

## XIV. THE TIGER GOVERNOR

The next Governor after Antonio de Albuquerque Coelho whose personality has left its imprint on the history of Macao is Antonio José Telles de Menezes. There were several fidalgos of this name active in Portuguese Asia during the middle of the 18th century, but our man can be identified as the Lisbon-born bastard of Antonio Telles de Menezes, a scion of the noble house of the Counts of Villa Pouca de Aguiar, who came out to India in an ill-starred hour for himself.

After filling various military posts with zeal and distinction, he was appointed Governor and Captain-General of the City of the Name of God in China, where he assumed office on the 30th August 1747. A week after his arrival, he ordered a gibbet and pulley to be erected on the wall of Monte citadel, for the enforcement of the military punishment of strappado. A detachment of twelve soldiers armed with carbines escorted him whenever he stirred out of the citadel. Not only the Macaonese, but even the local Chinese population were afraid of him, the latter calling him by the nickname of *Lofu* or "Tiger."

In June 1748, the night patrol on their round from Monte arrested two Chinese suspects. They were so badly beaten up by the soldiers in attempting to make their escape, that they died from their injuries. Telles de Menezes concealed the bodies by burying them in a dungeon in the citadel, or (according to the Senate's version) by placing them in jars and sinking them in the sea. He then ordered a flat denial of the incident to be made to all enquiries. Murder however will out, and a Macaonese named Franco informed the Chinese authorities of the crime. The Mandarin of Heungshan demanded the surrender of the culprits, but Menezes flatly refused to comply, even when the Chinese resorted to

their usual expedient of closing the Barrier-gate and cutting off the supply of food. When the Senate was intimidated into promising the surrender of the guilty soldiers, the Governor hurriedly shipped them off to Timor, thus evading compliance. The affair was finally settled out of court in the usual way, by paying heavy "squeeze" to the Heungshan officials through the intermediary of the Jesuits. Meantime the Governor arrested the informer Franco and subjected him to a rigorous punishment on the strappado. This incident was remembered by the Chinese to the Governor's disadvantage when he passed through the colony nearly 20 years later on his way to govern Timor.

Another instance of the Governor's severity occurred in November 1748. He had previously ordered the Municipal Judge to pay some attention to his legal duties, since many litigants had complained that they could never get their cases brought to court. The Judge, a certain Antonio Pereira Braga, paid no attention to these orders. Since the complaints of the would-be litigants increased in number and volume, Telles de Menezes summoned the unsuspecting official to his residence in the fortress of Monte. Menezes at first treated his guest courteously, begging him to relax all formality by removing his sword and coat. When he had done so, the Governor then upbraided him in the bitterest terms for his delinquency, and summoning his negro slaves into the room, gave the unfortunate *Ouidor* a severe thrashing. No sooner was this finished however, than he gave the victim back his sword and clothing, treated him with every consideration and regaled him with a glass of brandy as if nothing untoward had happened. It is not surprising to read that after the Governor had served in a similar fashion two or three more of the local officials who had offended him, there was a universal reluctance to accept the proffered hospitality of Government House. Those who received invitations were apt to seek refuge in one of the convents, or even find it necessary to pay an urgent visit to Canton.

A more patriotic gesture of this truculent Governor was evinced in the course of a dispute with the local representative of the *Hopu*, or Kwangtung Customs Commissioner, in the same month. On the grounds that the latter had

exceeded his authority in erecting some matshed walls around the Customs House, he had these flimsy structures torn down by his negro slaves, whereon the aggrieved Chinese officials appealed to the Senate for redress. The latter remonstrated with the Captain-General but got no change out of him. He drafted a counter protest to the Senators, pointing out that Macao was a Portuguese colony by permission of the Chinese Emperor, adding that in so far as he was concerned, "wherever the Portuguese Standard flew, it could not be lowered without shedding much blood". The Senators however were made of weaker if more practical stuff, and the trouble was eventually settled by their replacing the damaged structure with more durable material at their own expense.

This crisis came at a particularly awkward moment for the colony, as its security was already threatened by one of the periodical anti-Christian persecutions, which was raging throughout the Empire. In the course of this persecution, five Spanish Dominicans were martyred at Foochow, whilst the heroic Portuguese Jesuit missionary Padre Antonio José, and his Italian companion Tristan de Attimis, met a similar fate at Suchow in Kiangsu province on the 13 September 1748. Simultaneously the Kwangtung Provincial authorities began to turn the screws on Macao, and ordered the publication of an Imperial Edict forbidding all proselytizing in the colony and condemning the Christian religion as false. The publication, or at any rate the implementation of this decree was evaded; but the local mandarins also demanded the closing of the Seminary of Santo Amaro, which was run by the Jesuits for the instruction of neophytes and the formation of a native clergy. At this point the opposition stiffened, and the whole ecclesiastical community ranged themselves behind Bishop Hilario and the Jesuits, who, although usually at loggerheads with each other, were now united in defence of the faith. The Senate, who at first adopted a somewhat equivocal and wavering attitude, were emboldened to refuse the Chinese demand after the Jesuit Provincial, Padre Estevão Lopes, had flatly declined to hand over the keys of the Seminary to the mandarin of Heungshan. The Cantonese authorities eventually dropped

the matter, presumably after their palms had been suitably greased.

Telles de Menezes would doubtless have strongly supported the Bishop and the Jesuits in their stand, but he was no longer in the colony when matters came to a head, having been shipped off to Goa in disgrace. It is obvious that his arbitrary if courageous conduct had created many bitter enemies for him amongst the leading citizens. One of them was Manuel Vicente Rosa, the wealthiest and most influential of all, who, according to the traditional account of these events, combined with the Senators to discredit the Governor with the Viceroy at Goa. The popular story alleges that the conspirators persuaded the mandarins at Canton to write to Goa, complaining of the conduct of Telles de Menezes and demanding his recall. It is further alleged that Manuel Vicente Rosa supported these complaints with a present of solid gold oranges to the Viceroy, who was so impressed that he sent a legal official to Macao for the express purpose of arresting the Governor and giving due satisfaction to the mandarins. The nineteenth century historian, Antonio Marques Pereira, a careful and conscientious writer who lived many years in Macao, claims that the truth of this story was proved by authentic documents which he himself had examined.

Despite the integrity of Marques Pereira, there are some doubtful points in this tale. In the first place, the allegation that the Cantonese mandarins had written direct to Goa is demonstrably untrue, as there is no recorded instance of the Chinese authorities ever corresponding with the Viceroy of Goa. Secondly, the allegation of bribery, although natural enough, is difficult to credit in the present instance; since the Viceroy of Portuguese India in 1744-1750 was the Marquis of Alorna, an exceptionally honest and impartial official. However it must be admitted that the Marquis was influenced in some way; his apologist, the well-known Lisbon pamphleteer Jose Freire de Monterroyo Mascarenhas, makes the following rather cryptic allusion to this affair in Part VI of his *Epanaphora Indica*, published at Lisbon in 1752.

"In the previous April some complaints against the

Governor of Macao, Antonio Telles de Menezes, had reached Goa. None of these impugned his distinctive valour, nor his upright conduct, nor the cleanness of his hands. They were all concerned with some arbitrary acts into which his haughty spirit had led him. It was at once realised that all these charges had been trumped-up by a very wealthy but very proud merchant established in that city. But so persuasive were the arguments of his procurators in Goa, that they succeeded in inducing the Viceroy (who was immovable in all else) to deprive that fidalgo of his government which he had occupied for over a year, appointing in his stead the naval captain João Manuel de Mello. At the same time he sent an authorisation to Dr. Antonio Pereira de Silva, Judge of the High Court of Goa, with orders to leave for Macao in the next monsoon and to make a most searching inquiry into the crimes of which the former Governor was accused".

The Viceroy's sentiments were evidently not shared by the Bishop of Macao, who had written him in a dispatch dated January 1748: "Antonio José Telles de Menezes, Governor of this City, is a person worthy of estimation, and I have already experienced his good will in helping me in what he can. I greatly regretted the departure of Cosme Damião Pinto Pereira, but the successor whom he left me has assuaged this loss; and since I am indebted to both of them, I would be obliged if Your Excellency would favour him whenever the opportunity occurs".

The Bishop's patronage was not enough to prevent Telles de Menezes from being deposed from his office and confined in the fortress of Guia, after having been led through the streets by the sheriff's posse, and exposed to the obliquity of the bystanders. This took place in August 1749, after which he was transferred under close arrest to Goa. Here it seems that he was able to exculpate himself, or maybe Alorna's successor in the Viceroyalty, the Marquis of Tavora, was not so amenable to gifts of golden oranges. Anyway, his next appearance on the public scene was when in an evil hour for himself he contracted to marry a wealthy mulatto heiress, Dona Inez Gracias Cardozo, who lived on her vast estates in the valley of the Zambesi in East Africa.

Antonio Jose Telles de Menezes married, and which formed the backdrop to the ensuing tragicomedy described in a lengthy dispatch by the Governor of Mozambique, Francisco de Melo de Castro, addressed to the Viceroy of India in August 1757.

After Telles de Menezes had lived an uneasy married life for some time with his mulatto bride, they quarrelled so continuously that they eventually separated. The wife retired to one of her ranches, whence she ordered all her negro slaves and domestics to abandon her husband and leave him to his own devices. Not content with this, she bribed or intimidated the General of the Rivers, David Marques Pereira, to turn her husband out of the house he was living in, for which action he was severely censured by the Governor. The unfortunate Menezes now made his way to Mozambique where he brought a court action for the restitution of his rights, including the ownership of various properties which his wife had made over to him on the signing of the marriage settlement. The court having given a decision in his favour, he spent two years vainly attempting to induce the General of the Rivers to enforce it, which the latter under the pressure of Dona Inez consistently declined to do.

In February 1757, he obtained an escort from the Governor which enabled him to take possession of one of the disputed properties at Luabo. The officer commanding the escort having performed his duty, returned upriver to Senna by himself in a canoe. On the way he met Dona Inez coming downstream with a large flotilla of canoes filled with armed slaves levied to expel her husband from Luabo. This flotilla forthwith attacked the Sergeant-Major who defended himself valiantly, keeping his assailants at bay as long as his powder and shot lasted. Eventually he ran out of ammunition, and when bending down to get his pike out of a case, his canoe was rammed and overset, the unhappy man being killed or drowned as he tried to swim ashore. By order of Dona Inez his corpse was fished out of the water, and his head cut off and stuck on a post on the river bank.

Having blooded her slaves in this way, Dona Inez continued her voyage to Luabo, where she landed and set fire

The holders of these estates, *prazos* as they were called, lived a life of luxury and dissipation which would have astonished many a contemporary West-Indian planter. The wealthiest of these territorial magnates had thousands of negroes in their employ, not as field-hands but as tribes in a state of subjection. The Portuguese colonies in the Zambesi valley were run on different principles from the sugar and tobacco plantations of Brazil, the Antilles, and Virginia. Spasmodic government-sponsored efforts to found purely European settlements with a heterogeneous lot of convicts, prostitutes, and destitute peasants sent out from Portugal having failed, the country was now occupied by landowners of mulatto or Goanese origin with a sprinkling of pure Europeans. These waged intermittent warfare with the hostile Bantu tribes of Monomatapa (roughly identical with the present Rhodesia and Nyasaland) varied by bloody feuds and vendettas with each other. They used the Bantu tribes under their own control to fight these battles, and employed roving negroes to collect gold-dust and ivory for them throughout the countryside by barter.

They paid a purely nominal allegiance to the Portuguese Crown, whose small and sickly garrisons were too few and far between to curb their insolence and independence. They were exceedingly hospitable in their way, and lived in barbaric luxury with costly hangings, furniture and jewelry imported from Macao and Goa, with the profits they made on the sale of gold-dust, ivory and slaves, — the three main products of the colony of Mozambique. Their estates varied widely in size, but some of them ran to many thousands of acres, and were comparable to the holdings of the cattle-kings in America. The settlements in the Zambesi valley were under the titular authority of a military officer grandiloquently entitled *General of the Rivers* (General dos Rios), who in his turn was subordinate to the Governor and Captain-General of Mozambique. The retail trade was in the hands of Hindu and Parsee merchants from India; whilst the colonists were too lazy to grow cotton, sugar, or tobacco on any scale, and contented themselves with rice, fruits and the products of the chase. Such, in barest outline, was the nature of the society into which

to the house wherein her husband was living. The latter escaped from the flames "with great difficulty and equal peril", but once outside he was attacked and wounded in the shoulder by the Bantus, only making good his escape downriver by a very narrow margin. His clothes and household effects were seized by the Kaffirs who divided the spoil amongst themselves to the great amusement of Dona Inez. Her harassed husband now sought refuge in the local Jesuit establishment, only to find that his vengeful wife had been there before him, and he was driven away by showers of bullets, assegais, arrows and stones, again narrowly escaping with his life. He finally retired to Quelimane, where he arrived with nothing but the rags and tatters he stood up in, and where he was forced to live on charity. Meanwhile Dona Inez murdered a local Portuguese settler, his mulatto wife and their little daughter, for the sole reason that they had given her husband some food and shelter on his flight.

After this display of vengeance, the sanguinary Amazon retired to her estates near Senna, whence she sent a message to the commander of the local garrison, telling him that he had nothing to worry about, since she had no hostile intentions against the settlement, but was resolved to pursue Telles de Menezes wherever and whenever she might find him. The Governor of Mozambique concluded his report by stating that the local authorities in Zambesia had done nothing to apprehend Dona Inez nor would they dare to in the future. All the settlers were on her side through fear or favour, and he suspected that the Crown officials themselves were not exempt from either.

The final scene played out in this tragicomedy is not recorded in print, but evidently this terrible experience had considerably shaken the nerve of the one-time 'Tiger Governor' of Macao. So much at least may be inferred from the fact that ten years later Antonio José Telles de Menezes, who was then Governor of Timor, abandoned the stronghold of Lifao when it was besieged by the rebellious 'Black Portuguese' under Francisco de Hornay, and transferred the seat of government to the more easterly Dilli (Deli) where it has remained ever since. True it is that there were some exte-

nuating circumstances in this withdrawal, as Lifao was a stronghold only in name, and had been frequently besieged or blockaded by the rebels. But judging from his behaviour at Macao in 1748, it is not likely that he would have taken a similar attitude then; whilst the siege of 1769 does not seem to have been more closely pressed than those successfully withstood by some of his predecessors. Be this as it may, we will round off this chapter by briefly chronicling these last days in Timor.

The failure of the *Larantuqueiros* or 'Black Portuguese' to expel their white cousins and nominal overlords from this turbulent island in 1721–31, as narrated in Chapter XI, caused them to turn their attention to the Hollanders of Castle Concordia at Koepong. On the 18th October 1749, the *Opperhoofd*, Jacob van der Burgh, and his Council were surprised by the appearance of one of their tributary petty chiefs, who brought the unexpected and unwelcome news that "his people had seen a fearful multitude of armed men in the uplands and mountains, and heard the beating of many drums". Scouts sent out to verify this alarming report, returned with the information that there were indeed 2,800 Black Portuguese matchlock-men, apart from numerous hostile native tribesmen, marching on Koepong. They were headed by their "Lieutenant-General", Gaspar da Costa, and were flying "the King of Portugal's flag, standard, and Banner, called by them *El Real*". Although the Koepong tribesmen were terrified by this "awesome multitude", the Hollanders succeeded in scraping together a motley force of 23 Europeans, 130 *Mardijkers* (native freemen) and about 350 tribesmen, who were placed under the command of Ensign Lip. This little force, strengthened by the adhesion of more local tribesmen, sallied forth to attack the enemy in their stone-wall encampment on the field of Penefoeij, Sunday 9th November 1749.

Four of the enemies' *paggers* were stormed after heavy fighting, and whilst the beaten foe were falling back on their fifth and last stone-wall, the Dutch Timorese auxiliaries who had hitherto mostly been passive spectators of the conflict, "now taking courage, suddenly fell on the enemy from all directions, and made such a frightful slaughter amongst

them, that in an instant the field was covered with dead bodies. Meanwhile our men met with a very stiff resistance in this last entrenchment, for the Lieutenant-General and his other high officers who were behind it, seeing the slaughter of their men outside, and having no hope of escape, defended themselves with the courage of despair. Finally however they had to succumb to the might of the Honourable Company's arms, and the entrenchment was stormed and captured by the united Europeans, *Mardijkers* and brave Savonese tribesmen. Now at last the inmates tried to save themselves by flight, but our men were too close on their heels. Fearful was now their defeat on all sides, within and without, the more so since we had captured their horses and could pursue them closer. The Lieutenant-General, who had fled on horseback with 3 or 4 others when this last entrenchment was overrun, was overtaken about a thousand paces away, brought down by a Timorese with a javelin, and forthwith beheaded like all the others who had been cut down. Their total casualties are uncertain, but our own Timorese brought in about one thousand heads that evening and as many more within the next two days in triumph, whilst they are still pursuing the flying foe. We on the other hand have lost only 19 Timorese, one *Mardijker* and two volunteers, albeit there were not a few wounded", the official report of 18th May 1750 triumphantly concluded. Ensign Lip's remarkable victory on this Bloody Sunday caused the surviving Black Portuguese to resume their attacks against Lifao and to leave Koepong severely alone.

The reader may recall that in 1750 there were only eight Portuguese and a few Dominican friars left to represent the mother-country on Timor, where the state of things could hardly have been worse. Deteriorate conditions did however, for it had by now become the common practice to send only jail-birds thither, on the rare occasions when anyone was sent from Goa at all. Thus the Judge-cum-Treasurer who was the senior official on the island in 1781, was a man who had been found guilty of embezzling the funds of the *Misericordia* in the Indo-Portuguese capital. With such gentry in charge of the administration, it is not surprising that the few honest officials who appeared on the

scene were periodically removed by poison. The government of Lifao was thus often left in the hands of Dominican friars or the Black Portuguese de Hornays, or of an uneasy alliance of both. By this time the Hornays and Costas had composed their differences to the extent that a representative from each succeeded in rotation to the leadership of the *Topas* community. Accordingly after Gaspar da Costa's death or the stricken field of Penefoeij, a de Hornay took his place as Tenente-General. In view of this chaotic state of affairs, some of the Dutch Residents sought to fish in troubled waters, although they received no encouragement to do so from their superiors at Batavia, who repeatedly forbade them to interfere in the strife between Black Portuguese and White. A better deterrent than these formal orders was given by the fate of the German *Opperhoofd* Albrecht Von Pluskow in 1761. This individual sought to reinstate an expelled Governor of Lifao by force, — with a view to seizing the place for the Dutch if the Portuguese accounts are to be credited. He miscalculated the fundamentally loyal character of the rebels, for he was murdered by the minions of Francisco de Hornay soon after he set foot on shore. Hornay held the place for the King of Portugal until the arrival of the next Governor, who was poisoned five years later.

When Antonio José Telles de Menezes reached Lifao via Larantuka in 1768, he was closely blockaded by de Hornay, who nevertheless failed to carry the place by assault in a two-day frontal attack. But although temporarily victorious, Menezes' position was anything but enviable. He describes the place as being defended by a line of rudimentary stockaded earthworks, irregularly laid out over too extensive a tract of rugged and broken ground. He had 1,200 mouths to feed, of whom over half were women and girls, with only fifteen white men in the garrison. His appeal to Macao for assistance resulted in the arrival of 150 piculs of rice which did not provide rations for more than a month. A rebel flotilla cut off his supplies by sea, whilst Francisco de Hornay pressed the blockade by land so closely that the garrison could not sally out to forage for sago or coconuts. The surrounding country was in the hands of the rebels, or of the

Dutch, whilst the sixty cannon available for the defence of Lifao were either dismantled or of uneven calibre. All in all, Antonio Jose Telles de Menezes can perhaps hardly be blamed for considering his situation tactically hopeless and deciding to abandon Lifao; although, as already mentioned, Governors Guerreiro, Albuquerque, and Pedro de Mello, had "sat out" sieges equally difficult.

His decision taken, Menezes abandoned Lifao on the night of the 11/12 August 1769, taking advantage of the arrival in port of a large ship from Macao some weeks earlier, in which he was able to transport most of the garrison and armament. He set fire to what stores and equipment remained behind, and sailed eastwards. His first port of call was Batugade, where he left 12 guns and some reinforcements. From here he sailed to Dilly (nowadays known as Timor Dilli) which he reached on the 10th October. In this unhealthy and malarial site, which had nevertheless the advantage of being pretty far removed from the area controlled by the Black Portuguese around Larantuka and Lifao, he founded the new capital of the colony. And here through many vicissitudes it has remained ever since, including the days of Joseph Conrad, and the Japanese interregnum of 1942–45. Although Lifao was thus abandoned, it was not lost to Portugal, for even the rebellious de Hornays of Dutch ancestry acknowledged allegiance to the Lusitanian Crown. The very rebels flew the flag of the *Quinas*, which still flies today over this enclave of Portuguese territory in the Dutch half of Timor, — a colonial fossil comparable to Franco-Dutch Saint Martin in the West Indies, or to British Honduras in Central America.

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