

a town called Marethee where the North Pole Star sinks below the horizon, and they steer by a fixed cloud in the heavens »; quoted by Yule, *l. c.* Roughly speaking, Mogedaxo is at midway between Cutch and Zanzibar, so this « Marethee » (*sic*), may be, if not identical, very close to Mogedaxo.

Let us then go further than India. Under the name of « Mu-ku-ta-vu », Mogedaxo was visited by several Chinese embassies to the Somali coast, until 1427 (YULE, *l. c.*, II, 413 n.). These Chinese boats took necessarily pilots in Sumatra at their entrance in the Indian Ocean, and it is in Sumatra that they were shown, just as Marco Polo in 1285, this southern « fixed cloud » on which they had to rely for their sailing towards Eastern Africa. Muslims from Hadramot (Zufâr, Raysût) were already in our 12th century trading in Sumatra (Atjéh), and accordingly sailing back from Sumatra. So the celebrated journey of the malagasy « Ramini boat » which landed the first Islamized chiefs from Sumatra in Madagascar could be dated, as Julien has stated, 542 H. (= 1147 A.C.). And such a journey had no other possible steering than by the Magellanic Clouds.

Let us add that Muslim Arab pilots « coloured » their seafare in the Indian Ocean with a queer prayer, which links Hadramot and Sumatra with another link, religious : the pilot's prayer « man khâfa min bahrin » (viz. : « in dangerous high sea » where the « Sindibâd » of Basra had somany wrecks), invoking the protection of the Seven Sleepers in Ephesus (= Ahl al-Kahf). This prayer which was « officialized » after the 16th century in the Ottoman Navy, appears for the first time in a poem from Zufâr (LÖFGREN, *Aden*, 2, 90), containing the prophylactic Names of these Seven, at the beginning of our 13th century. And, on the other hand, Damsté (*Bijd. Inst. Taal L-V.*, 1939, 407sq.) has hinted to the exceptional diffusion of the invocation to the Seven Sleepers in islamized Sumatra.

Why did Muslim pilots emphasized the divine « rocking » of the Seven Sleepers (*Qur'ân*, 18) for the sailors « rocked » on the Monsoon waves, on their « steering » towards the South ? Magellanic Clouds are close to the south of Canopus, and Canopus is the Alpha Argo, the « sukkân janûbî » of the Ship constellation (ar. : Safîna, ir. : Kushtî), the Heavenly South seeking Ship, somuch alike the Persian Gulf's boats on the astronomical designs of the constellations. Besides, in the Ephesus' Cave, the entrance was on the North so that the pilgrim had to bow, entering, before the Qibla, the South.

Last question; from where did Sumatranese pilots receive the « steering by » the Magellanic Clouds ? From India (Cutch), or from China ? Arabists must leave Sinologists settle this problem. Yule thought the idea came from China, with the Compass indicating the *South* (not the North), marked by a kind of heraldic Cloud; the strange *serpentine* shape of this Cloud seems to have influenced Marco Polo's design of the Magellanic Cloud given to Petrus de Abano (see YULE, *l. c.*, I, 120), twisting « a big sack » into the shape of an *Hydra*. Three centuries after, it was in Sumatra that Fred. Houtman made the first list of names for the Southern Constellations, and he named « Hydra » the constellation where the Little Magellanic Cloud was put as its 10th star. From where Houtman did borrow the name « Hydra » ? Semler thought it was from Chinese pilots in Sumatra, and I dont think that Ideler's objection (*Untersuchungen...*, 352) is cogent <sup>(1)</sup> [L. M.].

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(1) So for Magellanic Clouds' « history » among written civilisations. Among unwritten primitive southern traditions, as in Central Australia and among Maoris, Magellanic Clouds enjoy an exceptional human and superhuman value; they master the winds and rains for agriculture; and they are the last abode of the souls. Modern science, since 1912, owes to these Clouds careful observation the calculation of the « speed of expansion » of the Universe : of the flight of the galaxies.