

## 論文十三

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# MAURICE BENYOWSKY – THE CRUCIAL PROMOTER OF FORMOSA IN EUROPE



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## Formosa perceived by Europe before the arrival of Baron Maurice Benyowsky

Until the middle of 18th century the perception of Formosa in Europe was mainly influenced by George Psalmanazar<sup>1</sup> : *Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa. An Island subject to the Emperor of Japan*, published in London in 1704. As the author confessed later himself, his “description” was a complete forgery for impressing the public. Psalmanazar claimed to be the Formosa born son of a Japanese prince. His education by Jesuits, Dominicans, and Franciscans, from whom he got the accounts on empires of Japan, China, Aztecs and Incas, provided him a sufficient inspiration for depicting Formosa, by analogies with those other exotic lands, as an island with strange and cruel practices. This dramatic presentation suited excellently to that time growing popular request for exotic reports on distant and unknown lands. His description of this country ruled by local kings with sumptuous palaces suited the British concept of a solid monarchy. On the other hand, it was accompanied by a drastic story of inhuman religious practices, a cult of



devil (Picture 1) with each year sacrifice of 18,000 young boys below the age of 9 years (with their throats cut and hearts exhibited), as well as of local cannibals and of horribly cruel punishments. When confronted by criticism, the author or his defenders were pointing out examples in other parts of the world, including atrocious punishments in some parts of Europe.

(Picture 1)

1. Psalmanazar, George: *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa. An Island subject to the Emperor of Japan*, London: Dan Brown, 1704, 331 p.

Not only this book was widely read, translated and reedited (in England, Ireland, France, Netherlands, Germany), but it was accepted as an objective and scientific reference by renowned expert authors. Imbault-Huart <sup>2</sup>, the author of the first scientific book on history and description of Formosa by a European, pointed out how Psalmanazar was recognized as a solid reference even in such serious encyclopedic publications as the *Bibliothèque universelle des voyages* of Boucher de la Richarderie <sup>3</sup> and others. Psalmanazar himself elaborated his self-defense <sup>4</sup> proving systematically by comparison of various accounts that these were not in contradiction with his own accounts. It came out in 1765, so just six years prior to Benyowsky's landing on Formosa!

Besides Psalmanazar there were also others accounts in 17th and 18th century, such as by Candidius <sup>5</sup>, Montanus- Ogilvie <sup>6</sup>, Ripon <sup>7</sup>, or de Mailla <sup>8</sup> - who elaborated the first comprehensive map of Formosa. It motivated a large wave of Chinese immigrants mainly to the North-East Formosa region. There was a Formosa description by another Jesuit, du Halde <sup>9</sup>, in frames of his description of China, or

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2.Imbault-Huart Camille: L'Ile Formose. Histoire et description. Paris: Ernest Leroux 1893, Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc. 1995, 323 p.

3.Boucher de la Richarderie, Gilles: Bibliothèque universelle des voyages. Paris:Taruttel, Würtz, 1808 (p. 289-290)

4.Psalmanazar, George: An Enquiry into the Objections against George Psalmanazar of Formosa. In which the Accounts of the People, and Language of Formosa by Candidius, and the other European Authors, and the Letters from Geneva, and from Suffolk, about Psalmanazar, are proved not to contradict his Accounts. London: Bernard Lintott, 1765, 78 p.

5.Candidius: An account on the Island of Formosa in the East-Indies. In: A Collection of Voyages and Travels. London: Awnsham and John Churchill, 1704, p. 526-533

6.Montanus, Arnoldus: Atlas Chinensis being a second part of a relation of remarkable passages in two embassies from the East-India Company of the United Provinces to the vice-roy Singlamong and General Taising Lipovi and to Konchi, Emperor of China and East-Tartary. Translated and illustrated by Ogilby J., London: Tho. Johnson, 1671, Vol. I, p.17-37

7.Giraud, Yves: Voyages et aventures du Capitaine Ripon aux Grandes Indes: journal inédit d'un mercenaire: 1617-1627. Thonon-les-bains: L'Albaron, 1990, 205 p.

8.De Mailla, Joseph de Moyriac.: Histoire Générale de la Chine, ou Annales de cet Empire. Taipei, Ch'eng-wen Publ., 1967-69

9.Du Halde, Jean Baptiste: Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique et physique de l'empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie chinoise, La Haye: H. Scheurleer. 1736

the account by Benedictine Prévost<sup>10</sup>, largely copying on de Mailla, but providing a more realistic map. The renowned traveler Commodore Anson<sup>11</sup> did not land on Formosa, he just passed by the Orchid Island nearby Formosa's East Coast, heading further on to Macao. All these accounts based mostly on indirect sources or created by a supposed analogy to surrounding or neighboring lands.

Le Gendre<sup>12</sup> pointed out that Dutch colonists had a very imperfect knowledge of the East coast. In none of the narratives he examined, either from the Spaniard, or from the Dutch or the Portuguese, was any mention of East coast. That is why their arguments, especially regarding the population of East Formosa coast, could be far from reality. This is also true as far as the Jesuits De Mailla and Du Halde, or the Benedictine Prévost, are concerned.

So, before Benyowsky brought his realistic information, Formosa was perceived in Europe as:

- a/ isolated, self-contented, with practically no opening to foreigners**
- b/ ruled by local kings**
- c/ practicing strange, cruel, inhuman rituals**

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10.Prévost, Antoine: Histoire générale des voyages, Tome VI, Paris: Didot, 1748, p. 56-64

11.Masefield, John, ed. (1911), A Voyage Round the World in the Years 1740–4 by Lord Anson, London: J.M. Dent & Sons.

12.Le Gendre, Charles: Notes on Travel in Formosa. Edited by Fix, D. L. – Shufelt, J., Taipei: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2012, p. 341

## Maurice Benyowsky's sojourn and activities on Formosa

That is why the very first practically applicable account on Formosa came from Baron Maurice Benyowsky, who arrived there after his escape from the exile in Russia, Kamchatka, passing by the coasts of Japan, and stayed from 26 August until 12 September 1771. He landed on two points of the East coast. At the first stop his crew was attacked by aborigines, most likely the Atayal, so they moved further to the North. There he was approached by a friendly aborigine's tribe, whose leader, described as prince Huapo, asked Benyowsky to assist with his crew in a battle against another prince allied with Chinese. Benyowsky took part in that victorious fight, in which thousands of fighters were reported on both sides. The grateful prince Huapo offered Benyowsky the possibility for establishing a permanent settlement with his crew. Benyowsky promised to return to Formosa after arranging his affairs in Europe. Benyowsky left Formosa with a firm decision to offer **a European power his project of founding a prosperous settlement on Formosa, which would be, at the same time, a strategic basis for trade and other activities in the whole Pacific area.**

Benyowsky described his stay on Formosa in his diary transcribed into his world-famous *Memoirs and Travels*<sup>13</sup>, published for the first time in London in 1790, largely reedited and retranslated (in England, Ireland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechia, Slovakia, Japan, Taiwan).

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13. *Memoirs and Travels of Mauritius Augustus, Count de Benyowsky*. London: Nicholson, 1790

By a historical coincidence, it was first published in London, where also the first description of Formosa by Psalmanazar was published. Benyowsky was the first European to present Formosa as very a promising land:

**a/ with favorable landing places**

**b/ with approachable chiefs and population**

**c/ open to agreements and alliances with foreigners**

**d/ with enormous mineral and vegetal richness, most suitable for settlement and trade**

**e/ a crucial basis for the trade and the strategic control of the Pacific**

**Benyowsky's essential merit for the perception of Formosa by Europe as the strategic basis for the implementation and the trade in the Pacific**

After Benyowsky had left Formosa, he returned to **Europe** and offered his services to France. He presented to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Duke d'Aiguillon the secret agreement between England and Russia for the conquest of Japan <sup>14</sup> (he took it from Russian governor's archive when escaping from his exile), that France could use as a pretext for its own intervention into the Pacific area also in relation to Japan, for which Formosa could play an important strategic basis. This secret agreement was justified by the fact that England was losing his colonies in America and needed new territories for the trade and for raw materials, but also that the new Emperor of Japan was building splendid palaces all over the country using all iron provisions, so that Japan was practically without weapons. <sup>15</sup>

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14. Lefèvre-Pontalis, Germain: Un projet de conquête du Japon par l'Angleterre et la Russie en 1776. Annales de l'École libre des sciences politiques, recueil trimestriel, 1889, Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France, p. 439-442

15. Lefèvre-Pontalis, 1889, ref. 14, p. 439-441

Benyowsky used in persuading the French government his own recent experience claiming that it was easy to negotiate with local leaders and to establish a strategic basis on Formosa for further penetration into the Pacific. The king Louis XV attached more importance to founding a strategic basis on Madagascar, as a crucial stopover for ships on the way to India, so Benyowsky was sent to Madagascar as French Commander. Nevertheless, his report on the economic, trade and strategic significance of Formosa left a strong impact on France. The next king Louis XVI, fond of new discoveries, had this in mind when he sent the famous discoverer La Pérouse to follow the Benowsky's itinerary passing by Formosa and to continue along the costs of Japan, Kuril Islands, Kamchatka and back along coasts of China (Picture 2: King Louis XVI instructing Commander La Pérouse to follow Benyowsky's itinerary). La Pérouse landed by the coasts of Formosa in 1787. Even if he did not disembark, because of a rebellion going on, he communicated with aborigines, who came on catamarans towards his ship. La Pérouse reported: "This is an island organized like a European colony. It could serve as the departure basis against any maritime tyranny, as well as the trade center towards China, Japan or Philippines" <sup>16</sup>



(Picture 2)

In 1809, the French geographer Conrad Malte-Brun<sup>17</sup> presented a memorandum to Napoleon I proposing how to cope with England's ambitions of a trade monopoly for China. He referred to **Benyowsky's report** and pointed out that there were, **on Formosa, convenient harbors for French bases**, from which 1,500 well-armed men could take over the control of the Pacific (the proposal was refuted by Napoleon I. as having too distant outcomes). Malte-Brun underlined that.

16. Chao-Ying Lee : L'aspect géographique et politique dans les récits de voyages à Taiwan. In : Milon, A. – Shu-Ling Stéphanie Tsai : Figure de l'Homme. Au croisement des différences entre l'Europe et l'Asie. Retina. Paris : L'Harmattan, 2016, p. 79-97

17. Malte-Brun, Conrad.: Universal Geography, A. Finley, Philadelphia 1827, 547 p.

England would be powerless towards this “new Batavia”, which would serve as a safe haven for trade ships in the peace time, while in the war time, pirate ships would be sent from there to Eastern seas. He argued that no one could prevent 1,500 well-armed Europeans to implant themselves on the Formosa East coast, amongst those aborigines without discipline or artillery, to become both beloved and scared, improving progressively their situation and protecting them against Chinese.

### Benyowsky’s influence in the context of Asia

It is important to mention that Benyowsky’s account served for political argumentation also to **Asian** powers. After a crew of a Japanese ship was murdered on the Formosa East coast in 1871, the Japanese pointed out the China’s incapacity to control the East coast. Japan also used Benyowsky’s account of alliance with a local prince against another local chief supported by Chinese to justify the necessity of their intervention as “liberators” from the Chinese oppression. This resulted in the Japanese expedition to Formosa in 1874, which ended by a failure, but motivated China to start an intense colonization of the East coast. Benyowsky in that era was already well engraved into the Japanese strategy considerations. Before his arrival to Formosa, he needed to land with his ship in Japan for supplies, but Japanese repelled him. Trying to get their favors, he presented a warning (based on his documentation from Russian archives) that Russia was intending to attack Japan. In such a way he entered the Japan history and eminent scholars such as Hayashi Shihei were quoting him as the testimony of vulnerability of their maritime country. He has also opened a new horizon towards Europe .<sup>18</sup>

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18.Hayashi Shihei – Friedrich Lederer: Diskurs über die Wehrhaftigkeit einer Seenation. Ludium, 2003, 586 p.



## Benyowsky's description of Formosa - for and against

Thanks to the abovementioned facts in the European and Asian context, there is no doubt that Benyowsky brought a radical change of the Formosa perception in the world scale.

A frequent polemics subject was the authenticity of description and of his achievements on the Formosa as such. Let us point out that he lived in the Baroque era, when a certain exaggeration in the literary description was part of the author's message and very suitable to the taste of the larger public, and that is also the case of his world famous *Mémoires and Travels*. That may be the reason why he was referring to local chiefs as "princes", as it suited better to the British or French public's taste.

Against: as the usual destiny of pioneer researchers and discoverers, Benyowsky's account provoked a series of doubts and objections. He reached Formosa in a company of Russian exiles. Some of these returned later to Russia, where, under the pressure of authorities, they commented Benyowsky's discoveries as a forgery, including those on Formosa.

For: many serious authors referred to the chapter on Formosa of Benyowsky's *Mémoires and Travels*, as an important reference for information - such authors as the French Consul Imbault-Huart<sup>19</sup> as the first European author to present a systematic picture of Formosa. Or the American Consul Le Gendre<sup>20</sup> who gave the most credentials to Benyowsky's account; the American Consul Dawidson<sup>21</sup>, the historian

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19. Imbault-Huart, 1995, ref. 2

20. Le Gendre, 2012, ref. 12

21. Dawidson James: The Island of Formosa: past and present. Historical view from 1430 to 1900. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1903, 1988, p. 83-90

Manthorpe<sup>22</sup>, and the most recently a Taiwanese researcher Chuang Hung-che<sup>23</sup>, who was a Taiwan's former diplomat to Hungary (the historical kingdom of Hungary covered also Slovakia, that was the country of Benyowsky's origin).

It is surprising that the critics of Benyowsky's account, especially the most frequently quoted Inkster<sup>24</sup>, seem to have missed completely the primary dimension of the Benyowsky's contribution to Europe's perception of Formosa and focused their criticism on secondary aspects, such as polemics about the numbers of aborigines or horses mentioned in his account. Inkster, the hardest Benyowsky's critic, did not realize that he promoted unwontedly Benyowsky by calling him Count, although Benyowsky when reaching Formosa in 1771 was Baron, and became Count only in 1778 by the grace of the Empress Maria Theresia.

**The polemics raised about Benyowsky's account on Formosa** turn mainly around the following topics:

**1/ the sites, where he landed**

**2/ the numbers of involved aborigines on the allied and the enemy side**

**3/ the prince with whom he concluded an alliance**

**4/ the aborigines' horses**

**5/ the natural richness of the country: the gold, the silver...**

The following sources were examined by the author in order to confront the authenticity of Benyowsky's account:

**a/ The descriptions of Formosa by British, Dutch, French, Spanish, USA travelers and diplomats from 17th to 20th century.**

**b/ The evaluations by contemporary authors and scientists.**

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22. Manthorpe, Jonathan: *Forbidden Nation – a history of Taiwan*, St. Martin's Press 2008, 286 p.

23. Chuang Hung-che: *1771 Formosa—based on Benyowsky's nautical journal*. Avanguard Publishing company. Taipei 2014, 272 p.

24. Inkster, Ian: *Oriental enlightenment: The Problematic Military Experiences and Cultural Claims of Count Maurice August Comte de*

*Benyowsky on Formosa during 1771*. *Taiwan Historical Research*, Vol. 17, No. 1, March 2010, p. 27-70

## 1.The landing sites

### 1./ Benyowsky's first landing site:

The historians such as Imbault-Huart<sup>25</sup> situated the first landing in that part of Formosa coast which is situated below the Tropic of Cancer; particularly the area of Dagangkou. An objective reason for that could be the geographical coordinates given by Benyowsky himself, which would rather situate his landing below the Tropic of Cancer. But, in the vicinity of Dagangkou there is no island with high steep cliffs that Benyowsky described when approaching the landing site.

The most extreme was the hypothesis expressed by the Dutch author Aalsvoort<sup>26</sup>. He referred to the fact, described also by Le Gendre<sup>27</sup>, that aborigine tribes on the Formosa's South coast murdered Europeans from ships sunk by the coast, as a retaliation for a previous massacre of a local tribe, Koalut, by the crew of a European ship. Le Gendre expressed the logical hypothesis that those aggressive Europeans were Dutch, the first European colonizers on the West coast of Formosa. Van der Aalsvoort (may be because he is Dutch) claimed that the cruel crew was from Benyowsky's ship and that his landing was there.

Chuang Hung-che<sup>28</sup> adopted the most systematic and objective approach to determine Benyowsky's real landing sites. He took in consideration, the same as the most internationally recognized expert on Benyowsky, Professor Kajdański<sup>29</sup>, that in the considered historical period the Greenwich meridian has not been used yet as

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25. Imbault-Huart, 1995, ref. 2, p. 101

26. Aalsvoort, Lambert: Benyowsky on Formosa. In: Móric Beňovský / Maurice Benyowsky, eminent citizen of Europe and of the World in the light of most recent international discoveries. International workshop. Bratislava, 25.10.2017

27. Le Gendre, 2012, ref. 12, p.341

28. Chuang Hung-che, 2014, ref. 23

29. Kajdański, Edward: The authenticity of Maurice Benyowsky's account of his voyage through the Bering Sea. *Terrae Incognitae* 23, 1991, p. 51-80

universal prime meridian. Many travelers adopted as prime meridian the one passing by their departure point. For Benyowsky it was Bolchereck or Bolsha, in Kamchatka, from where he started his escape on a Russian ship. That is why Chuang Hung-che revised systematically the coordinates given by Benyowsky for his landings on Formosa with respect to this Kamchatka prime meridian. He also argued consequently, that if we accepted just mechanically the coordinates given in Benyowsky's account, his first landing place would be below the Tropic of Cancer but deep inland, in the high mountain area, which is totally absurd. With such adequate corrections Chuang Hung-che managed to determine exactly that the first landing point was in Suao bay, and the second in Kaleewan bay (as indicated on the enclosed scheme in the Picture 3).

Chuang Hung-che provided an additional argument. Benyowsky, when approaching the landing site, commented, that his ship was passing by an island with a huge rock, which corresponds perfectly to Yonaguni Island, with imposing huge rocks, from where Formosa can already be seen. Benyowsky, after the first landing, noticed that the boat with his men had been attacked by the aborigines and the boat had to move around a "point" of the littoral. Chuang Hung-che observed that precisely there, by Suao, is such emerging point or cape (Picture 3).



(Picture 3)

Suao has always been an excellent natural harbor used from ancient times until the present. Imbault-Huart<sup>30</sup> explained that "ao" means "bay" – so the favorite conditions for landing are established in his name already. Le Gendre<sup>31</sup> quoted a Chinese source indicating that, except Suao bay, this coast was without harbors, with the mountains rising almost immediately from the sea. The British authors and travelers, whose testimonies are gathered by Harriet Harrison<sup>32</sup>, all mentioned Suao as their landing place, with a natural harbor and the estuary of a quiet river.

30.Imbault-Huart, 1995, ref. 2, p. 195

31.Le Gendre, 2012, ref. 12, 2012, p. 335

32.Harrison, Henrietta: Natives of Formosa. British Reports of the Taiwan Indigenous People, 1650-1950, Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines, Taipei 2001, 260 p.

## 2. Benyowsky's second landing site

As far as the second landing place is concerned, most authors situate it in the Kaleewan bay, which in that time was the estuary of Kaleewan river (the current location is the mouth of Dongshan river of Yilan). Here again, the rectified coordinates, calculated by Chuang Hung-che, confirm this location as the second landing, and that was also the Benyowsky's final departure site from Formosa. When leaving Formosa, on September 12, Benyowsky was passing by an island with a high rock, which would fit for Guishan Island.

## **2. Numbers of involved aborigines on allied and enemy side**

Benyowsky, in his account, mentioned thousands of fighters on both sides, and referred to prince Huapo as disposing of around 20.000 men. There were polemics regarding those thousands of fighters.

Against: Dutch or other sources, including those from Taiwan, affirm that the population of the given period was far from being so numerous. And we can assume that even the actual Taiwan researchers can only rely on imprecise records from the historical period we are examining. Historians presented the logical argument that aborigine communities were not likely to overpass one thousand people, otherwise they could hardly survive with respect to the natural resources for hunting or agriculture.

For: Authors such as Le Gendre and Imbault-Huart put in doubt Dutch, Spanish or Portuguese knowledge about East coast aborigines, including their numbers. The population estimate quoted by Inkster<sup>33</sup> evaluated overall Formosa population of that era of up to 100,000 persons, from which about 10% would correspond to the

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33. Inkster, 1995, ref. 24, p. 34

East coast population. On the contrary, Goddard<sup>34</sup> mentioned that much earlier, under the Dutch rule in the first half of 17th century Formosa had about 200,000 inhabitants. This is an example of how the number estimates can differ dramatically and cannot be put forward as a definite primary argument.

Inkster<sup>35</sup> also referred to de Mailla's estimate that indigenous people could at best put up fighting forces of perhaps "thirty or forty, armed with arrows and javelins". That is, evidently, an estimate based on informers from the West coast of Formosa, having just a very vague guess about the situation on the East coast, where they did not dare to venture, due especially to the headhunters such as Atayal.

Imbault-Huart<sup>36</sup> underlined the essential difference between clans and tribes. Clans were smaller aborigines' communities allowing them to survive from the locally accessible resources. Tribes were roof structures unifying those clans. That is why the prince Huapo could eventually rely upon thousands of men (as indicated by Benyowsky), if all men from tribes under his commandment were counted.

### 3.Prince with whom Benyowsky concluded an alliance

Against: There are affirmations by historians that the aborigine's community had no chief, or even prince, and that it was directed by a council of wise elderly.

For: Here again Imbault-Huart<sup>37</sup> underlined the essential difference between clans and tribes. Clans were ruled by a council of elderly. Clans belonged to a tribe, where they were subordinated to a chief of tribe holding absolute powers, even about life and death.

It would also seem logical that if Benyowsky wanted to impress European monarchs with his project for Formosa, it was more persuasive to speak about princes than about chieftains.

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34.Goddard, William.: Formosa / Taiwan. PO Box 337 Taipei, 1958, 161 s.

35.Inkster, 1995, ref. 24, p. 34

36.Imbault-Huart, 1995, ref. 2, p. 251

37.Imbault-Huart, 1995, ref. 2, p. 251

## 4.The number of aborigines' horses

Benyowsky described prince Huapo's cavalry disposing of hundreds of horses.

Against: Aalsvoort<sup>38</sup> and other authors affirm that horses were only on West coast, where the Dutch had imported them. According to them, there were no horses on East coast. Dawidson<sup>39</sup> and others pointed out that there were no roads and no vehicles on East coast, which would allow or necessitate the use of horses.

For: Candidius described quantities of horses on Formosa (brought by Dutch), but for a use not limited to riding or cart pulling. According to him, horses were also a highly appreciated delicacy! This implied that horses' use would not be linked strictly to transportation purposes. Imbault-Huart<sup>40</sup> referred to Chinese sources according to which aborigines had horses also in the inland mountain area. Since the area visited by Benyowsky was situated at the foot of inland mountains, the presence of horses there can be considered as possible, although their numbers could be exaggerated to render Formosa even more attractive to those whom Benyowsky addressed his colony project.

## 5.Natural richness of the country

### a/ The gold and the silver resources

Benyowsky mentions that he was offered an advantageous alliance with the local prince which could provide excellent exchange trade with gold, silver, cinnabar, crystal, precious wood, sugar, camphor... The prince gave him a gift of 25 Lb. of gold, 800 Lb. of silver, as well as pearls and other gifts.

Against: Dawidson<sup>41</sup> and other authors expressed doubts about the described quantity of gold and silver received from that aboriginal prince. Dawidson objected

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38.Aalsvoort, 2017, ref. 26

39.Dawidson, 1988, ref. 21, p. 462-463

40.Imbault-Huart, 1995, ref. 2, p. 211

41.Dawidson, 1988, ref. 21, p. 83-90, 462

that Dutch had good relations with aborigines, so if there really were gold and silver resources, aborigines would reveal that to Dutch. There were similar skeptical opinions arguing that if there were such significant sources of gold, Chinese, who arrived from the continent, would have exploited them much earlier. The intense extraction of gold started much later, only around 1890, when workers building a railroad and having an experience of gold mining in California, recognized the local sources of gold, both mineral and alluvial.

For: Imbault-Huart<sup>42</sup> objected that Dutch knew about the gold in the North-East, but they did not dare to go there and extract it, and that aborigines would rather die than reveal to Dutch where the gold is. Candidius<sup>43</sup> wrote that already under Ming dynasty Chinese were discovering gold and silver on Formosa and sent some of the ore to Japan on trial.

Imbault-Huart<sup>44</sup> also informed that, longtime before the Dutch colonization, Chinese were bringing silk and other merchandize from China to Formosa, in exchange against ingots of silver, spices, or cotton fabrics from Formosa. Japan, where the direct trade with China was forbidden, practiced the trade by the intermediary of Formosa, including silver and gold. Imbault-Huart quoted Ogilvie's comments in *Atlas Chinensis* referring to Dutch authors claiming that there were gold mines in the North-East of Formosa.

At the Gold Museum<sup>45</sup> in Jinguashi, it is recorded that as early as Sung dynasty, dating seven hundred years back, archival accounts recorded abundance of gold sand harvested along Eastern coast, where indigenous people had learned to trade with gold. It is also mentioned that for Europeans, in the Age of Discovery, Taiwan

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42.Imbault-Huart, 1995, ref. 2, p. 202

44.Imbault-Huart, 1995, ref. 2, p. 202

43.Candidius, 1704, ref. 5, p. 526-533

45.Gold Museum exhibition, Jinguashi



was the Treasure Island of the East in the legend. Goddard<sup>46</sup> designated the 18th century as the Golden Age of Formosa.

Dawidson<sup>47</sup> (paradoxically to his previous doubts about Benyowsky's reports on gold) stressed that the gold was the most important mineral richness of Formosa! He affirmed that the first mentions by Chinese about extracting gold on Formosa date from 1430, which would correspond to the chronology presented at the Jinguashi Gold Museum. Dawidson also underlined that the Eastern coast was the only part of Formosa which had geological dispositions for gold. He described two basic methods of gold extraction:

- 1/ from the reef gold in quartz
- 2/ from the gold alluviums in the rivers or water streams

Dawidson, the same as Candidius, Imbault-Huart and others, described how aborigines took advantage of the rain period, in July and August, by digging pits at the foot of slopes for the recuperation of gold particles washed from the mountain. Let us not forget that Benyowsky landed by this gold-rich coast precisely in August.

Imbault-Huart<sup>48</sup> mentioned that the river Suao had sources in mountains and was rich in gold sand. According to him there could be gold mines also in those mountains, but these altitudes were still controlled by aborigines, who were preventing the advance of Chinese colonists. They were even putting beheaded skeletons at the limits of their territory to scare intruders. The Suao region was precisely the area of Atayal, the headhunters, who most likely attacked the boat sent by Benyowsky to the coast, and this also confirms the site of his landing. (Picture 4 localizes the territories of various tribes in Formosa<sup>49</sup>).



(Picture 4)

46. Goddard, 1958, ref. 34, 161 p.

47. Dawidson, 1988, ref. 21, p. 459-475

48. Imbault-Huart, 1995, ref. 2

49. Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines, Taipei

Dawidson<sup>50</sup> described that besides quartz gold reserves in the North East Jiufen - Jinguashi area, there was also about thirty miles south from Suao a strip of alluvium sands with high gold content about ten miles along the coast, which he designated it as the largest area of alluvium gold on Formosa.

All these facts confirm that at the time of Benyowsky's arrival to Formosa, in the second half of 18th century, there were large gold reserves in the North-East part of Formosa, where he landed, so confirming the generous gift of gold that he received.

#### b/ Other mineral, vegetal and animal resources of Formosa

Imbault-Huart, Le Gendre, Dawidson or Swinhoe<sup>51</sup> referred enthusiastically about other mineral resources of Formosa such as copper, sulfur, coal, petrol, crystal or cinnabar. They also enumerated abundant vegetal resources, especially the rice, coming in several harvests in a year thanks to the humid and warm climate and the fertile soil, or the sugar cane. The island provides excellent conditions for all kind of current European, but also exotic tropical fruits. The forests in mountains abound in camphor and other precious wood trees. The forests are also home for dears or wild boars. The dear skin was a key export article from Formosa for centuries.

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47.Dawidson, 1988, ref. 21, p. 459-475

48.Imbault-Huart, 1995, ref. 2

49.Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines, Taipei

50.Dawidson, 1988, ref. 21, p. 459-475

51.Swinhoe, Robert: Natural History Notes Principally from Formosa, Zoologist, XXII, 1864, p. 9224-9229

## Benyowsky's project for Formosa

Although the most comments and polemics on Benyowsky's account are focusing, mostly, on less relevant aspects of his activities, his most important impact on Europe's perception of Formosa was related to his determination to present to a European power his project of founding a prosperous settlement on Formosa, which would be, at the same time, a strategical basis for the trade or other activities in the overall Pacific area.<sup>52,53</sup> He conceived this project by the end of his stay on Formosa raising the basic question, whether Formosa should be perceived primarily of commercial or of military interest. His conception was based on Enlightenment views of governance, with the acculturation of indigenous people and a considerable repopulation of the island.<sup>54</sup>

Imbault-Huart confirmed this intension of establishing a settlement on Formosa by the fact that Benyowsky left there the young sailor Loginoff (whose brother was killed by aborigines) for increasing the local partner's confidence in his return, but also for learning the local language and customs. Benyowsky expressed then his conviction that Formosa was surely an attractive territory for a European power and added: "And if not, then we will make it!"<sup>55</sup>

Le Genre concluded:

*"...one fact is certain, that he wished to return there, and a man of his talent would never have conceived such a plan had he not formed a high idea of the country and of his resources."*<sup>56</sup>

52.Campbell, William: Formosa under the Dutch, Kegan, Trench, Trubner, 1903, p. 535-538

53.Campbell, W.: Sketches from Formosa. Marshall Brothers, London 1972, 393 p.

54.Campbell, 1972, ref. 52, 393 p.

55.Imbault-Huart, 1995, ref. 2, p. 115-117

56.Le Genre, 2012, ref. 12, p.347

## Maurice Benyowsky - the international rebel and revolutionary

Let us not conclude this presentation of the fascinating personality of Maurice Benyowsky by limiting his achievements only with respect to the Formosa. This author made an overall evaluation of Benyowsky's involvement into the history and the culture of more than twenty countries of the world.<sup>57</sup> Benyowsky as an excellent diplomat gained the confidence of the King of France Louis XV and Louis XVI, the Empress of Austria Maria Theresia, the Emperor of Austria Joseph II or the Chief Commander of American Army George Washington, became the Polish and the French General, as well as the Great King on Madagascar, where he abolished the slave trade<sup>58,59</sup>. All these spectacular achievements, together with his rebellion against of the Russian dictatorial Empress Catherine II, his opposition against the slave trade on Madagascar or his involvement into the American Revolution, inspired writers, poets, composers, painters all over the world, which was the theme of the recent international conference on Benyowsky in Vienna "Count Maurice Benyowsky – a (Central) European Hero", where this author presented a systematic confrontation of myths and realities related to Benyowsky<sup>60</sup>. Our conference presents another very important step towards the authentic evaluation of the world famous historical personality of Maurice Benyowsky.

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57.MUSIL, Miroslav: En passant par Formose. Etudes formosanes de l'Asiathèque (in print) 2021

58.MUSIL, Miroslav: Real Story of Count Maurice Benyowsky. Bratislava: SSS, 2018, 200 p.

59.MUSIL, Miroslav: Diplomat Maurice Benyowsky, Annual Revue of Slovak Foreign Policy, p. 123-130

60.MUSIL, Miroslav: Graf Moritz Benjowsky: Mythos versus Wirklichkeit. In WOLDAN, Alois et al.: Moritz Benjowsky – ein (mittel) europäischer Held. Bern: Peter Lang, 2021, p.287-296.

## Conclusion

The present analysis of various sources, related to the stay of Baron Maurice Benyowsky in Formosa in 1771 and to his Formosa project and its implications, confirms that Benyowsky was the European discoverer who had, in the 18th century, the most significant influence on European powers' positive perception of Formosa and of its strategic role in the Pacific region and its potential for a promising settlement and trade.

*Remarks:*

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論文十三

MAURICE BENYOWSKY-THE CRUCIAL  
PROMOTER OF FORMOSA IN EUROPE

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台師大歷史系副教授

我們很高興有來自東歐的學者來參與台灣的論壇，會議舉行的今天，剛好也是貝紐夫斯基離開台灣滿250年的日子。而作為開場白，就先講到這裡。

說老實話，我想做的討論可能與眾人所想不同，因為我自己的研究比較偏向清代晚期的十九世紀，所以比起來並不那麼熟悉十七、十八世紀歐洲人對於台灣人的書寫，對於台灣東海岸部份也所知有限，對貝紐夫斯基生平及行程的討論，Dr. Miroslav的文章其實已講得非常清楚，並花了很多時間與篇幅在討論真偽上，個人是無法做判斷的，所以感到很抱歉。

現在我們都能看到莊宏哲先生所翻譯的《1771福爾摩沙：貝紐夫斯基航海日誌紀實—十八世紀一位匈牙利人筆下的台灣》一書，除了翻譯也有很仔細的考訂。我個人讀這本書十分興味昂然，而Dr. Miroslav也提到幾處令我感到非常有意思的論點。我覺得可以從這方面出發，繼續想想，不論是對於東台灣的研究、或是台灣如何在世界上被認識，都是接下來應該要發展的問題。Dr. Miroslav提到的兩點非常有趣：

第一，就是貝紐夫斯基為何要用princes，來取代我們比較常見的「酋長」、土酋」這種說法，其實是有歐洲背景在的，我覺得這是很有說服力的。

第二，歐洲對於台灣的認識，可以說都是從1704年薩瑪納札（Psalmanazar）的《福爾摩哈》（或譯《台灣變形記》）來的，這是十八世紀初期以來給歐洲人帶來很深刻印象的一部作品，Dr. Miroslav一方面將之與1790年出版的貝紐夫斯基的作品對比，說歐洲對台灣的認識至此起了比較正面積極的作用，改轉了原本歐洲人對於台灣野蠻的印象，不管是從人物、組織、風土、資源、地理位置來說，對於歐洲人來說，都變成是可以理解親近的狀態。此一文本的內容所代表的是長期以來歐洲對台灣形象的知識性轉變

的里程碑，是一個非常重要的事情，但文中針對這點討論很少，因文章著重在真偽的問題，沒有繼續下去，這點令我覺得有點可惜。

當然，所謂真偽的問題也非常值得探討，但是依目前的證據來看，1771年的貝紐夫斯基到台灣的旅行、見聞等，我們很難完全依其一面之詞來判斷真假，除非，日後有其他記錄或直接證據出現，這個問題恐怕很難繼續下去。

我想對Dr. Miroslav提出的問題其實是跟文本的傳播、媒體的再現有關的。我們知道1771年貝紐夫斯基就完成了初稿，包括了航海日記與回憶錄，然後被交給了英國皇家學會的成員翻譯成英文，1790年時在倫敦出版。這本書出版後，許多不同語言的版本也很快相繼出現，這種現象也說明了這本書在歐洲非常受歡迎，就這點來說，我想問的問題是：最初，聽說是有一份手稿存在，是貝紐夫斯基以法文書寫而成的，放在大英博物館之內，我不曉得作者是否有與它比對過英文翻譯的版本，甚至是匈牙利的版本，其中是否有所差異？這本書可以說明台灣的形象在歐洲的成形、轉變、再現，尤其是比較少資料的十八世紀，我覺得是一個很重要的課題。

我曾看過一些1890年代左右的英國雜誌，以及在中國發刊的英文報紙，對這本書其實褒貶不一，大部分的人將這本書視為冒險文學，認為戲劇性較強，當然，本書真偽是另一個課題；但是，如果從形象、知識的傳播等角度來看，我想就不太會再糾纏於基於真假問題而起的討論，如音恩雅（Ian Inkster）所說這本書扭曲了台灣，用以作為歐洲的東方啟蒙的結論。這個問題再從薩瑪納札拉過來的話，其實就是一個有條理、有脈絡的文學式的文本如何在歐洲傳播台灣的形象的這個變化，而這個變化在Dr. Miroslav文章中已經說的很清楚了，如果作者有機會要改寫的話，我會建議從這方面入手，以上是我的一些想法，謝謝。

