St. Paul College Historical Role and Influence in the Development of Macao

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Abstract

Macao is the first western city in East Asia, founded by Portuguese merchants, adventurers and missionaries. The first permanent urban complex in the city was the Jesuit’s Saint Paul College (SPC) that had a decisive role in Macao’s history. The objective of this paper is to analyze the role, influence and functions of Saint Paul College in the last 450 years. Because no plans or drawings survived to the present days, retrieving of the SPC historical layout, role and influence made use of a scientific method that consisted of a systematic survey and a comparison analysis of data from 1) graphic images and maps; 2) historical documents; and 3) archeological findings. This method could provide enough data to elaborate on a conjectural model of the SPC that would be needed to visualize its architecture. Historical research evidences showed that the SPC had three major functions: a) as a religious center and university college (1594-1762); b) as a military facility (1789-1835); and c) as a tourist and archeological site (1970’s - present). The conclusions showed the influence of SPC in the architecture of other religious facilities as well in the external use of squares as a baroque space introductory to the sacred buildings. The SPC was important for the understanding of Macao Architecture.

Keywords: Macao development; St. Paul College; architectural influences; tourism; conjectural model

1. Introduction

Around 1557, Imperial China permitted the Portuguese to settle in a practically empty peninsula on the delta of the Pearl River known as Macao. They built temporary shelters made of timber and straw until the small settlement was progressively transformed into a strategic city along the maritime silk route, replacing Venice and its Middle East allies. Macao initially served as an international commercial outpost until it became a unique venue for the interchange of cultural, scientific and religious values between Europe and Asia. The western city was known as a “Christian city” in order to distinguish it from the local settlements outside the city walls.

The construction of Saint Paul College (SPC) was started around 1572 at the most strategic site of the Macao peninsula called Monte Fort. The first structures were the church and the “Casa Professa” (residence headquarters) of the Jesuits. In 1592 the Jesuit missionaries in Nagasaki decided to put up a college outside Japan for Japanese students and chose Macao instead of Goa1) in India. Two years later, the SPC was established as the first university in the Far East with the aim of providing formation to missionaries and facilitate the spread of religious belief and humanist culture all over Asia. The SPC also served as the permanent foundational stronghold and nucleus on the hilltop from where the city developed and grew towards the inner and outer harbors (Fig.1)

As the first and most prestigious missionary Catholic center in China, the SPC became a model and a reference point for other religious communities to settle in Macao, such as the Dominicans, Augustinians and Franciscans. Within a period of 400 years, the SPC was used for different purposes: from a college to a military barracks in 1762, and as a cemetery and museum after the fire of 1835. Other religious compounds in Macao followed a similar fate of decay and demolition during the expulsion of the friars in the 1830’s and brought to a tragic end an important chapter in the history of Macao Christian architecture. We found a few gaps in the history of the SPC that influenced the creation of the Three Dimension (3D) models. These models which were designed as visualization aids, helped in discovering that the historical buildings suffered some inaccuracies due to lack of information. It was necessary to fill in these gaps in order to have a clear perspective of the SPC’s role and influence, and made it necessary to elaborate a conjectural model. The SPC ruins today remained as an important archeological site and was in fact, proposed to UNESCO by the government of the People’s Republic of China2) to be included in the List of World Heritage. The conclusions of this research would contribute to filling in the historical gaps and clarify the misconceptions about the SPC in order to fully understand its layout and establish its influence in the city.

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2. Difficulties of sources and gaps in the history of Macao’s foundational years

Macao’s 16th century history was affected by contradictory views due to missing data from the generic descriptions of places such as bays, hills, and shrines which could not be clearly identified with Macao’s geographic location. Legends were adapted to fill up these important historical gaps. The reality of this unacceptable situation was demonstrated by Portuguese researchers5) like Teixeira (1975) and Loureiro (1997) and Chinese scholars6) like Shibao (2002) and Oi (2003). All documents and scientific evidences pointed to the fact that when the Portuguese arrived, the place was deserted:5) there were no local forts, temples, harbors, residences, or any other types of archeological ruins which could have influenced the construction of a western city. According to Zhiliang (2003), the Portuguese were allowed to stay in Macao in 1557 to import overseas goods for the imperial court. Under this situation, the SPC complex became a pioneer building to serve as a foundation stone for the development of the city. To overcome the gaps in Macao’s foundation and its further development, it was fundamental to establish an effective method of knowing SPC’s long history and its influence on the environment of Macao.

3. Research methods and previous conjectural models

Previous papers published by architects Moreno and by Amaro et al. (1999) either focused on the first decades of the SPC, or on the archeological findings of the 1990’s and the museum project for this historical site. There were two large gaps in the available literature on the SPC history. The first historical gap was the period of 1602-1644 after the construction of the church. The second gap corresponded to the period between the fire of 1835 and the archeological diggings of 1994-97. Due to the architectural importance of the SPC, there was a need to obtain a historical perspective that includes the original layout and, if possible, the different phases of the long period of development. A conjectural model would be elaborated on to confirm the research findings, the connections and interrelationships between the different SPC buildings and their correspondence with textual and graphic data. Conjectural models were considered important learning and research testing tools. Models of cities like Rome, Nagasaki, Osaka, Lisbon, Berlin which were well documented in museums could be analyzed thanks to the research works of several scholars. The more accurate the historical accounts were, the better were the conjectural models used in order to build and to clarify any misunderstanding about the established history of the city. To answer this particular need for Macao, there was an attempt in 2001 by students of Macao University6) for a virtual reconstruction of the Mater Dei Church which formed part of the SPC complex. The result was a 3D computer generated image (Fig. 2 & 3) which interestingly did not match the graphic evidence provided by two painters; George Chinnery and William Andersen (Fig. 4 & 5). Both painters made several drawings on Macao religious compounds which allowed some glimpses of the SPC facades and interiors.

The 3D model relied heavily on the work of Tin (1990) that was based on two documents which contained the descriptions of two visitors; Father Jose Montana and Peter Mundy. Montana noted that: “The main section of the church is wide measuring eighty-four palms across and one hundred and sixty palms lengthwise supported on eight columns, four in each row, made of thick wood. It is around fifty palms in height but no more because of the typhoons. The main chapel measures forty-four palms across and sixty-two palms lengthwise. It and the two chapels on each side are lined with fine wood from Japan called funaki”. These dimensions were confirmed by the archeological findings. Peter Mundy, who visited the Church in 1636, described his impression in a letter to Captain John Weddle: “the roof of the Church appertaining to the College (called St. Paul’s) is of the fairest arches that yet I ever saw to my remembrance, of excellent workmanship, Don by the Chinois. Carved in wood; curiously guilt and painted with exquisite colors, as vermillion, azure, etc., Divided into squares, and at the joining of each squares great roses of many folds or leaves one under another, lessening till all end in a knobbe; near a yard Diameter the broadest, and a yard perpendicular to the knob standing from the roof downward’’.

The 3D model gave a perception of volumetric space. However due to software limitations and the lack of data related to the interior of the church, it was difficult to
elaborate on the detailed rendering of the shapes and materials described by Jose Montana and Peter Mundy.

Another important factor was the change of the interior decoration of the SPC. A period of 200 years separated the Peter Mundy description of 1636 from the description of the church that was burned in 1835. The roof decoration mentioned was built over a rectangular structural frame, a technique that was commonly found in Portuguese religious and palace architecture. This practice was substituted in Macao by a simpler roof, a flat timber structure, punctuated with several decorated openings for ventilation, and made the material more resistant to humidity and easier to replace. Timber roofs in Macao did not last long due to high humidity, water infiltration, termites, and typhoons. These were the reasons why the interiors of Macao’s churches needed constant remodeling and maintenance work to prevent them to collapse. Regina (1993) mentioned this unfortunate event of 1872 in the high altar and sacristy of Saint Augustine Church. Other reasons for the changes were the influence of new fashions and styles as symbols of modernization and progress. Similar to the St. Augustine and St. Dominic’s compounds, the SPC was influenced by baroque and neoclassic architecture. These influences were omnipresent in Portuguese and Spanish overseas cities and are a necessary “input” when doing research on western historical buildings in Macao. After reading Javellana (1991), we found out that the Macao Mater Dei Church’s interior organization, tower, courtyard, the façade evolution and even its historical fate was similar to the Jesuit’s Sta. Ana in Manila. From the Chico and Reis survey (1983) we discovered the remarkable external similarities that the churches of cartuxian convent in Evora had with the Mater Dei Church in Macao.

Il Gesu (Fig. 6) in Rome was a necessary point of reference by the overseas Jesuits. This influence in Carlo Spinola was apparent in the façade of the Mater Dei Church in SPC. (Fig. 7). According to Kostof (1995), the Sta. Maria Novella (Brammante) and Il Gesu (Giacomo della Porta) façades represented elegant solutions to reduce the height of the supporting sidewalls by hiding them behind volute scrolls. Il Gesu had balanced mathematical proportions that influenced the design of the new Jesuit churches. Another important element in the Il Gesu was the organization of the interior space to only one nave so that the priest could see and preach to the whole community without visual interference of columns.

The bell tower was no longer a separate element in the façade. These mannerist modernizations could not be followed in Macao nor in Portuguese India, particularly Goa because of the difficulties in using stone and the lack of experts from Italy. Hence, more gothic structures were used as reflected by the 3 naves and the cross-shaped floor plan. This also happened in the Mater Dei Church’s interior organization (Fig. 8) that had 3 naves, following the example of the Jesuit church in Goa (Fig. 9). The Macao church kept the bell tower in the main façade, representing an attachment to medieval practices (Fig. 7).
The great religious importance of Macao was traced to 1576 when Pope Gregory XIII erected the Diocese of Macao with the bull “Super Specula Militants Ecclesia”. The diocese had competence to administer the missionary work in China, Japan, Formosa, Korea, Khmer countries and Vietnam. Portuguese kings strongly patronized and promoted the work of the Jesuits. The first Jesuit church in Macao was a wooden structure built around 1563 near the actual St Anthony church. They had their first residence in 1565 and their first school which was later upgraded to a university in 1594. The previous timber church got burned and a new church in the present site of Mater Dei Church was built in 1582. This structure got burned again in 1595 and in 1601. In 1602, the Jesuit Carlo Spinola, of Genovese origin, educated in Madrid and Lisbon, was an architect and mathematician who worked in Macao and Kyoto. He raises Mater Dei church with a more solid structure and with very geometrically elaborate architecture. It also had a local flavor, as influenced by the cultural approach of the Jesuit head in Asia, Alessandro Valignano. Pinheiro (2003) exposed the influence of the SPC in the cultural intersection process in Asia. This was apparent in the façade of the SPC main temple called the Church of Mater Dei (Latin for Mother of God). The walls were made of “Chunambo” or “Taipa”, which meant earthwork walls fabricated with a cementious mortar mixture of clay, pebbles, lime, straw and river sand enriched with shells or similar natural debris. Granite was the solid stone foundation for the Chunambo walls of churches, college buildings, bell towers and most of the fortress structure. The SPC was a city within the city, a compound protected by surrounding walls embracing different buildings and structures: church, school, residence, seminary, fortress, garden, shops, infirmary, storage, library, press, Japanese affairs office, shops and workshops rooms.

4. SPC history

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4. 1. Macao’s citadel

From the beginning, St. Paul College had contributed to the urban organization of Macao. As the religious and cultural center of the city, it was so strategically located and proved to be the key position for the military defense of the city. This was evident particularly on that critical date of July 24, 1622 when Father Jeronimo Rho S.J., fired an accurate cannon shot from Monte Hill and forced the Dutch invaders to retreat. Located on the top of the hill and 30 meters above the Casa Professa, the SPC was a fortified platform used by the Jesuits as a quiet place for resting and as a refuge stronghold in case of danger. According to Graca (1999), this structure could be part of the walls and the four bulwarks built by Captain Tristao Vaz in 1568, and extended afterwards by different military leaders who never garrisoned the place until 1623. Captains from the Portuguese ships probably provided the cannons and directed the first castle construction organized around a four-storey artillery tower, barracks for a few soldiers and a small depot. Moreira (1989) demonstrated that this simple structure enclosed by a wall was a common Portuguese practice since the 15th century, especially in Africa, Middle East and India.

4. 2. Lost of military functions

In 1623, the SPC lost its military function when Dom Francisco de Mascarenhas, who became the first Captain General or Military Governor of Macao, arrived from Manila with a reinforcement of 200 Spanish troops and expelled the priests from the fortified top of the hill platform and close all communications (tunnels and doors) with the seminary. Mascarenhas completed the construction of Monte Fort in 1626, and named it Saint Paul fortress (influenced by “Saint Paul” College) that was permanently guarded by a military garrison. With
that move by Mascarenhas, SPC lost the high grounds of Monte Hill as well as the good relations and respect from the military. This reflected the serious situation in Europe that was suffering from the consequences of the 30 years war (1618-1648), the first global war fought in Europe, America, Africa and Asia. This tragic break up of the political, religious and social order that was initiated in Europe by the Lutheran protestant revolution, contributed to the spread of conflict in America and Asia. In the protestant countries, monasteries and church properties were often emptied, closed and taken by force. Military action was now the “practical” way to do diplomacy. This social change in Europe was reflected first in St. Paul College with the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1762. The SPC buildings were modified since 1789 to serve as troops’ barracks and only the church was used for religious functions. In the 1830’s all other monasteries in Macao received the same fate: it was first used for military purposes and later demolished. After 1910, the most of these ancient monastery properties were put on the market for sale by the new republican government in Portugal.

### 4.3. The Church façade’s religious purpose

The façade of Mater Dei is like an altar retable intended to teach a simplified and short catechetical lesson on the role of Christ’s church in the salvation of men and written by Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese and other South East Asian artisans. The Jesuit Genovese Carlo de Spinola, a mathematician and architect, authored the plan of the church’s façade by geometrically dividing it into five horizontal rows with several images of great religious symbolism (Fig.13). On top was a dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit and represented the Gift of Grace. In the next row was a central arched niche with the figure of Christ the Savior of the world. Below it was a depiction of Mary as the Mother of Jesus and as the new Eve to represent the mother of mankind redeemed by Christ. The middle row is dedicated to the Militant Church, formed by all the baptized struggling in this world to overcome their temptations and miseries by lifting up their hearts to God, receiving the sacraments and doing good works. The message was simple: the ones who overcome this earthly test would overcome death and enjoy eternal life; those who failed would be punished by the fires of hell and by the devil, as represented in the façade. Stone lion gargoyles, chrysanthemums, palm trees, the hydra and Chinese characters were Asian decorative elements. The Militant Church was also represented by the ship and the Jesuit heroes who were saints. At the lowest row were the three gates to access the church building, the house of God who dwelt in the chapel tabernacle. The stairs played an important part in the message because it represented the rising from the low level, of human and materialistic problems, towards the house of God. In the SPC façade we could observe the lost of the rigorous mathematical simplicity of the lower tier structure in favor of abundant decorations to overcome the Mannerist structure.

### 4.4. Destruction of the SPC and its adaptation into a sacred burial ground

In January 26, 1835 a devastating fire which started in the kitchen destroyed most of the SPC. However, the church—contrary to the popular opinion—was not totally destroyed. This was confirmed by several drawings of George Chinnery (Fig. 4). According to Brunt (1954), Fr. Candido Gonzalvez transformed the remains of the church as an exclusive place for burials in 1835. To the already existing tombs under the floor, the burial places were extended to the walls, like in the Roman catacombs. In May 14, 1836, the cemetery was under the administration of the Holy House of Mercy before it was handed to the ecclesiastical authorities in June 1, 1837. The ruins of the former main chapel now served as a funeral chamber. In 1878, the tombs were transfer to the new cemetery of Saint Michael, and the remaining walls were demolished. Despite its worsening situation, the SPC was always remembered as an important part of the history of the city of Macao. Eventually plans were made to recover the SPC for public use.

### 4.5. Reconstruction plans and more demolitions

The reconstruction of SPC to its past glory was always present in nostalgic memories. By the end of the 19th century there was a plan promoted by a wealthy man, Captain Albino Da Silveira, to build on it one of the largest neoclassic cathedrals in Asia (Fig. 14), while keeping only the façade of the old building. He intended to retrieve the position of Macao as the center for apostolic formation and for the spreading of the Catholic faith in Asia. His plan remained as a dream after his death in 1902, and the money collected by Father Antonio Gomes in 1904 was insufficient even to build a chapel. In 1934 walls stone were taken to build a retaining wall at Praya Grande Avenue. In the 1950’s, the SPC suffered further damage with the destruction of the orchards, the courtyard archeological site, the High chapel and the bell tower foundations in order to make room for a road, car parking area and residential houses. A small garden was built behind the façade.
5. Archeological work on the ruins and the new Museum.

Fearing the collapse of the damaged Mater Dei façade, the needed archeological excavations in the surrounding area which covered 3,408 hectares of this historical place was started in 1990. Governor Silverio Marques (1959-62) wanted to turn the SPC site into an archeological museum, a dream that was shattered by the Cultural Revolution riots. From 1990 to 1996, archeological work was done on the SPC site. It was opened to the public in 1997 and offered a large square with a grid design intended to simulate the church interior organization. A small crypt and an exhibition room called the “museum of sacred art” were built near the old main altar to better accommodate the large number of tourists who came to visit the place. Again, the very same building of St. Paul College changed its use and was now a ruin adapted to serve a major industry of Macao.

In 1997, the Macao Museum in Monte Fort premises was inaugurated and considered as the first cultural attraction for eleven million tourists who visited Macao every year. In 2001 the government applied at UNESCO to classify this archeological site as a World Heritage.

6. The Role the SPC in Macao’s development

The western settlers in Macao are of Mediterranean origin, with a predominance of people coming from the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal). Iberian society suffered a long medieval legacy, and was socially structured after the period of the Visigoths and the Arabs into three different social layers: a) the military aristocracy; b) the clergy; and c) the common people. This social organization was reflected in the unique and decisive way by which the Iberian institutions founded or developed their new cities. These three layers were the promoters of the a) fortification networks; b) religious institution buildings; and c) civil and commercial structures. They all cooperated in the development of the overseas Portuguese cities that were often led by the civil or military authorities. However, this was not the case of Macao because it was never taken over by military force or acquired by treaties from among the suzerains. During its first years, the city had a fragile religious government, a weak and “floating” military organization based in the ships, and the absence of an organized civil, municipal and commercial administration. Frequent commercial or criminal disputes were brought to the religious authorities who often acted as mediators. Teixeira (1968) mentioned that in order to solve this uncomfortable situation during the early 1580’s, Macao’s Bishop, Dom Leonardo de Sa and Captain Dom Joao de Almeida, encouraged the new settlers to organize a local government according to the procedures established for the overseas kingdoms. These were important developments which revealed that Macao had no permanent civil authority for at least for 27 years from 1557 until 1584. This unplanned social organization was reflected in the way the city grew, in an organic way around religious centers and adapted itself to the irregular land topography. Under this scenario, the inculturation approach sponsored by Alessandro Valignano, the Visitor of the Jesuits in China and Japan was of great importance. He promoted the study and adoption of Chinese culture and traditions whenever possible, as well as some “local flavor” for the design of the SPC Church of Mater Dei. The Valignano legacy in Asia could be compared with the “Reducciones” of America. “Reduccion” is a Spanish word which meant “reduction” or conversion to a civilization state. They represented urban autonomous compounds designed to administer missionary and social work of charity, such as attending to the sick, teaching languages, sciences, arts, medicine, rural techniques, etc. We could consider St. Paul College as the first case of Reduccion in China.

7. Influence of other religious buildings on SPC

There was an architectural influence from Goa in the internal organization of the church. The body of the church was shaped in the form of a Latin cross, and divided into three longitudinal naves after the traditional gothic organization (Fig. 15). This gothic model did not seem to be copied by other religious buildings in Macao (Table.1) which followed the modern tendency of not having side arms protruding from the church main body. However, similarities between the interior decoration and the layout of the main altar were striking. Some influences were also noticeable when we compared the sketch of the remains of the main altar of Mater Dei (Fig.4) to the main altar of St. Dominic’s church (Fig.16), and that of St. Augustine (Fig.17). This was a local “fashion” that contradicted the practices of the period to integrate the bell tower in the façade (II Gesu or Bom Jesus in Goa).
In Macao, the medieval model of the bell tower was used as a posterior appendix separated from the façade and was attached either on the sides or behind the church main body. The SPC bell tower was the model for similar structures in Macao like the towers attached to the Churches of St Dominic’s (Fig. 18), the Franciscan Church (Fig. 19) and St. Augustine Church (Fig. 20). It reflected an anachronism of styles which were the timeline marks of the 400 years of the evolution of Macao western architecture.

The ventilation system was very different from the European models, where the windows were designed to remain closed. In Macao, the windows and doors were open to allow cross ventilation and facilitate interior lighting. Venetian blinds were used in the same way as in the common residential houses of the city: they served as protection against rain and sunlight while also providing natural ventilation. These windows were protected with iron or bronze grills. The windows of the churches had a third layer of solid wooden shutters for protection against typhoons. Table 1 compare the organizational patterns found in several complexes of different religious orders in Macao. This comparison contributed to the construction of conjectural models. The research on a demolished historical building of the past was not completed until a conjectural model or axonometric perspective was elaborated on.

8. Pioneer squares
The front square of the SPC was probably a pioneer model of open public spaces in Macao that was later adopted by other religious institutions (Table 1) located in different parts of the city. These open public spaces were the oldest in the city. They were used for processions, festivals, commemorations and even for games since they served as the main (western) venue for social life. A survey elaborated in 2002 and 2004 by students from the Tokyo Institute of Technology in urban spaces like squares and dead end streets, showed that the Chinese were more familiar with the lanes and the dead end streets in the Inner Harbor of Macao. However, the spaces in front of churches were used as meeting points and recreation areas for Macao Chinese and western communities.

9. Conclusion
St. Paul College was a key element in the foundation and development of Macao and served both as the Acropolis and citadel of the city. Different gaps in the knowledge of the SPC history, its role and layout were overcame by the use of a scientific method that involves systematic surveying and comparing data from graphic images, historical documents, and archeological findings. This method provided enough data to elaborate on a conjectural model of the SPC.

The SPC influenced the city development by attracting and uniting the first settlers and defended the city from military attacks. The research showed that the large majority of SPC urban patterns and architectural characteristics were adopted as typological model for Macao’s other religious convents such as those of the Franciscans, Dominicans and Augustinians. The front square that the SPC introduced in the city was a pioneering concept in Macao for open public spaces and later adapted in different parts of the city. These open

Table 1. Organizational Patterns in Macao’ Convents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>SPC</th>
<th>S. Franc</th>
<th>S. Dom.</th>
<th>S. Aug</th>
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<td>Flatland</td>
<td>Hilltop</td>
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<td>Neo</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>identification</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>identification with the SPC</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Legend: NS- Naves Shape; CS-Cross Shape, R-Rectangular; MA-Main Altar; SBT-Separate Bell Tower; FFS- Façade Front Square

Figures:
- Fig.16. St. Dominic Altar
- Fig.17. St. Augustine Altar
- Fig.18. Dominican
- Fig.19. Franciscan
- Fig.20. Augustine

Convents Façades
public spaces were the oldest squares in the city. Macao’s typical urban space like the square had its roots in Portuguese tradition but now formed an important part of the cultural, commercial and social life of the predominant Chinese population. For a period of four centuries, the SPC served three major functions: a) as a university college (1594-1762) mainly oriented to teaching humanities and missionary work; b) as the seat for military defense and support barracks (1789-1835); and c) as a center for tourism and cultural activities (1970’s-present), since it was a museum and an archeological site. The SPC as an archeological museum (1970’s-present), since it was a museum and an archeological site. The SPC as an archeological museum and c) as a center for tourism and cultural activities (1970’s-present), since it was a museum and an archeological site. The SPC as an archeological museum site continued to be an important factor in Macao’s economy based on tourism.

Notes

1) Goa, conquered by Albuquerque in 1510, was transformed it in the capital of the Portuguese Empire in the East until 1961.
3) Diary records from the memories of Fernao Mendes Pinto, and father Montana mentioned Macao as a desert place. Teixeira, Manuel (1975) Os Militares em Macau, 18-27.
4) Tan Shibao revealed the lack of scientific evidence, documental and archeological of the existence of any Chinese Village or community in Macao at the time of the arrival of the Portuguese. Particularly in China every village community, temple, are recorded and painted in maps, constituting important official documents for taxing and administrative purposes. A village not register is not approved and is considered an illegal settlement that can be targeted as enemy of the empire. In the Macao case, there are no Chinese maps mentioning Macao as inhabited before the arrival of the Portuguese. Portuguese reports from the ships captains mentioned Macao as an empty place. Catarina Oi focus in the historical evidence, share by other scholars, which the temples of Ama and Kun Iam were built in the 17th century.
5) The place was barren, salty waters, small and with insufficient sustainability conditions for a rural settlement. The name of Amagau, bay of goddess Ama, from where the name of Macau means an idol or a statue (not a temple or a village) in a place of worship. The place was barren, salty waters, small and with insufficient sustainability conditions for a rural settlement. The name of Amagau, bay of goddess Ama, from where the name of Macau means an idol or a statue (not a temple or a village) in a place of worship. There are no archeological findings or documents evidencing in this place a fisherman or rural village.
7) Many tourist brochures mention the total destruction of the church, with exception to the façade.
8) The 2000 meeting of UNESCO Conference Workshop on Culture, Heritage Management and Tourism, held in Bhaktapur, Thailand in April focused on the impact of tourism in heritage. Macao Government statistics (www. dsec.gov.mo_e/index.html) reveal that until September 2003 there were 11,887.9 visitors. In November 5, 2004, at 19:00 PM, the number of visitors in the site counter reached 15, 1963. Tourism and heritage are important assets in Macao’s economy.

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