Fourteenth-Century China

3

China in the seventh century and entered the political elite during the Mongol-ruled Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368).¹⁰ Andrew’s tombstone, however, is an outlier: the lone example to have been inscribed in Latin, a language that not only identifies its owner as a Latin Christian but also distinguishes the monument from otherwise similar tombstones of the East Syriac Christians.¹¹ The following pages will examine the circumstances of the tombstone’s discovery, the attention it has elicited both in and outside China, and the historical milieu of the tombstone in the fourteenth century as well as the twentieth.

A worn, barely discernible “cross and lotus” motif occupies the top portion of Andrew’s tombstone and bears special significance. This image has long been associated with the East Syriac Church in China and is first seen carved near the apex of the so-called Xi’an or Nestorian Stele (781 CE) (Figure 2).¹² In light of a relationship between the Franciscans and members of the Church of the East that was fraught with animosity during the Yuan era, it is curious that a quintessentially Syriac Christian motif appears on a Franciscan tombstone. Might this reflect some degree of interaction and accommodation among Quanzhou’s religious and ethnic groups and, more importantly, the local artisans who likely carved these tombstones and participated in their design? Indeed, the role of local, most probably Chinese, artisans in exercising their artistic license and imagination to fulfill commissions from foreign clients of diverse faiths will be delved into later.

It is difficult to overstate the significance of Quanzhou’s Christian remains and how they have advanced our knowledge of the early history of Christianity in China. There endures a broad public misperception that Christian missions commenced in China only after the founding of the Society of Jesus in 1540 despite the presence of the East Syriac Church and the Franciscans centuries earlier and even in spite of allusions to encounters with Nestorians in China in Marco Polo’s famous narrative.¹³ The early Franciscan presence is not mentioned in any surviving Chinese text and remained little known in Europe until the early seventeenth century. This darkness in the historical record only began to be

¹⁰ Created with Tibetan alphabets, Phags-pa is a script invented for and used only during the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368). Rossabi, “The Reign of Khubilai Khan,” 466–7. For the East Syriac Church in Yuan China, see Tang, *East Syriac Christianity in Mongol-Yuan China*, 87–149. For the problematic use of the term “Nestorian,” see Brock, “The Nestorian Church: A Lamentable Misnomer.”

¹¹ Andrew’s tombstone joins two others made for the Italians Dominic and Katerina Vilioni that were discovered in Yangzhou 揚州 in 1951 as the only surviving medieval tombstones inscribed in Latin in China. See discussion further.

¹² For the Xi’an Stele, now at the Xi’an Stele Museum in the eponymous city, see Pelliot, *L’inscription nestorienne de Si-Ngan-Fou*; and Keevak, *The Story of a Stele*.

¹³ See further for discussion about Marco Polo and a Nestorian family in Fuzhou. While widely read in Europe, Marco Polo’s narrative was not known in China until the nineteenth century. See Wu, “Makeboluo ji ‘youji’ zai zhongguo zaoqi de chuanbo.”



Figure 2 The “Xi’an Stele,” erected in 781.
 Early twentieth-century plaster cast, H: 279 cm.
 Paris, Musée Guimet, ICH Biblio 1
 Photo: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

dispelled when the Irish Franciscan and historian Luke Wadding (1588–1657) discovered and transcribed some of the Franciscan texts about China that had been incorporated into a fourteenth-century world chronicle now in the Bibliothèque nationale de France.¹⁴ The Anglophone world would eventually discover Christians in premodern China with the publication of *Cathay and the Way Thither* by Henry Yule and Henri Cordier.¹⁵ By then, the history of the East Syriac Christians in China had come to light with the discovery of the Xi’an Stele in 1625, a discovery assiduously studied and publicized by the Jesuits then in

¹⁴ Moule, *Christians in China before the Year 1550*, 166. For a description of the manuscript and relevant bibliography, see <https://archivesetmanuscripts.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc63905x> (last accessed July 17, 2024). Wadding’s transcriptions appear in his *Annales Minorum*, III, VI and VII.

¹⁵ Yule and Cordier, *Cathay and the Way Thither*.

A Franciscan Tombstone in Fourteenth-Century China 5

China.¹⁶ At least one Jesuit extended his studies to medieval Quanzhou: The Portuguese Emanuel Diaz (1584–1659) included in his *Commentary of the Xi'an Nestorian Stele of the Tang Dynasty* (唐景教碑頌正詮) (1644) three woodblock prints depicting stone blocks carved with the cross (Figure 7). All three were found in Quanzhou and were attributed to the Church of the East, even though none bore inscriptions.¹⁷ Understandably, neither Diaz nor any of his contemporaries for that matter was aware of the Franciscan mission 300 years earlier.

Andrew of Perugia

Allusions to more than one potential Andrew of Perugia appear in Franciscan chronicles, but most of these cannot be securely connected to the Andrew who went to China in the fourteenth century.¹⁸ The name appears in *Rex Regum*, the July 23, 1307, bull issued in Poitiers by Pope Clement V, who appointed Andrew one of six suffragan bishops to be dispatched to China to consecrate John of Montecorvino (1247–1328) as archbishop of Khanbaliq, the capital of Yuan China (today Beijing).¹⁹ In some Franciscan documents, including the 1307 bull, Andrew was referred to either as a member of the Order of the Friars Minor (“Andrea de Perusio ord. fratrum Minorum”) or as a lector – a professor of theology – in Perugia (“Frater Andreas lector de Perusio”).²⁰ This Andrew is believed to have come from the Franciscan convent of S. Francesco al Prato in Perugia, to whose guardian he wrote a letter in 1326.²¹ This letter – the only one from his time in Zayton – provides us with useful information about Andrew’s

¹⁶ Keevak, “The Return of the Missionaries,” in his *The Story of a Stele*, 89–127.

¹⁷ “水陸東禪二寺，皆起於唐。十字碑石，亦悉於該寺內外得之...亦當與景教碑先後有也。” [Both the Shuilu and Dongchan temples were built in the Tang Dynasty, where the stone blocks with cross were reportedly found... they might have been around the time of the Nestorian Stele]. The three blocks have since all disappeared. See Moule, *Christians in China before the Year 1550*, 78–80; Wu and Wu, *Quanzhou zongjiao shike*, 370–2; and Gardner, Lieu and Parry, “Catalogue of Christian and Manichaeic Remains,” 89. For Diaz, see <https://archives.catholic.org/hk/Rare%20Books/Author/EJ-Diaz.htm>.

¹⁸ For the “other” Andrews, see Brugnoli, “Andrea da Perugia,” 8; and *Dizionario*, III, 112. For the biography of our Andrew of Perugia, see Wyngaert, *Sinica Franciscana*, 371 (hereafter *SF*); Lanciotti, “Andrea da Perugia, Vescovo di Ch’uan-chou (Zayton),” 93; Pratesi, “Andrea da Perugia”; Brugnoli, “Andrea da Perugia”; and Sella, “Andrea da Perugia.”

¹⁹ The July 23, 1307 bull in Paris, BnF Latin 5006, fol. 173r, is transcribed and translated by Moule, “Documents Relating to the Mission of the Minor Friars to China,” 561–3 and 590–2. The six suffragan bishops were Andrew, Gerard Albuini, Peregrine of Castello, Nicholas of Bantia, Ulrich of Soyfridstorf, and William of Villanova; see *Ballarium Franciscanum*, V, 38–9. Alternatively, Wadding gave the names of seven bishops. These were cited by Golubovich and Moule. Wadding, *Annales Minorum* VI, 94; Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica*, III, 94; and Moule, *Christians in China*, 167. References to Khanbaliq as an archbishopric began with the 1307 bull. Territorially, it likely encompassed the entire Mongol Empire. Jackson, *The Mongols and the West*, 298–300.

²⁰ Moule, “Documents Relating to the Mission,” 559, 561 and 563.

²¹ The letter was addressed to “reverendo patri fratri Guardiano Perusini Conventus.” Wyngaert, *SF*, I, 373; and Brugnoli, “Andrea da Perugia,” 5–15.

journey to China and his life once there.²² The physical letter has not survived, but its content, along with other Franciscan documents from and about the mission in China, has been preserved in several manuscripts, the best known being the fourteenth-century world chronicle (BnF, Ms Lat 5006, fol 186r-186v) from which Wadding drew his transcription.²³ Andrew's passage to China, undertaken with fellow suffragan bishop Peregrine of Castello, was a harrowing experience over land and sea. He was even robbed of all of his possessions, including his tunic and habit.²⁴ There has been confusion regarding when Andrew arrived in Khanbaliq, a problem precipitated by Andrew himself. His claim to have arrived in 1318 cannot be corroborated by other details in his letter.²⁵ According to Andrew, he spent his first five years in China in Khanbaliq before proceeding to Zayton, where his former travel companion Peregrine of Castello, later Zayton's second bishop, died four years later on July 7, 1322.²⁶ This timeline places Andrew's arrival in Zayton in 1318 (four years before 1322) and pushes his arrival in Khanbaliq back to 1313 rather than 1318.²⁷

Once settled in Zayton, Andrew soon had a structure ("ecclesia," "hermitorium") built in a grove a quarter mile from the city.²⁸ It was spacious enough to accommodate twenty friars and four prelates and so beautiful that a proud Andrew deemed it unrivaled "in our entire province."²⁹ This "hermitage" was an addition to the Franciscan footprint in Zayton: the friars already had a church inside the city wall. Evidently fond of both locations, Andrew stayed at each in turn after

²² Wyngaert, *SF*, I, 373–7.

²³ Wyngaert, *SF*, I, 377. For the other manuscripts that contain the Franciscan letters (Assisi, Biblioteca del Sacro Convento, MS 341; Rome, Biblioteca Vaticana, Chigi, VII, 252; and Rome, Biblioteca Corsini, 776), see Moule, "The Minor Friars in China."

²⁴ "Noveritis me itaque cum bone memorie fratre Peregrino co-episcopo, et mee peregrinationis individuo comite . . ." and "multos labores et languores, inedia, variaque incomoda, atque pericula in terra pariter et in mari, ubi fuimus rebus omnibus et etiam tunicis et habitibus spoliati." Wyngaert, *SF*, I, 373–4.

²⁵ ". . . demum . . . ad Cambaliensem civitatem . . . anno dominice incarnationis millesimo CCC XVIII . . ." Wyngaert, *SF*, I, 374.

²⁶ ". . . ubi secundum mandatum a Sede Apostolica nobis datum, Archiepiscopo consecrato, moram ibi per quinquennium ferme contraximus . . . Ante eius [Peregrine's] decessum pro quatuor fere annos . . ." Wyngaert, *SF*, I, 374–5. See also Sella, "Peregrino da Castello."

²⁷ For Andrew's arrival in China, see Moule, "Documents Relating to the Mission," 564, n. 1; Wyngaert, *SF*, I, 374, n. 1; d'Elia, *Zhongguo tianzhujiao chuanjiaoshi*, 38; Dawson, *The Mongol Mission*, 235, n. 1; and Brugnoli, "Andrea da Perugia," 7. Wadding's transcription gives Andrew's arrival date in China as 1308. See *Annales Minorum*, VII, 53.

²⁸ ". . . et in quodam nemore proximo civitati, ad quartam partem unius milliarii, ecclesiam convenientem et pulcrum edificari feci, cum omnibus officinis sufficientibus pro XX fratribus et cum IIII cameris, quarum quelibet esset pro quocumque prelato sufficiens." Wyngaert, *SF*, I, 375. Whether "hermitorium" or "ecclesia," the terms probably refer to "a general designation of a Franciscan house of religious," not necessarily a hermitage in the conventional sense. Private communication with Michael Cusato, October 23, 2024.

²⁹ ". . . cui similem in hermitoriis in tota nostra Provincia nullum scio quoad pulchritudinem et omnem commoditatem." Wyngaert, *SF*, I, 376.

A Franciscan Tombstone in Fourteenth-Century China 7

assuming Zayton's episcopate in 1322.³⁰ In his 1326 letter to the guardian in Perugia, Andrew described himself as in good health, "vigorous and agile, having nothing but gray hair." By that time, all his fellow suffragan bishops had died and Andrew was alone: "Ego solus remansi" (I alone remained).³¹

While no remains of any of the Franciscan buildings in Quanzhou have yet been located, it is noteworthy that in 1943 Wu Wenliang discovered in the Secuwei (色厝尾) neighborhood – outside the city wall just north of the East Gate – floors paved with blue tiles and occasional stone slabs. Local tradition holds that a "large structure" (大厝) once stood there before its demolition during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), when the area then became a cemetery.³² Secuwei, known as a source of brick and stone architectural salvage, remained a burial ground into the twentieth century for Quanzhou's Catholics and was known as the "Sacred Mount" (聖山).³³ The area has long been absorbed into modern Quanzhou's expanding urban fabric, its historical remains forever lost to the massive developments constructed atop them. Nonetheless, there are hints that Andrew's beloved "hermitage" may indeed have sat in Secuwei. While not dispositive, many of Quanzhou's Christian and Muslim tombs were discovered in the vicinity. This fact, coupled with a misreading of a phrase in Andrew's letter to the effect that the "hermitorium" lay a quarter mile *east* (sic) of the city³⁴ rather than merely outside it without reference to direction, convinced Wu that the cemetery in Secuwei must have been the location of Andrew's "hermitorium."³⁵ This misapprehension of Latin notwithstanding, Wu's keen observation of the neighborhood's archaeological finds and the site's historical use as a Christian cemetery may have led him inadvertently to a potentially accurate location for the "hermitorium." It is a tantalizing possibility that the long-disappeared Franciscan "hermitage" was both located in the likewise vanished Secuwei cemetery and indeed the cemetery's origin.

Medieval Zayton

To imagine medieval Zayton as first experienced by Andrew in 1318, it is necessary to delve into the city's historical landscape, both its physical and its demographic

³⁰ "... et nunc in loco vel ecclesia civitatis, nunc in hermitorio moram facio, iuxta mee libitum voluntatis." Wyngaert, *SF*, I, 376.

³¹ "Et sum sano corpore, et quantum longevitas vite patitur vigorosus et agilis, nichil quidem preter canitiem habens de defectibus naturalibus et proprietatibus senectutis." Later, "Omnes Episcopi suffraganei facti per dominum Papam Clementem Kambaliensis sedis migraverunt in pace ad Dominum." Wyngaert, *SF*, I, 376–7.

³² Wu, *Quanzhou zongjiao shike*, 43.

³³ Wu, *Quanzhou zongjiao shike*, 43; and Wu and Wu, *Quanzhou zongjiao shike*, 439–40.

³⁴ Wu, *Quanzhou zongjiao shike*, 42; and Wu and Wu, *Quanzhou zongjiao shike*, 439.

³⁵ Wu, *Quanzhou zongjiao shike*, 42.

topography. It is especially crucial to understand the evolution of the city's layout as seen in the building and rebuilding of its walls, walls that defined Zayton's neighborhoods for the influx of foreigners. This understanding of a historical landscape in flux also helps contextualize the eventual destruction of foreigners' tombs outside the walls, an issue addressed next. The historic city was first founded *c.* 700 CE under the name Wu Rong Prefecture (武榮州), a name changed to Quan Prefecture ("Prefecture" pronounced "Zhou," hence "Quanzhou" [泉州]) in 711.³⁶ No reliable documentation has survived regarding Quanzhou's city walls prior to the Ming Dynasty.³⁷ According to the *New History of the Tang Dynasty* (新唐書), not compiled until 1060, a rudimentary barrier surrounding the newly established Quanzhou was erected in the eighth century and this was soon complemented by a moat.³⁸ Like any organic development of a metropolis, Zayton's walls were repeatedly constructed, modified, and expanded. No fewer than twenty-seven building campaigns occurred from the early tenth through the mid nineteenth century.³⁹ The first major transformation was undertaken by the military governor Liu Cong-xiao (留從效) (r. 943–57), who not only expanded the city's footprint but also famously planted Citong (刺桐, *Erythrina Variegata*), known popularly as Indian Coral Tree, all around the city.⁴⁰ The tree, with its brilliant red blossoms, gave the city its nickname, Tong Cheng (桐城) or [Ci]Tong City.⁴¹ The name Citong was then transliterated by travelers to Zayton, the genesis of the name that identified the city in medieval travel literature.⁴² Crucial to this analysis is the building campaign of 1352, which reconfigured the outermost of the city's three concentric walls, in part to incorporate into the city a triangular area hugging the south and southeastern corner of the existing wall.⁴³ This neighborhood had become home to the city's majority Muslim merchants, many of whom started arriving as early as the mid-eighth century, an influx that prompted the poet Bao He (包何, active *c.* 750s) to describe how Quanzhou's streets were bustling with

³⁶ For an English summary on the archaeology of Quanzhou through the fourteenth century, see Pearson, Li, and Li, "Quanzhou Archaeology: A Brief Review."

³⁷ Wu, Huang, and Chen, *Quanzhou Shiji Yanjiu*, 23.

³⁸ Wu, Huang, and Chen, *Quanzhou Shiji Yanjiu*, 21–6. The moat was intimated in the *New History of the Tang Dynasty*: "別駕趙頤正溝溝, 通舟楫城下 [Secretariat Zhao Ji was ordered to fix the canal so that vessels could paddle to the city]," cited in Yang, "Quanzhou Gucheng Yangge," 9.

³⁹ Wu, Huang, and Chen, *Quanzhou Shiji Yanjiu*, 21; and Yang, "Quanzhou Gucheng Yangge," 8–13.

⁴⁰ Yang, "Quanzhou Gucheng Yangge," 8–11.

⁴¹ "桐城郡初築城, 環城皆植刺桐, 衢巷夾道有之, 故號桐城 [When Tong Cheng was being built, Citong tree was planted everywhere including along streets and lanes, hence the name Tong City]." Wanli, Chongxiu *Quanzhou Fuzhi* v. 4, 1761–62.

⁴² *Quanzhou Fuzhi*, v. 1, 274. Samuel Lieu misidentifies the Citong tree as the Pawlonia tree. Lieu, "Quanzhou 泉州 (Zayton)," 2.

⁴³ The three concentric walls are called, respectively, Yacheng (衙城), Zicheng (子城), and Luo Cheng (羅城). See Pearson, Li, and Li, "Quanzhou Archaeology," 27, fig. 3.

A Franciscan Tombstone in Fourteenth-Century China

9

“people from ten continents.”⁴⁴ The area’s proximity to the waterfront must have appealed to the merchants for its easy access to arriving and departing vessels loaded with goods that were the economic backbone of this maritime emporium.

In fact, by 1087, when the Maritime Trade Superintendency (市舶司) was established to administer the city’s increasingly complex commercial affairs,⁴⁵ the neighborhood – known to the Chinese as “Nan Guan” (南關) or “South Gate” – had already been labeled “foreigner’s lane” (番人巷) or “foreigner’s ward” (番坊).⁴⁶ One particularly astute observer described the foreigners living in ‘foreigner’s lane’ as having either light or dark complexions.⁴⁷ Whether the size of the neighborhood was modest, as implied by the informal “lane,” or stretched over multiple blocks as a structured “ward,” both labels reflect a concentration of predominantly non-Chinese residents with their own schools, warehouses, and houses of worship. According to a list of Quanzhou’s historic neighborhoods, what was known as Yiquan Block (義全境) until the mid twentieth century corresponded to the so-called “foreigner’s ward” of the Song Dynasty.⁴⁸ *The Gazetteer of Foreign Countries* (諸番志, 1225) by Zhao Rugua (趙汝适, 1170–1231) recorded traders from almost sixty countries who conducted business with Quanzhou.⁴⁹ Many from South Asia and the Muslim world ultimately settled in the city and formed the lion’s share of Quanzhou’s international population.⁵⁰ Zayton’s status as a major naval metropolis, its demographic diversity, and the powerful positions held by its non-Chinese citizens are recorded vividly by the Iranian chronicler, statesman, and physician Rashid al-Din Hamadani, who called Zayton “the port for boats” and identified a non-Chinese political elite serving in the government.⁵¹

Given that most foreigners in Zayton were Muslim, it is no coincidence that the Masjid al-Ashab (in Chinese, Shengyousi or 聖友寺), the largest mosque in Quanzhou and one of the earliest in China (founded 1009/10 or AH 400),

⁴⁴ “市井十州人.” Quoted in Li, *Research on the Iconography of the Christian Tombstones*, 1. See also Chen, “Lun Fanfang,” 69.

⁴⁵ The translation for the name of this trading office varies. For an in-depth look at this office, see Clark, “The Politics of Trade.”

⁴⁶ Zhuang Mishao 莊彌紹, “Luocheng Waihaoji 羅城外壕記 [Record of the Outer Moat]” (1302) in *Jinjiang Xianzhi* 晉江縣志, Roll 9, “Chengchi 城池 [City].” <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=801163> (last accessed July 29, 2025). Chen, “Lun Fanfang,” 67–74; and Liao, “Tan Quanzhou ‘Fanfang’ jiqi yuiguan wenti.” John Chaffee has argued for a less segregated medieval Quanzhou. See Chaffee, “Diasporic Identities,” 406–7.

⁴⁷ Zhu Mu 祝穆, *Fangyushenglan* 方輿勝覽 [The Magnificent Terrains]: “諸番有黑白兩種, 皆居泉州, 號蕃人巷 [In Quanzhou there are dark- and light-skinned foreigners living in the so-called Foreigner’s Lane].” Cited in Liao, “Tan Quanzhou ‘Fanfang’ jiqi yuiguan wenti,” 79.

⁴⁸ Chen and Lin, *Quanzhou Jiucheng Pujing Jilue*, 1990, 1.

⁴⁹ For an English translation of Zhao’s work, see Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*.

⁵⁰ For the history of South Asian traders in medieval Quanzhou, see Guy, “Tamil Merchants and the Quanzhou Trade”; and Schottenhammer, “China’s Emergence as a Maritime Power,” 440–50.

⁵¹ Rashid, *Compendium of Chronicles*, 445. For Rashid, see Del Negro, “La diffusion de l’islam en Chine sous l’empire mongol.”