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Arakan and Bengal : the rise and decline of the Mrauk U kingdom (Burma) from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century AD

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CHAPTER THREE

THE RISE OF MRAUK U INFLUENCE (1593-1612)

The start of Arakanese rule in Chittagong around 1590 was as we saw closely connected with the development of an Arakanese-Portuguese partnership. The account of Fernberger and the earlier involvement of the Portuguese mercenaries in the army of the Bengal sultans are testimony to the important role of these Portuguese communities in the Arakan-Bengal continuum. When Man Phalaung died in 1593 he was succeeded by his son king Man Raja-kri (1593-1612).¹ Man Raja-kri would continue the expansion of Arakanese rule along the shores of the Bay of Bengal. In 1598 he would take part in the siege of Pegu that would lead to the end of the first Toungoo dynasty in Burma in 1599. The early years of the seventeenth century would also witness the first armed confrontations between the Arakanese and the Mughals in south-eastern Bengal. This Chapter will describe the gradual expansion of Arakanese influence in Lower Burma and Bengal as well as the Mughal advance in Bengal. The steady development of an alliance between the Arakanese and the Portuguese communities in Chittagong will be seen to have played a crucial role in the expansion of the Arakanese kingdom.

3.1 *The Portuguese community in Chittagong*

From the late sixteenth century the Mrauk U dynasty, most prominently represented by king Man Raja-kri, the *anauk-bhuran* Man Co Lha, and the *uparaja*² Man Khamaung, firmly embraced the Portuguese *chatins* as military advisors and allies. At the same time the Portuguese community in Bengal also tried to secure the allegiance of the *Estado da Índia* in their own bid for supremacy in Bengal. The Portuguese *chatins* promised king Philip I major benefits from tax revenues in Chittagong and Sandwip in return for official recognition and royal protection.³ The reaction from the crown was however negative. In a response to a request from António de Sousa Godinho, Philip I wrote in 1591 that he saw no possibility to support the Portuguese *chatins* in this part of Bengal, stating that no new fortifications would

¹ Following Guedes, Leider rejects contemporaneous claims made in Portuguese texts such as the *Questão* that Man Raja-kri was an usurper and not the son of Man Phalaung. It should be remembered that the *Questão* was written to legitimize the designs for Portuguese dominion in Lower Burma. Similar claims were made in the *Questão* regarding the succession by Man Phalaung. Leider, *Le royaume d'Arakan*, pp. 154,173.

² Crown-prince.

³ King Philip II of Spain who ascended the Portuguese throne in 1580 as king Philip I of Portugal.

be built by the *Estado da Índia* in Bengal on account of the costs involved in keeping up the defences of such places.⁴

At the time when the *Estado da Índia* scorned the offers of the *chatin* community in Arakan and Bengal the Arakanese court showed a very different attitude towards the Portuguese community. The Portuguese were very well received in Arakan and were treated as vassals of the king.⁵ In October 1599 Manuel de Mattos went to Mrauk U as a representative of the *chatin* community in Chittagong to pay tribute to Man Raja-kri. He was accompanied by the nobleman Jérôme de Monteiro and Father Fonseca bearing letters from the leader of the Jesuit mission in Bengal, Father Francis Fernandez. The delegation was welcomed at Mrauk U, and in January 1600 the king promised the Fathers land to built churches in Mrauk U and Chittagong. He also gave them rents for the maintenance of the new churches.⁶ This mission characterizes the way in which the Arakanese Portuguese relationship functioned at the end of the sixteenth century. Essentially the Portuguese leaders had become local lords with estates allocated to them by the king in frontier areas.

It is however important to understand that the Portuguese community in Arakan or Bengal was not a homogenous entity. There existed several groups of Luso-Asians operating in the Bay of Bengal. That these groups had sometimes very different allegiances is borne out by a letter Father Francis Fernandez sent to Nicolas Pimenta. After the mission to Mrauk U Fernandez had left for Dianga, the Portuguese settlement on the Karnafuli river opposite Chittagong, where he started work on the new church with the help of Father André Boves. They built the church of St. John the Baptist, which was consecrated on 24 June 1600, the Saint's name day. To celebrate the consecration on the 29th of that month two rival factions of the Portuguese community in Chittagong heard mass and dined together in order to celebrate their reconciliation.⁷

It is in fact possible to distinguish roughly two rival groups within the Portuguese communities in Chittagong. One group was headed by Manuel de Mattos in Chittagong and

⁴ Letter dated 12 January 1591 quoted in Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'The Tail Wags the Dog', pp. 149-150 and Campos, *Portuguese in Bengal*, p. 67. Vide infra Chapter 2 for Fernberger's description of De Sousa's involvement in Chittagonian politics.

⁵ The French doctor François Bernier would write in the seventeenth century that: 'The kingdom of Rakan, or Mog, has harboured during many years Portuguese settlers. That kingdom was the place of retreat for refugees from Goa, Ceylon, Cochin, Melaka and other settlements held formerly by the Portuguese.' François Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire, A.D. 1656-1668* trans. and ed. A. Constable and V. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914), pp. 174.

⁶ Letter from Francis Fernandez, dated. 22 December 1599 [1600 s.n.] in H. Hosten, 'Jesuit letters from Bengal, Arakan and Burma (1599-1600). A new version of the annual Letter from Goa (December 1, 1600) dated September 8, 1602', *Bengal Past and Present* 30 (1925), pp. 56-63 and Josson, *La mission du Bengale Occidental ou archidiocèse de Calcutta, province Belge de la Compagnie de Jésus* 2 vols. (Bruges; Imprimerie Sainte-Catherine, 1921), pp. 1.56-57.

⁷ 'Le 24 juin 1600 eut lieu une reconciliation fameuse entre deux factions des Portugais les plus influentes du Bengale; les Pères les rassemblèrent à Dianga, "ces ennemis s'embrassèrent et dînèrent ensemble, après avoir ouï la messe et le sermon tout dirigé à ce sujet'. Quoted in H. Josson, *La mission du Bengale Occidental*, pp. 1:54-57.

Domingos Carvalho in Sripur, both working for the Arakanese and the Bengali *zamindar* Kedar Rai.⁸ These Portuguese operated mainly in the Bengal area and assisted the Arakanese king and Kedar Rai in their attempts to assert control over south-eastern Bengal. On the other hand there was the group centred around Filipe de Brito, who is remembered most for his military actions in Burma after the fall of the Toungoo dynasty in 1599 when he was sent by the king of Arakan to defend the fort at Thanlyn (Syriam).

The story of the rise to power of Filipe de Brito and his violent death has been told many times. From the early seventeenth century until the present day historians have been fascinated by De Brito's career after the siege of Pegu in 1599.⁹ From his rule as king of Thanlyn to his death by impalement in 1613 at the hands of the Burmese king Anaukpetlun the deeds of De Brito have captivated the attention of a wide audience over the centuries.¹⁰ Filipe de Brito de Nicote enters in Burmese, Arakanese and Portuguese chronicles of the early seventeenth century because of his participation in the aftermath of the siege of Pegu in 1600. He was at that time reputedly already more than 20 years in Arakan and Bengal and is said to have been a native of Lisbon. Around the time De Brito arrived in Arakan the Arakanese still had to establish their power in Chittagong. In 1581 Man Co Lha was proclaimed the first *anauk-bhuran*, but the Arakanese were still consolidating their power in the Chittagong area. Man Co Lha and his father Man Phalaung had needed Portuguese help in 1589 to keep their grip on Chittagong as has been described in the previous Chapter and it is a distinct possibility that Filipe de Brito had fought on their side during these wars. De Brito at any rate held a *wilayat* from the Arakanese king in south-eastern Bengal, which had made him a rich and powerful man.

Contemporary European historians all mention that Filipe de Brito was given the honorific title *changá*¹¹ which according to Bocarro meant *bom homem*.¹² According to

⁸ Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, pp. 1:285-288. Leider has also highlighted that it is wrong to speak of the Portuguese in the Arakan-Bengal continuum and that we can in fact identify several competing communities of Luso-Asians active in the area. Leider, 'The Portuguese communities along the Myanmar coast', pp. 54-77.

⁹ Cayetano J. Socarras, 'The Portuguese in Lower Burma: Filipe de Brito de Nicote', *Luso-Brazilian Review* 3.2 (1966), pp. 3-24.

¹⁰ Cf. Subrahmanyam, 'The tail wags the dog', pp. 149-160.

¹¹ Written alternatively as *xhenga* in a trans. of a letter by Man Raja-kri to the VOC in NA VOC 4778. Or *xenga* by Pieter Willemsz, the Dutch merchant who had been to Arakan for the VOC in 1608 who wrote: 'Philippe de Brito de Nicote, to whome he [Man Raja-kri] gave the name of Xenga, which is honeste'. W.H. Moreland ed., *Peter Floris, his voyage to the East Indies in the Globe 1611-1615. The contemporary translation [from the Dutch] of his Journal* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1934), p. 55. In Burmese chronicles as Na Janga (Nga Zinga) which Harvey related to the Panjabi *changa* meaning 'good'. In Na Mi's chronicle quoted in Leider, *Le royaume d'Arakan*, p. 224 he is called *Na Cinga nay* neither of these names make any sense in Arakanese or Burmese. Daw Kyan questions the identification of Na Cinga/Na Janga with Filipe de Brito on the basis of the *Man Raja Kri Catam* where it is said that Na Anga was a son of Man Pa. Daw Kyan, 'Rakhine Man Raja Kri Catam', p. 34.

¹² Bocarro has: '*Philippe de Brito de Nicote, de quem fazia mais conta que de todos, chamando-lhe por outro nome o changá, que quer dizer bom homem em sua lingua.*' A. Bocarro, *Decada 13 da Historia da India. Publicada de ordem da classe de sciencias moraes, politicasbellas-lettras da Academia real das sciencias de Lisboa* 2 vols. (Lisbon, 1876), p. 1:122; Manrique, *Itinerario*, p. 1:88 writing twenty years after De Brito's

Manuel de Abreu Mousinho it reflected his quality as *vedor da fazenda* or treasurer in the service of the Arakanese king.¹³ The Jesuit writers of the period claim that Filipe de Brito and Man Raja-kri had an excellent relationship. They assert that the former had twice restored the king to his throne when he was driven from it by his rebellious subjects.¹⁴

Chatins like Filipe de Brito had been given large estates by the Arakanese in the area known as *Porto Grande*, a term used for the area between the Karnafuli estuary and the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta. Nicolas Pimenta, writing in 1599, claimed that in return for assisting the Mrauk U kings in their wars the Portuguese *chatins* had received estates or *wilayat*¹⁵ worth around 30,000 cruzados, a sum that does not seem wholly unacceptable.¹⁶ The *wilayat* belonging to Filipe de Brito probably lay near Caranja, a port on the Karnafuli estuary a little higher up the river than the main Portuguese settlement at Dianga, for at least he returned to this place in 1601 after having completed his affairs in Arakan and Pegu. From Caranja De Brito wrote to the Father provincial of the Society of Jesus, Nicolas Pimenta.

The wealth of these local chiefs like Filipe de Brito can be gleaned from the letters of Jesuit missionaries to Bengal. De Brito had already given large sums of money to the residence of the Jesuits in Negapatnam and in his letter to Nicholas Pimenta he asked the Jesuits to allow him to be the founder of the College of Coutão on the Travancore coast. Pimenta reproduced his letter and added that ‘this man is very rich and can found many colleges’. In return for his generosity De Brito asked the Jesuits to send him Fathers to console the Portuguese community in Bengal and Pegu.¹⁷ The financial backing that Filipe de Brito promised the Jesuit order will certainly have influenced the reports Jesuit authors like Pimenta and Guerreiro sent back to Portugal, but they are usually our only source of

death has yet another meaning: ‘Philip de Britto known to the natives as Changa,, which means Great Captain’.

¹³ Manuel de Abreu Mousinho, ‘Breve Discurso em que se conta a conquista do Reino do Pégu’, trans. *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, p.113; Charney calls De Brito the chief of his palace guard, unfortunately he provides no source for this statement. M. Charney, ‘The 1598-1599 Siege of Pegu and the Expansion of Arakanese Imperial Power into Lower Burma’, *Journal of Asian History* 28.1 (1994), p. 51.

¹⁴ Guerreiro, *Relação Anual*, p. 1:290 writes: ‘*Andava neste tempo no serviço de El-Rei de Arracão um Português chamdo Filipe de Brito Nicote, homem honrado e muito rico, capitão de muitos Portugueses que trazia consign, o qual fizera a êste Rei de Arracão muito grandes serviços, porque duas vezes o restituíu a seu reino, que seus naturais lhe tinham tirado levantado-se contra êle, e em tôdas as guerras que tivera, êste era o principal capitão*’. Pieter Willemsz. wrote after his return to Europe c. 1620 that: ‘The king of Arracan [Man Raja-kri] gave the towne or forte of Siringh, lying upon the same river of Pegu, in keeping to the Portingalls, especially to Philippe de Brito de Nicote, to whome he gave the name of Xenga, which is honeste; which honour Xenga did afterwards requite very well, taking his sone prisoner some 3 or 4 yeares after and ransomed him for 110,000 Tangans and 10 galeas of ryce, so that the sayd Xenga is att this present yett dominerig, not caring for anybody.’ in Moreland, *Peter Floris, his voyage to the East Indies in the Globe*, p. 55.

¹⁵In European sources often rendered Bilatas, the recipient of which they styled Bilatteers, originally a Persian term *wilayat*, an estate. Also meaning a bureaucrat, a governor of a part of the empire (13th-14th cent.), who has to raise a number of troops if the king asks for them, and is responsible to pay them from the revenue of his *wilayat* of which he also has to sent a part to the king. W.H. Moreland, *The Agrarian system of Moslem India. An Historical Essay with Appendices* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1929), pp. 216-223, 278.

¹⁶ Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, pp. 1: 286. Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, p. 175.

¹⁷ H. Hosten trans. and ed., ‘Fr. N. Pimenta’s Annual of Margão, December 1, 1601’, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 23 (1927), pp. 95-97.

information on the *chatin* community in Chittagong. Filipe de Brito was thus not as Leider has suggested a marginal figure before he took charge of the fort at Thanlyin following the fall of Pegu in 1598.¹⁸

How had these Portuguese warrior colonists become so rich and influential? How can we explain the very favourable disposition of the Arakanese kings towards them? One explanation is given by Guerreiro who wrote that the king of Arakan, also known as the *Mogos*, was the most powerful king in Bengal and a great friend of the Portuguese. This friendship he said stemmed from the fact that the Portuguese assisted the Arakanese king in his wars. In return for their services the king had given these Portuguese amongst other things lands worth more than 30,000 Cruzados (c. 70,000 Tanka) in revenues.¹⁹

The Portuguese community had thus become so powerful that the Arakanese kings had integrated them as their vassals into the Arakanese kingdom. In return the *chatins* assisted them in their wars in Bengal and Burma. This is first illustrated by the war Man Raja-kri fought in Lower Burma against the Burmese emperor Nandabayin which will be described in the following paragraphs.

3.2 Lower Burma: Arakan and the downfall of the First Toungoo Empire

During the last decade of the sixteenth century Nandabayin (1581-1599), the last emperor of the first Toungoo dynasty, was confronted by a series of uprisings in Lower Burma. It appears that local lords, *myo-za* ('town-eaters') shifted their allegiance from Nandabayin to large principalities outside his direct control. These principalities were ruled by more or less independent *bayins* or kings.²⁰ Ayutthaya, Toungoo, Prome and Chiangmai were the most important of these *bayin* centres, while the capital of the 'high king' or emperor Nandabayin was at Pegu. The incessant warfare that resulted from the slow disintegration of the First Toungoo dynasty prompted large groups of Mon to flee to Arakan in 1593, thus increasing the Arakanese power-base to a large extent.²¹ In 1594 king Naresuan of Ayutthaya captured Pegu's possessions on the Kra Isthmus. After declaring an embargo on the movement of foodstuffs from his own province to the capital at Pegu, the *bayin* of Toungoo sought an alliance with the king of Arakan to mount a joint attack on Nandabayin in 1596.²² Around the same time the Arakanese king Man Raja-kri sought a marriage alliance with Pegu, but it

¹⁸ Leider, 'The Portuguese communities along the Myanmar coast', pp. 65-66.

¹⁹ 'Assim como El-Rei de Arracão, que também se chama dos mogos, é o mais poderoso rei de todos os que há em Bengala, assim era o mor amigo dos Portugueses que nela havia, o qual se servia muito deles e pelo muito que o ajudavam em suas guerras, tinha dado a diversos, em terras e comedias, mais de trinta mil cruzados de renda'. Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, p. 1:286.

²⁰ Arakanese: *Bhuran*.

²¹ *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi* Nai Thien tr., 'Intercourse between Burma and Siam as recorded in Hmannan Yazawindawgyi', *Journal of the Siam Society* 8 (1911), p. 51.

²² Lieberman, *Administrative cycles*, p. 42-43.

seemed he was turned down and given an indignant response by Nandabayin.²³ Whether the rude reception Man Raja-kri's ambassadors encountered at the Pegu court was a *casus belli* is difficult to ascertain. In the Arakanese chronicles no definitive cause for the resulting involvement in the conflict between Toungoo and Pegu is given, apart from the prospect of plunder. According to Leider it seems unlikely that the Arakanese king suddenly harboured ambitions to become supreme king of Burma.²⁴ In October 1597 the eldest son of Man Raja-kri, the future king Man Khamaung (1612-1622), departed with a fleet for Thanlyn, a fort in the Irrawaddy delta near Pegu and across the river from Dagon²⁵, he took with him a substantial force and he took the city without any difficulty. Man Raja-kri followed a month later with a second force.²⁶

The siege of Pegu started in 1598 and ended in December 1599 when Nandabayin finally surrendered to the Toungoo *bayin* and Man Raja-kri.²⁷ The two victorious kings took impressive war booty from Pegu with them. Man Raja-kri received from Nandabayin several highly revered statues²⁸, his third daughter and two of his sons as hostages and most important of all, Man Raja-kri received the revered White Elephant an important symbol for any *cakravartin* king. With these new possessions the Arakanese king made a triumphant entry in his capital at the end of the year 1599.²⁹

Charney has questioned the idea that Nandabayin surrendered to both the Toungoo *bayin* and the Arakanese king in December 1599. He has suggested that Man Raja-kri was absent from Lower Burma during the fall of Pegu. Charney suggests that the Arakanese king had pressing business to attend to on his kingdom's north-western border and that the Arakanese contribution to the siege continued at a more limited level with Man Khamaung in command of a number of Arakanese ships to help the king of Toungoo.³⁰

²³ Bocarro, *Decada 13*, pp. 1:121-122.

²⁴ Leider, *Le royaume d'Arakan*, p. 214-215; Charney, 'The siege of Pegu', pp. 39-57 favours the idea that this motive in fact was important.

²⁵ Today Dagon is situated in Yangon (Rangoon).

²⁶ *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi*, p. 54; See Leider, *Le royaume d'Arakan*, p. 215 for a thorough discussion on dating the siege. Dates chosen here are based on Leider and follow Sandamala's chronicle. During 1599 large numbers of Portuguese soldiers went from Bengal to Burma to fight for Man Raja-kri. Hosten, 'Jesuit letters from Bengal', p. 57.

²⁷ Hosten, 'Jesuit letters from Bengal', p. 73 cf. Pierre Du Jarric, *Histoire des choses plus memorables* (Bordeaux: S. Millanger, 1608), pp. 627-629 Jarric writes: '*Ils vindrent à composition qui fut telle. Le Roy de Pegu se rédit à celui de Tangu (parcequ'il estoit son beau frere, marié avec une sieni soeur)*'.

²⁸ For instance a statue of Eravata, Indra's elephant. Some of these statues are still to be seen in Mandalay at the Mahamuni pagoda, see also Taw Sein Ko, 'The bronze figures in the Arakan pagoda, Mandalay', *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 6 (1916), pp. 19-21.

²⁹ Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, p. 1:44-45; Du Jarric, *Histoire*, pp. 627-629. See also Leider, *Le royaume d'Arakan*, pp. 217-218 for a description of all the treasure taken from Pegu to Toungoo and Arakan and the *Relatione del Tesoro che ha preso Filippo Brito di Nicote capitano portoghese nell'India Orientale* published in in M.A. Marques Guedes, *Interferência e Integração dos Portugueses na Birmânia, ca. 1580-1630* (Lisbon: Fundação Oriente, 1994), pp. 225-232.

³⁰ The prominent role accorded to Man Khamaung during the siege is supported by Bocarro for at least the early stages of the siege in 1598, but contradicted by Guerreiro. Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, p. 1:44-45; Du Jarric, *Histoire*, pp. 627-629. Charney, 'The siege of Pegu', p. 45. At the end of December 1599 or early January 1600

After Nandabayin's surrender and the subsequent departure of Man Raja-kri, Nandabayin and his heir apparent Minyé Kyawzwa were both murdered at the behest of the Toungoo *uparaja* Nat-shin-naung. He apparently felt that they were obstacles in the way of his succession to the status of emperor.³¹ The Toungoo *bayin* now emphasized his role as successor to Bayin-naung's empire. The murders of the emperor and his son were in stark contrast to earlier promises made by the Toungoo *bayin* that he would 'reverence Nandabayin like a Buddha'.³² The Toungoo *bayin* now styled himself Mahadhammaraja.³³

When the king of Arakan heard that the Toungoo *bayin* had broken his treaty with him and Nandabayin, he collected an army to march to Lower Burma and claim his part in the spoils resulting from the murder of the High king. The Jesuit João André Boves³⁴ writing on the 28 March 1600 left an account of the return of the Arakanese to Lower Burma after the fall of Pegu:

Hearing that the king of Tangu [Toungoo] had evaded the terms of the treaty, he [Man Raja-kri] hastened at once to the fortress of Macao (On the Pegu river), whither the king of Pegu had formerly betaken himself and called out all the Portuguese whom he had presented with fields and revenues in Bengala, telling them to be in readiness in case he had to fight him of Tangu. Among them was Filipe de Brito, than whom there was not among the Portuguese a wealthier man or one more acceptable to the king, He insisted that one of us should go with them. Fr. Francis Fernandez laid the duty on me. On the 5th before the Kalends of March [25 February 1600], I embarked with the said Filipe de Brito and (God giving us good wind) on the fifteenth day we landed at the harbour of Sirian [Thanlyn].³⁵

The description Boves has given of Pegu after it had been sacked by the army of Toungoo is telling. The Toungoo *bayin* had razed to the ground enormous temples complexes, burnt down villages and everywhere the traces of large scale killings were still to be seen. Pegu was turned into a desert.³⁶

Man Raja-kri was at Mrauk U receiving Manuel de Mattos as *capitão mor* of the Portuguese community in Bengal and a Jesuit delegation, vide infra. Bocarro, *Decada 13*, p. 124 does mention an uprising in Arakan, but dates it August 1602. Bocarro, *Decada 13*, pp. 122-124. It is only after the siege has ended in 1600 and Man Raja-kri has returned to Lower Burma that Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, p. 1:47 mentions the presence of the *príncipe* alongside his father

³¹ Lieberman, *Administrative Cycles*, pp. 43-44.

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi*, p. 64.

³⁴ John Andrew Boves alias Francis Boves was born at Messina 1569 and died in Malabar 1634. Hosten, 'Fr.N. Pimenta's Annual of Margão', p. 95.

³⁵ Hosten, 'Jesuit letters from Bengal', pp. 73-74. Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, pp. 1:47-49 apparently uses the same letter by Andrew Boves as his source.

³⁶ Hosten, 'Jesuit letters from Bengal', p. 74. Lieberman, *Administrative Cycles*, p. 44, attributes the destruction of Pegu to the Arakanese.

The Arakanese could not do more than collecting the silver and other metals which the Toungoo *bayin* left behind. André Boves estimated these leftovers to be worth more than three million gold ducats. Apart from these precious metals Man Raja-kri could also add some 3,200 cannon to his magazines.³⁷

The Burmese chronicle *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi* attributes the departure of the Toungoo army from Pegu in March 1600, just before the arrival of the Arakanese army, to the threat posed to Lower Burma by the Ayutthayan king Naresuan.³⁸ Although the arrival of Naresuan in Martaban could certainly have been one of the reasons to leave Pegu in a hurry and leave behind such a large part of that immense treasure, the arrival of a potentially hostile Arakanese army should also be taken into consideration.

The arrival of the king of Ayutthaya and the *bayin* of Chiangmai, the brother of the deceased Nandabayin, also caused alarm in the camp of the Arakanese. For a while Man Raja-kri did not know what to do with this new threat.³⁹ Eventually Man Raja-kri sent an expeditionary force consisting of 600 *jalias*⁴⁰ to Martaban to attack the supply lines of Naresuan.⁴¹ The Arakanese attacks on the Ayutthayan supply lines finally forced Naresuan to break off the attack on Toungoo in May 1600, just before the start of the monsoon.⁴² After the unsuccessful attack on Toungoo Naresuan returned to Martaban where he pledged an oath of allegiance to the local Mon and he appointed or recognized the nephew of the governor Wingaw as lord of Martaban with the title of *Banha Dala*.⁴³

After the retreat of Naresuan the king of Arakan sent his *ko-ran-kri* together with Filipe de Brito to the Toungoo *bayin* to settle their dispute over the division of the treasure captured at Pegu.⁴⁴ Manrique writing some forty years later mentions a war between the Toungoo *bayin* and the Arakanese over the Pegu treasure in which the Portuguese soldiers played a prominent part. In Manrique's version of the story the Toungoo *bayin* would only have made over the large treasures of Pegu, including the white elephant after a bloody war

³⁷ Hosten, 'Jesuit letters from Bengal', p. 74. cf Manuel de Faria y Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia or, The history of the discovery and conquest of India by the Portuguese* Trans. J. Stevens repr. (Farnborough: Gregg International Publishers, 1971), p. 3:121 and Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, p. 1:47.

³⁸ *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi*, p. 56.

³⁹ Hosten, 'Jesuit letters from Bengal', p. 75; Mousinho writes that the Arakanese king actually went to Burma to help the Toungoo *bayin* and engage the Siamese emperor in battle, see his *Breve Discurso*, p. 112.

⁴⁰ A *Jalias*, *Galeas* or *Jelias* consisted of a single tree trunk and had thirty to fifty oars. It was extremely swift and was likened by the Portuguese to the *myoparo* a light piratical vessel. The rowers were armed with swords and lances. P.v.d.B[urg], *Curieuse beschrijving van de gelegentheid, zeden, godsdienst en ommegang, van verscheyden Oost-Indische gewesten en machtige Landschappen. En inzonderheid van Golconda en Pegu. Alsmede een pertinente aanwijzing, hoe men door heel Indien, alle plaatsen op zijn tijd moet bevaren* (Rotterdam: Isaak Naeranus, 1677), p. 118; Hosten, 'Jesuit letters from Bengal', p. 55.

⁴¹ Bocarro, *Decada 13*, p. 122.

⁴² *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi*, pp. 56-57 cf. Mousinho, *Breve Discurso*, p. 112.

⁴³ *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi*, pp. 57-60. *Bāna* is a Mon title frequently occurring in proper names and designating a local lord or king. See Leider, *Le royaume d'Arakan*, pp. 227-228. Bocarro uses *Banha* and *Banha Dala* interchangeable, *Decada 13*, pp. 128-129.

⁴⁴ Bocarro, *Decada 13*, p. 126.

with the Arakanese in which the latter emerged victorious, plundering and sacking Toungoo.⁴⁵ The pages in the *Itinerario de las Misiones Orientales* that deal with the capture of the white elephant by Man Raja-kri are different from the rest of the *Itinerario* and stand out because Manrique at several stages throughout the narrative reminds his reader that he is relating this history on the basis of information from Burmese and Arakanese histories.⁴⁶ As Manrique stayed for two prolonged periods at the royal capital Mrauk U it does seem credible that he was aware of Arakanese and Burmese versions of the wars in Lower Burma through contact with local chronicle traditions.

Should we then take Bocarro's summary comment that Filipe de Brito and the Arakanese admiral-general went to Toungoo to settle disputes around the division of the war booty from the Pegu campaign to mean that they conquered and sacked Toungoo or that they negotiated with him under the pressure of an armed Arakanese presence?

After the Arakanese and the Toungoo *bayin* had settled their differences over the division of the treasures the Arakanese king left for Arakan. The Arakanese left a small contingent of Arakanese and Portuguese soldiers at Thanlyn under the leadership of Filipe de Brito.⁴⁷ Man Raja-kri ordered them to build a fort in Thanlyn.⁴⁸ The king encouraged the rebellious Mon and 'all those who were roaming about the woods and mountains' to come and settle in Thanlyn.⁴⁹ Lower Burma was an unsettled place after the wars that had raged there. Trade had come to a standstill and large centres had been devastated by fire and murder. The new lords needed to attract people to their cities in order to extract revenues. As André Boves often quoted remarks illustrate, the Arakanese king was a king without people in Lower Burma.

Filipe de Brito also left Lower Burma after the monsoon period of 1600 to return to Arakan⁵⁰, but he soon realized the enormous potential of a customs house at the strategic place that Thanlyn was. Although commerce and industry of Lower Burma had been ruined by 1600, he envisaged repopulating the area and attracting the commerce back to the mouths of the Irrawaddy. Around 1600 the trade of Thanlyn was much diminished and trade from

⁴⁵ Manrique, *Itinerario*, p. 1:266-270.

⁴⁶ Manrique, *Itinerario*, p.1:238 where he says: 'This took place, as the ancient histories of the monarchy of the Bramas tell us' and on page 1:240: 'At the end of this period says the chronicle I have quoted'; page 1:244 'Turning once more to the chronicle'; page 1:248 'so the Brama chronicler tells us'; page 1:257 'The army he collected was so vast that I am afraid to give it in positive numbers, owing to the different opinions recorded by the Brama authorities'; page 1:261 'I will give a summary account of the result from the record I copied out of the history mentioned above'; page 1:262 'Most Brama and Ava authors agree'; page 1:268 'So I will omit what is recorded in the Brama chronicles and only note what I myself saw' and page 1:274 'according to the Magh historian'. Apart from this the *Itinerario* adopts at several points in the story the point of view of a native narrator/chronicler when talking about the Portuguese.

⁴⁷ Leider, 'The Portuguese communities along the Myanmar Coast', p. 67.

⁴⁸ Hosten, 'Jesuit letters from Bengal', p. 75.

⁴⁹ Hosten, 'Jesuit letters from Bengal', pp. 73-76.

⁵⁰ In June 1600 Filipe de Brito was still at Thanlyn, from where he returned to Caranja during the dry season. Letter from De Brito to Pimenta in Hosten, 'Fr. N. Pimenta's Annual of Margão, Dec. 1, 1601', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 23 (1927), pp. 83-107.

Ava, Siam, Cambodja, and Luang Prabang was now flowing through Arakan, Tenasserim, and Martaban to the Bay of Bengal and beyond.⁵¹

The letters and reports emanating from the circle around Filipe de Brito are full of his ambitions to make Thanlyn the new entrepôt of Lower Burma and to attach Lower Burma to the *Estado da Índia*.⁵² So much so that De Brito was willing to leave the considerable estate he had received from the Arakanese in Bengal for this new frontier in Lower Burma. Reading one of these reports, the *Questão acerca do direito do reino de Pegu e como pode pertencer a Sua Majestade* one senses the limitless possibilities that this pioneer envisaged for establishing a prosperous city on the Irrawaddy delta under Portuguese control.

The Arakanese kings on the other hand seemed to be quite willing to leave such pioneering work to De Brito and supported his efforts in the first three years. After all Filipe had promised the Arakanese king that he would send a large part of the revenue to Mrauk U.⁵³ On top of this the Arakanese king now enjoyed new revenues from trade that had earlier flowed through Lower Burma as the majority of this trade was now passing over the Arakan Yoma via Mrauk U to the Bay of Bengal and so proved to be a major source of income to the Mrauk U dynasty. This is a possible further explanation why the Arakanese king would allow a limited presence of the Portuguese at Thanlyn.

The potential of Thanlyn as a tax revenue was clearly realized by Filipe de Brito and the Arakanese king alike. For the privilege of building the fort and the right to erect a customs house in Thanlyn Filipe de Brito had paid the Arakanese king large amounts of money. An Augustinian resident of Pegu in the early seventeenth century claimed it had amounted to 30,000 cruzados in cash, and goods which were worth 15,000 pardous⁵⁴, while Guerreiro mentions that in 1602 De Brito made Man Raja-kri and his counsellors large presents worth 17,000 cruzados.⁵⁵

At the same time there were several local Mon and Burmese lords in the area vying for power with the Portuguese. For the Arakanese this was a favourable situation. The local Mon Lords, the *Banha Dala* and *Banha Lao* as well as the Burmese *bayin* of Prome had all pledged their loyalty to Mrauk U. And they could serve as an important check on the Portuguese power and vice versa.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, p. 2:318.

⁵² The *Apontamentos das couzas que dá o Reino de Pegu* referred to in Subrahmanyam, 'The tail wags the dog', pp. 159-160, published in Guedes, *Interferência e Integração*, pp. 197-202 and the *Questão acerca do direito do reino de Pegu e como pode pertencer a Sua Majestade* in Guedes, *Interferência e Integração*, pp. 202-224.

⁵³ *Questão*, §12.

⁵⁴ Subrahmanyam, 'The tail wags the dog', p. 151.

⁵⁵ Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, p. 1:292

⁵⁶ Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, p. 1:292; Mousinho, *Breve Discurso*, p. 115.

As soon as the Arakanese king had left Lower Burma with his army the contest for power in Lower Burma began in full earnest. When Filipe de Brito left Thanlyin at the end of 1600 to take care of his estates in Bengal and probably to negotiate with Man Raja-kri on the terms of the payment of revenue from Thanlyin to Mrauk U, he secretly ordered his captains, João de Oliva, Paulo del Rego, and Salvador Ribeiro de Sousa to take control of the area; hoping that his great credit with Man Raja-kri would bear him out.⁵⁷ These three men performed their job so well that they even became known as the founders of the settlement and that Salvador Ribeiro later even claimed to be the architect of the plan.⁵⁸

The *Breve Discurso*, an apology written by Manuel de Abreu Mousinho for Salvador Ribeiro, gives a full report of the conflict between the Portuguese force in Thanlyin and the local Mon and Burmese lords. Although Mousinho wrote to defend Ribeiro's claim of being the conqueror of Thanlyin against Filipe de Brito's claim that he was the author of the plan, it remains the only detailed account that has survived of the struggle between the Portuguese and local Mon and Burmese lords during the period of January 1600 to 1603.

In January 1601, when Filipe de Brito was in Bengal, Mousinho writes that Ribeiro and his fellow captains were attacked by a force from the *bayin* of Prome, apparently acting on orders of Man Raja-kri who seemed to have been worried about the speed with which the Portuguese were building their fortress at Thanlyin. According to Mousinho Man Raja-kri had written to the Prome *bayin*, the *Banha Dala*⁵⁹, and the *Banha Lao* that they should seek to curb the growing influence of the Portuguese. Ribeiro and his followers defeated the first attack by the Prome *bayin* and subsequently sought a confrontation with the *Banha Lao*. This Mon lord who had already emerged victorious in a recent battle with the Toungoo *bayin*, now seemed a potential threat to Ribeiro and he acted to cut short the *Banha*'s hopes of succeeding to the Pegu throne by killing him in a night attack on his camp on 27 February 1601.⁶⁰

After these first two victories the *Banha Dala* laid siege to the new fort at Thanlyin at several instances during the period 1601 to 1603. All the attempts of driving the Portuguese out were however unsuccessful, and in the end Salvador Ribeiro was acknowledged as a local lord by the Toungoo, Prome, Ava, and Chiangmai *bayins*.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Faria y Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, pp. 3:127-128.

⁵⁸ Faria y Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, pp. 3:127-128 cf. Bocarro, *Decada 13*, pp. 128-131 and Mousinho, 'Breve Discurso em que se conta a conquista do Reino do Pégu', trans. *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 16.2 (1926), pp. 98-138.

⁵⁹ It seems likely that this is the same person as the *Banha Dala* of Martaban, who had also allied himself to Ayutthaya, see *infra*, but Leider has his doubts, *Le royaume d'Arakan*, pp. 227-228.

⁶⁰ Mousinho, *Breve Discurso*, pp. 115-119. Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, p. 1:292 implies Filipe de Brito himself was involved in the attack, which seems improbable as he was at the time in Bengal. Faria y Sousa writes that the Arakanese had left the *Banha Dala* in control of the new fort at Thanlyin and that De Brito ordered his three captains to attack the *Banha*. Faria y Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, pp. 3:127-128.

⁶¹ Mousinho, *Breve Discurso*, p. 115. Guedes tends to follow Mousinho and accepts the claim that Salvador Ribeiro de Sousa was crowned king of Pegu. She argues that he abdicated in favour of Filipe de Brito de Nicote who in turn left the throne to Philip II king of Portugal and Spain. In return Filipe de Brito was created capitão-geral do Sirão e das partes de Pegu. Guedes, 'Salvador Ribeiro de Sousa um Rei sem Reino. Vestígios da

The skirmishes in Lower Burma apparently did not affect the relationship of the Portuguese in Thanlyin with Man Raja-kri. They regularly sent tribute to Arakan.⁶² While Ribeiro was establishing Portuguese power in Lower Burma De Brito went on a diplomatic tour. He travelled in 1602 to Goa to seek an alliance with the *Estado da Índia*. This mission to Goa had the blessing of the Arakanese king. Guerreiro writes that an ambassador of the Vice-Roy, Gaspar da Silva, who had just arrived in Mrauk U, advised De Brito and Man Raja-kri to seek assistance from the *Estado da Índia* in the Arakanese battle against the Mughal general Man Singh in south-eastern Bengal.⁶³ Guerreiro claimed that the king of Arakan expressed his willingness that De Brito should go to India to obtain ships to help him against the Great Mughal.⁶⁴ In Goa De Brito was received by the *Viso-Rey* Aires de Saldanha. And apparently the mission proceeded so well that De Brito eventually married the niece, or maybe even the illegitimate daughter of the *Viso-Rey*, Luísa de Saldanha. De Brito and Aires de Saldanha made a deal that secured official support of the *Estado da Índia* for the Portuguese settlement in Thanlyin. Over the years the deal meant that: First, the Portuguese crown would get a customs house at Thanlyin. Secondly, the *Estado da Índia* and the crown would support Filipe De Brito with an armada, men and supplies in the struggle against potential adversaries in Lower Burma. Thirdly, Filipe de Brito was created *Fidalgo da Casa Real* and he received the Habit of Christ. And lastly De Brito got the jurisdiction over all the Portuguese in Bengal and Burma. In the end the customs house in Thanlyin never sent a sum of any significance to Goa.⁶⁵

From both sides everything now seemed set for a period of lasting cooperation. The Arakanese and the *Estado*, as represented by Filipe de Brito had agreed to unite their forces in a war against growing Mughal supremacy in Bengal. But as described above, 1602 marked a turning point in this respect. At the end of the year 1602 the Mrauk U rulers decided that Portuguese influence in the Arakanese littoral was becoming too strong and they subsequently decided to stop that process. According to Portuguese sources this change in attitude towards their presence was occasioned by a hostile Muslim community in Mrauk U.⁶⁶

Birmânia Saiscentista em Portugal', *Revista de Cultura* 33 (Macau: Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1997), pp. 70-71.

⁶² Prince Damrong, 'Our Wars with the Burmese (Row Robe Phama in Thai by Prince Damrong translated into English)', trans. Phra Phraison Salarak Thien Subindu alias U Aung Thein, *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, 38.2 (1955); 40.2 (1957); 40.2A (1958), 40.2 (1957), p. 206 and Leider, *Le royaume d'Arakan*, p. 225; *Questão*, passim..

⁶³ The *Questão*, the document written to legitimize the Portuguese takeover of Thanlyin, claimed that Gaspar da Silva da Cunha convinced the Arakanese king to cede this port in Lower Burma to the Portuguese Crown, see Leider, *Le royaume d'Arakan*, p. 225.

⁶⁴ Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, p1:291-292.

⁶⁵ Subrahmanyam, 'The tail wags the dog', p. 152.

⁶⁶ More specifically the king of Masulitpatnam's ambassadors, see Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, pp. 1:291; 2:137-138.

These Muslims, mostly traders, had strong ties with big merchants on the Coromandel coast and they probably feared Portuguese competition in their Bengal and Burma trade.

Whatever the exact reason at the end of 1602 Man Raja-kri took action against the expansion of Portuguese power in the Bay of Bengal. In the section above it was already noted that Domingos Carvalho and Manuel de Mattos had at that time occupied the strategically placed island of Sandwip, and now it seemed that in Burma Filipe de Brito was also acquiring a position too strong for the liking of Man Raja-kri. In any case 1602 marks the beginning of a closely orchestrated attack by the Mrauk U rulers on the Portuguese leadership in this part of the Bay of Bengal. Charney has chosen precisely this period as a decisive turning point in Arakanese. The main argument he puts forward to choose this date as an important caesura in Arakanese history is that from 1603 onwards Arakan lost control over Lower Burma. Arakanese control over Lower Burma had however been ineffective and short (1599-1603); it is hard to imagine what the impact of this 'loss of control' could have had on the Mrauk U kingdom.⁶⁷

In the following paragraphs the development of Arakanese and Mughal power in Bengal from the late sixteenth century is described before returning to the confrontation between the Portuguese communities and the Arakanese after 1602.

3.3 Bengal: The first Arakanese-Mughal encounters

After the defeat of the Mughal general Shahbaz Khan in 1584 at the hands of the local *zamindar* Isa Khan the Mughals had been forced to retreat from Bengal. But in 1594 Akbar sent Raja Man Singh as his new governor to Bengal (1594-1606) with the objective of crushing local resistance. Man Singh was also nominated guardian of Akbar's son prince Salim. Five thousand of the troops allotted to the prince were given *jagirs* in Bengal and Man Singh himself was as well allotted his jagir in this province. The objective obviously was that the Mughal officers would capture these *jagirs* themselves. The first success of Man Singh as *subahdar*, was the capture of Bhushna by his son Himmat Singh in 1595. The control over Bhushna was essential for any campaign directed at eastern Bengal. Bhushna was one of the forts that commanded the road to Dhaka, which was to provide the main gate of entry into the lands East of the Brahmaputra. In 1595 Man Singh set up a new capital for the Mughal government in western Bengal at Rajmahal (or Akbarnagar) close to the old traditional capitals at Tanda, Patna or Gaur, but safer from the attacks of the navies of the *Bhara Bhuiyas* and the Arakanese. From this new capital Man Singh started a campaign to bring the Eastern part of Bengal, by the Mughals termed *Bhati*, under control of the imperial government.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Charney, 'Rise of a mainland trading state' and Idem, 'Crisis and reformation'.

⁶⁸ Sarkar, *History of Bengal*, p. 211.

Eaton wrongly assumed that the distinction between *Bhati* and Bangala in early Mughal sources roughly corresponds with the present frontier between Bangladesh and West Bengal. Abdul Karim convincingly showed that with *Bhati* the Mughals referred to the low lands of eastern Dhaka and Mymensingh, the north-western part of Tripura and the south-western part of Sylhet, watered by the Brahmaputra and the Meghna and their tributaries.⁶⁹ The advance of the Mughal general forced Isa Khan and his Afghan followers to fall back behind the Brahmaputra river, and much of Isa Khan's territories fell into the hands of Man Singh. During the rains of 1595 Man Singh decided to stay near the Brahmaputra river and built a fort he named Salimnagar at Sherpur Murcha (near Bogra).

While building the fort Man Singh was cut off from his headquarters in Rajmahal, when Kedar Rai and Khwajah Sulaiman Lohani recaptured the strategic fort of Bhushna, thus effectively blocking the main route between Dhaka and West Bengal. Only on 20 June 1596 was Bhushna recovered by Man Singh's son Durjan Singh. Khwajah Sulaiman Lohani was killed during the siege, but Kedar Rai escaped and made his way east to join Isa Khan.⁷⁰

The following years Isa Khan was to exploit his superiority in riverain warfare. In the rainy season of 1596 he harassed Mughal troops encamped near Ghoragat in North Bengal and was only driven off by Man Singh's forces after water levels had fallen so much that Isa Khan's fleet risked running aground.⁷¹ The following year an expedition under the command of Durjan Singh was directed towards Isa Khan's seat, Katrabo. The expedition ended in a rout of the Mughal fleet near Dhaka. Durjan Singh was killed during the fight, as were many of his soldiers. The defeat of Durjan Singh's fleet again proved to Mughal officials the need for a further development of the naval forces in Bengal⁷²

In 1598 Man Singh requested to be posted in Ajmer and had eventually his grandson Maha Singh appointed as his deputy under the guardianship of Pratap Singh Kachhwaha. In 1599 Isa Khan died and in 1600 the Afghan warlord Usman Sajawal revolted and recovered parts of Orissa. The revolt of the Afghan nobles prompted Man Singh to return to Bengal. In 1601 he subdued the Afghan rebels.

In 1602 another Afghan warlord, Usman, crossed the Brahmaputra and laid siege to the Mughal *thana* of Bhalwa (Bhawal). Man Singh marched to Bhalwa and defeated Usman. This victory left the Mughal governor in possession of a large part of Usman's fleet and artillery. From Bhalwa Man Singh proceeded to Dhaka, and in February 1602 he sent an army across the Ichamati to attack the son of Isa Khan, Musa Khan and Kedar Rai. Musa Khan and

⁶⁹ Abdul Karim, 'Bhati as mentioned by Abu'l Fazl and Mirza Nathan', A.B.M. Habibullah, *Nalini Kanta Bhattasali commemoration volume. Essays on archaeology, art, history, literature and philosophy of the Orient, dedicated to the memory of dr. Nalini Kanta Bhattasali [1888-1947 A.D.]* (Dhaka: Dhaka Museum, 1966), pp 311-323, 322-323; Eaton, *Rise of Islam*, p.146

⁷⁰ Abul Fazl, *The Akbarnama*, pp. 3:1023, 1042, 1043, 1059.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 3:1063.

⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 3:1093.

Kedar Rai, together with their allies, blocked riverain traffic, and thus had an effective hold on trade in eastern Bengal. Man Singh without the help of a fleet forded the Ichamati river with his elephants and horses and drove Musa Khan and his allies back to Sonargaon.⁷³

In 1602 Domingos Carvalho, in the service of Kedar Rai, together with Manuel de Mattos, captured Sandwip from the Mughals who had in their turn taken it from Kedar Rai. The island of Sandwip not only had an enormous strategical importance, as it controlled the entrance to the Karnafuli estuary, but it was also reputed to supply the whole of Bengal with salt.⁷⁴ This move by the Portuguese prompted Man Raja-kri to move against Sandwip. The Arakanese king tried to conquer Sandwip with the help of Kedar Rai. In the winter of 1602 Man Raja-kri sent a fleet to Bengal and on 8 November 1602 he defeated Manuel de Mattos. Two days later Domingos Carvalho arrived with relief from Sandwip.⁷⁵ The Portuguese were victorious over the Arakanese on 10 November 1602.

While Kedar Rai, the Arakanese and the Portuguese were fighting battles amongst themselves, the Mughal general Man Singh in 1602 established his new operational headquarters at Dhaka.⁷⁶ Man Singh now placed his main forces at a position much closer to the territories of Kedar Rai and the other *Bhara Bhuiyas*, at what was to become the future Mughal capital in Bengal. The main reason for this change of capital was the strategic position of Dhaka for an army wanting to control East Bengal. The move had been facilitated by the gradual submission of the area between Dhaka and Rajmahal between the 1570s and 1600.⁷⁷ The occupation of the fort at Bhushna is a good example. The new location of the Mughal headquarters in Bengal and the expansion of Arakanese power from Chittagong during the reign of Man Raja-kri meant that now for the first time the armies of the two contenders for the wealth of south-eastern Bengal would meet.

The Mughal-Arakanese wars of 1602-1604

In 1602 Arakanese forces attacked Sandwip. The following year the Arakanese attacked the area near Sonargaon and Dhaka. The confusion in the Mughal reports of this encounter between Arakanese and Mughal forces supports the hypothesis that the 1603 battles at the confluence of Bengal's great rivers were the first major contacts between the two parties. These battles would be the first in a war that would last for almost the remainder of the century. Early in 1603 the Arakanese probably took the fort at Trimohani near Dhaka, but

⁷³ Abul Fazl, *The Akbarnama*, pp. 2:1214-1215.

⁷⁴ Du Jarric quoted in Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, pp. 67-73.

⁷⁵ Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, p. 1:287.

⁷⁶ Abul Fazl, *The Akbarnama*, pp. 3:1214-1215.

⁷⁷ Eaton, *Rise of Islam*, p. 149.

apparently they were repulsed again after a land battle.⁷⁸ The Arakanese exploited their naval superiority and used their ships to cannonade the Mughal *thanahs* avoiding as much as possible to give battle on land. The following months the Arakanese and Kedar Rai made a joined attack and sailed for the *thana* of Srinagar. In a battle near Vikrampur the coalition was defeated by the Mughals. Kedar Rai was captured, and he died subsequently from battle wounds.⁷⁹ The *Akbarnama* testifies that during this final battle of Kedar Rai the Portuguese in the service of Kedar Rai also suffered heavy losses. The role of the Portuguese in these battles was already described in the preceding paragraphs. With Kedar Rai dead and the Arakanese in position at Sandwip, Man Raja-kri was now by far the most important lord in Bengal and next to the Mughal general Man Singh a serious contender for supremacy in Bengal. In the light of the coming struggle between the Mughals and the Arakanese it is not correct to say as Eaton does that Raja Man Singh: ‘expelled the Arakanese from the lower delta’ and met in all his campaigns in Bengal with ‘consummate success’.⁸⁰

After the battle of Vikrampur, Man Singh early in 1604 left his base at Bhawal with an eye on facing Man Raja-kri. The Arakanese king had by this time already withdrawn to Arakan.⁸¹ Internal struggles within the Mughal camp following the death of Akbar would obstruct effective Mughal attempts at dominating Bengal politics. In the struggle for the succession of Akbar between his son prince Salim, the future emperor Jahangir, and Salim’s son prince Khusrau, Man Singh took sides with Khusrau. After the accession of Salim to the throne as Jahangir (1605-1627) in 1605, the new emperor at first recalled Man Singh to court, then reinstated him, and in 1606 again relieved the Rajput general from his post in Bengal and sent him to Bihar.⁸²

In 1606 Jahangir sent his foster brother Qutbuddin Khan Koka to Bengal as the new governor. A year earlier Jahangir had sent one of his famous soldiers, Sher Afgan⁸³ – the Tiger Slayer – , to Bengal as *jagirdar* of Bardwan (Bardhaman). In 1607 Sher Afgan killed Qutbuddin Khan Koka after the governor had tried to arrest him on suspicions of treason.⁸⁴ Qutbuddin Khan Koka was succeeded by Jahangir Quli Khan (1607-1608) who died within a

⁷⁸ The name of the ‘tribe’ as the Mughals called the Arakanese in the *Akbarnama* is spelled different in various mss. The places where the first Arakanese-Mughal battles took place are difficult to identify as well. The identification of the account in the *Akbarnama* with the start of the Mughal-Arakanese conflict is however supported by the proximity of Arakanese forces at the time because of their campaigns in the lower reaches of the Bengal delta. Abul Fazl, *The Akbarnama*, pp. 3:1231 n. 4-6.

⁷⁹ Sarkar, *History of Bengal*, pp. 214-215, Abul Fazl, *The Akbarnama*, pp. 3:1235-1236.

⁸⁰ Eaton, *Rise of Islam*, p. 149.

⁸¹ Abul Fazl, *The Akbarnama*, pp. 3:1235-1236

⁸² Abul Fazl Allami, *The A-in-i Akbari*, H. Blochmann and H.S. Jarrett trans. 2nd rev. ed. 3 vols. (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1977-1978), p. 1:363.

⁸³ See also D.H.A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of a Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 133 n.32.

⁸⁴ The story of Sher Afgan’s death was later romanticized after Jahangir married Sher Afgan’s wife, who became better known as Empress Nur Jahan. Ellison Banks Findly, *Nur Jahan. Empress of Mughal India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 14-30.

year of his appointment.⁸⁵ The succession struggle following the death of Akbar thus prevented the Mughals in Bengal from extending their control over the area in the second half of the first decennium of seventeenth century. In the following paragraphs we will return to the development of the relationship between the Arakanese and the Portuguese in Lower Burma and Bengal.

3.4 The Portuguese leadership and the Mrauk U court

For a better understanding of the relation between the Portuguese and their Arakanese overlords we must now take a closer look at the period 1599 to 1615. During this period the relationship between the Arakanese and the Portuguese changed dramatically. In 1603 the Arakanese king Man Raja-kri (1593-1612) started a campaign against the Portuguese communities that had settled in his Bengal and Burma territories. In Bengal Manuel de Mattos and Domingos Carvalho led the Portuguese in occupying the island of Sandwip. And in Burma Filipe de Brito had taken control over the fortress of Thanlyn. With these two take-overs the Portuguese communities had established themselves in local strongholds that would enable them to operate independently in the Arakanese littoral. This, it seems, was unacceptable to the Arakanese and they began a campaign to bring these three leaders back into the Arakanese fold.

The campaign against them can be divided into two phases. The first part of the battle took place between 1602 and 1605. In Burma the confrontations between Filipe de Brito and Man Raja-kri over the fortress of Thanlyn left the Arakanese *uparaja* Man Khamaung a prisoner in the hands of the Portuguese. In Bengal the groups of Manuel de Mattos and Domingos Carvalho were driven off Sandwip, though after the death of Domingos Carvalho the Portuguese regained their old position for a while.

The second part of the campaign started when Man Khamaung had been returned from captivity by Filipe de Brito in 1606. Man Raja-kri now began a relentless crusade against the Portuguese leadership in Bengal. In 1607, in what has been called the Dianga massacre, Man Raja-kri had 600 Portuguese killed, amongst whom were the son of Filipe de Brito, Marcos de Brito and Manuel de Mattos. The ensuing battle with Filipe de Brito ended in a prolonged siege of the fortress of Thanlyn that left neither party as a clear victor. In Bengal the second set of battles are the wars between Sebastião Gonçalves Tibao, who had escaped the Dianga massacre, and the new king Man Khamaung (1612-1622). At the end of these wars the Portuguese community was left without a clear power base. The relationship between the Arakanese and their former allies had undergone considerable change by the

⁸⁵ Sarkar, *History of Bengal*, pp. 234-246.

middle of the seventeenth century. The Portuguese would go from being allies to enemies and finally at best mercenaries.

At the same time the *Estado da Índia* also faced severe problems with its relationship with its local allies, the *réis vizinhos*. With the arrival of the Dutch and English East India Companies the supremacy of the *Estado* on the high seas was seriously challenged. The Dutch VOC was able to take advantage from the growing discontent amongst Asian rulers with the dominant role of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean.⁸⁶ In 1608 Arakan would be among the first places the Dutch would visit in the Bay of Bengal as part of their efforts to gain a foothold in Asia. The fact that the Dutch Republic was at war with Portugal and Spain meant that Dutch attempts to enter the Asian trade were usually accompanied by armed engagements with their Portuguese rivals in the Bay of Bengal.⁸⁷ The arrival of the VOC would therefore provide new opportunities for the Arakanese kings in their conflicts with the Portuguese.

Bengal

As described above, in 1602 Domingos Carvalho and Manuel de Mattos captured Sandwip from the Mughals who had in their turn taken it from Kedar Rai. Carvalho and De Mattos offered Sandwip to the *Estado da Índia*. As a reward the Portuguese crown created both warlords *fidalgos da Casa Real* and they were given the Habit of Christ.⁸⁸ This move of Carvalho and De Mattos seems typical for the way the Portuguese leaders operated in the Bay of Bengal. They worked for local elites, but when they thought they could establish an independent power base they sought the support of the *Estado da Índia* and tried to re-enter the world of the *Estado* by offering Goa revenues and asking for protection in return. King Philip II of Portugal seemed more willing than Philip I to lend a favourable ear to these propositions. The take over of Sandwip was perceived as an act of open rebellion by the Arakanese. Man Raja-kri subsequently took action against the Portuguese leaders. According to Guerreiro, Muslims at the court of Man Raja-kri convinced the king that these Portuguese had become *alevantados* and had raised themselves against the Mrauk U state. This prompted Man Raja-kri to move against Sandwip.⁸⁹ As we saw, the Arakanese king tried in vain to conquer Sandwip in 1602. After the 1602 battles a peace was concluded between the

⁸⁶ E. van Veen, *Decay or defeat? An inquiry into the Portuguese decline in Asia, 1580-1645* (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2000), pp. 209-225.

⁸⁷ Femme S. Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company. Expansion and Decline*. (Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 2003).

⁸⁸ Letter from Philip II to Dom Martim Affonso de Castro, dated 2 March 1605 in R.A. de Bulhão Pato ed., *Documentos Remittidos da India ou Livros das Monções publicados de ordem da classe de Sciencias Moraes, Politicas e Bellas-Lettras da academia Real das Sciencias de Lisboa* 4 vols. (Lisbon, 1880-1893), pp.1:6,25.

⁸⁹ Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, p. 1:287.

Portuguese leaders and the Arakanese. Man Raja-kri even offered to rebuild a Dominican church that had been destroyed during the fighting.⁹⁰

Apparently not content with the outcome of the battles in 1602, Man Raja-kri launched a second attack on Sandwip on 1 March 1603. This attack left the Portuguese positions so badly damaged that they had to leave the island and flee for the mainland of Bengal. They evacuated to Sripur, Bakla and, Chandecan, where they sought refuge with the *Bhara Bhuiyas*.⁹¹ Domingos Carvalho apparently saw no objection to returning to Sripur, the seat of Kedar Rai, his former employer.⁹² Kedar Rai on the other hand could need all the assistance he could get in his battle with the Mughal general Man Singh. Already one month after his arrival in Sripur, on 28 April 1603, he had to fight a battle with a Mughal fleet.⁹³ This illustrates the interdependence of the interests of these Portuguese *chatins* and their employers.

In 1603 the Arakanese followed their attacks on Sandwip as we have seen with a further campaign against Mughal positions in the heart of Bengal. The irony was that Man Raja-kri had concluded an alliance with Kedar Rai who had in his turn hired Domingos Carvalho to fight the Mughals. In an attempt to escape the wrath of the Arakanese Domingos Carvalho had sought refuge with raja Pratapaditya, one of the *Bhara Bhuiyas* and the king of Chandecan. Raja Pratapaditya thought it however wiser to kill Carvalho as a sign of submission to Man Raja-kri.⁹⁴ After this show of strength by Man Raja-kri, and the defeat of Carvalho, at last in 1605 a peace between Manuel Mattos and Man Raja-kri was concluded.⁹⁵

As we saw earlier, in Bengal the arrival of the Mughals and the Arakanese had prompted a coalition of the so-called *Bhara Bhuiyas* to unite their forces against Mughal and Arakanese domination. The *Bhara Bhuiyas* were not one homogeneous group. The different local lords, Afghans, and Portuguese freely and frequently shifted their allegiances to take advantage of the unsettled affairs in Bengal.⁹⁶ In this frontier situation the Portuguese tried to cut a share for themselves and in this process they sought assistance from the *Estado da Índia*. The attempts at becoming local lords in Bengal from the Portuguese side were crushed by the Arakanese from 1602. The Augustinian Friar Sebastião Manrique, writing in the 1640s, referred to the 1600-1615 period as the 'unhappy and unlucky war' between the Portuguese *chatins* and the Arakanese. The narrative of this war between the Portuguese and Arakanese

⁹⁰ Josson, *La mission du Bengale Occidental*, p. 1.62; Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, p. 1 :288

⁹¹ Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, pp.2 :132-133; Josson, *La mission du Bengale Occidental*, pp. 1.61-65.

⁹² Josson, *La mission du Bengale Occidental*, pp. 1:61-65.

⁹³ Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, p. 2:134.

⁹⁴ Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, pp. 2 :135-137; Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, p. 71-73

⁹⁵ Josson, *La mission du Bengale Occidental*, p. 1:64.

⁹⁶ Rita Joshi, *The Afghan nobility and the Mughals* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1985), pp. 18-19, 95-97, 72, 76.

is presented very carefully in his *Itinerario* suggesting that the memory of this war was till fresh and stirred strong sentiments.⁹⁷

Lower Burma

The *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi* describes how already in 1603 the king of Arakan asked the king of Toungoo to take action against De Brito, but the attacks on the Portuguese communities in Chittagong and Sandwip were only in 1604 followed by an attack on Portuguese positions in Thanlyn.⁹⁸ At the end of the year 1604 a fleet under the leadership of Man Khamaung left Arakan for Lower Burma. At first the Arakanese tried to disguise their intentions and claimed that they intended to use their forces against Martaban and Tenasserim.⁹⁹ But on 28 January 1605 Man Khamaung appeared with a force in front of the fortress of Thanlyn. After a long battle the Arakanese forces were left stranded in a narrow channel with no outlet to the sea. Seeing that there was no way out Man Khamaung's army left their boats and went ashore. The final result was that the majority of the Arakanese army defected to Filipe de Brito or to neighbouring Prome and Toungoo. According to some Arakanese chronicles, the campaign also resulted in the capture of Man Khamaung and the other leaders of the Arakanese expedition by Filipe de Brito.¹⁰⁰ Filipe de Brito puts the capture of Man Khamaung in a wholly different perspective as he claimed that he and Man Khamaung were actually on good terms. In connection to this San Shwe Bu has suggested that Man Khamaung rebelled three times against his father. Taken together with De Brito's remarks on their friendship, Man Khamaung's long stay in Thanlyn can of course also be read as an act of rebellion.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Interpreting Manrique's *Itinerario* can be difficult as the author has mixed-up the titles of the kings Man Raja-kri, Man Khamaung and Sirisudhammaraja. Man Raja-kri (1593-1612) is referred to by Manrique as Xalimxa, which could be translated as Selim Shah, the Muslim title of this king. Man Khamaung (1612-1622) is given the title Xalimxa II or Xalamixa II, ie Selim Shah II, which conflicts with all the other available sources where the Muslim title of this king is given as Husein Shah. To add to the confusion Manrique also calls Man Khamaung the son of the 'great Anakporam' ie. the son of the *anauk-bhuran*. As Man Raja-kri's brother was *anauk-bhuran* at the time, this statement of Manrique conflicts with an early statement in the *Itinerario* that Xalimxa II was the son of Xalimxa I, but it could be explained by the fact that Man Khamaung was the second son of Man Raja-kri, which he got by his wife, a daughter of the *anauk-bhuran*. See Leider, *Le royaume d'Arakan*, p. 72 for genealogical information. To make matters more complicated still Sirisudhammaraja (1622-1638) is alternatively given the name Xadamaxa (Sudhamma Shah) and Xadramaxa II. Leider, 'These Buddhist kings with Muslim names' has apparently misread the *Itinerario* and has coupled Xalimxa II or Xalamixa II with Sirisudhammaraja, while in fact Manrique uses Xadramaxa II and Xadamaxa for this king.

⁹⁸ *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi*, p. 64.

⁹⁹ Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, p. 2:139.

¹⁰⁰ Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, p. 2:140; Faria y Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, pp. 3:130-134.

¹⁰¹ Filipe de Brito, 'Relacion del Sitio que El Rey de Arracan y El de Tangu pusieron por Mar y Tierra sobre la Fortaleza de Serion en la India de Portugal el año de 1607', *Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa* II, 233-241; San Shwe Bu, 'U Ga Byan, governor of Sindin, Arakan', *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 9 (1919), pp. 151-153, see also Maurice Collis, 'An Arakanese poem of the sixteenth century', *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 13 (1923), pp. 221-228. Leider has rejected the idea of the rebellious Man Khamaung following the Nga Mi chronicle and because he was not able to trace San Shwe Bu's claims in any other

The ransom Filipe de Brito asked for the release of the Arakanese *uparaja* is significant. As a reward for the release of Man Khamaung, Filipe de Brito asked Man Raja-kri to address him in the future on an equal footing as king.¹⁰² Another result from the release of Man Khamaung was that Man Raja-kri in 1607 restored to Filipe de Brito the territories he formerly held as his *wilayat* in Bengal. Filipe de Brito sent his son Marcos to Mrauk U to settle his affairs in Bengal, but Marcos was killed on his arrival there.¹⁰³

In Thanlyn the last phase of the battle between Man Raja-kri and Filipe de Brito took place in 1607. That year the Arakanese king mobilized a large army and called upon his allies, the rulers of Bhalua¹⁰⁴, Cukkara¹⁰⁵ and Toungoo to assist him in his war with De Brito. The events of this war are relatively well known because of the extensive reports given by Guerreiro, which were translated by Payne and the description given in Bocarro about the history of the Portuguese settlement in Thanlyn.¹⁰⁶ These are both second hand accounts. First hand accounts of the battle have until now scarcely been used to analyse the events of 1607. There is however a first hand report from Filipe de Brito himself that sheds considerably more light on the case than the others have done. The report written by De Brito, the *Relacion del Sitio que El Rey de Arracan y El de Tangu pusieron por Mar y Tierra sobre la Fortaleza de Serion en la India de Portugal el año de 1607* [Report on the siege of the fort of Thanlyn in Portuguese India conducted by the kings of Arakan and Toungoo on water and on land in the year 1607] was written for king Philip II.¹⁰⁷ A comparison between Guerreiro's *Relação*

Arakanese chronicle. Leider, *Le royaume d'Arakan*, p. 174. As we do not know on which authorities San Shwe Bu based his claims, it remains difficult to assess whether his version of events is credible. The statements made by De Brito seem however to indicate that San Shwe Bu's version of events is correct.

¹⁰² Bocarro, *Decada 13*, p. 144, gives also the amount of the ransom, as does Willemsz., *Peter Floris, his voyage to the East Indies in the Globe*, p. 55; *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi*, pp. 64-66. The release of Man Khamaung was apparently not free of incidents as Bocarro writes that a parting salute nearly killed the Arakanese *uparaja*, which according to Bocarro made Man Khamaung and De Brito bitter enemies. Bocarro, *Decada 13*, p. 144

¹⁰³ Anon., *Neue Relation. Wie Don Sebastian Gonzales, ein Portugeser. Wider den gewaltigen Indianischen koenig von Arracam, so ein grausamer feind und verfolger der Christen, sigh hafftig getritten, auch von ihme die beruembte Insul Sunidiva erobert hat. Aus einem Portugesischen schreiben, so nechst vergangnen Junio dises 1611. Jars zu Lijsabona aus Indien ankommen, ins Teutsch gebracht* (Augsburg, 1611), p. 3 The *Neue Relation* should be dated to c. October 1610, as the letters from which it is taken arrived in Portugal in June 1611. With an average journey time from Bengal to Portugal of somewhere in between six and eight months this corresponds nicely with the remark of the anonymous author at the end of the text that the northeast monsoon will set in soon (ie. October-November); Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, p. 80; Letter from king Philip II reproduced in the Letter from the *viso-rey* Lourenço de Tavora to the king, dated 29 December 1610 De Bulhão Pato, *Documentos Remittidos da India*, pp. 1:348-349. Faria y Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, p. 3:154 attributes the killing of Marcos de Brito to rivalry within the Portuguese community in Arakan.

¹⁰⁴ *Neue Relation*, passim.

¹⁰⁵ Cukkara, or here Chocoria, lies on the Matamuhuri river: see João de Barros (1552) 'up to Cape Negrais are these populated places, Chocoria, Bacala, Arakan city, capital of the kingdom so styled' Hosten thinks that Chocoria could thus be modern Cukkara (Chakiria), halfway between Mrauk U and Chittagong, north of Ramu vide Hosten, 'Jesuit letters from Bengal', p. 61 n.37.

¹⁰⁶ Guerreiro, *Relação anual*, pp. 2:317-329, 3:77-84 translated by C. H. Payne trans and ed., *Jahangir and the Jesuits. From the relations of Father Fernão Guerreiro s.j.* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1997), pp. 207-240; Bocarro says: 'Do cerco que o rei de Ová poz á nossa fortaleza de Serião, e das causas que houve para se fundar em Pegú por Philippe de Brito de Nicote' in Bocarro, *Decada 13*, pp. 117-164.

¹⁰⁷ The *Relacion del Sitio* was published in *Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa* 2 (1962), pp. 233-241.

and this report suggests that the Jesuit author used the *Relacion del Sitio* from De Brito as his primary source, it also shows how Guerreiro has simplified matters and glorified Portuguese military achievements far beyond De Brito's own words. Some striking examples are the letters exchanged between Man Raja-kri and De Brito where Guerreiro greatly embellishes their contents. The battle reports seem totally out of proportion as well when compared to the original report. If we are to believe Guerreiro, the siege mainly consisted of a series of large battles in which enormous Arakanese armies were constantly being defeated by small numbers of brave Portuguese soldiers, De Brito's own accounts present an altogether more realistic picture. Surprisingly the *Relacion del Sitio* has not been analyzed closely by students of Burmese history.

While it is clear that the *Relacion del Sitio* offers only one perspective on the events of 1607, it is to date the only primary source available. To credit the author it must be said that he adopts a far more sober and descriptive vantage point than other Portuguese authors of the time. From the Arakanese side of the story we do not have an account of the battles that took place in 1607.¹⁰⁸ The Arakanese attack on Thanlyn in 1607 could be a result of an earlier conflict in 1605, when Filipe de Brito had allegedly taken Man Khamaung prisoner in Thanlyn, on the other hand De Brito claimed that Portuguese raids on the Arakanese coast were the main motive for the Arakanese king to lay siege to Thanlyn.

The *Relacion del Sitio* provides rare insights in the way the Arakanese conducted their military operations. A central characteristic of the Arakanese way of war was that amphibious operations were at the core of their military campaigns. Naval and land forces operated in close proximity and did not move independently in battle.¹⁰⁹ On the basis of the report of De Brito it is hard to see a technological advantage with the Portuguese in riverain warfare in the shallow-waters of the Irrawaddy delta. It is striking that both Portuguese and Arakanese ships were seemingly capable of firing heavy guns. Both sides protected their ships against enemy fire with strong netting designed to limit the impact of incoming fire.¹¹⁰ For the Arakanese it was moreover essential to protect their long supply lines, and during the campaign they erected numerous stockades along the banks of the rivers to protect their stores of ammunition and food.¹¹¹ For the following description of the siege of Thanlyn in 1607 the

Filipe de Brito apparently kept on a regular correspondence with king Philip II (king Philip III of Spain) as the latter often refers to letters he received from De Brito in his communications with Goa, see the king's letters in De Bulhão Pato, *Documentos Remittidos da India*, pp.1:173-178; 1:317-358.

¹⁰⁸ Leider, *Le royaume d'Arakan*, pp. 233-234.

¹⁰⁹ I have divided the text of the *Relacion del Sitio* into paragraphs. De Brito, *Relacion del Sitio*, §3-4,8-10.

¹¹⁰ De Brito, *Relacion del Sitio*, §13, 42.

¹¹¹ Combined operations in Bengal were carried out along the same lines. Atul Chandra Roy, *A history of Mughal navy and naval warfares* (Calcutta: World Press, 1972), pp. 75-78.

report by De Brito will be used as the main source while other sources will be consulted to check and supplement the information given by De Brito himself.

Somewhere early in 1607 or late 1606 De Brito learned about the preparations made by Man Raja-kri to attack the fort of Thanlyn. In response to this threat he sent his *capitão-mor* Paulo do Rego Pinheiro to scout around Cape Negrais. Do Rego sailed for the Arakanese coast with three *sanguiceis*¹¹² and seven other ships to raid the coast of Arakan and engage the Arakanese fleet. The purpose of these raids probably was to delay the arrival of the Arakanese in Lower Burma and distract their attention towards Do Rego. Paulo do Rego proceeded along the coast of Arakan on his way plundering and burning several villages. To receive news from what the king of Arakan was doing he ordered three *sanguiceis* together with three of the smaller vessels to land in a place called Caranca, which was close to the first port on a river under Arakanese control. Here they obtained information that Man Raja-kri had been delayed by bad weather and was now in a place called Pontho with his whole armada. At this point Paulo do Rego decided to withdraw to Cape Negrais because of want of ammunition and stores. On receiving this information De Brito sent new supplies to his *capitão-mor* but Do Rego had decided meanwhile to leave at Negrais only two *sanguiceis* and retreat further into the Irrawaddy delta. Shortly after Paulo do Rego had left his men to guard the bar of Negrais they saw the Arakanese fleet arriving which was for them the signal to retreat and report to their captain. The supplies De Brito had sent to his fleet therefore all fell in the hands of the Arakanese at Negrais. The Arakanese fleet arrived in three parts in Negrais, headed respectively by the king, the crown-prince and the lord of Cukkara.¹¹³

Paolo do Rego subsequently returned to seek battle with the fleet, but the Arakanese declined, and sought refuge under the rocky shores, where the larger Portuguese ships did not dare to venture. The only thing Paulo do Rego could do now was to attack an Arakanese supply fleet which forced the Arakanese to send light vessels to guard their supply vessels and attack the Portuguese. The Portuguese killed the Arakanese *koran-kri*. They also captured a Portuguese fighting for the Arakanese who informed them of the Arakanese plans. Paulo do Rego now returned to Thanlyn and was ordered by De Brito to post the fleet at the point of Dagon. The account of the siege underscores that there were many divisions within the Portuguese communities in the Bay of Bengal. Portuguese soldiers can be seen fighting for both sides. It is also clear that De Brito could count on the support of the ruler of Prome. The

¹¹² This is the plural of *Sanguicel* on which see king's letter to Dom Affonso de Castro, AD 1605: 'And seeing that I am informed that the incursions of certain pirates who still infest that coast might be prevented with less apparatus and expense, if we had light vessels which would be more effective than the foists (*fustas*) and galleys (*galés*) of which the fleets have hitherto been composed, seeing how the enemy use their sanguicels, which our ships and galleys cannot overtake, I enjoin and order you to build a quantity of light vessels to be employed in guarding the coast in place of the fleet of galleys and foists.' in De Bulhão Pato, *Documentos Remittidos da India*, p 1:26.

¹¹³ De Brito, *Relacion del Sitio*, §1-6.

bayin of Prome supported the besieged fortress with food, soldiers and military equipment. From the start the Arakanese tried to involve the Toungoo *bayin* in their attempts to remove De Brito from Thanlyn. De Brito on his part tried to do the same. In the end the Toungoo *bayin* threw his support behind the Arakanese.¹¹⁴

On 25 March 1607 an advance party of the Arakanese landed on the point of Dagon and began to build stockades and trenches. At the same time they sent ambassadors to the sons of the Toungoo *bayin* at Pegu. With their defences in place the main body of the Arakanese army and fleet moved into Dagon on the 29th. The Arakanese were now anchored at both sides of the river with their smaller ships facing their bows to the river and the larger ships anchored mid-stream facing their broadsides towards Thanlyn. In this way the smaller ships, which were equipped with bow cannons could fire across the river, while the larger ships could bring their heavier guns and mortars to bear on the approaching enemy. On land the ships were protected by the trenches and stockades erected by the advance party. The Arakanese also employed large pointed bamboo sticks securely anchored to the riverbed to prevent enemy ships coming to close to shore. On the 4th of April Paulo do Rego's ship, one of the largest ships in De Brito's fleet, was caught on two of these stakes. His ship subsequently became an easy target for the Arakanese artillery. As the ship of Do Rego carried ammunition for the rest of the fleet it exploded soon after it had been set fire to by the Arakanese, killing Do Rego and his crew. Man Raja-kri hoped that the death of the Portuguese admiral would convince De Brito to surrender, which he did not. The following days the Arakanese slowly approached the river of Thanlyn and made trenches and stockades along the river bank so that their fleet would be able to move closer to the fort under the protection of their defensive works. On 11 April two sons and a brother of the king of Toungoo arrived with 600 horse, 18 elephants and about 16,000 troops to assist the Arakanese.¹¹⁵ The Arakanese now conquered a high place where the church Nuestra Señora del Monte stood. The following days the Arakanese and the troops from Toungoo tightened the net around Thanlyn forcing De Brito's men back to their citadel. Attacks on the Arakanese supply lines and their headquarters in Dagon by troops from Prome provided some relief. The Arakanese in response cut Thanlyn's supply routes to Prome, making the siege complete.¹¹⁶ In the weeks that followed the fort was attacked frequently but its defences did not break. Early in May, with the monsoon approaching rapidly the troops from Toungoo left their trenches and started to leave the battlefield.¹¹⁷ The Arakanese king tried to establish a fort opposite Thanlyn under the command of Man Khamaung to continue the siege during the monsoon. De Brito's troops made a sortie from the fort and were able to destroy the fort while

¹¹⁴ De Brito, *Relacion del Sitio*, §8,23,35-36, 51.

¹¹⁵ De Brito, *Relacion del Sitio*, §23.

¹¹⁶ De Brito, *Relacion del Sitio*, §36-43.

¹¹⁷ De Brito, *Relacion del Sitio*, §45-46.

it was being built. On 9 May after a few days of heavy rain the Arakanese also decided to end the siege and on the 10th they sailed downriver.

De Brito estimated that the Arakanese force numbered in total 30,000 men, among whom there were 8,000 arquebusiers. He said there were Afghans, ‘Muslims’, Muslims from Malabar, Portuguese, Mon and Burmese soldiers in the Arakanese force.¹¹⁸ The smallest Arakanese galleons, the largest type of ship in the Arakanese fleet, were equipped with 12 pieces of artillery. Although De Brito does not explicitly say so, from his account it seems that the Arakanese ended the siege because of the beginning of the monsoon.¹¹⁹ It is quite probable that the majority of the soldiers of the besieging armies needed to go home as the ploughing season was about to begin.

In 1608 Man Raja-kri sent a letter to the VOC in which he commented on the reasons for leaving Lower Burma in 1607:

I went to Pegu last year and there I fought against the principal captain, Paulo del Ree. We took three *fusten*, but just as the castle was about to surrender, some *wixins*¹²⁰ raised themselves against me, and because the rainy season was about to start I had to retreat. As you are now the same Dutchmen who fought so bravely against the Viso-Rey and you want to spread your name and fame all over India, I ask you to help me take revenge on that rebel Xhenga.¹²¹ When you agree to this I will promise to remain for always the enemy of the Portuguese and to forbid them entrance in my country, and to give you all of Bengal, Arakan and Pegu, or any other place that you might chose to make a city or a *bandel* and to help you as much as I can.¹²²

The bearer of the letter, Pieter Willemsz confirmed this in a report of his trading adventures in the East writing that some ‘Peguers’ had raised themselves against the king, which confirms at least that the sons of the Toungoo *bayin* had broken off the siege as De Brito said, or indeed that they had rebelled against the Arakanese king.¹²³ It is also possible to connect the

¹¹⁸ De Brito, *Relacion del Sitio*, §48, passim.

¹¹⁹ De Brito, *Relacion del Sitio*, §47-50.

¹²⁰ This term could refer to; [*a*]wi *shins* or *awa shin*, ‘[men from] the lord of Ava’. Personal communication from Jacques Leider, 25 December 2007. Alternatively *Wixins* could also be read as *Abixins*.

¹²¹ Filipe de Brito.

¹²² NA VOC 4778, n.f., Letter from Man Raja-kri to the Prince of Orange, n.d. [1608] A slightly different version was printed in *Historisch verhaal van het begin, den voortgang en den tegenwoordigen staat des koophandels van de Generale Nederlandsche geocroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie* 2 vols. (Arnhem, 1768-1772), pp. 1:508.

¹²³ NA VOC 1055, n.f. Letter from Pieter Willemsz. to Puyck in Aceh, dated Arakan 6 March 1608 and rephrased in NA VOC 1055 n.f. Report on the Bay of Bengal and Arakan by Pieter Willemsz., dated Masulipatnam 25 May 1608 printed as Pieter Willemsz., ‘Informatie van de Bochte van Bengala en de Arracan gedaen door Pieter Willemsz. in Masulipatnam desen 25 Maij Anno 1608’, J.K.J. de Jonge, *De Opkomst van het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indië* (1595-1610) 16 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1862-1909), pp. 3:287-

hasty retreat of the Arakanese king to a rebellion of Man Khamaung. Earlier in this Chapter it was noted that De Brito claimed they were on good terms with each other and in Arakanese traditions the name of Man Khamaung is connected to three attempted rebellions against his father.¹²⁴ Given the account of De Brito this however seems unlikely; At any rate Man Rajakri's attempt to restore his authority in Lower Burma had failed. The following years Filipe de Brito would set out to dominate the local *Banhas* and *Bayins* in Lower Burma.

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¹²⁴ San Shwe Bu, 'U Ga Byan, governor of Sindin, Arakan', *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 9 (1919), pp. 151-153.

After the siege Filipe de Brito was left with a depleted and weakened force in Thanlyin and he was hit in January 1608 by a great fire which destroyed the fort. Although the citadel of Thanlyin had almost fallen to the Arakanese and a great fire had only left the walls standing, De Brito kept a strong position in Lower Burma. The strength of Filipe de Brito in Lower Burma after 1608 is attributed by Burmese chronicles to the alliance between De Brito and the *Banha Dala*. Although there is no agreement on the exact nature of the relationship, several sources write about a marriage-alliance between the children of the two leaders.¹²⁵ Dutch merchants in Siam observed that this *Banha Dala* had earlier been allied to the king of Siam, but that in 1612 he had switched allegiances and allowed De Brito to conquer Martaban and Moulmein. That same year it was reported De Brito was planning to lay siege to Mergui. De Brito apparently planned to build another fortress in Mergui and in doing so he was aiming to complete his stranglehold over Lower Burma and the trade routes to China and Siam. The Dutch merchants at the Ayutthayan court reported that it was feared that if De Brito was not stopped now, he would become too strong for the Arakanese, Burmese or Siamese to stop him. They of course also feared growing Portuguese influence in Lower Burma would harm the VOC's interests in the region.¹²⁶ In 1612 the *Banha Dala* and De Brito even attacked Toungoo.¹²⁷

In 1613 the Avan king Anaukpetlun marched his armies en masse on Thanlyin and laid siege to the Portuguese stronghold in the Irrawaddy delta. In April the fort fell to the Burmese after a prolonged siege. De Brito was impaled on a stick, his head cut off and displayed for all to see, while his Portuguese followers were all killed.¹²⁸ The downfall of Filipe de Brito in 1613 is attributed by the Burmese chronicles by the end of De Brito's friendship with the *Banha Dala*, when the latter became an ally of Ava with the title of Phyu Dhammaraja and as a consequence Filipe de Brito was left in Thanlyin without local support.¹²⁹ Dutch sources confirm that in 1613 the *Banha Dala* submitted to the king of Ava and in doing so also handed Martaban and Moulmein over to the Burmese. In 1613 in a final attempt to restore the

¹²⁵ According to Prince Damrong, 'Our Wars with the Burmese', p. 207, The son of De Brito married the daughter of *Banha Dala*, but A.P. Phayre's commentary on the *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi*, p. 64, says De Brito marries his daughter to *Banha Dala's* son (*Banha Nwe*) while the text of the *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi*, p. 78, allows for De Brito's son Simon to be married to the daughter of *Banha Dala*. Faria y Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, p. 3:139 finally, lets Simon de Brito marry the daughter of the king of Martaban. As was mentioned earlier this Mon lord was known as the *Banha Dala*.

¹²⁶ NA VOC 1054, fol. 40v. Letter from Cornelis van Nevenrode and Maerten Houtman to Heynrick Janssen in Patani, dated Ayutthaya 3 May 1612. In discussing De Brito's conquests on the Tenasserim coast, Van Nevenrode referred to an earlier letter he had received from Janssen in Patani.

¹²⁷ *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi*, p. 68.

¹²⁸ NA VOC 1056, fol. 95-96v Letter from Maerten Houtman to Heynrick Janssen in Patani, dated Ayutthaya 18 March 1613, fol. 96v; NA VOC 1056, fol. 97v-99 Letter from Maerten Houtman to Heynrick Janssen in Patani, dated Ayutthaya 24 April 1613, fol. 98v and NA VOC 1056, fol. 57-59 Letter from Abraham van den Broecke to the Amsterdam chamber, dated Patani 12 October 1613, fol. 58v.

¹²⁹ Prince Damrong, 'Our Wars with the Burmese', pp. 209-210.

balance of power in Lower Burma Man Khamaung, who had recently succeeded his father, sent three ships to relieve Felipe de Brito, but this succour arrived too late.¹³⁰

Although Filipe de Brito is portrayed in Burmese chronicles like U Kala's chronicle and in the *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi* as a despoiler of temples and an enemy of the Buddhist religion the *Slapat Ragawan*, a Mon chronicle, records that during his reign in Lower Burma several additions were made to the Shwedagon.¹³¹ Also the find in 1915 by the Archaeological survey of Burma of a stone inscription testifying to the foundation of a stupa in 1608 by the son and daughter of the Arakanese wife of Filipe de Brito point to a somewhat different picture of Filipe de Brito.¹³² Would a man noted for his aversion to Buddhism allow his wife and children to build a stupa? The evidence from the Mon chronicle and this archaeological find, together with his own letters and the diplomatic activities suggest that Filipe de Brito aimed to become a *local* lord, and acted accordingly.

The 'Dianga massacres'

The killing of Marcos de Brito in 1607 stood at the beginning of what became known as the 'Dianga massacres'. Manuel de Mattos, the leader of the Portuguese community in East Bengal, was allegedly poisoned by the Arakanese.¹³³ The same year Man Raja-kri killed and captured some 600 Portuguese in Bengal. In a letter to the VOC, addressed to the *stadhouder* of the Dutch Republic, Prince Maurice of Orange, he explained why:

I have had already for a long time the desire to have you [ie. the VOC] in my country to drive out the Portuguese from my land, but because you are so slow in coming here, I could not delay action against those people who have received so much from me and yet betrayed me so bitterly. So I have killed and captured about 600 Portuguese and I have destroyed all of Bengal, so that at this moment only xhenga¹³⁴ is left in Pegu.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ J.S. Furnivall, 'The History of Syriam - Syriam ya-zawin', *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 5 (1915), p. 52-53.

¹³¹ P.W. Schmidt, *Slapat ragawan datow smim roin. Buch des Ragawan, der Königsgeschichte: die Geschichte der Mon-Könige in Hinterindien nach einem Palmblatt-Manuskript aus dem Mon übersetzt* in Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften Abh. 3 Philosophisch-historische Klasse 151 (Vienna: A. Hoelder, 1906) which differs considerably from the *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi*, p. 64 and Lieberman, *Administrative cycles* passim.

¹³² *Report of the Superintendent, Archaeological Survey Burma for the year ending 31st March 1915* (Rangoon: Government Printing Burma, 1915), pp. 33-34.

¹³³ The anonymous author of the *Neue Relation* sees a conspiracy whereby Manuel de Mattos was poisoned by the Arakanese but was still given a state funeral attended by Man Raja-kri and his court to quell suspicions regarding his death. *Neue Relation*, p. 4.

¹³⁴ Filipe de Brito. The text has 'a xhenga' or 'one xhenga'.

¹³⁵ Letter from Man Raja-kri to the Prince of Orange, d.d. 1608 in NA VOC 4778 nf. Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, p. 80, also speaks of 600 deaths without mentioning his sources, he probably refers to

The Dianga killings left the Portuguese community in East Bengal without its leadership. One of the few Portuguese to escape the killing in Bengal was a salt trader from Dianga named Sebastião Gonçalves Tibao.¹³⁶ In the years after the Dianga massacre he would lead the last effort by the Portuguese to recapture their prominent position in Bengal.

Tibao had arrived in Bengal, as so many of the Portuguese adventurers, as a soldier. In the few years that he had been in Asia he had managed to buy himself a small ship with which he engaged in the lucrative salt trade in the Bengal delta. Salt was one of the main products of the island of Sandwip, of which it was said that it could supply the whole of Bengal with that commodity.¹³⁷ Tibao was what might be called a typical example of the Portuguese warrior colonists, selling his services as military man to the highest bidder, engaging in trade and operating as a local lord at the same time. After 1607 Tibao together with a large group of Portuguese sought refuge with one of the *Bhara Bhuiyas*, the raja of Bakla.¹³⁸ From this base in Bakla Tibao and his fellow Portuguese managed to wrest the control over Sandwip from the Afghan warlord Fateh Khan, who held the island as *wilayat* from the Arakanese king. In Bengali history Fateh Khan is known as ruler of Ramu, one of the Arakanese strongholds on the coast south of Chittagong, while in the various Portuguese chronicles he is described as a mercenary formerly in the pay of the Portuguese community in Chittagong.¹³⁹ With his take-over of Sandwip the potential danger of a Portuguese controlled Sandwip became a reality for the Mrauk U kings. It now became clear that the need to control Sandwip to protect their interests in Chittagong was very real.

From Sandwip Tibao managed a short-lived but profitable enterprise. He extended his influence to the neighbouring islands of Dakhin Shahbazpur and Patelbanga, which he took from his former ally the ruler of Bakla.¹⁴⁰ Tibao's power in this corner of the Bay reached its zenith when in 1610 he managed to win over the *anauk-bhuran*, Man Nyo a son of Man Rajakri, in his quest for power:

Dann dises besorgten die arme gefangne Christen, dieweil sie wol wusten, daß ihre erledigung allein an dem gelegen, wann die Insul erhalten wurde, welche der König (wie er sagte) an vilen Orten durchgraben, am Volck erödnen, und gar ins Meer leßen und versencten wolte. Mit disen Briefen schrib Philippus de Britto auch dem

Faria y Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, p. 3:154.

¹³⁶ Faria y Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, p. 3:154.

¹³⁷ Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, p. 67, citing Du Jarric.

¹³⁸ Faria y Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, pp. 3:154-157.

¹³⁹ The Bengali poet Nasrullah Khan (c. 1560-1625) in his *Jang nama* relates how his father Mansu Khan Khondkar was honoured by king Fateh Khan, king of Ramu. This Fateh Khan is according to Haq the one who controlled Sundiva in 1607. In Bengali histories Gonçalves Tibao is known as *Ganjlis*. M.E. Haq, *Muslim Bengali literature* (Karachi, 1957), pp. 109-140; Faria y Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, pp. 3:154-157.

¹⁴⁰ Faria y Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, p. 3:158. See Luard's notes in Manrique, *Itinerario*, pp. 1:394-395.

*Anacaparao (diß ist der Nam deß Königins, deme Ramu und Chocoria eigentlich zugehört) und erinnert ihn, wie daß der König von Arracam sein Vätter (dieweil er sich seiner besorgte) ihn wider alle billichteit vons seinen Landen außgeschlossen, und nur in ein Ed. desselbigen eingetrunen, strich ihme auch andere plagen und unbild, so ihme der König von Arracam gethan heffe, herfür, reiße ihn also an, sich wider den Vatter auffzuwerffen, und daß er mit seiner Macht zum Sebastian Gonzales stossen solte, versprach auch, er wölle ihme selbst Arracam einnehmen, und ihn allda zum König machen helfen. Diser ursachen, unnd daß Sebastian Gonzalves hierzu auch sein hülff anerbote, wurffe diser deß Königs Vetter Anacaparao sich auff.*¹⁴¹

The Dutch chief of the VOC in Masulipatnam, Jan van Wesick writing on 15 June 1610 commented on this situation. He reported that an ambassador from the king of Arakan had arrived in Masulipatnam with a letter from Man Raja-kri asking why the Dutch support Pieter Willemsz. promised him in 1608 had not arrived yet. Van Wesick noted that in 1609 the king also sent an ambassador to Goa to ask the *Estado da Índia* for help, and in 1610 he was at war with his brothers¹⁴². He also reported that the rebels had a large following and were supported by Sebastião Gonçalves Tibao. To make matters worse Man Raja-kri faced at the same time an invasion by the king of Ava, who had refused access to the ruby mines in Upper Burma, presumably meaning that he had closed the passes across the Arakan Yoma.¹⁴³

In the early days of Tibao's leadership he seemed to be on a good footing with Filipe de Brito in Thanlyn, but this soon gave way to mutual distrust. After the 1607 siege, Filipe de Brito needed all the resources he had to stay in power in Lower Burma and he was not able to make good his claim to be the leader of all the Portuguese in this part of the Bay of Bengal. Conflicts with Tibao soon ensued. The conflict between Sebastião Gonçalves Tibao and Filipe de Brito was discussed by king Philip II in a letter to his *viso-rey* Dom Jeronymo de Azevedo dated 15 March 1613. The king ordered that the two should stop their rivalry and work together to secure access to Porto Grande¹⁴⁴, abide by the peace that was concluded between the *Estado da Índia* and Arakan by de last *viso-rey* Lourenço de Tavora, and fight with the Arakanese against the rise of Mughal power in Bengal.¹⁴⁵ But by the time this order reached Bengal the king's words were years behind the facts happening on the ground.

The Mughal campaign for eastern Bengal by Islam Khan starting in 1608 had unsettled the Bhara Bhuiya coalition and made room for Tibao to expand his rule, as will be

¹⁴¹ *Neue Relation*, p. 11.

¹⁴² In fact his own sons had risen against him. Leider, *Le royaume d'Arakan*, pp. 211-214.

¹⁴³ Van Wesick mentioned that on no account would the VOC assist Man Raja-kri in a war against this Filipe de Brito. *Missive van Jan van Wesick uijt Mussilipatan van de 15en Junij 1610* {Report from Jan Wesick, dated Masulipatnam 15-6-1610} NA, VOC 1055 n.f.

¹⁴⁴ The Chittagong region.

¹⁴⁵ De Bulhão Pato, *Documentos Remittidos da India*, pp. 2:391-395 and *Neue Relationi*, pp. 10-11.

highlighted in the following pages where we will discuss the ascendancy of Mughal power in Bengal after 1608. In 1615 Tibao even succeeded to win the support of the *Estado* for a military campaign against Arakan. On 14 September 1615 a fleet set sail from Goa to unite with Tibao and attack Mrauk U.¹⁴⁶ This episode that ended in the defeat of Tibao in 1616 will be discussed in the next Chapter.

3.5 *The Mughal campaigns of Islam Khan in Bengal (1608-1613)*

Islam Khan is in Mughal historiography credited with the consolidation of Mughal power in West Bengal and the first substantial victories over the local lords of East Bengal or *Bhati*. For an understanding of the campaigns of Islam Khan and the political geography of Bengal it is necessary that a short description is given of the *Bhara Bhuiyans*. Effective control of the Mughals over Bengal was at this time confined to narrow limits and did not stretch far beyond Rajmahal and a few fortified outposts such as Ghoragat on the right bank of the Karatoya on the south-western border of Kuch-Bihar, Salimnagar at Sherpur Atai in Mymensingh, and Alapsing facing the residence of Khwaja Usman at Bokainagar in Mymensingh. At Dhaka a few *thanahs* were made to protect the city. Bhawal: some 16 miles north-east of the city, Tok, 22 miles north of Bhawal, and Trimohani near Narayanganj 10 miles south-east of Dhaka at the confluence of the Ganges (Padma), Lakhya and the Brahmaputra (Meghna) near Idrakpur.

The local lords of south-eastern Bengal, or *Bhara Bhuiyas*, were organized in a coalition led by Musa Khan, son of Isa Khan who himself was of Afghan descent. The coalition consisted of Afghan warrior colonists and local Hindu chiefs.¹⁴⁷ Raja Pratapaditya of Jessore was the most powerful *zamindar* of the time. He had holdings in Jessore, Khulna and Backerganj and his capital commanded the confluence of the Jumna and Ichamati rivers, known as Dhumgat. Bordering on Pratapaditya's realm was another Hindu *zamindar*, Raja Ramchandra of Bakla. Bhulua (Balwa) was ruled by Lakshman Manikya, who was succeeded by his son Ananta Manikya, who ruled over a large area at present known as Noakhali. The first chief to join the Mughals was the important *zamindar* Raja Satrajit of the strategically important fort at Bhushna who had large possessions in modern Jessore and Faridpur. Raja Raghunath, *zamindar* of Shushang, who covered large parts of the north-eastern border of Mymensingh also joined the Mughals early.

Musa Khan himself inherited from his father a vast territory earlier in this dissertation

¹⁴⁶ Guedes, *Interferencia e Integração*, p. 167.

¹⁴⁷ The following local lords can be identified as forming part of the Bhara Bhuiyas; three *zamindars* between them ruling most of the Pabna area: Mirza Mumin, the son of Masum Khan Kabuki at Chatmohar, Dariya Khan, and Madhu Ray ruling in Khalsi. Binod Ray, *zamindar* of Chandpratap near Manikganj in Dhaka district. In Shahzadapur in the north-east of Pabna ruled Raja Ray. Majlis Qutb ruled Fathabad (Fathapur); This lists is taken from Sarkar, *History of Bengal*, p. 239.

identified with the area the Mughals called *Bhati*. The lands reigned by Musa Khan comprised about half of Dhaka, large parts of Tripura, and large portions of Mymensingh. The centre of Musa Khan's powerbase was however the strategic region south-east of Dhaka around Trimohani at the confluence of the rivers Ganges, Lakhiya and Brahmaputra. Musa Khan's fort of Khizrpur stood near the confluence of the Dulai and the Lakhiya, opposite the fort stood the family residence of Musa Khan, Katrabo. Opposite modern Narayanganj stood the fort of Qadam Rasul. Three miles east of Khizrpur and nine miles south of Dhaka stood his capital Sonargaon. Another important fort of Musa Khan was Jatrapur at the confluence of the Ganges, the Dhaleswari and the Ichamati. This was a very strategically placed fort because it commanded the water route from Rajmahal to Dhaka. After the death of Kedar Rai in 1603 Musa Khan seems to have taken over his forts at Sripur and Vikrampur. Musa Khan was supported by his cousin Alaul Khan and his brothers Daud Khan, Abdullah Khan and Mahmud Khan, while his other brother Ilyas Khan had submitted to the Mughals after Musa Khan's first defeat.

The account of Islam Khan's wars in Bengal in the *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi* provides a clear insight into the state of Mughal power in Bengal and the way of war in that province.¹⁴⁸ The beginning of Mirza Nathan's account is quite frank as to the state of Mughal influence in the province when he refers to the words the emperor spoke at the beginning of the campaign: 'At this moment it came out of the truth speaking royal tongue, that the conquest of Bengal had assumed a practical shape'.¹⁴⁹ Apart from the statement at the beginning indicating that Bengal was still to be conquered, the first fact that will strike a reader of the *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, is the hazardous passage of the Mughal fleet and army from the capital in Rajmahal to the northern frontier town of Ghoraghat. The passage was by no means peaceful and from Nathan's accounts it seems that almost every step along the way had to be fought for.¹⁵⁰ This further confirms our earlier observation that Mughal rule in Bengal was far from secure after Akbar's first conquest at the end of the sixteenth century.

Islam Khan was sent to Bengal on 6 May 1608. Mirza Nathan, the son of the Mughal admiral Ithiman Khan, the *mir bahr* of the Bengal fleet, describes how at the beginning of the campaign a fleet was assembled and tailored to meet the specific needs of the Bengal theatre

¹⁴⁸ Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi. A history of the Mughal wars in Assam, Cooch Behar, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan by Mirza Nathan*, translated by M.I. Borah, 2 vols (Gauhati 1936). The author of the *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, Mirza Nathan was the son of the Persian nobleman Ihtiman Khan who was the Mir Bahr, or admiral of the Mughal fleet in Bengal. *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, pp 1:xviii-xx. For a detailed analyses of the Baharistan-i-Ghaybi in the context of Mughal warfare, see Jos Gommans, *Mughal Warfare* (Routledge: London, 2002) especially pp. 169-179.

¹⁴⁹ Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, p. 1:6.

¹⁵⁰ Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, pp. 1:1-44. Even the passage from the Mughal court to Rajmahal was not without its difficulties. Mirza Nathan had to fend off his boats from Gawars or 'unruly people' Ibidem, 1:8.

of war. The first thing Ithiman Khan set out to do after his appointment was to requisition from Kalyan Singh, son of Man Singh, the artillery brought from Bengal in the previous years.¹⁵¹ The Mughal fleet at its arrival at Rajmahal now consisted of 295 war-boats, of which 70 were designed to carry loads.¹⁵²

The first objective of the Mughal general was to secure strategic forts along the long supply routes from Rajmahal to *Bhati*. During the rainy season of 1608 Islam Khan started negotiations with Raja Pratapaditya who left his son as a hostage with the imperial troops and agreed to meet the expedition later on.¹⁵³ After the rainy season of 1608 Islam Khan marched to Alaipur. At Alaipur Islam Khan despatched a force to Raja Satrajit, the ruler of Bhushna. Satrajit, like Pratapaditya, decided to join the imperial army and pledged allegiance to Islam Khan.¹⁵⁴ Islam Khan then received Pratapaditya at Nazirpur and the two agreed that Pratapaditya would send his son Sangramaditya with 400 war-boats to join the imperial fleet under the command of Ithiman Khan. Pratapaditya would join the expedition at Sripur and Vikrampur to assist in the battle against Musa Khan. As a reward he would receive the revenue from Sripur and Vikrampur as his allowance and he was further more confirmed in his own possessions.¹⁵⁵

The campaigning season of 1608/9 was largely spent on securing the road to Ghoraghat, the next stop on the way to eastern Bengal. Islam Khan had distributed lands at strategic places along the routes between West and East Bengal amongst his officers as *jagirs*.¹⁵⁶ He now left it to them to bring these areas under control.¹⁵⁷ The negotiations with large local *zamindars* and the campaigns for the *jagirs* were all part of the plan to secure the waterways and roads to *Bhati*, to maintain communication with the Mughal headquarters in Rajmahal and to protect the rear and the flank of the army, as well as to provide safe bases for encampment during the rainy season.

In October 1609 Islam Khan left Ghoraghat and marched south along the Karatoya to Shahzadpur and from there on to Balia about ten miles southeast of Shahzadpur. Islam Khan needed to take out two forts of strategical importance, the fort at Fathabad and the fort at Jatrapur. The control over these forts was vital before Islam Khan could think of attacking

¹⁵¹ At Allahabad Ithiman Khan took from Kalyan Singh 330 pieces of small firearms and cannon, as well as some war-boats. In order to complete the collection Ithiman Khan travelled to the seat of the Man Singh family at Rohtas in Bihar, where he left with 85 pieces of large cannon. Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, pp. 1:7, 12.

¹⁵² Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, p. 1:15.

¹⁵³ Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, p. 1:14.

¹⁵⁴ Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, p. 1:19.

¹⁵⁵ Pratapaditya agreed to bring 500 war-boats, 20,000 infantry and 1,000 *maunds* of gunpowder to the fight with Musa Khan. Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, pp. 1:14, 27-29.

¹⁵⁶ Ithiman Khan for example received parganas at Jahanabad, Tamluk and other places in Orissa and Bardwan, as well as Sunabazu, Bhaturiabazu, Kalabari and other places in the east of Bengal and near Ghoraghat. Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, pp. 1:12-13.

¹⁵⁷ Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, pp. 1:16, 21-22, 29.

Musa Khan's powerbase at Sonargaon. The fort at Jatrapur lay at the confluence of the Ganges with the Ichamati, and the fort of Fathabad was situated on the opposite bank of the Ganges.¹⁵⁸ These forts not only controlled the overland route to Bhushna and western Bengal, but also provided a base from which Musa Khan could patrol the river Ichamati. All this made the control over Jatrapur and Fathabad vital to the success of the Bengal campaign.

From Balia the fleet and the army of Islam Khan moved on south to Trimohana, the confluence of three rivers, probably close to the place labelled Pidar Poer on Van den Broucke's map.¹⁵⁹ The army entrenched itself here in three forts covering all three rivers, with Islam Khan covering the mouth (*mohana*) of Katasgarh. At this point Islam Khan sent a separate force to Dhaka with 20 war-boats, 50 pieces of artillery and 2,000 musketeers to divert Musa Khan's attention to the East.¹⁶⁰ From the *mohana* of Katasgarh Islam Khan slowly made his way to the main branch of the Ganges leading to Jatrapur. The Mughal general ordered his troops to built block-houses on the banks of the river so that the fleet might pass secure down river.

The battle for *Bhati* was now to begin in earnest. Musa Khan, alerted at the progress of the imperial army, summoned his allies to Jatrapur.¹⁶¹ At the head of a fleet numbering 700 boats they came down the Ichamati and towards the front of the Mughal army, which by then had reached the banks of the Ganges. Musa Khan constructed at Dakchara a fort on the same river bank as the imperial army, hoping in this way to block their advance to Jatrapur. From his new fort at Dakchara Musa Khan launched an attack on the imperial trenches. Despite the fact that the coalition navy outnumbered the Mughal fleet considerably they were unable to dislodge the Mughal army from its trenches on the high banks of the Ganges. After a battle that lasted three days Musa Khan's fleet had to withdraw to Dakchara after having sustained severe losses.

At roughly the same time another Mughal army under the command of Shaikh Habibullah was heading for Fathabad, which was in the hands of Majlis Qutb. The latter wrote to Musa Khan for assistance, who sent him 200 war-boats under the command of Mirza Mumin. Mirza Mumin at night sailed past the trenches of Islam Khan's army and proceeded to the other side of the river to relieve the besieged fort at Fathabad. The army of Habibullah now found itself in turn under siege. But with the assistance of Raja Satrajit of Bhushna the

¹⁵⁸ Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, p. 1:55.

¹⁵⁹ Pidar Poer is situated just north of the entrance to the Ichamati river. From the narrative of the *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi* it seems likely that this is the place meant by Mirza Nathan. See Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, pp. 1:53-60 where he describes the unsuccessful attempts of Islam Khan to enter the Ichamati and the inconclusive discussion in the notes on the exact geography of the battle Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, p. 2:811 n.4-7. Sarkar, *History of Bengal*, p. 253-254.

¹⁶⁰ Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, p. 1:54.

¹⁶¹ The allies of Musa Khan on this expedition included; Alaul Khan, a cousin of Musa Khan, Abdullah Khan and Mahmud Khan, younger brothers of Musa Khan, Bhadur Ghazi, Suna Ghazi, Anwar Ghazi, Shaykh Pir, son of Haji Bhakul, Mirza Mumin, Madhava Raj, *zamindar* of Khalsi, Binud Raj, *zamindar* of Chandpratap, Pahlawam, *zamindar* of Matang, and Haji Shamsuddin Baghdadi. Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, pp. 1:55-57.

attack on Habibullah's trenches was repulsed. Mirza Mumin was forced to retreat and his fleet sustained heavy losses when he had to pass again by Islam Khan's trenches on his way back to Dakchara or Jatrapur.¹⁶²

At this point, around June 1610, it seemed that the two opposing armies held each other in a stalemate. Islam Khan decided to bypass the fort of Dakchara and proceed with a small part of his army to the bank of the Ichamati, while the main body of his army kept Musa Khan occupied in a feigned attack on Dakchara. Islam Khan crossed the Ichamati with his elephants and 20 boats he had earlier recalled from Dhaka. Musa Khan was taken by surprise and his boats arrived too late at the Ichamati to stop Islam Khan's troops from crossing the river. The fort of Jatrapur apparently fell easily in the hands of the Mughal army, which now could march overland to besiege its ramparts. With Jatrapur in Mughal hands a large number of Musa Khan's followers fled to Fathabad on the other side of the Ganges.

Dakchara was taken about a month later, after Mirza Nathan with his engineers had reopened a silted up branch of the river, taking the imperial fleet right to the gates of the fort.¹⁶³ In July 1610 Islam Khan had won the first major battle for *Bhati*. He now had cut off Fathabad from eastern Bengal, and besieged this strategically important fort from Bhushna. And with Jatrapur in Mughal hands he had strengthened his position in the Dhaka area. All was now ready for the attack on Musa Khan's strongholds east of Dhaka. The defection of one of Musa Khan's brothers to the imperial side was another sign that the coalition was beginning to break down.

After his defeat in July 1610 Musa Khan had made the river Lakhiya his last line of defence. Abdullah Khan, a brother of Musa Khan, guarded the fort at Qadam Rasul, Daud Khan was posted at Katrabo, the family residence north of Qadam Rasul. On the Mughal side Mirza Nathan was entrusted with the building of several forts on the right bank of the Lakhiya. The first fort he constructed was at Khizrpur, opposite Qadam Rasul and Katrabo. The fort provided shelter for the imperial navy and artillery. And so to the north and south of Khizrpur the Mughals built their forts facing Musa Khan's strongholds.

The last phase of the Mughal battle against Musa Khan started on the height of the dry season at the New Year's festival of 1020 A.H., 12 March 1611. Mirza Nathan attacked Katrabo, crossing the Lakhiya under the cover of darkness with a number of small boats and his elephants. The attack so surprised Daud Khan that he fled to Sonargaon. The fort at Qadam Rasul was taken as well following the easy victory at Katrabo. These successive defeats meant that the road to Sonargaon was now wide open for the Mughal cavalry, which crossed some smaller rivers with the aid of floating bridges of small boats which were put in place by Mirza Nathan's engineers. Musa Khan hid himself on Ibrahimpur island, while his

¹⁶² Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, pp. 1:59-60.

¹⁶³ Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, pp. 1:60-70

brother Daud Khan was attacked by a Portuguese fleet. The *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi* does not specify who these Portuguese actually were. It is however quite plausible that Daud Khan was fighting against Tibao. Tibao, as was discussed above, had around 1609 occupied Sandwip as an autonomous ruler. It is quite probable that the Mughals could have tried to enlist the help of Tibao's fleet in their last battles with Musa Khan, in the following years Tibao would frequently shift his allegiance from the Mughal to the Arakanese side. Daud Khan was eventually killed in a fight with the Portuguese somewhere after July 1611.¹⁶⁴

Musa Khan made a last attempt to recover his former possessions but his army was prevented from landing by Mirza Nathan. With the defeat of Musa Khan the *Bhara Bhuiya* coalition began to fall apart. First Bahadur Ghazi submitted to the Mughal army. He was followed shortly by Majlis Qutb, who handed over Fathabad. Both men were given their former territories as their *jagir*. The occupation of Fathabad now gave the Mughals a shorter and safe communication line with western Bengal and the ports around Hugli¹⁶⁵.

Conclusion

The involvement of Portuguese mercenaries in the Arakanese littoral has provided significant material for the study of Arakanese history. The Portuguese chronicles help us to construct a detailed image of the struggle over Chittagong and Lower Burma during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. From 1516, when the first Portuguese arrived in Chittagong until 1616, when their last leader was defeated at Sandwip, the Portuguese played a strong and ever more independent part in the politics of south-eastern Bengal and for a short period of time also in Lower Burma. They were instrumental in establishing Arakanese control over the Karnafuli estuary, and consequently over Chittagong. It has also become apparent that the Portuguese were a very diverse group in which different communities worked for various local rulers. With the death of Filipe de Brito and the destruction of Thanlyn in 1613 the Portuguese lost an important leader and one of their strongest positions in the area. At the same time the rise to power of Sebastião Gonçalves Tibao seriously tested the coherence of the Arakanese state. In the following Chapter we will see how the Arakanese were able to eliminate Tibao.¹⁶⁶

At the same time the Mughals slowly but steadily expanded their hold on south-eastern Bengal. The campaigns of Islam Khan brought the Mughals to Dhaka. The conquest of Dhaka provided them with a base from where they could control the economic centre of

¹⁶⁴ Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, pp. 1:85-86

¹⁶⁵ Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, p. 1:88.

¹⁶⁶NA VOC 1083, Report of Hendrick Lambrechts from Urittaung, dated 5-12-1623, folia 188-190; VOC 1055, Report of Jan van Wesick 15-6-1610, n.f. and MacLeod *De Oost-Indische Compagnie als zeemogendheid in Azië, 1602-1650* 2 vols. (Rijswijk: Blankwaardt & Schoonhoven, 1927), pp. 1:220, 494.

Bengal, *Bhati*. The success of Islam Khan's campaign for *Bhati* was not matched by a comparable westward advance of Arakanese influence beyond the Brahmaputra. Although Man Raja-kri found a trustworthy ally in Raja Ananta Manik of Bhalua¹⁶⁷, it appears that after the 1608 debacle in Lower Burma he had his hands more than full with rebellions in his own kingdom.

¹⁶⁷ Ananta Manik was one of the chiefs that followed Man Raja-kri on his campaigns against De Brito. *Neue Relation*, pp. 2-3.