



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Chinese porcelain and other orientalia and exotica in Spain during the Habsburg dynasty

Krahe Noblett, M.C.I.

Citation

Krahe Noblett, M. C. I. (2014, September 18). *Chinese porcelain and other orientalia and exotica in Spain during the Habsburg dynasty*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/28741>

Version: Corrected Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/28741>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/28741> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Krahe, Cinta

Title: Chinese porcelain and other orientalia and exotica in Spain during the Habsburg dynasty

Issue date: 2014-09-18

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Two Empires Meet: Habsburg Spain and Ming China

Spain and China in the Middle Ages

For the mediaeval Spanish mind, China was a land of fabulous richness and abundance. Its inhabitants were known as *seres* or *sinai*, both terms that derived from the word for silk – the sumptuous material for which China had been famous in the West since the Roman empire.¹⁵ And in his seventh century encyclopaedia, the *Etimologías*, Bishop Isidoro of Seville (d. 636) made this reference to the China: ‘The *seres* have taken the name from their city which is situated in the East where wool is knitted from the trees’ (*Etimologías*, IX, 2, 40).¹⁶ The best known early encounter between Europe and East Asia, was of course on the occasion of the Venetian Marco Polo visiting the country at the end of the thirteenth century. At that point new terms for China entered the Spanish language (via Catalan), such as *Cathai* or *Mangi*.¹⁷ When a century later Tamerlane (1336–1405) began expanding his own empire by absorbing portions of the Ottoman Empire, he inadvertently halted Ottoman expansion into Europe. Like many European monarchs, Henry III of Castile (1379–1406) decided to foster ties with Tamerlane and dispatched an embassy to the Timurid court at Samarkand (1403–6). The only surviving document of this embassy to Central Asia is an account by one of its members, Ruy González de Clavijo,¹⁸ who recorded that their embassy coincided with one from China. In describing the welcoming banquet he wrote: ‘meat was served in gold and silver dishes, glazed ceramics and others that are called *porcellanas* that are very expensive and rare to find’.¹⁹ These first Spanish ambassadors to an eastern court returned to Seville truly orientalised. One of them, the

¹⁵ The Greek traveller Strabo mentions the ‘*Seres*’ in his *Geographia*, written around 20 AD. Other classical authors also mention the *seres*, among them, Pliny the Elder in his *Naturalis Historia* (c. 78 AD).

¹⁶ Juan Gil, ‘La idea de China. De los Seres al Catay’, in Carlos Martínez Shaw & Marina Alfonso Mola (eds.), *La Ruta Española a China*, Madrid, 2009, p. 20.

¹⁷ Marco Polo’s book was translated into the Aragonese language by Juan Fernández de Heredia (1310–96) between 1377 and 1396. His text was an abridged version of an older Catalan translation. The manuscript was kept in the Royal Chapel of Granada, but Philip II had it transferred to the Monastery of El Escorial where it is today. The book had previously belonged to Isabella the Catholic; see Tomás Buesa Oliver, ‘Variaciones en el discurso y alternancias personales del narrador en la versión aragonesa del Libro de Marco Polo’, in *Dicenda. Cuadernos de Filología Hispánica*, no. 6, Madrid, 1987, pp. 289–95. The first map of Asia drawn in Spain, which included some of the names mentioned by Polo, is the *Catalan Atlas V* (1375) by the Jewish cartographer Abraham Cresques, which also included 30 toponyms in China and a number of Asian places. The map is preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Mss. Espagnol 30, fols. III, IV, V and VI. Gil, 2009/1, pp. 22–23.

¹⁸ Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, *Historia del gran Tamorlan, e Itinerario y enarración del viage, y relación de la embajada que Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo le hizo por mandado del muy poderoso señor Rrey Don Henrique el Tercero de Castilla*, Seville, Andrea Pescioni, 1582. The introduction is by Gonzalo Argote de Molina. (The first edition was consulted according to the Spanish bibliographer Antonio Palau y Dulcet who wrote a bibliographic compilation of printed Spanish books in seven volumes titled *Manual del librero hispano-americano: inventario bibliográfico de la producción científica y literaria de España y de la América Latina desde la invención de la imprenta hasta nuestro días* (1923–45). The edition consulted is preserved in the library of the Cigarral del Carmen in Toledo (no. 105218).

¹⁹ ‘Echaron mano de aquella carne, e facían piezas della, é ponían en bacines, dellos de oro, y dellos de plata, é aún dellos de barro vidriado, é otros que llaman *porcellanas*, que son muy preciados e caros de aver’, in Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, *Historia del gran Tamorlan*, 1582, p. 45. See Gil, 2009, p. 20.



Galician nobleman Don Payo Gómez de Sotomayor, brought back with him many exotic items – one of which, a silk dalmatic datable to the first half of the fifteenth century, is still preserved in the cathedral museum of Santiago de Compostela. (Fig. 2)

Fig. 2. Dalmatic of the reliquary of Saint Susana in silk and gold, Central Asia, first half of the fifteenth century. 122 x 124 cm. Museum of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. From Martínez Shaw and Alfonso Mola, 2009, p. 30.

Claiming the New World

The fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 disrupted the Mediterranean trade with Asia. There was mounting pressure on Spain and Portugal to search for alternative routes to the East. Shortly before making their victorious entry into the city of Granada in 1492, which brought an end to eight centuries of Moorish presence in Spain, Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon (named the Catholic Kings) agreed to authorise Christopher Columbus's expedition across the Atlantic. His purpose was to discover and exploit the riches of India and the East – gold, silks, spices and porcelain – and to evangelise 'the Indies'.²⁰ Columbus proposed reaching India by sailing west from Spain, as sailing eastwards was impossible due to the treaties with Portugal.²¹ When Columbus reached the island of *Guanahani* or *San Salvador* (Bahamas) in October 1492, he called its inhabitants *indios* mistaking the lands he had encountered for India. Uncertainty about the precise location of China would be the norm throughout the fifteenth century. Many Europeans still regarded China as part of the dominions of the great Khan.²²

A year after Columbus's discoveries, Pope Alexander VI issued a series of Bulls granting the Catholic kings and their successors control over lands situated to the west of an imaginary line located 100 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands. All lands to the west of the meridian would be Spanish, while Portugal was granted all lands to the east.²³ The Portuguese protested the decision, claiming that their Atlantic routes were being excessively curtailed. On 7 June 1494, a new treaty between the monarchs of Portugal and Spain was signed at Tordesillas (Valladolid),²⁴ whereby the line of demarcation was redrawn 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands, approximately halfway between these islands and those recently discovered by Columbus (Fig. 3). All territories to the west of that line would be-

²⁰ After Columbus, the term was used in Castilian language from the fifteen to the nineteen centuries to refer to America and the Philippines.

²¹ The Treaty of Alcaçovas, signed in 1479, confirmed Portuguese control of the Atlantic routes to Asia.

²² Juan Gil, 'En Búsqueda de la China. Del Atlántico al Pacífico', 2009/2, pp. 33–46. Through the writings and documents of Christopher Columbus and others, the author explains the perception of the location of the newly discovered territories at the time.

²³ Except the Canary Islands which were granted to Spain by the Treaty of Alcaçovas in 1479.

²⁴ Lourdes Díaz-Trechuelo, 'El tratado de Tordesillas y su proyección en el Pacífico', in *Revista Española del Pacífico*, no. 4, Madrid, 1994, pp. 11–21.

long to Spain, and all the lands to the east to Portugal.²⁵ Since at the time of signing many lands in the Pacific Ocean were uncharted, Spain and Portugal concluded another agreement in 1529 (Treaty of Zaragoza) establishing a line of demarcation on the opposite side of the world. Although this treaty located the Philippines Islands in the Portuguese area even more conclusively than the Tordesillas line had done, Spain colonised these islands, as will be outlined in the following section.



Fig. 3. Cantino planisphere, by an anonymous Portuguese cartographer (1502). Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, Modena, Italy.

²⁵ The line crosses the East coast of South America just east of the mouth of the Amazon River and ultimately served to secure the Portuguese title to Brazil. On the opposite side of the globe it passes just west of New Guinea, but it was a long time before the facts were accurately determined, and in the meantime Spain made good her hold on the Philippines, which lay on the Portuguese side of the line.

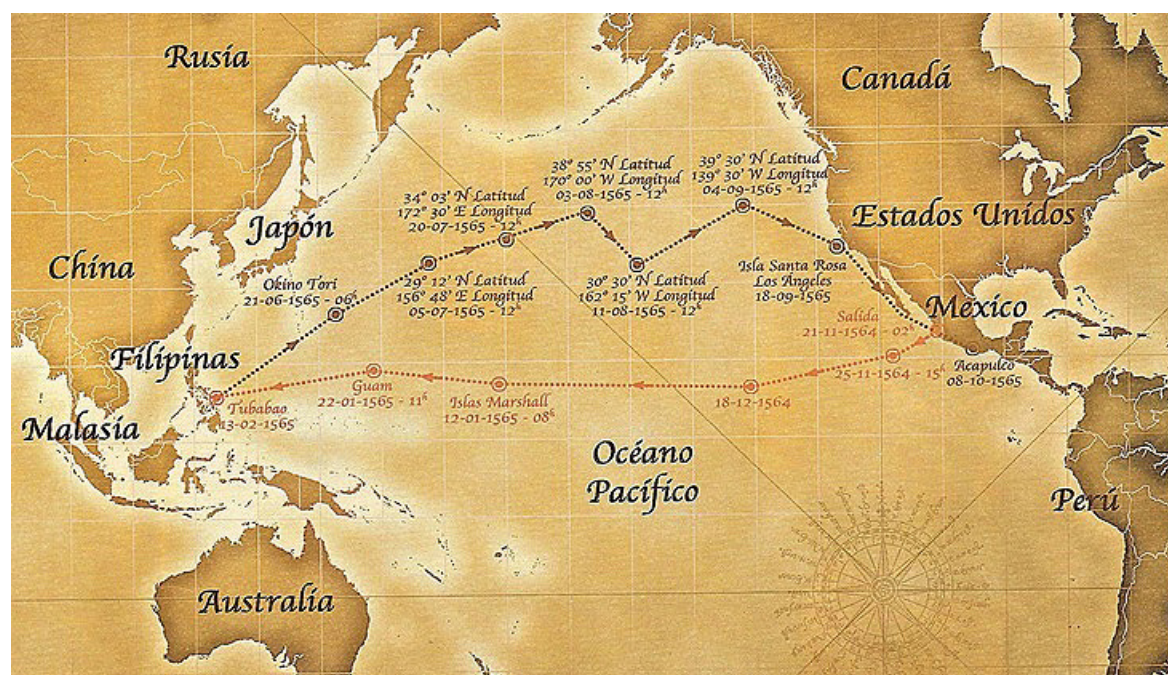


Fig. 4. The Manila Galleon Routes with their maritime courses and latitudes.

Expeditions Around the 'Spanish Lake' and the Discovery of the Philippines

Charles I of Spain (1500–58), founder of the Spanish branch of the Habsburg dynasty (1516–56)²⁶ and ruler of the Holy Roman Empire from 1519, oversaw the Spanish colonisation of the Americas and the success of the expedition in search of the 'Spice Islands' by the Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan (1480–1521). The first stage of Spanish exploration in the Pacific is known as 'the voyages to Maluco', because their objective was to wrest from the Portuguese the claim to the Moluccan archipelago, the precious 'Spice Islands', which should have been in the area recognised by the Treaty of Tordesillas as belonging to the Spanish Crown, according to biased Spanish interpretations relying on distorted geographic longitude calculations. The first of these expeditions (1519–22) was organised in Spain and placed under the command of Ferdinand Magellan, the Portuguese mariner who, after discovering the first sea passage between the two oceans (the strait that bears his

²⁶ Philip I (the Fair) of Castile was the first king of the Spanish Habsburgs or 'Austrias' dynasty. He acceded the throne in 1506 after the death of Queen Isabella the Catholic of the Trastámara dynasty. Charles I of Spain (V of Germany) inherited both the crown of Castile and Aragon when they were united under the sovereignty of a single Habsburg because Charles father, King Philip I, never inherited the crown of Aragon. From then on Spanish Habsburgs have been divided into the 'major Austrias', which comprised the reigns of Charles I of Spain (1516–56) and Philip II (1556–98) and the 'minor Austrias' in the seventeenth century, which included the reigns of Philip III (1598–1621), Philip IV (1621–65) and Charles II of Spain (1665–1700). As Jorge Calvo Poyato explains: 'According to artistic and literary sources most of their rule in Spain is considered today as the Golden Age or *Siglo de Oro* dating from the beginning of the reign of Charles I of Spain until 1665 when the reign of Philip IV concluded. In any case, the period was of a great cultural activity between the Renaissance and the Baroque periods'. José Calvo Poyato, *Así vivían en el Siglo de Oro*, Madrid, 1989, p. 4. Other authors like Juan José Martín González consider the existence of two Golden Ages during the Habsburg period: the first finished with the death of King Philip II in 1598 and the second was during the seventeenth century. Juan José Martín González, *El artista en la sociedad española del siglo XVII*, Madrid, 1984, p. 13.

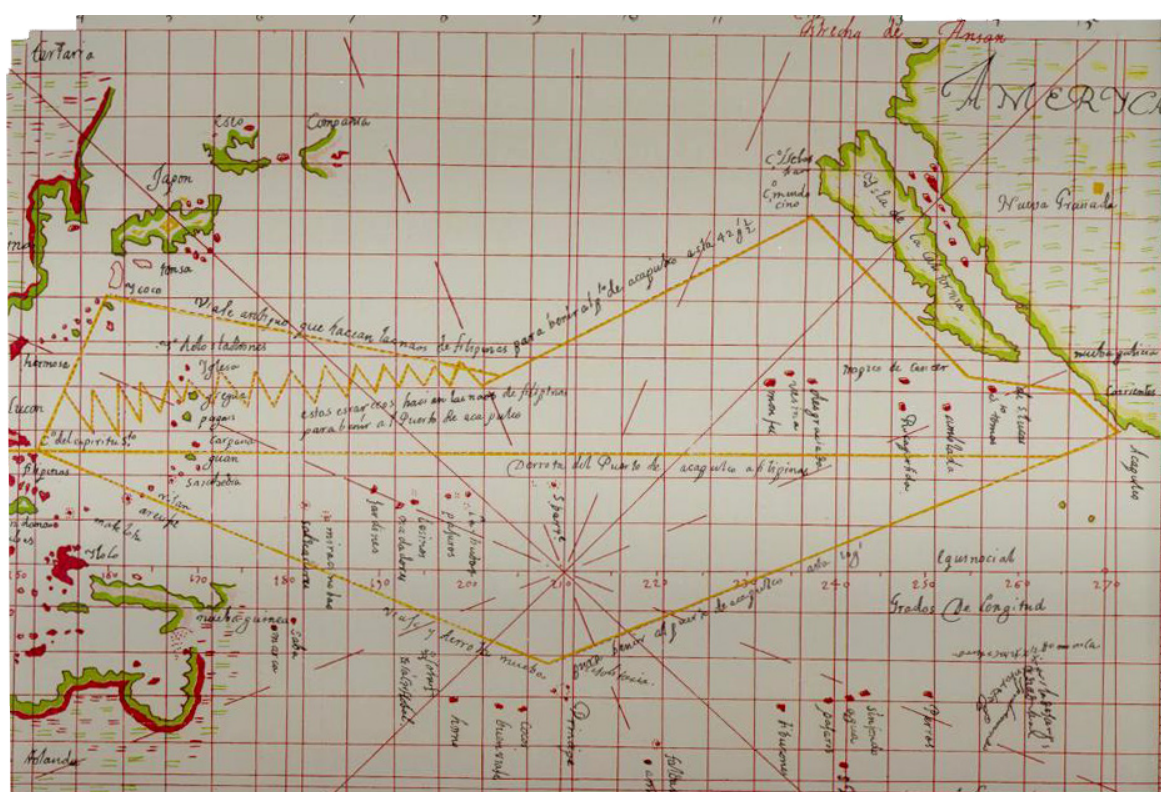


Fig. 5. Maritime routes from Manila to Acapulco. Drawing from the archive of Antonio Pareja, Toledo.

name), sailed into the waters of what their discoverer, Vasco Núñez de Balboa (1475–1519), had called ‘the South Sea’, and which Magellan re-baptised with the name *Mar Pacífico*, the Pacific Ocean. In his crossing, Magellan came into contact with the Desventuradas Islands and finally the Saint Lazarus Islands (that is, the Philippines)²⁷, where the expedition’s commander met his death fighting the locals. Having reached the Moluccas, one of Magellan’s ships, the *Trinidad*, under the command of Gonzalo Gómez de Espinosa, unsuccessfully attempted the first eastward return voyage, in the course of which Gómez de Espinosa discovered a number of islands north of Gilolo. In the meantime, the expedition’s only remaining ship, the *Victoria*, returned to Spain under the command of Juan Sebastián Elcano by sailing westwards, thus completing the first European circumnavigation of the globe, one of the expedition’s main achievements. The expedition commanded by García Jofre de Loáisía (1525–27) was also organised from Spain, with the same objectives as its predecessor, but the four ships that managed to cross the Strait of Magellan were scattered by a storm, each eventually meeting a different destiny. There were still further expeditions before the Treaty of Zaragoza (1529) settled the dispute in Portugal’s favour, putting an end to this first cycle of Spanish sailing on the Pacific.²⁸

²⁷ One of the most important publications about the Philippine Islands is Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, *The Philippine Islands. 1493–1898*, Cleveland, 1903–9. These 55-volume compendium contains nearly 20,000 pages of historical documents and books translated into English. The first volume describes the explorations by early navigators, descriptions of the islands, their peoples and their history, records of the Catholic missions, and documents regarding the lines of demarcation, Papal Bulls, Treaties and so forth. See also Carlos Sanz, *Primitivas relaciones de España con Asia y Oceanía*, Madrid, 1958.

²⁸ Carlos Martínez Shaw, ‘La Exploración española del Pacífico en los tiempos modernos’, in María Dolores Elizalde, Josep M. Fradera, Luis Alonso (eds.), *Imperios y Naciones en el Pacífico*, Madrid, 2001, vol. 1, pp. 3–23. See also Alfonso Mola and Martínez Shaw, ‘El lago español o la primera exploración del Pacífico’, in Martínez Shaw and Alfonso Mola, 2007, pp. 47–48.

The second stage of Spain's strategy for the Pacific was to secure the Philippine archipelago as Spanish territory and also establish a trade route back and forth across the Pacific between it and Spanish America. The first expedition was undertaken by Ruy López de Villalobos (1542–1545), who sailed through the Revillagigedo Islands, the Marshall Islands and the Caroline Islands, concluding at Sarangani, in the Philippine islands. Spanish rule would continue in these islands for three and a half centuries.²⁹

Finding a route that would make a return trip to Mexico possible was a matter of great concern, and a ship, the *San Juan*, was sent on the mission. Two consecutive attempts were made and failed utterly. While Ruy López de Villalobos had set up outposts in the Philippines and explored the islands' coasts, the Spanish did not actually settle in the archipelago until after the arrival of the fleet commanded by Miguel López de Legazpi (1564–65). His particular mission was to conquer the islands, establish a permanent trade route and, as a related condition, find a way back by sailing east. Although on the outward trip the expedition, which departed from Puerto de la Navidad in today's state of Jalisco, discovered an entire series of islands in the Marshall Archipelago before making land at Cebu in the Philippine Archipelago, the endeavour's greatest accomplishment was discovering a way to reach New Spain. One member of the expedition was Alonso de Arellano, whose ship, the dispatch boat *San Lucas*, was separated from the parent fleet on the outward voyage, whereupon the commander set off on the homeward voyage on his own. The *San Lucas*'s successful arrival crowned the first crossing of the Pacific from West to East. However, it was Andrés de Urdaneta,³⁰ at the helm of the *San Pedro* under the command of Felipe Salcedo, who officially inaugurated the route back from the west when he reached Acapulco Bay in October 1565.³¹

The Settlement and Occupation of the Philippines

The settlement and occupation of the Philippines after the founding of Manila (1571) made the archipelago a launching pad from which to reach out towards the borders of Asia. An entire series of expeditions were organised to establish contact with Asian lands, the real Cathay and Cipangu originally sought by Christopher Columbus. Organised from the Philippines or from New Spain – and regardless of whether their objectives were missionary, military or diplomatic, and although their effects in the field of the history of discoveries were quite minor – these expeditions enriched the experience of navigating the Pacific and allowed for a more extensive and accurate mapping of these territories (Fig. 6). New trade routes such as Lisbon-Goa-Malacca-Macao-Nagasaki, Seville-Veracruz-Acapulco-Manila, and inter-Asiatic routes such as Manila-Macao-Nagasaki would link old towns to newly discovered ones, re-defining the concept of

²⁹ Martínez Shaw, 2001/1, p. 9.

³⁰ Carlos Martínez Shaw, 'El Tornaviaje de Andrés de Urdaneta y Alonso de Arellano', in Sociedad Geográfica Española (ed.) *Atlas de los Exploradores Españoles*, Barcelona, 2009, pp. 129–31.

³¹ 'The point behind the early exploration of the western coasts of North America was to expand the zone occupied by the Spanish and to find a passage between the two oceans (the famous Northwest Passage) and, later, to establish points from which to take navigational bearings between the Philippines and New Spain. The second wave of exploration, launched from Mexican ports, sought primarily to reconnoitre the Gulf of California. Another important factor, however, was Spain's determination to take full advantage of return voyages from the Philippines to explore the Californian coast'. This rule was established in 1565, although it was not until 30 years later, in 1595, when Sebastián Rodríguez Cermeño shipwrecked at Drake's Bay leaving behind his porcelain cargo. In the 17th century, exploration followed exploration, plotting maps and establishing place names from Acapulco to Oregon. This work would prove fundamental for the Manila Galleon Route, see Martínez Shaw, 2001/1, p. 14.

Fig.6. Map of the Philippine Islands with old and new maritime routes.
Engraving from the archive of Antonio Pareja, Toledo.i

the world and of the individual, who became increasingly aware of a new global reality.³²

Being its only colony in Asia, Spain had two main objectives regarding the Philippines. The first was to convert the local population to Christianity. The occupation of the islands was accomplished with no bloodshed, partly because most of the population, except the Muslims, offered little armed resistance. The Spanish Crown assumed administrative responsibility for the new ecclesiastical establishments while responsibility for converting the indigenous population was assigned to the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Augustinians, known collectively as ‘the Friars’, and to the Jesuits. The second objective was to acquire a share in the spice trade and develop contacts with China and Japan to foster the Christian missionary efforts and promote trade with these territories. Indeed, Manila was going to be the key to the trade in the East Indies. As Miguel López de Legazpi,³³ who established a Spanish settlement in the Philippines,

wrote in 1569: ‘We shall gain commerce with China, whence come silks, porcelains, benzoin, musk and other articles’.³⁴ (Spanish involvement in the spice trade will be discussed in more detail in the chapter about trade.)

With the incorporation of the Philippines, Spanish America was brought to the gates of Asia, and the Spanish Habsburg Empire became the greatest power on earth, rulers of an empire on which ‘the sun never sets’, or in the words of the famous writer Lope de Vega: ‘the world could be walked through the lands of Philip II of Spain’.³⁵ Although the Spanish monarchy enjoyed a pre-eminent position in the world and ruled over a vast overseas empire with immense resources – the discovery of new lands meant new sources of revenue – it was not a single or unified state.³⁶ From the prosperous Crown of Castile, the



³² Oliver Impey & Christiaan Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer (1580–1850)*, Amsterdam, 2005, p. 19.

³³ Miguel López de Legazpi (1510–72), the Spanish explorer who established Spain’s dominion over the Philippines until 1898. The town of San Miguel was founded on the island of Cebú in 1565, and the city of Manila in 1571; the latter became the first Spanish capital in the East; see Marina Alfonso Mola ‘Miguel López de Legazpi’, in Sociedad Geográfica Española (ed.), *Atlas de los Exploradores Españoles*, Barcelona, 2009.

³⁴ William Lytle Schurz, *The Manila Galleon*, Manila, 1985 (2nd ed.), p. 30.

³⁵ Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio (Madrid, 1562–1635) was one of the most important playwrights and poets of the Spanish Golden Age. In 1618 he published the comedy *La octava maravilla* in which he relates the imaginary voyage of the King of Bengal and his retinue to the Iberian Peninsula.

³⁶ It is due to custom or habit that nowadays we still use the term ‘Spain’ when referring to Spanish politics in the 16th and 17th centuries, but at the time it was a fragmented empire that stretched around the globe. It was a federation of states with different laws and customs governed by the same ruler, the King of Spain, but that was the main cohesion or link. The Iberian Peninsula included three Crowns: the Crown of Castile and León which was the most populated and extensive area and included territories like Galicia, Asturias, Andalucía and

seat of the empire, the Spanish Habsburgs financed their overseas projects by resorting mainly to taxation in Castile and mining in America, the former outranking the latter as a source of revenue. Because of its immense resources, the Spanish economy was soon devastated by inflation, taxation, currency devaluation and bankruptcies of the Royal treasury due to a succession of debilitating foreign wars.³⁷

Fostering diplomatic ties with the Far East and gathering commercial, political and cultural information about these lands were two priorities for Spain during the first 30 years of settlement in the Philippines. However, there were other projects and political initiatives that were oriented towards less peaceful ends. After his return from the Philippines and a year before the foundation of Manila, the Augustinian friar Diego de Herrera wrote to Philip II from Mexico enquiring about the possibility of conquering China. On 8 June 1569, the official to the Crown, Andrés de Mirandaola, sent the king news about China and hoped that its conquest would be achieved soon.³⁸ Friar Martín de Rada, writing to the Marquis of Falces, Gastón de Peralta, III Viceroy of Mexico, on 8 July 1569, explained:

If his Majesty wishes to get hold of China, which we know to be a land that is very large and rich and of high civilization, with cities, forts, and walls much greater than those of Europe, he must first have a settlement in these islands [...] because in order to conquer a country so large and that has so vast a population, one must have aid and refuge near at hand, for any contingency that might arise [...] I have been informed the people of China are not at all warlike. They rely entirely on numbers and on the fortification of their walls... Consequently, I believe (God helping), that they can be subdued easily and with few forces.³⁹

Expansion west of Manila began with a set of instructions issued in 1572 by Martín Enríquez de Almansa, Viceroy of New Spain, to Captain Juan de Isla, ordering him to enter Manila with his three-ship fleet and thereafter to take one of his ships with a contingent of men recruited by Miguel López de Legazpi and set off to explore the Chinese coastline. The operation, however, was never carried out. Later, Governor Guido de Lavezares (1572–75) continued with the same plans of conquest, as is clear from a letter, dated 1574 he sent to Phillip II of Spain, enclosing a map drawn in 1555 and now preserved in the Archive of the Indies [M. P. Filipinas 5]. The last person to try to conquer China was the next governor of the Philippines, Francisco de Sande (1575–80). He garnered support from the results of the first Spanish embassy to the Middle Kingdom, conducted by the Augustinian monk Martín de Rada, who told of his mission in his famous account the *Relación*.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the Council of the

Murcia. The Crown of Aragon consisted of the Kingdoms of Aragon, Mallorca and Valencia and the Principality of Catalonia and Navarra. From 1580 until 1640 the Crown of Portugal was also added to the Iberian territories as the fourth crown. In addition, the kings also exercised sovereignty over the Netherlands, the Duchy of Milan, the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily and the New World. Preserving the territorial integrity of the empire against its enemies, maintaining their authority over a large territory that sometimes had opposing interests, and promoting the welfare of their subjects posed endless challenges to the Spanish Habsburg Monarchy. John H. Elliott, 'España y su imperio', in *España y su Mundo*, Madrid, 2007, pp. 27–50.

³⁷ Antonio Domínguez Ortíz, *El Antiguo Régimen: los Reyes Católicos y los Austrias*, Madrid, 1973.

³⁸ Trechuelo, 1994, pp. 11–21. See also José Martínez Millán, 'La crisis del "partido castellano" y la transformación de la Monarquía Hispánica en el cambio de reinado de Felipe II a Felipe III', in Carlos Gómez-Centurión, *Monarquía y Corte en la España moderna*, Madrid, 2003, p. 33.

³⁹ The Editorial Board Filipiniana Book Guild, 'Letter from Martín de Rada to the Marquis de Falces', in *The Colonization and Conquest of the Philippines by Spain. Some Contemporary Source Documents (1559–1577)*, Manila, 1965, p. 149. From AGI, 68-1-37; BR 34: 223–28.

⁴⁰ In 1575, Rada wrote an account titled *Relación verdadera del reyno Taibin, por otro nombre China, y del viage que a él hizo el muy reverendo padre fray Martín de Rada, provincial que fue del orden de San Agustín, que lo vio y anduvo, en la provincia de Hocquien, año 1575 hecha por el mismo*. Rada's account is included in the text by Fr. Gaspar de San Agustín, O.S.A. *Conquistas de las Islas Philipinas la temporal, por las armas del Señor Don Phelipe Segundo el Prudente; y la espiritual, por los religiosos de la Orden de San Agustín*, Madrid, 1698.



Fig. 7. Map of China by Jodocus Hondius, Amsterdam, 1606.

Indies proved more prudent than the governor; in 1577 it ordered the suspension of all warlike intentions. However, that did not banish lurking plans of conquest from the minds of other people of rank, such as Governor Diego Ronquillo (1580–83) and Father Alonso Sánchez.⁴¹ In many cases, however, these projects proved ultimately to be chimeras that never left the drawing board; others were put into practice but met with ill fortune.⁴²

Fact-Finding Missions from Spain to China and Vice Versa

Maps, letters and chronicles were the means by which information about newly discovered territories and their peoples first spread across Europe. Marco Polo’s account of his travels to the Far East, *Il milione* or *The Travels of Marco Polo*, was the most popular source of information about China in Spain (see also footnote 17). It was translated into Castilian in 1503, followed in 1515 by the publication of *El Livro das Cousas de Oriente* (*Book of the Things of the Orient*), by the Portuguese explorers Tomé Pires and Duarte Barbosa.

⁴¹ For the history of the Spaniards in the Philippines during the last third of the sixteenth century, see Manel Ollé, *La empresa de China. De la Armada Invencible al Galeón de Manila*, Barcelona, 2002; and by the same author, *La invención de China. Percepciones y estrategias Filipinas respecto a China durante el siglo XVI*. South China and Maritime Asia, 9, Wiesbaden, 2001. Also see Rafael Valladares, *Castilla y Portugal en Asia (1580–1680). Declive imperial y adaptación*, Leuven, 2001.

⁴² Carlos Martínez Shaw, ‘Más allá de Manila’, in Marina Alfonso Mola & Carlos Martínez-Shaw (eds.), *El galeón de Manila*, Madrid, 2001, pp. 95–105.

The first reference to porcelain (or *porcelaine* in the Italian-French dialect of Languedoc) was in a description of cowry shells (*cypraea moneta* as *porcellani*) in Marco Polo's book, but the same word was used to identify white pottery Polo had seen in Quanzhou (Fujian Province).⁴³ One century later Tomé Pires remarked that in China 'there was a practically infinite quantity of porcelain'.⁴⁴

Among the first Spanish missionaries to the East Indies, were the Augustinian friars Martín de Rada, who accompanied Miguel López de Legazpi's expedition to the Philippines, and Jerónimo Marín and Miguel de Loarca, who were entrusted with the task of beginning the spiritual conquest and developing trade between the Far East and Spain. The main objectives of these friars was to ask for a Fukien port for the Spaniards to trade. They were also to obtain information about the diosyn-cray and trade of the Chinese.⁴⁵

Martín de Rada accompanied Miguel López de Legazpi and Andrés de Urdaneta on their expedition to the Far East, reaching the Philippines in February 1565.⁴⁶ He was later dispatched to China on behalf of the viceroy of New Spain⁴⁷ to request the opening of a port for trade with Spain, and to learn about the customs of the Chinese. However, the most important aim was to find out which sort of commodities could be profitably exported to Spain. It is revealing that Rada's first-hand account,⁴⁸ written in 1575, makes no mention of porcelain or pottery of any kind, although he does comment on details of Chinese banquets, such as the fact that they did not use tablecloths or napkins, and ate with the help of peculiar 'long little sticks'.⁴⁹ In marked contrast, the Portuguese soldier Galeote Pereira⁵⁰ described the place where fine porcelain was made, while the Dominican friar Gaspar da Cruz, writing his *Tractado em que se cotam muito por esteso as cousas da China, co suas particularidades, e assi do Reyno Dormuz* (1569), provided many details about the place and manufacture of porcelain and the different types to be found. Like Galeote Pereira, he even refers to their price, stating that 'a great quantity is sold, very good and very cheap'.⁵¹ The following description of the manufacturing process

⁴³ The Italians had long called cowries '*porcellani*', because the shape of the shell was similar to a piglet (*porcellus*, diminutive of *porco*). Robert Finlay, *The Pilgrim Art. Cultures of Porcelain in Word History*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2010, p. 70; see p. 79 for a description of the term porcelain in Covarrubias' dictionary, where he describes porcelain wares from Puçol.

⁴⁴ Rui Manuel Loureiro, 'Portugal at the Gateway to China', in *Caminhos Da Porcelana*, Lisbon, 1998, p. 46.

⁴⁵ C.R. Boxer, *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, Bangkok, 2004, p. 45.

⁴⁶ Boxer, 2004, p. lxxvi.

⁴⁷ The viceroy of New Spain or Mexico was the monarch's representative in the Spanish territories of North America, Mexico, Costa Rica, Hispaniola Island (today's Dominican Republic and Haiti) and the Philippines.

⁴⁸ Pedro G. Galende wrote a biography of Rada: *Navarros ilustres. Martín de Rada*, Manila, 1980. A bibliographic compilation of some historical documents related to China in the Spanish archives can be consulted in *La China de España: Elaboración de un corpus digitalizado de documentos españoles sobre China 1555 a 1900*. <http://www.upf.edu/asia>. This project was directed by Prof. Dr. M. Dolors Folch i Fornesa from the Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona.

⁴⁹ The narration of Fr. Martín de Rada was translated by Boxer from a sixteenth-century copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris that was written in Manila or Cebú in November 1575 and May 1576, folios 16–31 of Codex 325 of the Spanish Collection (Boxer 2004, p. 243). There is a copy of Radas' *Relación* in the Palacio Real de Madrid library.

⁵⁰ Galeote Pereira, *Certain Reports of China*, in Boxer 2004, p. 5: 'This city of Quiansi lieth nearer to Liampo, the Portugals being ignorant of this country, and finding great abundance of that fine porcelain to be sold at Liampo, and that very good cheap, thought at the first that it had been made there, howbeit in fine, they perceived that the standing of Quiansi more near unto Liampo than to Chincheo or Cantao, was the cause of so much fine porcelain at Liampo.' Previous to this information there is a mention of porcelain-production in the early 15th century in Libellus de Notitia Orbis by John of Sultaniey, a French priest, who was appointed bishop in Beijing but ended up in Sultaniey (Persia).

⁵¹ In Boxer, 2004, p. 91. Maria Antónia Pinto de Matos in her article 'Chinese porcelain. From Royal Gifts to

appears elsewhere in Boxer's translation of Gaspar da Cruz's text:

The porcelain which is used in all the country of China and in all India is of common clay; notwithstanding, some of the porcelain is very coarse and other types are very fine: and there is some that cannot be sold to the common people, as it is reserved only for the use of high officials because this porcelain is red and green, gilt and yellow. Some of this porcelain does get sold but in very small quantities and in great secrecy.⁵²

His description of the manufacturing process of porcelain echoes that of Marco Polo: 'As regards the substance of which it is made, some say it is manufactured from "oyster-shells", others of dung left to rot for a long time'.⁵³

The Jesuit order, founded in 1534 by the Spaniard Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), was one the most influential orders in the East. Among its most important missionaries was Francis Xavier (1506–52), who established Christianity in India, the Malay Archipelago and Japan, and who died in China in 1552.⁵⁴ Other Spanish Jesuits such as Diego de Pantoja (1571–1618) accompanied Father Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) to Beijing. He arrived in Macao on 20 July 1597 and was sent to Nanjing where he stayed until 1600. He and Matteo Ricci left Nanjing on 19 May 1600 and arrived in Beijing on 24 January 1601. He worked in Beijing as a musician, astronomer and geographer. In 1602 he wrote his *Relación*,⁵⁵ in which he described banquets and the use of porcelain:

They don't eat as we do in our land, the banquets are not made to eat, as they only nibble a little and drink frequently from little porcelains which only hold five or six thimbles of wine, and in this and in chatting take four or six hours and after the feast you return home hungry.⁵⁶

On 18 March 1617, he was trialed as an enemy of the Chinese astronomers, and was expelled from China, along with his Jesuit colleague, Sabatino de Ursis (1575–1620), and settled down in Macao, where he stayed for a short time before his death. In 1625 another Spanish friar of the same order, Adriano de las Cortes (1578–1629), travelled from the Philippines to China where he lived for more than a year and wrote *Viaje a China* (*Voyage to China*). The book chronicles his perilous journey and provides insights into the everyday life of the Chinese: 'They have the best and very fine porcelain

Commercial Products', in *Caminhos da Porcelana*, Lisbon, 1998, transcribes another part of Gaspar da Cruz's text, p. 111: 'There is another province called Quiansi [Jiangxi]... and it is there that all the fine porcelain is made, from Sulljo [Jingdezhen]... northwards, and none is made anywhere else... And as this city of Quiansi is closer to Liampo than to Chincheo or Canton, there is always a lot of cheap porcelain at Liampo; and because up until now the Portuguese knew so little about this land, there were many who believed and categorically stated that it was made in Liampo, but the truth is this.'

⁵² Gaspar da Cruz, *Tractado em que se cotam muito por esteso as cousas da China, co suas particularidades, e assi do Reyno Dormuz*, Evora, 1569; in Boxer, 2004, p. 126.

⁵³ Boxer, 2004, pp. 126–27.

⁵⁴ He reached the town of Kagoshima (Japan) on 15 August 1549 and remained there until 20 November 1551. He persuaded the viceroy of Portuguese India to dispatch an embassy to China, despite the regulation that excluded foreigners from that country. St Francis Xavier left India for Malacca on 25 April 1552 and at the end of August the same year reached the island of Sangchuan, off the coast of Guangdong. He was stricken with fever and died on 2 December, or, according to some authors on 27 November 1552.

⁵⁵ Diego de Pantoja, *Relación de la entrada de algunos padres de la Compañía de Iesvs en la China y particulares fuecchos que tuuieron, y de cofas muy notables que vieron en el mismo Reyno*, Seville, 1605. The book is preserved in the library of the Cigarral del Carmen, Toledo.

⁵⁶ Diego de Pantoja, *Relación*, 1605, pp. 112 and 112v: 'No comen como en nuestra tierra, ni parece que aquello fe hizo para comer, fino toman por cumplimiento alguna cofilla, y muy amenudo beben con vnas porcelanillas que en cada vna cabra cinco o feis dedales de vino, y en efto y en conuerfar paffan quatro y feys oras en banquetes, y tornanfe a cafa con hambre'.

in the world and sell a great quantity of it to East India and the Philippines, but the Chinese hardly ever use it; rare is the Chinese using a fine cup or bowl as everybody uses coarse bowls and plates'.⁵⁷

One Spanish book that stands out in the so-called *Literature of the Missions*, especially in view of the impact it would have on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European readers is *The Great and Mighty Kingdom of China and the Situation Hereof* compiled by the Spanish Augustinian friar Juan González de Mendoza and published in Rome in 1585.⁵⁸ The descriptions in his account were not firsthand but were drawn from a variety of sources, such as texts and letters written by missionaries about their experiences while at their East Indies outposts. In an early English translation of the book,⁵⁹ the manufacture and trade of porcelain is described as follows:

Such merchants as do keepe shoppes (of whom in euvry citie there is a great number) they haue a table or signe hanging at their doore, whereon is written all such merchandise as is within to be sold.... There be also shops full of eathen vessels (porsilan in the margin) of diuers making, redde, greene, yellow, and gilt; it is so good cheape that for foure rials [*reales*] of plate they giue fiftie peeces: very strong earth, the which they doo breake all to peeces and grind it, and put it into sesternes with water, made of lime and stone; and after that they haue well tumbled and tossed it in water, of the creame that is vpon it they make the finest sort of them, and the lower they go, spending that substance that is the courser: they make them after the forme and fashion as they do here, and afterward they do gild them, and make them of what colour they please, the which will never be lost: then they put them into their killes and burne them. This hath beene seene and is of a truth, appeareth in a booke set forth in the Italian toong, by Duardo Banbosa [Barbosa] that they do make them of periwinkle shelles of the sea: the which they do grinde and put them under the ground to refine them, whereas they lie 100 years: and many other things he doth treat of to this effect. But if that were true, they should not make so great number of them as is made in that kingdome, and is brought into Portugall, and carried into Peru, and Noua Espania, and into other parts of the world: which is a sufficient prooffe for that which is said. And the Chinos do agree for this to be true. The finest sort of this is neuer carried out of the countrie, for that it is spent in the seruice of

⁵⁷ Father Adriano de las Cortes & Beatriz Monc6 (ed.), *Viaje de la China*, Madrid, 1991, p. 240: 'Tienen la mejor porcelana y toda finísima que hay en el mundo y venden della mucha que se lleva a la India Oriental y Philipinas y a ellos vi que apenas la usan ni se sirven della en su tierra; raro es el chino que de limeta o de plato, ni escudilla o taca fina, todo es servirse de las más bastas escudillas que della hacen y en los bodegonos cual o cual plato grande también de los más bastos'. Pedro Ordoñez de Ceballos was another adventurous Spanish friar who spent time in China and wrote *Tratado de las Relaciones Verdaderas de los Reynos de la China, Conchinchina, y Champaa, y otras cofas notables, y varios fuceffos, facadas der fus originales*, Pedro de la Cuesta, Jaén, 1628. He did not, however, mention any porcelain in his book.

⁵⁸ The first edition of Juan González de Mendoza, *Historia de las cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del gran reino de China*, was published in 1585 in Spanish, 1586 in Italian, the French edition in 1588, and a Latin edition in Augsburg (1589) and Antwerp (1655). A Spanish edition was also published in 1596 in Antwerp. Apart from Gonzalez de Mendoza, other Spanish pioneers in opening up China to the world were Bernardino de Escalante who wrote the *Discurso de la Navegación que los Portugueses hacen a los reinos y provincias de Oriente*, Seville, 1577; the first translation of a Chinese text to an European language was done by the Dominican friar Juan Cobo but it was not published until the twentieth century; it is titled *Beng Sim Po Cam* or *Rich Mirror of the Clear Heart*, Madrid, 1959, in R. Valladares, *Castilla y Portugal en Asia (1580–1680)*, Leuven, 2001, p. 4. The manuscript is preserved in the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid (Ms. 6040).

⁵⁹ The book was translated into English at Richard Hakluyt's suggestion in 1588 and republished by the Hakluyt Society in 1846. I have used a new edition of the book: Juan González de Mendoza, edited by George Staunton and Richard Henry Major, *The Great and Mighty Kingdom of China and the Situation Hereof*, Cambridge, 2010, chapter X, pp. 33–34, and chapter XVIII, p. 138.

the king, and his gouernours, and is so fine and deere, that is seemeth to be of fine and perfite cristal: that which is made in the prouince of Saxii is the best and finest.

In another part of the book a banquet is described in the following manner:

In the middest of the table they doo sette the victualles in maruelous good order, as flesh of diuerse manners of brothes passing well dressed, and are serued in fine earthen [in the original Spanish book the author uses the word 'porcelain'] dishes of great curiositie, and of siluer (although these vse verie seeldome, except for the viceroys: they have no neede of table clothes nor napkins, for they eate so delicately, that they doo not touch the meate with their hands, but with little forkes of golde or siluer, with the which they eate so cleanly, that although it be verie small that they eate, yet will they let nothing fall.⁶⁰

Mendoza's book was translated into several languages and made a long-lasting impression on seventeenth-century European readers, shaping their image of China. It should be remembered that Gonzalez de Mendoza was also involved in the mission to dispatch a Spanish embassy to the Chinese Emperor Wanli in 1580, supported by King Philip II. With this embassy the Spanish monarch tried to gain the friendship of Emperor Wanli and open the doors to the evangelisation of China, as revealed in a letter he wrote to the Emperor.⁶¹ The importance of the embassy was underscored by a rich cargo of presents appraised at 4 million *maravedíes*.⁶² The sumptuous gifts⁶³ were consistent with Philip II's 'concept of the State' being the most powerful ruler of the time, as he made clear in his letter, obviously intending to make an impression of power on the emperor. Unfortunately the embassy got as far as Mexico before it was aborted on the grounds that Chinese law prohibited the entry of foreigners to China and the emperor of China would not welcome the embassy. Besides, the

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, chapter X, pp. 33–34, and chapter XVIII, p. 138. The Spanish edition consulted is Juan González de Mendoza, *Historia de las Cosas más notables ritos y costumbres del Gran Reyno de China*, Antwerp, 1596, p. 22: 'Los mercaderes de tienda (ay muchos en cada ciudad) tienen a la puerta una tabla, a donde están escritas todas las mercancías, que ay dentro para vender. ... Ay otras tiendas de porcelanas, de diferentes maneras, coloradas, verdes, doradas, y amarillas: valen tan baratas que por quatro reales dan cinquenta piezas. Hacen fe de un barro rezio el qual deshacen, y muelen, y después echan en unos estantes de agua, que tienen muy bien hechos de piedra de cantería: y después de bine rebuelto en el agua, de la nata que queda encima, hazen las más finas: y quanto mas abaxo va, son más bañas. Hazenfe de la forma que las de aca, y después las doran: y ponen el color que quieren el cual jamas pierden. Luego las cuezen en el horno y esto se ha visto, y es mas verofimil que lo que dize cierto Duarte Barbosa, que anda en italiano, que se hace de caracoles de mar, los quales fe muelen, y los meten debaxo de tierra afinarfe 100 anos, y otras cosas que acerca desto dize. La muy fina, nunca fale del Reyno, porque fe gasta en feruicio al Rey, y Gobernadores, y es tan linda que pareçe de finreifsimo cristal. La mas fina, es la que fe haze en la provincia de Saxij. Los artífices, y oficiales mecanicos estan en calles señaladas, donde no fe entro mete ninguno, que no fea del officio, o arte: de manera, que viendo al primero de la calle, el officio, o arte que vfa, fe puede entender que toda la calle fera de aquel mesmo officio...'. In chapter XVIII p. 104: 'En medio de la mesa ponen la comida muy concertada, a fi dues, y carnes diferentes como de pecados regalados de los quales hazen muchos potajes bien adereçados, y los sirven en platos muy curiosos de porcelana, o de plata (aunque de estos vfan muy pocos fino son los Virreyes) no tienen necesidad de manteles ni feruilletas, porque comen tan pulidamente, que no tocan con las manos al manjar, fino con vnos palillos dorados, o de plata, o de oro, a modo de tenedores'.

⁶¹ The letter of King Philip II to Emperor Wanli is preserved in the Archive of the Indies (Seville) dated 1580. AGI, Filipinas, 339, L.1., fols. 201v–202 (430–431).

⁶² Carmen Sotos Serrano, 'La Embajada Artística de Felipe II al rey de China. Arte y política de un proyecto frustrado', in *Orientes-occidentes: el arte y la mirada del otro*, XXVII, Mexico City, 2007, pp. 681–711. In 1580 one *maravedí* would have the purchasing power of approximately 0.07 Euros in 2010, so the total cost of the gift would have been of 280,000 Euros. Sotos Serrano, 2007, p. 682.

⁶³ The gifts sent by Philip II to Emperor Wanli included clothes for men, trappings for horses, mirrors, Venetian glass, clocks, paintings of Philip II, Emperor Charles V and of Our Lady Virgin Mary by Alonso Sánchez Coello, and so forth; See Sotos Serrano, 2007, p. 687.

viceroy of Mexico was unwilling to risk losing the gifts by authorising a voyage fraught with danger. The gifts were eventually sold in Mexico or were used to decorate of the viceroy's palace in the city of Mexico. Unfortunately, the whereabouts of these gifts are not known at present.

A few years later (1584) another embassy⁶⁴ was dispatched, but this time in the opposite direction: four Japanese noblemen, who had been converted to Christianity by the Jesuits, sailed from Nagasaki to Lisbon, arriving on 8 November 1584. The embassy to the courts of Philip II of Spain and Pope Gregory XIII was conceived by the Jesuit Valignano⁶⁵ to introduce the Japanese to Europe and to win support for the Jesuit mission in Japan.⁶⁶ According to Frois' account,⁶⁷ Philip II watched the four emissaries arrive in two carriages from his chamber and met them in the courtyard (of the Alcázar) dressed in black with a cape, a sword and the chain of the order of the Golden Fleece around his neck that was prominently visible when he leaned over a table or *bufete*.⁶⁸ The Japanese were dressed in their ceremonial attire, wearing traditional swords and shoes, and the monarch, showing great curiosity, touched the robes of the visitors and asked them to take their sandals off to view them in greater detail. The Japanese presented the king with their gifts: a writing desk made of cane, a pot,⁶⁹ and a coffer for letters that were greatly appreciated for its lacquered surface and gilding. Examining these pieces, the king remarked that the work of the Japanese was very different from that of the Chinese. The words are revealing in that they suggest that Philip II was sufficiently familiar with Oriental objects to be able to discriminate between them by source and style.⁷⁰ The scene is exemplary of the fact that, all types of intercultural exchanges took place during the first two decades of the colonisation of the Philippines.

Union of the Crowns of Spain and Portugal

In 1580 Portugal's aged Cardinal-King Dom Henrique (1512–80) died, the last descendant of the Royal House of Avis. This event plunged Portugal into a succession crisis between three rival claimants: Philip II of Spain, the son of Isabel of Portugal (a daughter of Joao III); the Duke of Bragança; and a royal bastard, Dom António, Prior of Crato. The nobility and urban elite supported the King of Spain, particularly after the defeat at Alcácer Kebir (1578) where the Spanish Crown helped them by giving them silver to repatriate relatives and enrich themselves. In addition, most of the Portuguese

⁶⁴ During King Philip III's reign even another diplomatic and commercial embassy, known as Keichô, was sent to Madrid and Rome by *daimyô* Date Masamune, Lord of Sendai (in the northeast of Japan) from 1613 to 1620. See Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, *Lacas Namban: Huellas de Japón en España. IV Centenario de la Embajada Keicho*, Madrid, 2013.

⁶⁵ Alessandro Valignano (Chinese: 范禮安 Fàn L' n; 1539–1606), arrived in Macao in September 1578 and visited Japan three times: in 1579 when he stayed for three years; from 1590 to 1592, and again from 1598 to 1603. Understanding and adapting to Chinese and Japanese culture, language and customs was a fundamental issue for Valignano who established several seminaries in the Far East.

⁶⁶ M. Cooper, *The Japanese Mission to Europe 1582–1590. The Journey of Four Japanese Noblemen through Portugal, Spain and Italy*, Folkestone, Kent, 2005.

⁶⁷ L. Frois, *La première ambassade du Japon en Europe, 1582–1592. Première partie. Le traité du Père Frois*, Tokyo, 1941.

⁶⁸ In Covarrubias' dictionary (1611) the word '*bufete*' is explained as a French name for a table but also for a sideboard. In this context it clearly refers to a table. See the glossary for a detailed explanation of this word.

⁶⁹ A pot was mentioned in Father Frois' account, but unfortunately no other details about the object could be gathered from his description.

⁷⁰ Fernando Bouza, 'Ardides del arte. Cultura de corte, acción política y artes visuales en tiempos de Felipe II', in *Felipe II. Un monarca y su época*, Madrid, 1998, pp. 57–81.

traders preferred Philip II of Spain above the other candidates because a Spanish Habsburg succession would be least likely to disrupt the markets and trade, incur a minimum violence and would also infuse silver into the *carreira* trade. At the *Cortes-Gerais* (General Courts) of Portugal in 1581, the Spanish king swore to maintain the independence of the Portuguese monarchy and the integrity of their respective overseas empires and to respect other privileges of the Portuguese nation.⁷¹

A consequence of the union of the Crowns of Spain and Portugal was that Spanish influence over the territories around the Philippines intensified in the 1580s. Communication between the East and West was clearly apparent in the great voyages of that era. The Spanish Franciscan monk Martín Ignacio de Loyola (1550–1606) was able to travel around the world between 1581 and 1584, landing almost exclusively on Spanish-Portuguese lands only; and travelling in the opposite direction was the Portuguese Pedro Teixeira (1570–1641), who, because of his life and his work, can be regarded as a symbol of Iberian union overseas.⁷²

Voyages across and in the Pacific Ocean also increased when Portugal came under the rule of the Spanish monarchy and Spain was accordingly allowed in waters that had been reserved for Portuguese vessels since the Treaties of Tordesillas and Zaragoza. Some of the most important early voyages included Francisco Galí's trip between Macao and Acapulco (1584), Pedro de Unamuno's voyage between the same two ports (1587), and the voyage of the *San Felipe*, the first Spanish vessel to seek refuge in a Japanese port (1596).⁷³ The diplomatic expeditions headed by Sebastián Vizcaíno (1611) belong to the same category; they carried a Japanese delegation that had visited New Spain from Mexico back to Japan, completing the round trip after having explored the eastern coast of the island of Honshu.

However, a few years after Philip II was proclaimed King of Portugal, the Spanish decided on other political and strategic plans relating to China. These projects included securing a port for direct trade with China much as Portugal had in Macao. In 1598 Francisco de Tello de Guzmán, governor of the Philippines (1596–1602), authorised Captain Juan Zamudio to survey the Chinese coast in search of a suitable site for a port. The Spanish obtained permission from the Chinese authorities to provisionally establish themselves in the Cantonese port of *El Pinhal* ('Pine Tree' in Portuguese) or '*El Piñal*' or '*El Piñar*' (same meaning but different Spanish spellings), and were also granted the use of a warehouse in Canton. Understandably, the Portuguese in Macao fiercely opposed these developments, despite Spain and Portugal being united under one Crown at the time. The persistent hostility of the Portuguese prevented the Spanish from bringing to fruition this commercial enterprise. By the time a Royal decree was issued in 1609 specifically granting Spain the right to trade directly with China, *El Pinhal* was a fading memory.⁷⁴

⁷¹ James C. Boyajian, *Portuguese Trade in Asia under the Habsburgs, 1580–1640*, Baltimore and London, 2008, pp. 11–12.

⁷² Carlos Martínez Shaw, 'Mas allá de Manila', in Marina Alfonso de Mola & Carlos Martínez-Shaw (eds.), *El Galeón de Manila*, Madrid, 2001, p. 98.

⁷³ In 1589 a group of Franciscan and Augustinian friars were sent from Manila. They received permission to build churches, monasteries and chapels, and stimulated trade from Manila to Japan. Pedro Bautista Blasquez was sent as an ambassador in 1593, causing great tension between Portugal and Spain, which greatly increased when the Manila galleon *San Felipe* foundered off the Japanese coast. As a result of that intrusion, six Spanish Franciscans from Kyoto and 20 of their converts were tried and executed in Nagasaki in 1597. After this episode Spanish influence in Japan waned, Impey and Jörg, 2005, p. 19.

⁷⁴ Jorge de Sousa Pinto, 'Enemy at the Gates, Macao Manila and the "Pinhal Episode" (End of 16th Century)', in *Bulletin of Portuguese/Japanese Studies*, vol. 16, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, June 2008, pp. 11–43.

After this incident, King Philip (I of Portugal and II of Spain) ensured that a clear distinction was made between the Portuguese and the Spanish Crowns, placing himself as the overarching figure who unified the two countries, while observing Portugal's traditional law and system of government, as well as the integrity and separation of its overseas dominions. The Crown played a moderating role in curbing Spain's expansionist drives in Portugal's areas of influence. The king insisted that Spain refrain from interfering in the Asian–Portuguese trade and in the direct communication between the Philippines and the Portuguese ports of Malacca, Macao and Nagasaki. However distance, commercial opportunities and conflicting colonial interests would conspire against the strict enforcement of these stipulations.

This delicate balance was maintained throughout the ensuing reigns of Philip III and Philip IV, as both kings abided by Portugal's *Estado da Índia*.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, and despite sporadic resistance on the part of the Portuguese, Spain's influence in China was to increase considerably because collaboration between the two empires in specific areas proved fruitful. One of these was the joint military defence of East Asia against the growing presence of Dutch and English ships in the zone. As far as the Dutch were concerned, Philip II ordered an embargo on the Dutch trade in Portugal whence they had drawn their supply of Oriental commodities to punish them for overthrowing Spanish dominion of the Netherlands. On 14 December 1600 the Spanish merchant vessel *San Diego* was re-fitted as a warship to pursue Dutch ships entering Philippine waters. This was the first in a series of episodes that brought an end to the Iberian monopoly on Asian trade.⁷⁶ A few years earlier Cornelis de Houtman (1565–99) had rounded the Cape of Good Hope and returned to Holland with a cargo of Oriental commodities (1595–97). In 1602 several trading companies in the Netherlands merged, and shareholders formed the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, VOC) and soon huge quantities of Chinese porcelain and Oriental merchandise found its way to Holland.⁷⁷

In 1606 the Portuguese and Spanish cooperation in defending Iberian interests in the zone would be enshrined in an agreement signed by the Viceroy of Goa, Jerónimo de Acevedo, and the Governor of the Philippines, Juan de Silva.⁷⁸ In the Moluccas and Macao, the Iberian joint forces managed to fend off the Dutch intruders, prompting the Governor of the Philippines, Juan Niño de Tabora (1626–32), to support the unification of the military headquarters of Manila and Macao.⁷⁹ The plan, however, was never realised. We also have to take into account other military ventures by the Spanish aiding the Portuguese who were sent to Macao (1622) and Formosa (1626).

On 1 December 1640 a revolution broke out in Lisbon that would restore the Bragança dynasty to the throne, tipping Portugal and Spain into war. It was also around this period that the Ming dynasty fell from power and was replaced by the Manchu Qing dynasty in 1644. By 1657 commerce between Europe and China had reached a standstill due to internecine struggles in the Chinese empire. Dutch traders turned to other Far Eastern sources for their imports, such as Japan.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ 'State of India', the name given by the Portuguese to their Asian empire from East Africa to Japan, with Goa as its centre.

⁷⁶ Christiaan J.A. Jörg, 'The Portuguese and the Trade in Chinese Porcelain. From the Beginning Until the End of the Ming Dynasty', in A. Varela Santos (ed.), *Portugal na Porcelana da China. 500 Anos de Comércio*, Lisbon, 2007, pp. 45–71.

⁷⁷ The English were another menace in the area. In 1600 Queen Elizabeth I (r. 1558–1603) granted a charter to the Honourable East India Company of London and the ships arrived in Asian waters settling in the Persian Gulf and along the Malabar Coast. A truce between the Portuguese and the English was signed in 1635; see Jörg, 2007, p. 8.

⁷⁸ Alfonso Mola and Martínez Shaw, 'Manila y la proyección española en Oriente', in Alfonso Mola and Martínez Shaw, 2009/1, pp. 113–30.

⁷⁹ Ollé, 2007, pp. 65–80.

⁸⁰ Oliver Impey and Christiaan J.A. Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer. 1580–1850*, Amsterdam, 2005, pp. 21–23.

Around the middle of the seventeenth century, Spain had to endure further concessions in Europe: a peace agreement with the Dutch rebels in 1648 and the Peace of the Pyrenees with France in 1659, which brought Spain's protracted war with France to an end. Spanish troops were then deployed in a new campaign unsuccessfully aimed at crushing the Portuguese 'rebellion'.⁸¹ Portugal's separation from the Spanish monarchy also marked a turning point to the organisation of a defensive barrier against the Dutch in the Philippines. However, in the second half of the seventeenth century, Manila continued to be a forward bastion with a view to assailing the coastal border of Asia in every way, including military, commercial, religious and cultural. What this new phase ultimately accomplished in particular was to strengthen Manila's sway to the east, in the closest archipelagos in the Pacific, which were finally roped into the Spanish world. Thus were the Mariana Islands (so-called by Francisco Lezcano in honour of Queen Mariana of Austria in 1668) and the Caroline Islands (named in honour of King Charles II of Spain) conquered and evangelised.⁸²

After the death of Philip IV there was an interregnum period with the regency of Queen Mariana de Austria (1634–96), mother of the child-king Charles II.⁸³ It was during the reign of Charles II (1665–1700), the last monarch of this Habsburg branch, that Spain's fortunes reached their nadir. A sickly man, Charles was quite unsuited to the task of tackling Spain's intractable problems.⁸⁴ The decade of the 1690s was, in turn, faced with the problem of succession to the Spanish throne, while the international front was characterised by a rapidly diminishing standing and a shift in European naval power to the Dutch and the English. The monopoly on the East Indies trade, which Spain and Portugal had clung to for decades, was irrevocably lost.⁸⁵

⁸¹ It was around this time, in 1656, that the Spanish authorities seized a large cargo of Chinese porcelain from the merchant Juan Vangel (It might be an almost phonetic representation of Van Geel. He could be an individual from the Southern Low Countries with a place name-origin) as he was heading for Seville, having previously smuggled the goods into the country. (Documentary Appendix 1, document 26, 2). Incidents such as this reinforce the fact that there still was a market for Far Eastern artefacts in times of war. A few years earlier the Spanish authorities might have sold the confiscated goods to traders who would probably have resold them. In the circumstances, the cargo ended up in the treasury of Philip IV in Madrid. Spain's last hope of recovering Portugal was dashed in 1668 with the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon, which guaranteed the independence of Portugal, with only the loss of Ceuta in North Africa, which was left in Spanish hands.

⁸² Martínez Shaw, 2001/1, p. 103.

⁸³ Maria Victoria López-Cordón, 'Mujer, poder y apariencia o las vicisitudes de una regencia', in *Studia Histórica Historia Moderna*, no. 19, Madrid, 1998, pp. 49–66.

⁸⁴ However during the decade between 1670 and 1680 aristocrats such as Don John of Austria, the Duke of Medinaceli and the Earl of Oropesa promoted key political reforms. Luis Antonio Ribot García, 'La España de Carlos II', in Ramón Menéndez Pidal, *Historia de España, La Transición del siglo XVII al XVIII*, no. XXVIII, Madrid, 1993, pp. 71–203.

⁸⁵ John H. Elliott, 'Arte y decadencia en la España del siglo XVII', in *España y su Mundo (1500–1700)*, Madrid, 2007, pp. 325–51. On Charles II of Spain, see Henry Kamen, *Spain in the Later Seventeenth Century 1665–1700*, London, 1980; Centro de Estudios de Europa Hispánica, *Carlos II. El rey y su entorno cortesano*. Madrid, 2009; Carlos Martínez Shaw, 'El Imperio portugués en el siglo XVI y las vías de evangelización en el Extremo Oriente', in *Congreso Internacional Los Mundos de Javier*, Pamplona, 2006, pp. 81–107.



The General Archive of the Indies in Seville