

## **Chapas Sínicas (Chinese Documents)**

“Chapas Sínicas” (Chinese Documents) is a collection of records of Macao during the Qing Dynasty. Preserved in the National Archive of Torre do Tombo of Portugal, the collection comprises over 3,600 documents, including official letters written in Chinese, the Portuguese translated copies of the letters and other miscellaneous documents that were created mainly from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century. The collection was titled “Official Records of Macao During the Qing Dynasty (1693-1886)” in its nomination for the Memory of the World Register.

Jointly nominated by the National Archive of Torre do Tombo of Portugal and the Archives of Macao, “Official Records of Macao During the Qing Dynasty (1693-1886)” has been inscribed by the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) onto the Memory of the World Register on 30 October 2017. The successful inscription goes down in the cultural history of Macao as another milestone after the enlistment of the Historic Centre of Macao on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2005.

During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Macao was administratively part of Xiangshan County in the Canton Prefecture of China. Formerly known as Hao Jing Ao (written as 濠鏡澳 or 濠鏡澳 in Chinese), Macao was one of the trading ports along the coast of Canton where Chinese and foreign ships anchored. Around 1553 to 1557 (the 32<sup>nd</sup> to 36<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Emperor Jiajing in the Ming Dynasty), the Portuguese gained permission from Chinese officials to stay in Macao. For nearly 300 years up to 1849 (the 29<sup>th</sup> year of Emperor Daoguang in the Qing Dynasty), China exercised full sovereignty over this Portuguese settlement on Chinese soil, as manifested in the appointment of Chinese officials to administer Macao and the implementation of Chinese orders and instructions in the territory.

A major part of “Chapas Sínicas” are official correspondence exchanged between the Chinese authorities and the Portuguese authorities in Macao during the implementation of Chinese sovereignty over Macao. The records are reflections on the social conditions of the society, the people's lives, urban development, trade and commerce, etc. In addition, they represent the significance of Macao to the world. Through sea trade and other means of exchanges, Macao was connected to Britain, France, Russia, United States of America, Sweden, Netherlands, Denmark, Spain, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Brunei, Philippines and many other countries; it became a key hub for China's external trade and exchanges, a port where foreign ships assembled and a place where the East and West met and interacted.

“Chapas Sínicas”, which can provide a rich resource for the study of Macao's history and culture, is a precious cultural heritage of the world. This stamp issue is

being released to commemorate the inscription of the collection by UNESCO onto the Asia-Pacific Register of the Memory of the World in 2016 and the Memory of the World Register in 2017.

Archives of Macao of the Cultural Affairs Bureau  
of the Macao Special Administrative Region Government