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"'Never Trust the Chinese:' The Pedro de Alfaro Mission and Trans-Pacific International Relations, 1565-1630"

by

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"'Never Trust the Chinese:' The Pedro de Alfaro Mission
and Trans-Pacific International Relations, 1565-1630"

by

Ashleigh Dean
M.A., University of North Florida, 2010

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An abstract of

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
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Doctor of Philosophy in History

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Abstract

"'Never Trust the Chinese:' The Pedro de Alfaro Mission
and Trans-Pacific International Relations, 1565-1630"

By Ashleigh Dean

This work examines the career of Pedro de Alfaro (c. 1525 - 1580), a Spanish Franciscan whose travels to Mexico, the Philippines, and China proved to be pivotal in the history of Sino-Spanish international relations. At the behest of the Viceroy of New Spain, Alfaro and a few companions defied the Spanish governor of the Philippines to enter China without permission in 1579, in order to both establish a Catholic mission there and to assess the feasibility of a military conquest of China by Spain. Both endeavors collapsed within a matter of months. The friars were scarcely permitted to speak to the local population, much less secure the thousands of converts they hoped for, and, to the surprise of the Spaniards, China turned out to be a far greater military power than had been suspected. Unfortunately for Alfaro, he was soon forcibly returned to the Philippines, where he wrote a detailed report on Chinese military and civil infrastructure before his death in 1580.

Alfaro's report was taken seriously by the Spanish authorities, resulting in the Spanish permanently halting all major plans for significant military expansion into the Chinese sphere of influence and therefore implicitly acknowledging that Ming China, far from being in a period of decline, was in fact the world's foremost military power at the time. The thwarted clash of these two powers helped clarify the balance of power in the newly-emergent Pacific World, a region that was a major aspect of the development of global trade and cultural exchange networks. This vast maritime region was balanced by the powerful Ming to the west and the aggressive, expansionist Spanish Empire to the east, united in this early period by the slender thread that was the annual Manila Galleon—a trade route considered to be the final link in the development of early modern globalization. Alfaro's journeys, taking place at a pivotal moment in Sino-Spanish relations, helped establish a balance of power that allowed the Chinese and Spanish to foster a thriving trade across the Pacific.

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the Bibliotheqúe National de France, the First Historical Archives of China, the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, the Macau Historical Archives, and the University of Santo Tomas Archives. I would particularly like to thank the archivists and staff at the Archivo General de Indias, the Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericos, and the National Archive of the Philippines Spanish Reading Room for their significant assistance in helping me develop this project. I would also like to thank Robert Antony and Paul van Dyke, whose kind personal assistance in Macau and Guangzhou respectively made my Chinese research plans considerably smoother, as well as Jing Zhu at Emory, whose translation and research skills saved me a tremendous amount of time when time was the thing I needed most. As with all of those who helped and guided me through this project, any errors of fact or judgment are entirely my own.

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One last acknowledgment, for someone who will never read this and in any case would probably not care to have my gratitude. I am thankful for the chance that led me to Pedro de Alfaro, a complex, irksome, devout, brave, and deeply flawed individual whose peregrinations I have followed literally and figuratively over the past eight years at UNF, Emory, and over three continents. It seems fitting that I completed this dissertation during the Passover season—to have this friar, a man of intense and rigid faith who made his disdain for the Jewish people abundantly clear, be the one who facilitated my exodus from the metaphorical Egypt that is graduate school is a stroke of irony both of us could wryly appreciate.

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Part One:
The Search for Pedro de Alfaro

Chapter One: "'A Minor Incident Unworthy of Further Note:' Pedro de Alfaro in History and Historiography"

During my field research in Spain I had the pleasure of meeting Francisco Alfaro y Rueda, a retired teacher and amateur genealogist, at a tavern in Madrid. A chance contact had recommended him to me, hinting that this portly, somewhat-disheveled fellow could provide me with more information on the sixteenth-century friar I was researching. Francisco indeed turned out to be the second cousin fifteen times removed of this friar—Fray Pedro de Alfaro, a Discalced Franciscan and would-be missionary to China entrusted with the task of reporting China's military strength to Spain, who had been born in Galicia sometime in the third decade of the sixteenth century and killed in a shipwreck in the South China sea in 1580, his body supposedly found contorted in a posture of prayer as a rebuke to the Chinese who had failed to heed his words.

Unsurprisingly, considering such a biography, Pedro de Alfaro had, over the years, become a fixation for both of us, despite our very different backgrounds. This obsession had stymied Francisco's goal of producing a definitive genealogy of the Alfaro family and had led me to fifteen archives and libraries around the world, looking for traces of his remarkable career in box after box of fragile, yellowed folios. After I won Francisco's trust by showing him a faster way to access online archival documents (and, perhaps more importantly, proving that I supported the correct Formula One team), we

talked over this obsession over a dozen miniature cups of lager and an endless heap of *picos,* Spain's ubiquitous bar snack.

"Look at us, just a couple of Don Quixotes roaming Spain looking for our Dulcinea," laughed Francisco, slapping me on the back jovially. I laughed too while coughing and sputtering from the slap, and responded that maybe Dulcinea was the wrong model for Pedro de Alfaro—that perhaps he was more like the Man of La Mancha himself, tilting at windmills and eagerly anticipating his place in the history books. This led to a long conversation about his historical reputation, and we both expressed our frustration at both the gaps in available documentation for his life, and his near-complete absence in contemporary works of history. As I discussed the various historical subfields in which Alfaro's career had some relevance that went unacknowledged, Francisco and his wife Cristina quickly became indignant on the unfortunate friar's behalf.

"He didn't even get any recognition when Franco was in power," Cristina complained. "Every friar, every priest who did anything at all for Spain was written about or commemorated then, but not him. Why is that?"

Cristina's question deserves some consideration. Alfaro was, as far as the historical record shows, the first known Spaniard of prominence to enter a nationally-important city in Ming China, he re-established (albeit temporarily) the Franciscans in China after a gap of over two hundred years, his report on the extent of Chinese military power halted Spanish expansion into the mainland, and the timing of his career emphasized the growing importance of the Pacific Ocean as a distinct historical zone. He had been appointed the first *custodio* of the Franciscan order in Manila, but on the order of the Viceroy of New Spain he abandoned this post and secretly entered China in

defiance of the governor of the Philippines in order to assess the feasibility of a Spanish conquest of China. His answer, a clear and emphatic "impossible," promptly changed Spanish policy in Asia and allowed for the establishment of a stable balance of power in the Pacific Rim just in time for the contemporaneous—and very profitable—silver trade between Spain and China to take off following the promulgation of a Ming tax code mandating the use of silver, a metal Spain had in abundance via its colonies in Latin America.

And yet the Alfaro mission has been ignored. In the detailed and extensive historiography of Christianity in China, his brief attempt at evangelization is barely mentioned, despite the fact that he was the first Franciscan to enter Chinese territory for over two centuries. This is perhaps understandable from the viewpoint of earlier historians. He was only in China briefly, cultivated no positive relationships with Ming officials, and counted no converts whose faith outlasted his physical presence there. As a missionary, he was an abject failure, which he attributed spitefully to the machinations of the Portuguese community in China and the perverse deviousness of the Chinese but was in reality the result of his utter lack of preparation for life in China or understanding of the local population and of his relationship with them.

Pedro de Alfaro in History and Historiography

Despite this poor reputation, he does turn up here and there in the literature, always briefly and out of focus. One of the only mission histories to discuss him in more than a sentence or two is J.S. Cummins' 1986 book, *Jesuit and Friar in the Spanish Expansion to the East*, which examines Alfaro's intense longing to save souls in China without exploring much of his mission beyond that—an important aspect of his career,

certainly, but one that disregards his pivotal role as an emissary/spy on behalf of the Spanish. And he appears, though not by name, in Steven Turley's 2014 book *Franciscan Spirituality and Mission in New Spain, 1524-1599: Conflict Beneath the Sycamore Tree*, where he and his fellow friars, as the first representatives in the New World of a radical new expression of Franciscan devotion, are credited with revitalizing the Franciscans of Mexico with their fiery preaching and extravagant piety.[1] Although I do discuss Alfaro's order and his religious devotion, my work by contrast focuses on him as an agent of political and economic change in the Pacific.

Recently, the Catalan historian Dolors Folch i Fornesa devoted a few lines of a 2010 article on sixteenth-century Spanish views of Chinese language and scholarship to assessing Alfaro as a person and as a missionary:

> He was a Franciscan, consumed by his religious zeal, more impressed by the fact that the Chinese were pagans than by their history and culture. Nobody invited him to go to China—he entered illegally—and from the outset he was a problem that the Chinese wanted to get rid of. His experience is interesting because he paid much less [attention to] official channels than his predecessors, but his view is much more limited.[2]

Folch is quite correct in her judgment of Alfaro's attitude towards the Chinese and his genuine religious zeal. And she is also correct that he was a thorn in the side of the Chinese, that he had entered Ming territory illegally, and that he disregarded "official channels" with a thoroughness that, until then, was unusual.

But she is perhaps less correct about his limited view of China. In fact, he was sufficiently clear-headed and sharp-eyed enough to pen a report on the fortifications,

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[1] Steven Turley, *Franciscan Spirituality and Mission in New Spain, 1524-1599: Conflict Beneath the Sycamore Tree (Luke 19:1-10)*. (New York: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 154-155.
[2] Dolors Folch i Fornesa, "¿Todos los chinos sabían leer y escribir?..." In *Lenguas de Asia Oriental*, Montaner et al, eds. (Valencia: Valencia, 2010): p. 72.

armaments, defenses, and population of Guangzhou that was so devastating (to Spanish interests) in its accuracy that it prompted a major shift in Sino-Spanish relations. His bigotry and intolerance, obvious as it is to even the most casual reader of his letters, did not prevent him from having a keen eye for the kind of information the Spanish needed to assess the feasibility of conquest.

Folch is somewhat of an anomaly, however—most scholars writing about topics related to Alfaro simply omit the mission altogether; even such seemingly relevant contemporary works as Liam Brockey's *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579-1728* (which includes a great deal of information on contemporaneous Mendicant missions) and Manel Ollé's *La Empresa de China: De la armada invencible al Galeon de Manila* (on Sino-Iberian relations in the late Ming) fail to even mention the mission. Spanish historian José Antonio Cervera Jimenéz has published a book, *Tras el sueño de China: Agustínos y Dominicos en Asia Oriental a finales de Siglo XVI*, that discusses the mission in the context of Mendoza's *Historia de las cosas...* without going into any further detail. This treatment—or lack thereof—of Alfaro is quite typical.

Unfortunately, the English-language academy has not outshone the Spanish regarding Alfaro—historians in the Anglophone world have published almost nothing of Alfaro since Cummins' work. There have been a few asides, such as Carmen Hsu's article on gifts and the notion of kingship in Philip II's attempts to cultivate a diplomatic relationship with the Wanli Emperor, but nothing representing any kind of deeper analysis of his career. Generally, when Alfaro himself is mentioned in a work of modern history, it is as a footnote or a lone fact in a larger work.[3]

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[3] Carmen Hsu, "Writing on Behalf of a Christian Empire: Gifts, Dissimulation, and Politics in the Letters of Philip II of Spain to Wanli of China." *Hispanic Review*, Vol. 78: 3 (2010): pp. 323-344, p. 325.

The reasons for Pedro de Alfaro's disappearance from the historiography are complex and reflect not only the rapid pace by which Europeans acquired firsthand knowledge of China in the early modern era, but also the shifting priorities of later historians regarding mission work, diplomatic and institutional history, and maritime history. An observer at the Spanish court in the 1580s might be forgiven for thinking that Alfaro's place in history was assured—surely the feat of being the first Spanish Franciscan in Ming China was worthy of remembrance in and of itself, much less a Spanish Franciscan who had been responsible for directing the ambitions of Philip II away from a conquest of China and whose voyages had recently been published to the acclaim of educated Europe! However, this felicitous vision was not to be. Within just a few decades of Alfaro's death, his place in the pantheon of important European travelers to Asia was made redundant by major international developments. The rise of the Jesuits in China, the Franciscan martyrdoms in Japan, the Chinese Rites Controversy, and the rise of the Dutch in the first decades of the seventeenth as Spain's new rivals in Asia and the Pacific all contributed to make Alfaro seem less relevant in the years following his mission, meaning that when mission history became an important field of historical inquiry in the nineteenth century, Alfaro had already been minimized in the existing record.[4]

Having already missed the opportunity, as it were, to feature prominently in the institutional histories of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, the wandering spirit of Pedro de Alfaro failed to find redemption with the cultural turn as well. When the historical profession moved towards cultural history and related subfields

[4] See Chapter Seven for a detailed examination of how and why Alfaro was forgotten by seventeenth-century Europe.

in the mid to late twentieth century, a study of the career of a representative of the Spanish Empire and the Franciscan order who made important contributions to the history of international relations was not necessarily in high demand. The marginalization that began in the seventeenth century therefore carried over into the modern era.

Today, however, with the rise of global history, it is time for Alfaro to receive his historiographical due. My research is the first to explicitly focus on the reviving of Alfaro in the historiography, and this dissertation presents the first substantial examination of the Alfaro mission in English since 1588, when Robert Parke translated Juan González de Mendoza's *Historia de las Cosas mas Notables*…. It is also the first scholarly work in any language to cover the entirety of what is known of Alfaro's life and career.

My examination of Alfaro's remarkable career has convinced me that that Alfaro's significance lies in three main areas. Firstly, his short-lived career as a spy in the service of the Viceroy of New Spain places the hubris of Philip II and his Council on full display.[5] Indeed, I argue that there is compelling evidence to suggest that Alfaro's mission marked a turning point in nascent Sino-Spanish relations. Spain's attempts to expand its territorial sway past Latin America into China culminated in Alfaro's mission to collect information on Chinese military infrastructure. Following the reports made by Alfaro concerning Chinese manpower and naval power, the Spanish court deliberately backed away from discussions of an invasion of the Chinese mainland. Other historians have either not focused on this question, not taking Spain's claims seriously, or they have

[5]Hubris is an apt description for the Spanish plans to conquer China (detailed further in Chapter Two); a description that also ties in to Geoffrey Parker's two major analyses of Philip II—*The World Is Not Enough: The Imperial Vision of Philip II of Spain,* a lecture collection that examines the Habsburg monarch's "messianic complex," and his 2014 biography *Imprudent King: A New Life of Philip II*, which examines the question of whether Philip's failures were the result of poor choices or the natural consequence of attempting to rule a too-unwieldy empire.

located the transition elsewhere. Manel Ollé, for example, in his excellent and provocative *La Empresa de China: De la armada invencible al Galeon de Manila,* argues that the pivotal moment that made Spain reassess its destiny vis-à-vis China was the devastating blow to Spanish naval infrastructure represented by the destruction of the *Grande y Felicísima Armada* by the English in 1588.[6] Not so, I argue. The periodization of Spain's rejection of a conquest of China must be pushed back to the early 1580s, when Pedro de Alfaro's report on the military prowess of China vis-a-vís Spain had reached both Viceroy and King, who had in turn tacitly concluded that his assessment was correct.

In turn, Alfaro's inability to deliver an assessment amenable to Spanish military interests illuminates my second point, that Ming China, far from being in a period of precipitous decline illustrated most famously by Ray Huang's classic work *1587, A Year of No Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline*, was explicitly recognized as the world's foremost military and economic power by no less an entity than Habsburg Spain at the height of its glory. In this respect, my work joins an ongoing wave of scholarship that reassesses European conquest and colonialism in Asia and situates China as the major global power throughout the early modern period.

European conquest and colonialism has taken quite a blow in recent decades. Historians writing prior to the mid-twentieth century regularly celebrated the rise of global European exploration while vastly inflating the wealth and power of Europe relative to a declining, tradition-bound China, writing narratives of the "great encounter"

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[6] Manel Ollé Rodriguez, *La Empresa de China: De la armada invencible al Galeon de Manila*. (Madrid: El Ancantilado, 2002), p. 5. David Goodman's detailed study of post-armada Spanish naval power, published the following year and marking the first full-length study of the subject, does not discuss China at all—an interesting omission in light of Ollé's thesis. Goodman, *Spanish Naval Power, 1589-1665: Reconstruction and Defeat.* (Oxford: Oxford, 2003).

that portrayed Europeans (and particularly European missionaries) as forces of modernity awakening a sleeping China and permanently transforming it.[7] This was known as the "impact and response" thesis, first articulated by John K. Fairbank and Têng Ssu-yü (鄧嗣禹, *pinyin* Deng Siyu) in their 1954 collection *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923,* where, with the politicized Cold War fervor of the era, they stated that "underlying this book is the belief that modern China, including the communist rise to power there, can be understood only against the background of its contact with the West."[8] From there, the impact and response thesis entered not only the mainstream historical profession, but popular perceptions of China as well, feeding into a widespread contemporary views of premodern China as a hopelessly tradition-bound and therefore in need of Western influence and institutions. While not all of these works of history actively promoted this viewpoint (always more dominant in popular history than in the profession), a cursory look at the book titles of previous generations illustrates this tendency—*To Change China, Generation of Giants,* the innumerable textbooks and monographs and articles containing some combination of *tradition* juxtaposed with *transformation*, implying heavily or outright stating that European influence was the catalyst in the latter.[9]

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[7] D. E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800.* (New York: Rowman, 3rd ed. 2009). p. 2. For examples, see John Fairbank, Frederic Wakeman, and Joseph R. Levenson, all of whom produced classic works of the "impact and response" school. For a detailed discussion of this thesis and its gradual rejection by the field, see the first chapter of Ziming Wu's *Chinese Christianity: An Interplay Between Global and Local Perspectives*.

[8] Fairbank and Têng, *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923*. (Cambridge: Harvard, 1954), pp. 2-6. This work focuses on the impact of American Protestant missionaries in the late Qing and early Republican period in particular, but the theory is applicable to early modern Sino-European contact as well.

[9] Respectively, Jonathan Spence, *To Change China: Western Advisers in China, 1620-1960* (Boston: Little, 1969); George H. Dunne, *Generation of Giants: The Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame, 1962). Mungello cites John Fairbank and Edwin

The past few decades of historical research have significantly eroded this image of active, dynamic early modern Europeans forcing their way through the seas to impose themselves upon a passive China, beginning in the 1970s with the work of Theodore de Bary, who argued over a long career that Chinese tradition was a dynamic force that continued to evolve into the present day, an argument in which he was gradually joined by virtually all contemporary China historians. The rise of the Great Divergence (that is, the examination of how and why the West become the world's most powerful region) as a major historiographical topic in the emerging field of global history did further damage to the traditional view of China vis-a-vís Europe—no longer was the West held to be implicitly superior in terms of wealth and power from the start of their encounters with China in the late Ming. Instead, the relative rise of the West and decline of China on the global stage was not only attributed to external factors such as the environment, but gradually pushed the event forward in time. (This work focuses on the timing of the divergence rather than its cause, thus the emphasis on the former.)

It was believed for much of the twentieth century that the rise of the West at the expense of China had begun roughly with the advent of the Age of Exploration, a view typified by James Blaut's 1992 article "Political geography debates no. 3: On the significance of 1492," which argued that the establishment of permanent European outposts outside the continent allowed the West to acquire raw materials and labor at a rate that permanently outstripped that of the East.[10] However, historians researching aspects of the Great Divergence concerning relative European and Chinese power, such

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Reischauer's seminal textbook *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation* (1st eds 1958-60, in two volumes) as a major force in propagating this theory in the profession. Mungello, p. 2.

[10] James Blaut, "Political geography debates no. 3: On the significance of 1492." *Political Geography* 11.4 (1992): pp. 355-385., p. 357. The quincentennial of Columbus's voyages heralded a tremendous amount of output concerning their place in Latin American, European, and global history.

as Tonio Andrade, Andre Gunder Frank, and Kenneth Pomeranz, have in the past two decades uncovered a treasure trove of information on Chinese military, economic, and environmental assets that have convincingly shown that China in the early modern period was a dynamic force and one more than equal to its contemporaries in Europe. In current historiography, the divergence in relative Western and Asian power and wealth is now seen as occurring much later, at the beginning of the nineteenth century—at precisely the time Napoleon is supposed to have made his famous remark concerning the possible role of China in the future, beloved of modern foreign policy think pieces: *"Quand la Chine s'éveillera, le monde tremblera*."[11] Contrary to the Emperor's belief, China, far from being in the midst of a centuries-long hibernation in 1800, had in fact just settled down to sleep for a brief nap, from which it would awaken once again in the postwar era as the economic and industrial powerhouse it is today.[12]

This work expands on this perspective, but with a focus on China vis-a-vís Spain and the Iberian world, the latter of which has received little attention in the Great Divergence debate with its ongoing focus on Great Britain as a world power. Spain, with its (debatable) precipitous decline in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has never been a major subject of this school of historiography—it was obviously excluded from Max Weber's clutch of Calvinist nations steeped in Protestant work ethic, and the meteoric rise of Britain as Europe's first industrial power has maintained the attention of

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[11] For an excellent examination of Great Divergence historiography, see Patrick O'Brien, review of *Ten Years of Debate on the Origins of the Great Divergence*, 2000. For a detailed examination of military parity of China and the West, see Tonio Andrade's recent work *The Gunpowder Age: China, Military Innovation, and the Rise of the West in World History* (Princeton: Princeton, 2016). Both aspects of historiography will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

[12] This work emphasizes and builds upon the theories presented by Andre Gunder Frank in *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age*, which argues that the era of Western dominance was not only briefer than had been previously thought, but was merely a "blip" in a long history of Asian supremacy. Frank, *ReOrient*. (Berkeley: California, 1998), pp. 322-324.

most subsequent historians engaged in examining the Great Divergence.[13] However, in order to emphasize the dominance of the Ming on a global scale in the late sixteenth century, the comparison must therefore be not with Britain or the Dutch, but with the world power that was aggressively expanding its power in Europe, Latin America, and across the Pacific—Spain. Indeed, such a perspective strengthens the argument for a later, early nineteenth-century divergence by emphasizing the recognition of Ming supremacy by the Spanish at the height of their global power in the closing decades of the sixteenth century.

My research is, essentially, about the realization of sixteenth-century Europeans that Spain was no match for China and that the "great encounter" represented nothing particularly great or novel for China—and its historiographical background reflects this shift in perception, focusing primarily on areas that have been neglected by historians as outlooks and interpretations changed, such as trans-Pacific bureaucracy and the role of missionaries as would-be ambassadors and spies. Indeed, in this research, it is China that changes and transforms Spain, rather than the other way around—it was Chinese power that halted the advance of the Habsburg banner across the Pacific, and the Chinese demand for silver that powered a large proportion of Spanish finances from the 1580s to the mid-seventeenth-century crisis, with its simultaneous uprisings in both Spain and

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[13] The causes and extent of Spain's fall from military preeminence in mid-seventeenth century Europe have been the subject of spirited debate in the late twentieth century, most notably by Henry Kamen, who argued in a classic article that the argument that Spain had declined was based on a mistaken belief that Spain had ever actually been all that powerful. My research proceeds from the later argument that, while Spain's dominance in the era was more complex than was once believed, it was nevertheless Europe's foremost power in the late sixteenth century. Henry Kamen, "The Decline of Spain: A Historical Myth?" *Past & Present* 81 (Nov. 1978): p. 35.
Weber's classic thesis argued that the development of Calvinist ethics centered on thrift, rationality, and wealth-building allowed Northern Europe to pull ahead of countries such as China where the entrepreneurial spirit was supposedly looked down upon. Spain is never mentioned, but Catholic countries are repeatedly held up in unfavorable contrast to those with the Protestant ethic. Max Weber, author, and Talcott Parsons, trans., *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* (New York: Routledge, 1930), pp. xxxvi-xlii.

China.[14] It was China that rudely awakened the Spanish Empire from its unrealistic dreams of conquest, rather than the armies of Philip II forcibly pulling a slumbering Ming Dynasty into modernity.

Third, and last, Alfaro's mission, by making clear that Spain could not conquer China, helped clarify the balance of power in the western Pacific, a region that played a key role in the development of global trade and cultural exchange networks. There is very little current scholarship in English specifically focused on interactions between Spain and China in this period (the situation is somewhat different in the Spanish academy, as my earlier discussion of Ollé and Folch's works implied, but even in Spain there is not a particularly large body of work). Obviously, much of this is due to the fact that the Spanish, unlike the Dutch and Portuguese, never established formal trade or tribute missions with the Ming capital—I have been unable to find documentation during the Ming Dynasty for anything more than the sort of informal international skirmishing that characterized the aftermath of the de Alfaro mission.[15] Thus the Alfaro mission is a major aspect of the history of Sino-Spanish relations, and deserves to be treated as such in the historiography.[16]

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[14] The explosion of the worldwide silver trade was traditionally the historiographical province of Latin Americanists and historians of Spain such as Barbara Stein, Stanley Stein, Peter Bakewell, and Eduardo Galeano; however, in recent years, focus has shifted to the role China played in this trade, particularly in the works of Dennis Flynn, Arturo Giraldez, and Xing Hang. Chapter Six examines this historiography in more detail.
The Seventeenth Century Crisis, striking particularly hard as it did in both Spain and China in particular, is somewhat beyond the scope of this work, but represents a fascinating research opportunity for the future.

[15] Spain did not establish formal diplomatic relations of any kind with China until 1864, in the aftermath of the Opium War. Spain was one of many European countries to take advantage of the decline of Qing power to negotiate what is now known as an "Unequal Treaty." Dong Wang, *China's Unequal Treaties: Narrating National History*. (New York: Lexington, 2005), p. 10.

[16] See Chapter Five for a more thorough examination of this aspect of historiography and my arguments regarding the Alfaro mission's role in this.

This is particularly important because the Spanish and Chinese were the key players in the development of the maritime region scholars are increasingly referring to as the Pacific World. Although historians have increasingly begun to examine early modern history not in the context of continents or proto--nation--states, but in the context of maritime regions, the concept of a Pacific World has lagged behind those of the Indian and especially Atlantic Oceans, at least in the context of historiography. And yet all the criteria that historians demand exist for the Pacific in the early modern period—permanent trade links that made a major impact on the areas involved, long-term migration, exchanges of flora, fauna, and natural resources between shores, sustained and permanent communication across the ocean—are there.[17] This work contributes to the development of a historiography of the Pacific World by focusing on the two powerful empires that influenced it most deeply: the powerful Ming to the west and the aggressive, expansionist Spanish Empire to the east, connected in this early period by the annual Manila Galleon.

Alfaro's travels, undertaken between 1577 and 1580, would prove to be pivotal in the stabilization of the Pacific World. With the threat of a large-scale military conquest of China removed, Spain then shifted its primary focus to establishing trade relations with the Ming. When placed in the context of these and other major contemporaneous domestic and international events, this mission shows effectively that the balance of power in the region between the two major powers had more or less stabilized by the 1580s—that Spanish expansion had effective boundaries at the edge of the Chinese sphere of influence, that China was and would continue to be the dominant power in the

[17] These criteria were laid out by Alfred W. Crosby in his seminal 1972 work *The Columbian Exchange*; however, although Crosby does discuss the exchange in the context of the Pacific, recognition of the Pacific zone was a long time coming in the historical field.

Western Pacific, and that Spain, whether it openly admitted it or not, had a vested interest in the continued undisturbed functioning of the Ming economic system.[18] The accident of timing that allowed Alfaro to return to the Philippines bearing his report on Chinese infrastructure in 1580—the same year the Single Whip Law accelerated Chinese demand for silver and the same year the Iberian Union brought Portugal's Asian trade outposts under nominal Spanish control—proved to be pivotal in the development of a discrete Pacific maritime zone.

My work is thus intended to be part of an ongoing wave of historical works emphasizing the importance of the Pacific Ocean as a distinct historical zone (itself part of the larger global history movement). The relevance of Alfaro's mission to the development of this Pacific zone is significant—his explicit description of Chinese power effectively halted the march of the Spanish Empire across the ocean, helping to establish a cohesive maritime zone with the Chinese sphere of influence in the west and the Spanish power base in Latin America to the east. Alfaro's mission, though brief and unsuccessful, reverberated throughout a sizeable portion of the early modern world. Spain, Portugal, China, New Spain, and the Philippines all found themselves scrambling to soothe their allies and assert their respective authorities in the face of an incident that was embarrassing and infuriating to many of the parties concerned. The flurry of correspondence between these respective territories in East Asia and Latin America alone

[18] Of course, Spain did not immediately give up all pretensions to an Asia-Pacific presence; in addition to bringing much of the Philippines under Spanish rule, they continued to attempt to expand its control over the Pacific well into the eighteenth century, but this was limited to small islands outside the real sphere of Chinese influence. The one exception is Taiwan, the northern part of which was a short-lived Spanish colony from 1626-1642. Tonio Andrade's *How Taiwan Became Chinese* and José Borao's *The Spanish Experience in Taiwan* examine the importance, or lack thereof, of Taiwan in the waning fortunes of the seventeenth-century Spanish Empire.

suggests that a Pacific-centric geographical approach is more relevant to understanding this aspect of global history than more traditional Eurasian approaches.

The historiography of Sino-Western encounters, for example, is long and rich, and has benefited enormously from the rise of global history as a major subfield; however, while many historians do emphasize the importance of the Pacific, a significant proportion of these works (particularly older ones) are presented from a Eurasian standpoint. In these works, the Dutch and Portuguese arrive in Asia via Africa and the Indian Ocean, and until recently Manila was often presented as relevant only as a link to faraway Spain. In the context of Alfaro's mission, however, we see that the Pacific, not Eurasia, was the geographical nexus that mattered. This perspective serves to not only further reorient the focus of global history away from the European powers somewhat, but to emphasize the role of New Spain as a quasi-metropole in its own right, to bring the Philippines into greater focus as a place of vital strategic and economic importance, and to demonstrate the importance of Asia in the colonial Latin American political and economic world.[19] So for these three reasons—the end of the Spanish conquest dream, the implicit recognition of Ming China's dominance, and its role in the development of a cohesive Pacific World—the Alfaro mission is historiographically significant, but it is also important for another reason. His exciting and eventful travels paint a picture of the connections that linked the early modern world during a period of rapid expansion in trans-cultural contact, and as a result his peregrinations have left traces in archives all over the world.

[19] In respect to the Philippines, the works of three emerging scholars, Ethan Hawkley, Ubaldo Iaccarino, and Birgit Tremml-Werner, have further emphasized the importance of the islands in the development of globalization.

Sources and Methodology

At one point during my chat with Alfaro's descendant, the latter pulled out a creased world map that had obviously been torn from a Cold War-era atlas. Faint pen circles marked every spot that he knew Alfaro had visited. It was a daunting itinerary, with circles over Galicia, Madrid, Seville, Mexico City, Manila, and a larger, indistinct one over China. He retrieved a stubby pencil from the bar and asked me to add the destinations I knew to the map. Francisco leaned in excitedly as I adjusted his large, vague circle over southern China to two precise marks over Macau and Guangzhou, drawing a rough sketch over the South China Sea to indicate the sea route that led him from Manila to China and, ultimately, to his demise.

"How did you find all this? How long have you been studying Pedro?" Francisco had of course been able to access the digitized documents available on the Spanish national archival system's website, and the main repository for Alfaro sources was just a three-hour train ride away, but the time required to search them out and decipher them proved to be too much of an obstacle, particularly prior to his retirement.[20] Alfaro's appearances in the historical record are in fact fairly frequent for an obscure friar whose active international career spanned less than five years and who died over four centuries ago, but since he is relatively unknown, his presence in the archives can be difficult to track down. As I talked to Francisco about my long search for Alfaro's tracks, I began to realize how difficult it would have been to find him in the archives, were it not for the moment of pure chance that brought me to his letters.

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[20] PARES, the online version of the Spanish archival system, is extremely comprehensive but notoriously difficult to parse, a problem I have attempted to solve by writing a guide to it in collaboration with Scott Cave. See "Taming PARES: Accessing Some of the World's Greatest Archives With One of the World's Crankiest Websites," Accessed April 2nd, 2016. http://www.scottcave.net/taming-pares/

I first read about Pedro de Alfaro quite by accident in late 2008, over five years before I met his descendant for a genealogical discussion in a Madrid bar. I had signed up for a Spanish paleography course that required me to select a set of documents for transcription, and, being anxious to find something that would dovetail nicely with my ongoing work in Chinese history, I began reading through everything on the archive's website with the keyword "China." I selected one of Pablo de Jesús's letters about the Alfaro mission to start with (Pablo de Jesús was Alfaro's friend, co-missionary, and second-in-command; his clear hand was a motivating factor in the early days of my paleography education), and as time went on I began to realize that this was something worth researching fully. This mission was more than a footnote in the long, tangled history of Christianity in China, and as I read more and more, it became obvious that the Alfaro mission had a diplomatic and economic significance that other historians had neglected.

Over the next few years, the focus of this work changed, as such things always do. What was once a work that deliberately set out to marginalize the direct intervention of Spain in favor of colonial Latin American concerns now focuses explicitly on Sino-Spanish relations, and the historiography of the Great Divergence has proved to be a far more important factor than I initially suspected. But the focus on Alfaro and the Pacific has remained constant, and when I planned my research travels several years later, I chose to follow Alfaro's trail around the world and through the archives, in order to find out as much as I could about this elusive historical target. I did not visit his probable birthplace of Santiago de Compostela, but in pursuit of this wily friar I visited every other site he is known to have arrived at during his lifetime.

I knocked on every administrative building at the University of Alcalá near Madrid until I found the one that was built on the site of his home monastery, knelt in the chapel at his embarkation point at the Isla de la Cartuja in Seville, visited the palace in Mexico City where he dined with the Viceroy, toured the current incarnation of the Augustinian monastery he lived in during his brief residence in Manila, walked along the Pearl River where he landed safely at Guangzhou, and visited the Macanese shore that received his body in 1580. These side visits did not necessarily yield any actual information, but they helped contextualize the reality of Alfaro's career and travels. What I found, and what his descendant immediately understood as I related the extent of my travels to him, was that visiting the physical sites of Alfaro's career highlighted its importance in the context of the development of permanent communication networks across the Pacific in a way that simply reading the documents could not.

Alfaro's mission makes for intriguing reading, with its narrative of world travel in a precarious age, cultural clashes played out on an international scale, espionage, and trans-Pacific squabbling. Given its insights into international and intercolonial relations between major powers in the emerging global era, it is quite historically relevant as well. Yet the remarkable career of Pedro de Alfaro has gone largely un-researched by historians—despite a range of accessible primary sources, his story was unexplored. I thus found myself a pioneer of sorts, often finding that I was the first person in decades to request a particular archival document. Little to nothing about his life before or during his time at the monastery at Alcalá de Henares remains extant or available, but the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, the Archivo Franciscano Ibero-Oriental, and the National Archive of the Philippines each contain significant information on his career outside of

Spain, with smaller holdings in archives and libraries elsewhere in Spain and in Mexico, Italy, the United States, Macau, and Portugal.

I have also made cautious use of Juan González de Mendoza's *Historia de las Cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del gran reyno de la China...*, a compendium of the sum of sixteenth-century European knowledge of China published in 1586 that uses contemporary accounts of Alfaro's mission as a major source (being careful to take note of its frequent ventures into what would now be termed "creative license"). I also made equally-cautious use of Robert Parke's 1588 English translation of the same, which is somehow even more elastic with the source material than the original. Mendoza's work, which ran through dozens of editions in seven different languages until it was superseded by the publication of Matteo Ricci's travel accounts, devotes an entire book in the second volume to Pedro de Alfaro's travels—a sum of information considerably larger than all currently extant documentary sources. My use of Mendoza is therefore limited to those portions that can be corroborated elsewhere, or is used, as in Chapter Seven, to discuss its influence in promulgated Alfaro's posthumous reputation in educated Europe. (In addition to Mendoza, The *Necrologium* of the Franciscans in China as well as several official Franciscan records found in Rome also discuss Alfaro briefly, if only to list his name; overall, however, the Vatican seems to have generally left him alone, as have the main Chinese archives.[21])

Most of the primary sources for Alfaro's life and career are letters (*cartas*) written by him, his fellow Franciscans, and the various officials and authorities who were in one way or another inconvenienced, embarrassed, or disappointed by his actions and reports.

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[21] "Codices manoscritti" in the Biblioteca Antonianum in Rome contains a few lists of Franciscan missions in which Alfaro is included.

Alfaro himself wrote six letters that survive—a small number, but each of them is both lengthy and densely-detailed, providing a vital glimpse into the earliest days of both Catholic missions to Ming China and the Spanish presence in Asia.[22] Pablo de Jesús, his successor in both spirit and religious appointment, wrote nine extant letters, and another companion on the ill-fated China mission, Agustín de Tordesillas, helped Alfaro write the forty-page "Relación del viaje del franciscano Pedro de Alfaro..." that became the basis for Mendoza's work. These letters are heavily supplemented by the outraged missives of two governors-general of the Philippines, Francisco de Sande and Gonzalo de Ronquillo, both of whom saw their authority flouted and their carefully-constructed plans for further enrichment of the Spanish crown and their own coffers endangered by the friars. Philip II of Spain (and, after 1580, Portugal), two viceroys of New Spain (Martín Enriquéz de Almanza and Lorenzo Suárez de Mendoza), the first bishops of Macau and the Philippines, and several Portuguese traders based in Guangzhou and Macau also wrote directly about Alfaro and his mission. This clutch of letters, approximately sixty all told, represents an important opportunity for scholars that has thus far gone mostly unused, or at most used in a context that does not realize its full potential.

My approach to these various *cartas y relaciónes* emphasizes their context in the nebulous world of early modern international and inter-colonial relations, by carefully examining both their respective genres and their biases in respect to their authors and their intended recipients. *Cartas* in this narrative are more than just letters—while they can simply mean personal correspondence, those which found a permanent home in the

[22] These six letters, two of which are contemporary copies, are divided as follows: one examines his departure from Spain and arrival in the Philippines, one his initial residence in Manila, two were written in China, and the final two—the copies—were written in the brief time between his return to Manila and his death in the South China Sea a few months later.

Spanish, Latin America, and Philippines archives had some official context or interest (dependent on the particular document) that can change its entire context and importance. Determining to whom these letters were sent is simple enough, but determining when and why they were sent to that particular person at that particular time often changes the importance of an individual *carta* considerably.

Relaciónes, on the other hand, are somewhat more clear-cut—generally, they were to be sent directly to the king or a royal official acting as an intermediary, either by order (as in the famous *Relaciónes Geográficas*, originating in a questionnaire sent throughout the Spanish Empire) or on the decision of the writer in the mold of a *probanza de mérito,* a combination report and petition for reward whose form gradually took over much of sixteenth-century colonial correspondence and makes wading through layers of self-promotion and bias a difficult task.[23] The *Relación* of Pedro de Alfaro, while arriving at the same conclusions as his *cartas*, is somewhat different in scope and focus than the individual letters penned by the friar himself—a difference in genre that requires an interpretation that emphasizes both the needs of the Spanish Crown and the desire of the friars to present themselves in the best possible light. Alfaro's strict vows of poverty and humility did not prevent him from engaging in self-aggrandizement that glosses over his failures and shortcomings—he is often not a reliable narrator, and his correspondence is peppered with odd gaps that make little sense outside of the context of self-promotion

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[23] *Probanzas* developed a distinctive style as the sixteenth century wore on which eventually spread to chronicles, letters, *Relaciónes*, and other forms of colonial correspondence. For a detailed examination of the *probanza* genre and its ubiquity in colonial Latin America, see Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*. (Oxford: Oxford, 2003), pp. 11-15, as well as James Lockhart and Enrique Otte, eds, *Letters and People of the Spanish Indies*. (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1976), pp. ix-1. For information on the *Relaciónes Geográficas*, see Barbara E. Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciónes Geográficas.* (Chicago: Chicago, 1996).

implied by the genre in which he was writing. Interpreting these letters requires a keen awareness of their intended audience, historical context, and epistolary genre.

Other historians have used these letters in the context of mission history or, more rarely, in the history of European conceptions of China, but my work is the first to situate them in a global diplomatic (or quasi-diplomatic) context, and I focus on their applicability to the development of a discrete Pacific World and to the historiography of Sino-Spanish relations. For the portions of this work relating to international and intercolonial relations, I used sources from the Mexican, Filipino, Chinese, Spanish, French, and Portuguese national archives and libraries, as well as from smaller repositories in the United States, Italy, Spain, and Macau. These sources, mostly epistolary, are discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

The "Great Man" and Pedro de Alfaro

As we drank our cerveza, Francisco and I drifted onto other topics: the state of Madrid's young people (terrible), the procedure to enter the Archivo General de Indias in Seville (much improved), and the merits of flying versus taking the train for travel within Spain (air travel is infinitely preferable). Finally, we came back to Pedro de Alfaro and his lack of historical recognition. I mentioned an old, out-of-print annotated list of Catholic missions to China I had come across in a library several years before. The anonymous author had under Alfaro's entry simply written that the mission had lasted less than a year and was "a minor incident unworthy of further note."[24] Francisco and I could only be amused that we had each, in our own ways, devoted so much time and thought to someone "unworthy" of deeper analysis. We parted ways with a promise that

[24] N.a., *Cathay and the Way Thither, Vol II.* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1866), p. 228.

we would both do our best to make the anonymous chronicler's assessment seem as laughable to others as it was to us.

This dissertation will, I hope, help fulfill that promise. I must admit, however, that this rehabilitation attempt has not come without some misgivings on my part. Pedro de Alfaro was not only a representative of Spain but a firm proponent of the aggressive military expansion of the Spanish Empire that left millions dead and erased partially or totally many aspects of indigenous, local cultures—indeed, the great tragedy of his life from his own point of view was that the role in that expansion he had hoped to play in China proved impossible to carry out. The goals he espoused over the course of his career would, had they been remotely feasible and carried to their logical conclusion, have wiped out much of Chinese civilization as we know it, by explicit design. He hated Jews, Muslims, Protestants, and essentially anybody who did not share his own beliefs—and, based on his correspondence, he also disliked a large percentage of those who did. This is not to judge Alfaro by contemporary standards—in most of these traits he was very much a man of his era, and his attitudes and viewpoints were unremarkable from a sixteenth-century perspective. However, these qualities did make me uneasy about my long championing of his role in the historical record, particularly as the years passed and I developed what one might plausibly call an attachment to him. His twenty-first-century cousin, an enthusiastic supporter of the glorious Spanish Empire, the pre-Vatican II Catholic Church, and the Great Man Theory to a degree Thomas Carlyle himself might have found somewhat excessive, does not share these qualms. He is fully at peace with his long identification with the man he refers to as "Fray Pedro." I am less comfortable

with my growing familiarity with "Pedro," a man who variously described the Chinese as liars, cheats, and soulless infidels, and this work reflects this ambiguity.

Pedro de Alfaro was by no means a great man, in any real sense of the phrase. He certainly had admirable qualities—he was a person of indomitable spirit and fervor, and his sharp tongue and sharper pen make for enjoyable reading. But in the roll of missionaries to China, a group that has come in for a significant amount of mythologizing in the past, he was not anything particularly noteworthy or heroic, and the importance I attach to him in the historiography is due solely to an accident of timing. If he had not been selected to lead the first Franciscan mission to the Philippines and then in turn asked to appraise the feasibility of a Spanish conquest of China, someone else inevitably would have. However, he *was* asked, and the timing that allowed him to be the first Franciscan to enter China in over two centuries also made him the person whose firsthand reports of Chinese wealth and power convinced the Spanish to permanently retire any real hopes of a conquest of China. It is this coincidence of timing, more than any of his own personal attributes, that makes Alfaro's life and career deserving of historiographical rehabilitation.[25]

Moreover, my argument about his historical relevance is perhaps not precisely the sort of thing his descendant might wish to see. In general, I see the story of Alfaro —his arrival in China, his report to Spain on the feasibility of conquest, his death off the coast of Macau, and his subsequent disappearance from the historiography—as one of

[25] Two other recent works dealing with individuals in the context of the development of global networks in Asia (and, incidentally, also with religious themes)—Liam Brockey's *The Visitor: André Palmeiro and the Jesuits in Asia* and Lucio de Sousa's *The Jewish Diaspora and the Perez Family Case in China, Japan, the Philippines, and the Americas*—also touch upon the unease of the author vis-a-vís their subjects; fortunately for both Brockey and de Sousa, neither Palmeiro nor the Perez family were quite as irksome as Alfaro.

humbling and of thwarted ambition, not just for him but also for Spain and for the Catholicism he loved. In 1577, when Alfaro left Spain for the Philippines, he believed not only in the likelihood of a Catholic China under the banner of Rome, but that he himself would be the one to begin the process as the head of a thriving Franciscan mission in China. He arrived in China at the behest of the then-Viceroy of New Spain, Martín Enríquez de Almanza, who, along with Philip II and many other high-ranking Spaniards, believed in the even more unlikely dream of a full military conquest of China. Alfaro's six-month sojourn in Guangzhou shattered both of these dreams, both personally and to his contemporaries—and consequently changed the course of Sino-Spanish relations in a pivotal moment in the development of a globalized Pacific zone.[26] This thwarted ambition on dual fronts, and the entirety of his career in general, proved to be a symbol of the humbling of Catholic Spain in the face of the more powerful Ming China. Alfaro is important today precisely because he showed the fragility of Spain's ambitions, and his own.

Notes on Organization

This work consists of eight chapters divided into four parts that examine the role of Alfaro's mission in various aspects of Spanish, Chinese, and Pacific history. Part One, "The Search for Pedro de Alfaro," analyzes his historiographical significance and explores the major historical questions my research answers. Part Two, "Expanding Worlds: Spain, China, and the Pacific in 1577," consists of two chapters. Chapter Two explores what little information of Alfaro's life before his arrival in the East Indies

[26] Carta del franciscano Pedro de Alfaro sobre inicio de viaje a Filipinas. AGI Filipinas 84 N. 7., r. 2-v3. Hereafter "Carta…viaje." Note on citations: documents using the foliation system will retain their original numbering in this work. Otherwise, standard pagination is used.

remains extant and examines the general historical context of the sixteenth-century Pacific, while Chapter Three goes into further detail on the latter, examining the years immediately preceding Alfaro's arrival. This chapter focuses on the 1575 Martín de Rada mission to China and the reasons behind its failure, as well as exploring Spain's long-standing interest in conquering China, a subject seldom researched in the English-language academy.

The two chapters that form Part Three, "Pedro de Alfaro and a Re-Assessment of Sino-Spanish Relations," represent the narrative heart of this manuscript. Chapter Four begins with Alfaro's arrival in the Philippines and continues through his journey to China, establishing his role as an emissary and spy in the secret service of the Viceroy. Chapter Five begins with the death of Pedro de Alfaro at sea in 1580 and continues with Spain's endeavors to establish more cordial relations with China in the wake of not only Alfaro's report on Chinese power, but the Iberian Union in Asia and the promulgation of the Single Whip Law (一條鞭法) throughout the Ming Empire, which sparked a demand for silver that represented one of the most significant economic opportunities in world history. Most importantly, it examines Spain's explicit decision to abandon a conquest of the Ming (which was itself an implicit decision to recognize China as the world's foremost power) as a result of his testimony, and Spain's transition to interactions with China that, although not exactly harmonious, allowed for increased trade and, a few years later, the admission of greater numbers of missionaries into the Chinese mainland.

Part Four, "The Globalized Pacific," examines the Alfaro mission's effect on the establishment of a discrete Pacific World in the sixteenth century. Chapter Six analyzes the nebulous history of the trans-Pacific administration of the Philippines from Mexico in

the wake of the bureaucratic struggle prompted by Alfaro's actions, concluding that the revelation that the friar had disobeyed the Philippine governor at the behest of the Viceroy of New Spain ultimately clarified the role of both colonial governments in administering Spanish interests in the Pacific. Finally, the concluding chapter examines Alfaro's legacy in sixteenth-century European thought, revisits the overall contributions of this work to the historical profession, and situates Pedro de Alfaro as a significant figure in the development of the Pacific as a historical zone.

Finally, a brief note on dates used in this narrative: Precise dating was not a priority among many of the historical figures whose correspondence and reports are central to this work, and many supplementary records are no longer extant—a problem common to all early modern research. Mistakes also abound in the records; for example, the arrival of the Franciscans in Manila is variously given as occurring in spring 1577 and summer 1578, even by people such as Pablo de Jesús who are known to have been personally present at the landing. As a result, the dates for Alfaro's arrival in China also vary by a year, and these mistakes have been repeated in the secondary sources and in archive guides. I have corroborated dates in personal letters with extant ship's logs and travel permits where available, and the dates I use here are the ones I have deemed most likely to be accurate—Alfaro, for example, cannot have arrived in Manila earlier than 1578 because his passage permit was not signed until spring 1577 and multiple sources document his stay in Mexico as lasting for several months. However, as with many early modern sources, total certainty is elusive. For a full list of dates used here, consult the Appendix.

Part Two:
Expanding Worlds: Spain, China, and the Pacific in 1577

Chapter Two: "'We Did Nothing But Dream of China:' Pedro de Alfaro's Historical Context"

Pedro de Alfaro's Origins

Pedro de Alfaro's disappearance from the historiography early on has spared his biography from being embellished with the kind of pious hagiography beloved by chroniclers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries—the researcher will find no tale of a young Alfaro defying his antagonistic father to join a religious order (a somewhat dubious story often repeated in biographies of Matteo Ricci), much less anything more extravagant.[27] Indeed, the researcher will find almost nothing for his life prior to 1577—not even a baptismal record. He was probably born sometime in the 1520s or early 1530s, almost certainly in the famous pilgrimage town of Santiago de Compostela in what had once been the independent kingdom of Galicia, but neither of these basic biographical facts can be fully confirmed from the available sources.

Nothing is known of his early life other than the few tantalizing glimpses provided by the man himself. When Alfaro referred to his youth it was generally vague and in a spiritual or religious context, as when he wrote to his friend Juan de Ayora that when he was a young man he had not understood the true meaning of Matthew 10: 9-10, the verses that had compelled Francis of Assisi to cast off his fine silk clothes and begin a

[27] Joseph Needham. *Civilization in China. vol. 3* (Cambridge: University Press, 1959), p. 170.

life as a wandering mendicant (the adult Alfaro, a man whose vocal vows of poverty could never adequately disguise his love of splendor, arguably did not quite understand the verses either).[28] In an era when reform-minded mendicants often re-christened themselves with new names reflecting their commitment to God and servitude—for example, two of Alfaro's contemporaries in the Philippines called themselves "Pablo de Jesús" and "Juan Pobre"—this reticence concerning his youth is not particularly unusual.[29] Alfaro, after his vows, was a new man, a man dedicated to God, his forbidden love of frippery and fine foods notwithstanding.

Several sources, both primary and secondary, as well as many of the Archivo General de Indias' internal document descriptions, refer to him as "Pedro de Alfaro, de Sevilla," but as this appellation only appears after his arrival in Asia, other sources, including his passage permit, that refer to him as "de Santiago" are most likely correct.[30] Seville was the point of embarkation for Spanish travelers to the Americas and Asia and the "de Sevilla" descriptor is likely meant to clarify that he was a recent arrival from the metropole and not born in or a longtime resident of Spain's Latin American colonies, as were many of Alfaro's contemporaries in the Philippines. Alfaro himself never referred to his birthplace in any of his surviving letters, but his style and spelling occasionally reflect a habitual speaker of Galician-accented Castilian (or perhaps even the Galician language

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[28] Carta del franciscano Pedro de Alfaro a Juan de Ayora, AGI Filipinas,79 r. 8. Hereafter "Ayora." The verses from Matthew are: "(9) Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, (10) Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat." KJV Bible.

[29] "Pedro de Alfaro" is almost certainly not a pseudonym, as Francisco Alfaro's long genealogical research demonstrates. It may be a toponymic surname from generations past—there is a town called Alfaro in La Rioja, which lies along the famous Camino de Santiago pilgrimage route that terminates in Alfaro's probable hometown. Also, the elasticity of names was by no means confined to friars in sixteenth-century Spain—many a common man, starting over in the New World, took on a new name as well. Camino de Santiago: Helena Miguélez-Carballeira, ed., *A Companion to Galician Culture.* (London: Boydell, 2014), p. 56.; names, Restall, p. 33.

[30] Cartas del obispo..., AGI Filipinas 34 R.1,r.2 , *Necrologium*, 332, and Cummins, 182.

proper) rather than Andalusian or standard Castilian. For example, in written salutations he occasionally used "bo," a Galician word, whereas a sixteenth-century Castilian speaker would almost always write "bueno" or "bno." "Bo" does appear as an abbreviation for "bueno" in native-speaking Castilian writing of the time, but the O is usually raised above the B to indicate that it is an abbreviation. This does not appear in Galician writing or in any of Alfaro's letters. However, in the sixteenth century, a total absence of Galician spelling or syntax would not necessarily point to non-Galician origin—Pedro de Alfaro lived his entire life within what became known as the *Séculos Escuros*, the Dark Centuries, when written Galician almost entirely vanished, and like all his contemporaries, he would not have deliberately used it in his correspondence. Depending on when he entered religious life and how urbanized his early upbringing was, he may not even have spoken his region's native language fluently.[31]

The religious order he chose was the Discalced Franciscans, known as Alcantarines in Spain and referred to colloquially (and in these sources almost universally) as simply *los descalzos*, the barefoot. In sixteenth century Spain, they represented a vigorous new reformed Franciscan spirituality, emphasizing preaching, the sacrament of confession, and eremitism, manifested in outward shows of what many contemporaries considered ostentatious poverty, most famously in their total refusal to wear footwear of any kind. Alfaro was undoubtedly a man of extreme and zealous devotion, and it is not difficult to see why the Alcantarines appealed to him—they were spiritual, outspoken, and dedicated wholly to reforming the spiritual lives of the Franciscan order they felt had become corrupted over time.[32] He struggled mightily with

[31] Miguélez-Carballeira, p. 4.
[32] Turley, pp. 152-153.

the injunction against luxuries of any kind, but then as now, these kinds of struggles can be appealing to people seeking spiritual comfort.

He probably received at least part of a university education—many of his religious contemporaries did (the Augustinian Martín de Rada was proud to have studied at Paris briefly), and the monastery he served at prior to his departure for the East Indies was located very near and collaborated closely with the famous University of Alcalá.[33] His hand is unusually clear by the standards of the time, reflecting perhaps long practice or an innate tidiness, and he was fond of inserting long Latin quotations in his correspondence. While direct evidence for his early life is now lost, it is probable that he was well-educated and well-connected to the powerful people of his day.

His age is equally difficult to pin down. In the 1570s he was presumably hale and hearty enough to easily withstand the difficult journey from Spain to the Philippines (although the Crown often did not shrink from appointing men in their sixties and seventies to onerous positions requiring a journey of over a year), and yet had the age and experience to have been made the abbot at the Franciscan monastery of Alcalá de Henares no later than 1567, when he is mentioned in the municipal records as a local firebrand who often offered public prayers for the success of Franciscan missions in the Americas.[34] He was fond of reflecting grumpily on the trials of aging (a presumed arthritis flare-up was described as "the hellfire in my hands"), but referred to the septuagenarian Alfonso de Alvarado, head of the Augustinian order in Manila, as "a man

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[33] The modern visitor to the university can obtain an informational pamphlet on the medieval institution that shows a "typical street scene" featuring a Franciscan friar interacting with students.

[34] Recuerdos del ciudad de Alcalá... AGN Gobernial 334, v. 2. While Alfaro was a member of an ermitic group, not all Discalced Franciscans were actually hermits or wanderers—Alfaro personally admired those who devoted their lives to wandering, but he himself showed a marked preference for a home base. With the rising popularity of the reform movement in Franciscan spirituality came the need for Discalced Franciscans to take on leadership roles, and Alfaro was eminently suited for the job. Turley, pp. 17-24.

who stands to me in age and wisdom almost as a father."[35] And of course, advanced age was not an impediment to a major appointment in this era—Martín Enríquez de Almanza, the Viceroy of New Spain at the time of Alfaro's voyage, could frankly be described as desiccated, and he ended his career with a major promotion to the Viceroyalty of Peru when he is believed to have been at least seventy. Presumably then Alfaro was old enough to be at the prime of his career, a man who could be trusted to carry out a mission with both the tenacity and verve of youth and the wisdom and experience of age, and yet young enough to still have active companions from his parents' generation. It seems correct then to place his age anywhere from approximately his mid-forties to late fifties at the start of his great adventure in the spring of 1577, with a notional birthdate of approximately 1525.

This adventure began with the issuing of a passage permit to the Indies on March 31, 1577. These permits were issued by La Casa y Audiencia de Indias, known to history as the Casa de Contratación, a state agency that, theoretically at least, controlled the entirety of Spanish travel and exploration worldwide. Established in 1503 and in operation until the end of the eighteenth century, the Casa de Contratación, among other duties, issued passage permits to all Spaniards seeking to travel beyond the sea, collected taxes and duties, administered commercial maritime law, and maintained and kept the secret navigational maps that were essential to international travel in the early modern era. (Of course, these goals proved to be almost impossible to carry out completely, and clandestine travel in particular is a major feature of both Alfaro's career and Spanish

[35] Ayora, v. 7 and Cartas del Franciscano Pedro de Alfaro sobre su llegada a China, AGI Filipinas 84. N.24, v. 2 (hereafter "Cartas del Franciscano") respectively.

maritime history.)[36] Alfaro seems to have petitioned long and hard for this permit, although the details remain obscure, and left Spain "with as much immediacy as the seas would allow."[37] The permit provided for entry into New Spain and, from there, across the Pacific to the newly established colony on the Philippine Islands, and was issued in order for him to become the first *custodio* of the Franciscan order in Manila, acting as both head of his order there and as chief assistant to the Augustinian order, at the time the only other order in the islands.[38] He was permitted to select his candidate for the successor to his current position as well as the companions to take with him from both Spain and Mexico to found the Order of Friars Minor in the Philippines—an impressive array of privileges that suggested that Alfaro was held in high esteem by the colonial authorities.[39] Exactly which person or entity that was responsible for commissioning Alfaro's new position remains unknown—Alfaro's successor Pablo de Jesús attributed it to the current Pope, Gregory XIII, while Alfaro implied that it was the Viceroy of Mexico.[40] They were probably both correct—the establishment of the Franciscan order in Spain's newest colony was likely a major collaborative effort in which the Vatican, the Council of the Indies, and the Order itself were all heavily involved.

Alfaro was proud of the twenty friars he selected to accompany him (fourteen from Spain and six from Mexico, though which were which and the manner by which the

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[36] The Casa was somewhat more successful in maintaining the secrecy of what one recent work referred to as "their precious maps"—Spanish maps from the early modern era are less common than maps from elsewhere in Western Europe, though their influence can be ascertained in other contemporary cartography. In fact, persistent rumors since the sixteenth century have credited Spain with being the first Europeans to arrive in Hawaii—and then hiding it. Evonne Levy et al, *Lexikon of the Hispanic Baroque: Transatlantic Exchange and Transformation.* (Austin: Texas, 2014), pp. 24-26.

[37] Carta…viaje, v. 3.

[38] Licencia..., AGI Patronato, 25, r. 2.

[39] Ibid, r. 2 - v. 2.

[40] de Jesús, Pablo. "Letter to Gregory XIII" in *The Philippine Islands.* (No location: Forgotten Books, 2012; no original publication date given), p. 34.

friars from Mexico were selected and joined the journey is unknown).[41] To him, they represented a special combination of verve and piety, zeal and intellect, sacrifice and acumen, that would be essential in their new lives on the frontiers of the Spanish Empire. The journey was nightmarishly long, the possibility of never seeing Spain again more than likely, and the infrastructure of Manila in the 1570s lacked many of the comforts considered essential by a sixteenth-century monk (already fairly primitive by many of the standards of the time), but regardless of these drawbacks Alfaro had no problem finding volunteers. The lure was not so much the actual appointment in the Philippines, however, but the island's' proximity to China—a contemporary fixation that crops up again and again in the primary sources and in this work.

With "a joyful countenance," Alfaro left his monastery and, barefoot, traveled the 317 miles between Alcalá de Henares and the Franciscan monastery of Santa Maria de las Cuevas on the Isla de la Cartuja in Sevilla, where Christopher Columbus had stayed while planning his first voyage to the Americas and where many early modern Spaniards embarked for journey to the New World until the rise of Cadíz as the preferred departure point in the eighteenth century.[42] Alfaro slept in the same monastery Columbus had and prayed at the same chapel before his departure for the Indies in mid-autumn, trembling with excitement at the prospect of traveling to Asia and remarking repeatedly that he wished the slow waters of the Guadalquivir River would bear him down the coast "with

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[41] Both the number of friars listed and the manner of their deaths, departures, and additions to the group fluctuate from source to source. The numbers I use here are the ones most often corroborated.

[42] Cartas del Franciscano, v. 2. Regarding his travel from Madrid to Seville: he later admitted to traveling by barge part of the way, probably from Cordoba to Seville, (Relación del Pedro de Alfaro, AGI Patronato 25, v. 4), but such long barefoot journeys were a common show of piety for mendicants of the era, and of course walking was the primary means of transportation in the sixteenth century anyways. Discalced Franciscans in Spain were famous for their total refusal to wear footwear of any kind under any circumstances (other discalced orders would sometimes allow sandals), but even so the journey Alfaro described could be undertaken in possibly as little as three or four weeks by a traveler possessed of good health and good luck in equal proportions. Turley, p. 23.

all the speed the saints could fathom."[43] His voyage from Spain to Veracruz proved to be considerably less onerous than he had thought (he had been quite certain that he would face all manner of privations on the journey and possibly die en route as a martyr of an indeterminate type), and he arrived in Mexico safely slightly over two months later.[44] After the equally-uneventful overland trip from Veracruz to Mexico City, he would meet the Viceroy of New Spain, the man whose requests would shape the course of the rest of his life.

Mexico, Spain, and Dreams of China: Alfaro and the Viceroy

Don Martín Enríquez de Almanza was the fourth viceroy of New Spain (Mexico). He was in his late sixties and had been in office for nearly a decade when Alfaro arrived in late 1577. A thin, gaunt man with a distinctly sickly visage that even the obligatory equestrian portraits could not quite disguise, he was in declining health but was still a capable and competent viceroy (his wretched physical condition became one of his more salient characteristics as time went on; three years later, his new subjects in the Viceroyalty of Peru would dub him *El Gotoso*, The Gouty, a nickname probably bestowed in light of his general terrible health rather than any specific diagnosis, as his emaciated appearance makes it unlikely he actually suffered from the disease). His time in office had been one of repeated success from the point of view of the Crown, if not always his subjects and the indigenous groups that remained outside the sway of direct Spanish control. He had organized successful military campaigns against the Chichimecs, established the Inquisition in Mexico, and provided medical facilities that were widely

[43] Cartas del Franciscano... v. 22.
[44] Ibid., r. 6. Altogether, Alfaro was oddly reticent concerning the details of his sea voyages; whether this was due to a fear of sailing or total comfort with it remains a mystery.

credited with halting a terrible epidemic of chickenpox that killed thousands of indigenous people in 1576.[45] Almanza was an able administrator and, most importantly for the perspective of this work, a person who had demonstrated a distinct knack for anticipating the interests of Spain and acting upon them quickly and decisively.

As an important member of the Franciscan order poised to bring the Friars Minor to the very edge of the Spanish Empire, Alfaro was naturally immediately admitted to the viceregal palace to converse with Almanza.[46] Indeed, the writings of the friars hinted heavily that the viceroy had been the one who engineered Alfaro's appointment in the first place—a situation that is perfectly plausible even if the documentary evidence is no longer extant. As the Philippines were part of the viceroyalty (a situation that proved to be significant after Alfaro's death), it would have made sense for Almanza to be involved, at least in a supervisory capacity, in the arrangements for bringing the Franciscan order to Manila for the first time.[47]

If Alfaro and Almanza had not communicated directly prior to their face to face meeting, they became fast friends in Mexico City. To Alfaro's immense delight, Almanza was also one of the many sixteenth-century Spaniards who shared two of his favorite passions: an obsessive paranoia about the possibility of *conversos* secretly practicing the Jewish faith, and a keen interest in the East. The former was a common fixation of the period—practicing Jews had been expelled from Spain in 1492, and the specter of *conversos* defying this prohibition through clandestine worship remained a topic of empire-wide obsession for centuries afterwards. Neither Alfaro nor Almanza was

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[45] Alejandro Caneque, *The King's Living Image: The Culture and Politics of Viceregal Power in Mexico.* (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 54-6.
[46] Now the Palacio Nacíonal, the palace Alfaro visited was more akin to a fortress. The current Baroque edifice was constructed following a fire in 1624. Caneque, p. 78.
[47] Relacíon, v. 7.

particularly remarkable for the time in their preoccupation with crypto-Judaism, but it did provide an easy start to conversation between the two. After a literal blow-by-blow description of a recent *aúto-da-fe* in Mexico City that had safely dispatched a group of alleged unrepentant *conversos* to the hereafter, the pair, along with the rest of the friars, happily (if perhaps with feelings of unease given their commitment to public poverty) settled down at banquet table on a dais to eat a marzipan castle. Their conversation was not confined to tidbits and torture, however—the two men, friar and viceroy, also discussed the land that was the focus of nearly every educated European's fascination at the time: China.[48]

China was a contemporary obsession, regardless of an individual person's particular area of interest—statesmen, courtiers, merchants, clergy, philosophers, naturalists, and virtually any other prominent profession evinced a deep fascination with "Cathay" and its almost endless list of wonders.[49] Since at least the days of Marco Polo, China had occupied a special place in the collective European consciousness that often represented a strange foretaste of our own contemporary Western fascination and ill-ease with the Chinese. China was an exotic symbol of wealth and a vaguely articulated threat, an object of intense curiosity that invited scorn nearly as often as it produced fascination. It represented endless possibilities for sixteenth-century Western Europeans. In the absence of regular firsthand reports, China could, in the imaginations of early modern

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[48] Ibid., r. 2-4. Fear may have been a motivating factor in Almanza's pursuit of *conversos;* he was widely rumored to have Sephardic ancestry himself. Caneque, p. 65. On marzipan castles: these confections were a popular early modern delicacy (though perhaps a somewhat old-fashioned one by Alfaro's day), so much so that Thomas Aquinas, writing centuries before, deemed the treat permissible for fast days. Ursula Heinzelman, *Beyond Bratwurst: A History of Food In Germany*. (London: Reaktion, 2014), p. 88.

[49] Both the terms Cathay and China were in use in the sixteenth century, although the final conclusive identification of the two as the same country did not come until the Jesuits established themselves in China at the end of the sixteenth century. Before this, many early modern Europeans thought that the two were closely related, yet distinct. Diego de Pantoja, *Relación de la entrade de algunos padres de la Compania de Iesus en la China* ...(Valencia: Garriz, 1605), p. 156.

Europeans, become almost anything they wanted it to be. China was at once the repository of unimaginable luxury and a land of infidels, a sort of proto-Orientalist avatar upon which intellectuals, religious orders, and military leaders alike could fasten their hopes and fears. "Proto-Orientialist" indeed may not be sufficient to describe the treatment of China in sixteenth-century European thought—while Edward Said in his pioneering work situates the eighteenth century as an effective starting point for the development of Orientalist thought in Europe, much early modern commentary on China in particular has a distinct Orientalist flavor that reminds the reader of imperialist writings penned centuries later.[50] The historiography of early modern views of China is tilted towards English history; however, the tremendous amount of planning and writing about China that went on in Spain (detailed in this chapter as well as Chapters Three and Five) suggests that historians in the English-language academy at least would be well-served to focus more on Iberia.

This paradoxical view of China, in which European perceptions of the Middle Kingdom were the object of intense curiosity and yet had more to do with Western attitudes than any cogent reality of Chinese society, was the product of a world in which China was constantly on the periphery of the collective European unconsciousness but firsthand knowledge was still very difficult to come by. When Alfaro was issued his East Indies passage permit, Europeans had been in direct contact with the Ming for sixty years via the Portuguese, who had launched the first European embassy to Ming China in 1517

[50] Edward Said, *Orientalism.* (New York: Vintage, 1994), p. 3. Said focused his work on the Middle East rather than China, but China was a frequent target of attitudes that would now be described as orientalist well into the twentieth century.

and from there were eventually able to establish a long-lasting enclave at Macau.[51] Sixty years is a long time, but it was not long enough to sate the Western appetite for information of China, particularly since the Ming seemed strangely reluctant to allow unlimited numbers of Portuguese to pour into the country. The fortunes of the Portuguese in China swung back and forth throughout the century, but the overall number of Westerners permitted in China remained low until the years immediately following Alfaro's death, when the Jesuits were able to establish themselves as missionaries in the final decades of the Ming dynasty. This meant that, while the medieval reports on "Cathay" could be somewhat embellished and corrected by contemporary visitors, access to regular, factual firsthand accounts of China remained tantalizingly out of reach, even as Portugal was launching a profitable, if shaky, trade agreement with the Ming that allowed them to establish a permanent base at Macau.[52]

In 1578, just as Alfaro was settling down after his long journey to have a friendly discussion with the Viceroy, the renowned Afro-Portuguese doctor and natural historian Cristobal Acosta wrote that "as for the greatness of this kingdom, the size of the population, the excellence of policy and possessions and riches and government this China exceeds all the other kingdoms of the world."[53] This was taken as basic knowledge by many educated Europeans at the time, despite the fact that relatively few Europeans had actually entered Chinese territory at this point and almost none of them had written extensively about China. Alfaro almost certainly never got a chance to read Acosta

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[51] A.J.R. Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire, 1415-1808: A World on the Move.*(Baltimore: Hopkins, 1992), p. 22.
[52] Ibid., p. 18, 44.
[53] Cristobal Acosta, *Tractado de las Drogas....* (Burgos: n.p., 1578), p. 250.

himself, but there is little doubt that he would have agreed with Acosta's outsize praise of China, with some reservations about the "pagan" faith of its subjects.

As a Franciscan, China retained a special place in Alfaro's dreams—the order had been instrumental in shaping European knowledge of China in the medieval era. They had established successful missions over the course of a century in the latter half of the Yuan Dynasty, and, while they had been depleted considerably during the Black Death and then driven out during the rise of the Ming, the historical memory was a powerful motivating factor in the motivations of their sixteenth-century heirs.[54] Alfaro, like many mendicants of his era, nourished the pious dream of reestablishing his order in China. He was indeed far more interested in China than he had ever been in the Philippines—he hoped to at the very least converse with some of the Chinese residents of Manila, if not actually visit China himself. The Mongol-era Franciscan experiences loom large in the historiography of Christianity in China—indeed, virtually every available historical overview originating from the contemporary Order of Friars Minor devotes a tremendous amount of space to these early missionaries, followed by a relative gap in the early modern period before expanding again in the early twentieth century when the tottering Qing dynasty was host to an influx of missionaries of all (Christian) stripes.[55] This dearth of information for the early modern period in Franciscan sources is a reflection of the comparatively poor performance of the Franciscans in China during the Ming and Qing dynasties—the Jesuit order was able to establish a longer and more influential presence in

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[54] Standaert, et al, eds. *The Handbook of Christianity in China, Vol 1.* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p. ix.

[55] For a representative example, see Noel Muscat, "History of the Franciscan Movement." Accessed April 4 2016. http://www.christusrex.org/www1/ofm/fra/FRAht11.html. This is not to imply any inadequacy on the part of these Franciscan historians; members of the Order have been instrumental in preserving their historical records and making them available to others, including myself. Their keen scholarship has been significant boon to mission history.

China than the Franciscans, and the tendency of the Friars Minor to focus on periods of comparative glory in their own chronicles instead is quite understandable.[56] In mainstream academic history, however, the order of priorities has reversed in recent decades—the medieval Franciscan missions to China have receded into the background of Sino-Western encounter historiography with the relative decline of medieval history as a subfield and the recent explosion in early modern history. This is unfortunate—at the very least, these Yuan Dynasty missions had a significant impact on the dreams and visions of those Franciscans who arrived in Asia over two centuries later, as Pedro de Alfaro's career suggests.

Almanza's dreams, however, were worldlier. To a politician like Almanza, China represented a significant global power that could potentially become part of the Spanish crown, and moreover represented a superb opportunity for him to cement his legacy by becoming one of the architects of this prospective conquest. Alfaro's hopes of returning the Franciscans to China could be combined beautifully—from the Spanish point of view—with Almanza's ambition for Spain while the friar and viceroy conversed privately after supper that night in Mexico City.

Alfaro never wrote directly of his conversation with Almanza, but he relayed it immediately thereafter to Pablo de Jesús, a slightly younger Franciscan whom Alfaro had selected to make the journey to Manila and who was present at the banquet (and ate "a great quantity" of the marzipan castle). Something of the quintessential sidekick, de Jesús was Alfaro's right-hand man in his lifetime but was somewhat quiet in the records until

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[56] Whether or not the higher prestige and power of the Jesuits in Ming-Qing China was well-earned or the product of biases and propaganda (I tend to favor the former viewpoint) is itself a major debate within the historiography of the Chinese Rites Controversy, albeit one beyond the chronological scope of this work. For an excellent overview of the topic, see Paul A. Rule, "The Chinese Rites Controversy: A Long-Lasting Controversy in Sino-Western Cultural History." *Pacific Rim Report*, No. 32 (Feb 2004), n.p.

Alfaro's death (and his background remains as opaque as Alfaro's), at which point he penned a small flurry of pointed letters to various officials and administrators. In one of them, he claimed that Alfaro had told him that Almanza had personally asked Alfaro to disregard his duties in the Philippines regardless of the protests of the governor there and proceed straight to China to found a mission and, more importantly, assess the feasibility of a future Spanish conquest of China.[57] There is little reason to doubt this story, convenient as it was. It fits all too well with the known accounts of the Alfaro mission, Almanza's ambition, Alfaro's fixation on China, and the future anger of the Manila governors. Almanza, an old man in wretched health, knew that he was nearing the end of his life, and hoped to accomplish something truly lasting, something that would outshine all his previous efforts on behalf of the crown and perhaps reap significant rewards for himself and his family. The possibility of becoming the mastermind behind the first step in an eventual conquest of China was a perfect opportunity.[58]

"A la mexicana:" The Impossible Dream of Conquest

For Spaniards of his day, the conquest of China was no crackpot scheme but a central point of the crown's Asian policies—while seriously under-examined in the historiography, the possibility of extending Spanish power into China had been a serious part of Philip II's agenda since the founding of the Spanish colony in the Philippines in 1565.[59] China, along with India and the East Indies, had been the *raison d'être* for what historians knew in decades past as the Age of Exploration in the first place, and that

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[57] Cartas del franciscano Pablo de Jesús... AGI Filipinas 6, v.2. (hereafter "Cartas…de Jesús")
[58] Almanza was indeed rewarded for a job well done, though not because he was the successful architect of a conquest of China—he died at the head of the wealthier Viceroyalty of Peru. Caneque, p. 31.
[59] Ollé, pp. 7-8, and Hsu, p. 225.

fixation with Asian wealth and luxury products such as silk and spices had continued after Spain and Portugal had established themselves as colonial powers in the Americas.[60] If the Spanish were able to establish a permanent base in East Asia, like that possessed by the Portuguese in Macau, Spain could at the very least profit from close proximity to the Chinese luxuries market—and at the very most, if their luck overseas continued, they could fully integrate China into the sprawling Spanish Empire by force.

The whole notion of a Spanish conquest of China seems frankly preposterous to the modern reader. How could Spain possibly conquer China? Were they seriously planning to slowly ferry soldiers across the Pacific by the shipful until enough had gathered to mount a successful conquest (or *pacificación*, as such military events were euphemistically termed)? Or perhaps did king and viceroy alike dream of a *pacificación* in the mold of Hernán Cortés, who had won dubious fame throughout the Western world for his seizure of the Aztec seat of power using only a few Spaniards but taking skillful advantage of local discontent to gather indigenous armies against Montezuma II?[61] Were the Spanish so unaware of basic facts about China that they formed these plans without considering the huge population of China and its global reputation?

The answer to all of these questions is, with some qualifications, *yes*. Plans to conquer China took various forms throughout the 1560s and 1570s, but they generally followed a set narrative: a core force of Spanish soldiers would gather in the Philippines,

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[60] The historiography of the so-called Age of Exploration reached a controversial crescendo with the 1992 quincentennial of the voyages of Columbus; more recently the preferred terminology is "contact" and the "exploratory" voyages of Columbus, Magellan, and others are examined in a global context. Luca Codignola, "North American Discovery and Exploration Historiography, 1993-2001:From Old-Fashioned Anniversaries to the Tall Order of Global History?" *Acadiensis* Vol. XXXI No. 2 (Spring 2002), n.p., para. 2-7.

[61] The debate surrounding the ultimate ambivalency of Cortés's career in Mexico, while a significant aspect of Latin American historiography, is not really relevant in this context—what is important is that Mexico was formally integrated into the Spanish Empire.

their numbers strengthened somewhat by Filipino forces, and proceed across the South China Sea to seize Macau, and from there pour into China proper, where they would no doubt be joined by discontented locals—a concept Manel Ollé refers to as *conquista de China a la mexicana*.[62] Ideas for conquest following this narrative or one very similar to it were repeatedly floated by, among many others, the first three governors-general of the Philippines (Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, Guido de Lavezaris, and Francisco de Sande) and seriously entertained by Philip II. This 1570 plan, drawn up by Lavezaris and sent to the royal court where it was read with interest by the king's council, is a typical one:

> If Your Majesty intends to [conquer] China, which we know to be very large, rich, and well-policed, and which has cities that are stronger and better-walled than those in Europe, [we] must first establish a seat among these islands [presumably the many barrier islands dotting the southern Chinese coast], because we could not successfully pass among these islands and shoals [without doing so first]. The other reason is that to conquer such a great many people on land it is necessary to close [avenues of] relief from the enemy host in case of any event [attack] from there, although the people of China are not warlike. By God's will we can do so easily and without too many people [being involved.] [63]

Interestingly, this plan immediately admits that Chinese military infrastructure, at least when it came it city walls, was superior to that of Europe. While sixteenth-century knowledge of China was spotty at best, enough information had trickled into Spanish consciousness for them to reasonably (and correctly) conclude that China represented a major adversary. Indeed, Lavezaris and his fellow administrators in the Philippines represented the cutting edge of Spanish knowledge of China at the time, particularly in an era when constant hostility and suspicion of the Portuguese may have made the latter's closer connections to China seem somewhat suspect. In 1570, no Spaniard had entered Ming territory as an official representative of the interests of Spain, either religious or

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[62] Ollé, p. 42.
[63] Ibid., original in.Copia de cartas... AGI Filipinas,79, R.1., r. 1.

temporal, but enough was known via contemporary Portuguese accounts to at least accurately assess China as a power exceeding their own. Lavezaris was of course completely wrong about the Chinese lacking bellicosity, and as a man who would spend nearly four decades in Asia he ought to have known better than to write that—although China had indeed just concluded a century of relative peace, there had also been two Chinese-led massacres of the Portuguese during Lavezaris' tenure in the East Indies.[64] Lavezaris was not just writing to himself, as it were, either—his plan and the others like it received tacit and regular approval from both Philip II and the successive Viceroys that had overseen the first expeditions into the Pacific. This was no pet project and no fringe fantasy—this conquest was a common proposal that was taken extremely seriously at the time, both in the Philippines, Latin America, and Spain.[65] These plans ranged from the meticulous to the fanciful, including one that proposed that Spain would only have to send about sixty soldiers to take the entire province of Fujian, with virtually all falling into the *a la mexicana* mold.[66]

Another plan was drawn up by Lavezaris's successor to the governorship, Francisco de Sande, in 1576. This one called for "six thousand men with lances and arquebuses," along with Japanese pirates brought on as mercenaries (Sande did not detail how this was to be achieved), who would seize either Guangdong or Fujian, where they would doubtless be joined by hordes of discontented Chinese and from there seize the

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[64] Chinese peace: Andrade, *Gunpowder Age*, p. 5; Portuguese attacks: Russell-Wood, p. 74. The survivors of these two massacres, at Ningbo in 1542 and Quanzhou in 1549 respectively, were among the founders of the Portuguese settlement at Macau.

[65] For a partial list of contemporary observers who were privy to or promoted conquest plans, see Hsu, p. 65.

[66] John Headley, "Spain's Asian Presence, 1565-1590: Structures and Aspirations." The Hispanic American Historical Review, Vol. 75, No. 4 (Nov., 1995), pp. 623-646, p. 637.

rest of the empire.[67] It is reasonable to presume that a newly-arrived governor of the Philippines was not actually fully enmeshed with the domestic troubles of the Ming Dynasty, but nevertheless Sande delivered his own interpretation of why they could count on internal Chinese support of the type that had made the conquest of Mexico possible:

> The judges, the authorities, and the king [of China] engage in acts of tyranny such as have never been seen…this war is as just as war could be....The Chinese make their law prevail [in the sea], massacring and robbing those who risk entering their waters. [The Chinese] are idolaters, sodomites, and pirates...who know neither how to read nor write...However well they are treated, every day they give you a thousand reasons to undertake a just war.[68]

This plan as well drew on prior Spanish experiences in Latin America, although Sande's argument—that the Chinese were rapacious and violent and thus deserved to be attacked—contradicts Lavezaris's picture of a country that, though well-defended, would not put up much of a fight. This in turn illuminates the lack of substantive information about China available to Spain in the years immediately leading up to Pedro de Alfaro's arrival in Asia in 1578—these plans were drawn up within three years of each other, by administrators physically located in Asia and privy to all official channels of information available in the Philippines. There certainly was information available on China, as Manila was host to not only a large population of Chinese, but also intermittently to Portuguese arrivals from Macau, but this information was garbled, contradictory, and, perhaps most importantly, not coming from sources attuned to Spanish interests in Asia. Therefore, in the absence of the kind of hard data (or at least its sixteenth-century equivalent) that would force them to turn away from this plan, the Spanish took these plans seriously.

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[67] Serge Gruzinski, *The Eagle and the Dragon: Globalization and European Dreams of Conquest in China and America in the Sixteenth Century.* (Cambridge: Polity, 2014), p. 220. Original: Carta del Doctor Sande sobre conquista de China, AGI Filipinas 84.

[68] Ibid., p. 221, and Carta del Doctor Sande... r. 1.

Why *was* Spain taking this seriously, considering that they already had some idea of the extent of Chinese power? Part of the answer is lack of substantial, trustworthy information. Enough was known about China for the Spanish to be aware of some of their basic infrastructure, but anything more detailed was confined to the realms of rumor and conjecture. The coastal towns in Guangdong and Fujian, the regions of China Europeans were familiar with at the time, were known to be populous, wealthy, and well-defended by Spanish contemporaries in the Philippines, but what lay beyond that was more or less a mystery. From the Spanish point of view, it was entirely possible that this coastal region represented the apex of Chinese might, and that the rest of Ming territory was some kind of sparsely-populated, poorly-governed backwater with animosities towards the capital (wherever that was) that could be used to Spain's advantage.

Another, somewhat more disturbing reason the Spanish held out hope for a conquest of China is that, by the middle of the sixteenth century, the Spanish were well aware of the tragic consequences of their arrival in the Americas—namely, the hideous spread of Eurasian diseases that, when introduced to indigenous groups with no immunity, wreaked nightmarish havoc on the population.[69] As early as 1548, Spanish estimates of the death toll from disease topped one million souls in some localities, and while many contemporary Spanish observers were horrified, others saw an opportunity for the expansion of the Empire if such horrors (or was the decimation of the opponents of Spanish power a sign from God?) could be repeated among the Chinese.[70] Indeed, the indigenous Tagalogs and Ilokanos in the Philippines were already taking ill *en masse* by

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[69] Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*. (Westport: Praeger, 2003 ed), pp. 37-38.
[70] Ibid., p. 45. The estimate of one million deaths in this instance is for Santo Domingo.

the 1570s, giving twisted hope to the supporters of a *conquista a la mexicana* in China.[71] As widespread death and disease had followed the actual conquest of Mexico, so it could in China as well, making the job of *pacificacion* considerably easier.

However, the main reason why Spain devoted so much time to the unfeasible plan of conquering China was simply hubris writ large on an international scale. It is no accident that the conquest plans were *a la mexicana*—the extraordinary career of Cortés loomed large in the sixteenth-century Spanish imagination, as yet untroubled by the rise of "ambivalent conquest" historiography and the concept of alternative forms of resistance. If the model of a small Spanish core of soldiers strengthened by local armies toppling the existing political system could be done in Mexico, and then repeated in Peru, why couldn't it be transported across the Pacific to China? So the reasoning went, and in the proper historical context it wasn't a completely outrageous idea—Spain was the military wonder of the Western world for precisely that reason, after all. And yet it was hubris nonetheless—hubris was behind the notion that the Ming were somehow comparable militarily with the Aztec and Inca Empires, despite a total lack of evidence indicating that this was so. And it was hubris that made the Spanish write as though the distances involved in traversing the Pacific were comparable to those of the Atlantic and would present no difficulty in terms of communication and transportation.[72] Had the conquest plan ever actually been implemented, the would-be Cortéses would most likely have been quickly and bloodily routed. As for the idea of pestilence following the Spanish into mainland Asia and facilitating their conquest plans, this too was fantasy, though a more forgivable one, as early modern Europeans were quite unaware of germ

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[71] Linda Newson, *Conquest and Pestilence in the Philippines,*(Honolulu: Hawaii, 2009), p. 22.
[72] This is not meant to imply that the Aztec and Inca were "backwards" in any way; only to point out that the relative size and power of the American empires was easily dwarfed by that of the Ming.

theory and the concept of a common Eurasian immunity outlined by Jared Diamond among others.[73]

This series of proposals for a Spanish conquest of China has not featured prominently in the historiography. These plans were part of active Spanish policy in Asia for only a few years and were never actually implemented, and by the end of the seventeenth century, even references to it had died away, resulting in their historical importance being downplayed or ignored altogether by historians. When these plans do appear, the focus of historical work on the subject has been primarily concerned with pointing out and elaborating upon their existence in general, rather than examining them in a global or trans-regional context. However briefly these plans may have flourished, they represent an important aspect of the historiography of the Spanish Empire—the natural final step in a long road of Spanish expansionism that began long before the Empire itself was established.

The history of Spanish conquest and colonialism can be divided into three geographic and chronological periods. The first is the combined history of the *reconquista* and the forcible absorption of the other Iberian kingdoms under the Castilian banner, a process that spanned eight hundred years from the establishment of the Christian kingdom of Asturias in the eighth century to the annexation of Navarre, the last independent Iberian kingdom besides Portugal, in 1515.[74] (Although the concept of a *reconquista*—that is, the "re-taking" of "Christian territory" from Muslim "occupiers"—

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[73] Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*. (New York: Norton, 1997), pp. 195-201.

[74] Dates: John Elliott, *Imperial Spain: 1469-1716*. (New York: Penguin, rev. 2nd ed, 2002), pp. 2, 9. While "Spain" as a national entity did not exist for much of the first phase, I do not consider this to be an effective argument against my inclusion of the medieval era in this three-phase explanation of Spanish conquest ambitions. Even for the contemporary entity I would argue that the idea of Spain as a cohesive state and national identity has more to do with nineteenth-century nationalism and twentieth-century Francoism.

has rightfully come under scrutiny by historians, I retain the term here for convenience's sake.) These two long-term endeavors, undertaken by various Spanish kingdoms in various forms over the course of centuries, represent the first and longest phase of Spanish expansionism and include the Mediterranean incursions outlined by Felipe Fernandez-Armesto in *Before Columbus: Exploration and Colonization from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1229-1492* as representing the first heralds of Spanish overseas militarism.[75] The second phase is the conquest of Latin America, dominating Spain's early modern history and marking the start of Spain's brief status as a major global power. Finally, Spain's entry into Asia via the Philippines and its attempts in the mid to late sixteenth century to expand their control of Iberia and much of the Americas into China represent the third phase, which historians have traditionally included as part of the Latin American conquests. Historiographically, the links between the first and second phases have been given scant attention until recently—even fifteen years after Fernandez-Armesto's groundbreaking work, Josep M. Fradera's historiographical research identified the links between these two phases as being "imprecisely defined," a fair argument given the overwhelming focus on the early modern period in Spanish historiography, to the detriment of the late medieval era that laid the foundations for Spain's rapid expansion in the sixteenth century.[76]

My contribution to the historiography of the Spanish Empire and its overseas expansion is to not only elaborate these three phases, but to make a distinction between the second and third phases, despite their chronological overlap. The conquest of the

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[75] Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *Before Columbus: Exploration and Colonization From the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1229-1492*. (Philadelphia: Penn, 1987), p. 3.
[76] Josep M. Fradera, "Spanish Colonial Historiography: Everyone in Their Place." *Social History* Vol. 29 No. 3 (August 2004), pp. 268-273: p. 269.

Philippines and the proposed conquest of China not only mark the culmination of Spain's global ambitions but, within a few years, also marked the halting of those ambitions as the Spanish realized that China was too strong an adversary and their effective power base would therefore remain in Latin America and the metropole. The *reconquista* and the annexation of the Iberian kingdoms represent the development of the conceptualization of Spain as a world power, the conquest of Latin America its greatest extent, and the attempt to expand into China its eventual failure and decline. Expansion into Asia represents a new and distinct phase in Spanish history not because the Spanish were able to repeat their successes in Latin America, but because it curtailed that expansion and forced the Spanish to not only eventually focus on trade-based relationships in Asia rather than conquest, but to acknowledge, at least implicitly, that their colonies in the Americas represented the effective extent of their global power.

This third phase, and in particular the proposed conquest of China, has not spawned any particularly flourishing historiographical debates. Whether or not this conquest was a serious plan is not a topic of any particular dispute (it is generally agreed that it was at the very least under serious consideration by the Crown itself), nor is the question of whether or not the conquest of the Philippines was a deliberate prelude to the conquest of China (the primary sources are unambiguous on this matter). What is up for debate, and what comprises a major argument in this work, is the question of when precisely Spain turned away from seriously planning a conquest of China, with the date being gradually pushed back earlier in time as the historiography became more and more oriented towards global history and integrated more Asian sources. Charles Boxer, writing in 1969, placed the end of the conquest dream in the early seventeenth century,

arguing that the arrival of the Dutch complicated the balance of power in Southeast Asia so much that Spain was forced to turn away from their Chinese ambitions.[77] In 1995, John M. Headley asserted that Philip II's 1598 death ended the plan, as his son and successor Philip III was unable to devote the proper time and attention to a military and spiritual conquest of China.[78] And in 2002, Manel Ollé's *La Empresa de China* argued that the destruction of the Spanish Armada in 1588 robbed Philip II of the naval infrastructure that had been slated to be used in the conquest of China, a point echoed by José Antonio Cervera Jiménez in his 2013 article "Los planes españoles para conquistar China a través de Nueva España y Centroamérica en el siglo XVI."[79] This work argues in subsequent chapters that these interpretations are incorrect, relying as they do on proposals that contradicted knowledge of China available to Philip II (most notably that of the Jesuit Alonso Sánchez, who in 1586 presented a plan to Philip II that was never accepted) and that essentially represent a tradition of militaristic *braggadocio* more than they do any serious attempt to conquer China.[80] The turning away from the *conquista de china a la mexicana* should be dated to 1580-1581, the dates on which reliable, detailed eyewitness accounts of Chinese military and civil infrastructure written by Spaniards aware of conquest plans became available to the viceregal and royal courts, respectively.

Returning to Mexico, Viceroy Almanza was protected by ignorance from the distressing knowledge that a conquest of China was unfeasible, and thus imparted his request (or was it an order?) to Alfaro with high hopes. Alfaro accepted the commission

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[77] Charles Boxer, "Portuguese and Spanish Projects for the Conquest of Southeast Asia, 1580-1600." *Journal of Asian History*, vol. iii, no. 2 (1969): pp. 118-136., p. 120. Incidentally, a new comparative history of Spanish and Portuguese plans for conquests of China and Southeast Asia is long overdue.
[78] Headley, p. 646.
[79] Ollé, pp. 7-8, and José Antonio Cervera Jiménez, "Los planes españoles para conquistar China a través de Nueva España y Centroamérica en el siglo XVI." *Cuadernos Intercambio Año 10*, Vol. 10, No. 12 (2013): pp. 207-235., p. 230-231.
[80] Cervera, "Los planes..." p. 228.

with delight, as it dovetailed beautifully with his ongoing fascination with China. As it turned out, he and the Viceroy would be spending a great deal of time together to discuss these plans. Alfaro had been impatient to leave Mexico City for an extensive tour of Franciscan missions in the surrounding territories (envisioned as sort of a training exercise for the friars from peninsular Spain), but unfortunately he and his entire band of Franciscans, all twenty-one of them, fell ill of a virulent digestive ailment soon after arrival. Six of the friars died in agony, while the others writhed and sweated and experienced "indignities it is not fit to discuss," as Alfaro primly put it before baldly stating that his bowels had "turned to water."[81] Perhaps the marzipan castle was to blame. The tour had to be scrapped, as the Galleon only sailed from Acapulco once a year in those days and the surviving friars needed several months to recuperate.[82] Alfaro was housed in the Viceregal palace for part of his recovery, despite his protests that it violated his commitment to poverty (he spent the rest of his convalescence in a more respectable hermitage), and he and Almanza strengthened their friendship while indulging in that classic pastime of the chronically ill, an endless remuneration of their maladies. Almanza had sore spots that felt like gout, Alfaro's hands ached, and both were plagued by recurrent headaches, no doubt caused by the stagnant water in and around Mexico City.[83] Their friendship seems to have been genuine—in addition to frequent affectionate remarks in their letters (a common feature of sixteenth century correspondence, true enough, but one that Alfaro, a notably prickly person, rarely employed with others beyond the most basic requirements), the Viceroy himself, upon Alfaro's full recovery,

[81] Carta del franciscano Pedro de Alfaro..., v.3.
[82] De Jesús, pp. 28-9.
[83] Carta del franciscano..., r. 6.

arranged for the friar to travel in grand style across Mexico in what J.S. Cummins described as a "triumphal progress."[84]

This progress carried them the 230 miles from the Zocalo in Mexico City to the port at Acapulco from which the Manila Galleons sailed. Alfaro, as ever extremely fond of ostentatious acts of faith, had wanted to walk the entire distance barefoot as a mark of piety, but his recent illness and the "tender solicitude" of his friend the Viceroy won out and he was carried on a litter for much of the journey.[85] They were fêted in every town, meeting the officials and conversing with their fellow Franciscans whenever possible, who they fired up with their new approaches to preaching and their zeal for reform—they were in fact also the first *descalzados* to enter New Spain as well.[86] Vows of poverty notwithstanding, they even sampled many rich confections, including chocolate, which at the time was rapidly becoming fashionable in the courts of Europe (Alfaro disliked the froth that settled at the top of chocolate beverages but drank the liquid greedily, while the more adventurous de Jesús tried molé and fell ill again as a consequence). They arrived in Acapulco in the first week of March 1578, entering the city in triumph and avidly curious to see the ship that would take them to Manila.[87]

Their feelings of victory upon arrival were not misplaced, though they may have been preliminary—Spain was at the height of its wealth and power, with gold and silver pouring in from across the Americas and with direct rule over a large part of continental Europe. The establishment of a Spanish Franciscan order in Manila, on the other side of the world, on the very doorstep of China, was but one more manifestation of this power,

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[84] J.S. Cummins, "Two Missionary Methods in China," p. 41.
[85] Cartas del virrey... 42.
[86] Turley, p. 154.
[87] Cartas del virrey, pp. 44-6.

and Alfaro and the fourteen surviving friars felt it keenly. Manila itself was a new world, a very recent addition to the Spanish crown, and as excited about China as they all were, they were scarcely less impatient to see the Philippines.

"A Place Beautiful Beyond Dreams:" A Brief History of the Philippines to 1577

The Spanish first claimed what would become their most enduring legacy in Asia on Easter Sunday (March 31st), 1521, when Ferdinand Magellan, the Portuguese head of a Spanish expedition funded by Charles I, planted a cross on Limasawa Island in the southeast region of the archipelago. Spain initially derived little benefit from this claim—following clashes with the local tribes, Magellan was killed, the expedition broke up, and only one poorly-manned ship managed to limp back to Spain later that year, marking the first known successful (if barely so) trans-Pacific voyage.[88] However, the crown's interest was piqued by the realization that the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas that had divided the Americas between the Iberian powers could also be applied at a demarcating line in Asia that gave the Spanish hypothetical control of the Moluccas. Unfortunately for the Spanish crown, Portugal had come to a different interpretation concerning the treaty and also claimed the islands, so a second agreement, the Treaty of Zaragoza, was drawn up in 1529 to allow both countries arbitrary control over already-populated sections of Asia and the Pacific. The Philippines (and, incidentally, China) actually fell in Portugal's designated territory, but Spain disregarded that inconvenient fact when it dispatched several exploratory voyages to the Philippines in the mid sixteenth century. The most successful of these was the 1565 voyage of the Basque navigator and first governor-general of the Philippines, Miguel López de Legazpi, who in quick succession established

[88] Newson, pp. 5-9. Magellan's voyage was of course also the first to circumnavigate the globe.

what would soon become the Manila Galleon route from Mexico, founded the first permanent Spanish settlement in the islands at Cebu, and brought the first Spanish missionaries, Augustinians who built the church and monastery where Pedro de Alfaro lodged upon his arrival a little more than a decade later.[89]

The Spanish at Cebu had heard rumors of the rich resources to be found on the island of Luzon, and in 1570 Legazpi formed an alliance with the Visayan kingdoms (a loose amalgamation of Malay-influenced territories clustered in the central part of the archipelago) and dispatched a force to Manila Bay. Relations with the local Islamic Kingdom of Maynila[90] quickly broke down, and that May a mixed force of Spanish and Visayans attacked, seizing what would become the City of Manila for their own (and perhaps giving some credence to the notion that the Spanish could rely on local forces in further conquests in Asia). Legazpi moved the Spanish seat of government there the following year, building the walled city of Intramuros, an exclusive habitation for the Spanish, with the help of the Augustinians in a deliberate echo of the policy of urbanization as a tool of Spanish conquest that had been used so effectively in the Americas.[91] Legazpi served as the first governor-general of *Las Islas Filipinas* until his death in 1572 at the age of seventy. He concentrated his final efforts on consolidating Spanish authority over their former allies and converting the population to Christianity, arguing that a "place beautiful beyond dreams" needed only the universal worship of

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[89] Ibid.,pp. 14-20, 31.

[90] An examination of the political divisions in the pre-Hispanic Philippines is beyond the scope of this work, but scholars generally divide the islands into four broad categories: Austronesian indigenous territories and kingdoms in northern Luzon and outlying islands; Sinicized kingdoms along the western coast of Luzon and Mindoro; Indianized territories in the central part of the modern state (southern Luzon, Visayas, Negros, Isla han Samar, and Cebu); and Malay-influenced Muslim kingdoms and sultanates in Palawan and Mindanao in the far south. In short, a very complex political landscape. Robert Reed, *Colonial Manila*. (Berkeley: California, 1978), p. 2.

[91] Reed*,* pp. 2, 6.

Almighty God to complete its perfection.[92] The *encomienda* and *repartimiento* forced-labor systems were successively transported from the Americas, and the friars were granted what essentially amounted to a free hand in governing and converting the residents, a system that naturally resulted in gross abuses of the indigenous population.[93] This pattern of close, if often very tense, collaboration and administrative ambiguity between spiritual and temporal authorities in the Philippines—indeed, in many aspects, of spiritual control over the colony—would continue throughout the colonial period, laying a foundation for a pattern of close church-state collaboration that persists in some form in the Philippines to this day.

The Hispanization of the Philippines was not, however, a precise echo of that of Latin America. Earlier historians, such as Charles Cunningham, argued that it was—that the Philippines were simply the latest in a long string of *audiencias* established by the Crown in the sixteenth century, with no significant difference between their administration and that of any other contemporaneous colony.[94] The long stretch of time in the twentieth century during which the Philippines were not a common feature of historical work solidified this perception, as has the general trend away from institutional histories. The pace of new works on the Philippines has historically been slow, but in the past few decades Filipino historians in particular—among them Leslie Bauzon, Patricio Abinales, and Donna Amoroso—have persuasively argued that the Hispanization process was, compared to that in Latin America, poorly administered and ambiguously defined, setting a pattern of weak, corrupt government that remained long after the Spanish had

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[92] Administración spiritual de los padres Agustínos.... Newberry, Ayer 2143, p. 4.
[93] Ibid, p. 5-6. See also the writings of Martín de Rada for firsthand accounts of maltreatment of the native Filipinos.
[94] Charles Cunningham, *The Spanish Audiencia in the Spanish Colony as Illustrated by the Audiencia of Manila 1583-1800.* (Berkeley: California, 1919), p. 3.

left Manila for good.[95] Distance played a major role in this failure to precisely adapt the Latin American model, as did the very different political and economic context of the Philippines versus the Latin American territories.

The Spanish population of Manila grew very slowly in its first decade—indeed, the European population would never come close to approaching that of the indigenous people and resident *chinos* and Malays, despite the native population decreasing by over two-thirds by the mid-seventeenth century due to epidemics and slaughter, in a sad echo of what had happened (and, in the 1570s, was still happening) to the indigenous population of the Americas.[96] Until recently, historians believed that, in the context of armed conquest at least (hardly a high standard), the invasion and subjugation of the Philippines was gentler and more "enlightened" than that which had taken place in Latin America earlier in the century, and that the demographic collapse that took place in the Americas did not reach the Philippines because, as part of Eurasia, the Filipino population had acquired immunity from Old World diseases from Asian traders in the islands.[97] However, Linda Newson has convincingly demonstrated that the indigenous population of the islands was too scattered and isolated to develop the immunities common to mainland Eurasians, although the loss of life to disease in the Philippines was dwarfed by losses approaching ninety percent in some parts of the Americas. While the demographics of the early modern Philippines are difficult to sketch out due to a lack of records, all available evidence suggests that the islands had a very low population density

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[95] Leslie Bauzon. *Deficient Government: Mexico and the Philippine Situado, 1606-1804*. (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1981), p. 20. Bauzon focuses on finance particularly.
[96] Newson, p. 9.
[97] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

upon the arrival of the Spanish.[98] This is borne out by the first attempt at what could be called a census of the Philippines, undertaken in 1591, despite its reliance on tribute records, a notoriously unreliable method of counting. This census found that there were approximately six hundred thousand people living in the parts of the Philippines subject to Spanish rule at the time (approximately the island of Cebu, the southern portion of Luzon, and parts of Mindoro). Even assuming that this census was wildly inaccurate and only counted half of the population in 1591, this is an astoundingly low population density for the area—as a comparison, the approximate population of these regions at the last census in 2010 is by my count over twenty million.[99] This small population, too scattered to have acquired the immunities that would protect the rest of Southeast Asia from European diseases, nonetheless suffered a steep decline with the arrival of the Spanish due to the establishment of the Latin American mission system—with a friar or priest in every village that could be reached, the spread of new diseases was facilitated. Newson, interestingly, writes at length of both the spread of religious throughout the islands and the spread of disease, but does not explicitly link the two.

In recent years, Newson and other historians writing about the early colonial Philippines have amply shown that, while there was certainly more lip service paid to humane treatment of the indigenous population, it very frequently failed to translate to actual changes on the ground.[100] (It is important to recognize the abuses and indignities suffered by the Filipino people in the larger historical context of ongoing Spanish conquest, both military and spiritual, in the greater Latin America region. Alfaro's

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[98] Ibid., p. 9.
[99] For the 1591 census, Abinales et al, p 64. For the 2010 census from which I calculated my estimate, see Philippine Statistical Authority, "2010 Census of Population and Housing Reports," accessed April 10th, 2016. https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/census/population-and-housing/2010-CPH
[100] Newson, p.44.

subsequent journey to China should not allow historians to overlook the fact that his original task was to continue this cultural subjugation of the Philippines.) Indeed, many of the abuses that had been decried in Latin America were simply imported to the Philippines—when Alfaro arrived, he found in place a mission system so similar to that in operation in Mexico that he would later propose that "feeder" missions be established in the latter in order to provide a steady stream of friars to spread Christianity and Hispanicize the Philippines, an idea that proved to be a regular feature of discussion in the first century of Spanish rule.[101] While the clerical population of the Philippines in the 1570s was very small, consisting of less than thirty friars, it was an important part of the state apparatus—what Patricio Abinales and Donna Amoroso in their landmark work *State and Society in the Philippines* call the "clerical-secular state." This was a complex interconnection between religious orders and the colonial government, characterized by bickering and rivalry that nevertheless grew in dependency upon each other and resulted in a system in which friars were responsible for administering basic services.[102] The rise of the clerical-secular state in the Philippines, the strength of the secular arm hampered by the refusal of many secular Spaniards to serve in the Crown's most distant colony, not only contributed to the demographic decline of the indigenous people due to the spread of disease facilitated by the friars, but laid the foundations for a nebulously-defined system of government with overlapping and poorly-delineated authority that would make governing the islands via Mexico extraordinarily difficult.

Spaniards and indigenous Filipinos were not the only residents of Manila in the 1570s. Also present were Chinese traders from Fujian, known to the Spanish as

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[101] Consultas y paraceres.... AHN Codices,L572. R.2-4.
[102] Abinales et al, p. 67.

sangleyes, a corruption of the Hokkien word *sing-li* (□□), meaning "trade" or "business."[103] With the establishment of the Spanish in what quickly became the city of Manila, large numbers of *sangley* traders arrived, keen to trade with the Spanish, an enthusiasm that was shared by the colonial officials, at least in the beginning.[104] These Fujianese quickly outpaced the Spanish population of the islands—Lucille Chia estimates that by the end of the sixteenth century, over twenty thousand Chinese traders and immigrants dwelled in Luzon, ten times the Spanish population. (These Chinese were, after 1581, confined to a specific area of Manila known as the Parián, which would, in time, become the world's first Chinatown.)[105] The *sangleyes* would, from the Spanish point of view, alternate between being valued trade partners and dangerous enemies, culminating in the famous Sangley Rebellion of 1603 in which twenty thousand Chinese were killed by a mixed force of Spanish, Japanese, and Filipino troops.[106]

This ethnically-heterogeneous view of sixteenth-century Manila has not, until recently, been well-represented in the historiography. In reading early to mid-twentieth-century works on the Philippines, particularly ones published by non-Filipino authors, the reader could sometimes be forgiven for not realizing that there was a Chinese population in Manila at all, so heavily did the research focus on the Spanish and, to a lesser degree,

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[103] Ryan Crewe, "Pacific Purgatory: Spanish Dominicans, Chinese Sangleys, and the Entanglement of Mission and Commerce in Manila, 1580-1640." Accessed March 3, 2016. http://www.academia.edu/17622796/Pacific_Purgatory_Spanish_Dominicans_Chinese_Sangleys_and_the_Entanglement_of_Mission_and_Commerce_in_Manila_1580-1640 , p. 240.

[104] Ubaldo Iaccarino. "Manila as an International Entrepôt: Chinese and Japanese Trade with the Spanish Philippines at the Close of the 16th Century." *Bulletin of Portuguese - Japanese Studies,* vol. 16, (2008): pp. 71-81., p. 75.

[105] Lucille Chia. "The Butcher, the Baker, and the Carpenter: Chinese Sojourners in the Spanish Philippines and their Impact on Southern Fujian." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* Vol. 49, No. 4, (2006), pp. 509-534., p. 515. There were indeed so many more Chinese than Spaniards that the term *mestizo*, when used in the colonial Philippines, referred not to a person of mixed indigenous and European heritage, but to someone of combined Chinese and Filipino ancestry—the *mestizo de sangley*. The Philippine national hero José Rizal was a *mestizo de sangley.* Newson, p. 139.

[106] José Eugenio Borao Mateo, "The massacre of 1603: Chinese Perception of the Spaniards in the Philippines." *Itinerario*, vol. 23, No. 1, (1998): pp. 22-39., p. 22.

the indigenous populations. This was partially the result of Eurocentric bias and, as Lucille Chia points out, the result of difficulties in the primary source material. The Chinese did not formally recognize overseas immigration in this period, and Spanish sources were so recalcitrant about informal trade activities and rendered Chinese names so poorly that gleaning information was difficult.[107] For example, the groundbreaking work of Pierre Chaunu, quantifying Spanish trade in the Philippines and across the Pacific into Mexico, leaves out this aspect of trade as he was reliant on official records.[108] As so often in the case with historiographical subjects in this work, the rise of global history proved helpful. Placed in the context of the history of globalization, this Chinese population has become the focus of significant new works by Ubaldo Iaccarrino, Birgit Tremml-Werner, and Ryan Crewe, among others.[109] These works emphasize not only the importance of the Chinese emigrant community in Manila to Spanish trade in the years before (and indeed during) the rise of the trans-Pacific silver trade, but situate this Chinese population as crucial players in the development of permanent global trade and cultural links across the Pacific and into East Asia.

Until Alfaro's arrival, the sole representatives of the Catholic Church were the Augustinians, and, despite the tightening grip of Spanish authority, and the beginning of waves of epidemics among the indigenous populations, temporal control over the area

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[107] Chia, pp. 510-513.

[108] Ibid., p. 513, and Pierre Chaunu, *Les Philippines et le Pacifique des Ibériques (XVIe, XVIIe, XVIIIe siècles) ; introduction méthodologique et indices d'activité.* (Paris: SEVPEN, 1960), pp. 27-40.

[109] Ryan Crewe, "Pacific Purgatory: Spanish Dominicans, Chinese Sangleys, and the Entanglement of Mission and Commerce in Manila, 1580-1640." Accessed March 3, 2016. http://www.academia.edu/17622796/Pacific_Purgatory_Spanish_Dominicans_Chinese_Sangleys_and_the_Entanglement_of_Mission_and_Commerce_in_Manila_1580-1640;
Ubaldo Iaccarino, "Manila as an International Entrepôt: Chinese and Japanese Trade with the Spanish Philippines at the Close of the 16th Century." *Bulletin of Portuguese - Japanese Studies,* vol. 16, (2008), pp. 71-81; Birgit Tremml-Werner, *Spain, China, and Japan in Manila, 1571-1644: Local Comparisons and Global Connections*. Chicago: Chicago, 2015.

beyond Cebu and Manila Bay was nebulous at best. Indeed, Fidel Villaroel dates the effective Spanish sovereignty of the territory to 1599, when a Royal Cedula (decree) provided for restitution from earlier abuses that resulted in several major indigenous groups agreeing to formally recognize Spanish power.[110] However, many outlying islands and the interior areas of major islands resisted or simply never encountered colonial control—even today there are parts of the country (especially in Mindanao) that have successively ignored the territorial claims of Spain, Britain, the United States, Japan, and the contemporary independent government. When Alfaro arrived, predating the 1599 decree by over two decades, colonial authority was at once the source of terrible abuses, and yet had only a slender grasp of effective authority.

This shaky authority was most evident in 1574, a mere four years before Alfaro landed at Manila Bay, when the city was besieged and nearly conquered by the notorious Chinese pirate and warlord Lin Feng (林鳳), not once, but possibly *twice*, a series of events that were probably not only terrifying for the Spanish, but quite disheartening as well.[111] Lin Feng, known as Limahong or Limajon to the Spanish, had been a thorn in the side of the Ming authorities for years, with a history of predation along the coast of Fujian and Guangdong that had made him notorious in the South China Sea area. In autumn of 1574, he and a force of over a thousand attacked the newly-established Spanish city of Manila but were driven back by a combined force of Spaniards, indigenous forces, and Chinese. This attack, disturbing as it must have been to those

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[110] Fidel Villaroel, "Philip II and the "Philippine Referendum' of 1599," in *Reshaping the World: Philip II and his Time*. (Manila: Ateno de Manila, 2009), pp. 120-133.

[111] Mendoza, Juan González. *Historia de cosas...*(Rome: Grassi, 1585), p. 99. Mendoza, who never met a primary source he wouldn't embellish, says that Lin Feng attacked twice; other Spanish sources are somewhat garbled but most claim a single attack in November 1574. It is possible that there was only one direct attack on Manila, but it is also very probable that there were two offensives in very rapid succession, probably within days.

residing in Manila, would prove to be a blessing in disguise, at least temporarily, as it turned out to provide the impetus for the first official Spanish visit to Ming China.[112] In the immediate aftermath, however, it was more relevant that Spain had successfully repelled a major attack—from an aggressor the Chinese themselves were having trouble with!—only three years after the capital was established. They were now arguably a force to be reckoned with in the region, at least in their own estimations.

This was the Philippines in 1578—a dual picture of incomplete conquest on one hand, and increasing regional power on the other. Spain's grasp on the Philippines was quite tenuous, particularly in the areas outside of southern Luzon and Cebu, but the colonial administration had weathered several significant challenges to its authority and the Hispanization of the islands using the Latin American model (albeit weakened) was moving forward quickly. Friars held a great deal of power over the indigenous people nominally in their care, and these religious orders were not technically under the direct command of the governor-general. However, those like Alfaro who were Spanish subjects were nevertheless bound to colonial authority, which was in turn bound to viceregal authority via Mexico City, which in turn granted them a significant amount of leeway in both their administration of the islands and their representation of Spanish interests in the Asia-Pacific region in general.[113] These overlapping, loosely-defined layers of authority would be the major contributing factor to the power struggle that took place between the two colonies as a result of Alfaro's clandestine mission to China.[114]

All this lay ahead for the Franciscans, who had more immediate concerns to think about. On the Ides of March, 1578, a beautiful day, Pedro de Alfaro and his fourteen

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[112] Lin Feng's attacks on Manila and their results are discussed in further detail in the next chapter.
[113] Los frailes Agustínos en las Islas Filipinas... Newberry, Ayer 334, p 1.; Reed, pp. 44-9.
[114] See Chapter Seven for more on this power struggle.

remaining friars set sail for Manila at last on the *San Juanillo* for a "very long voyage of two thousand one hundred leagues."[115] Their destination was at the very fringes of the Spanish Empire, in a new colony where Almanza's request might have unlooked-for consequences.

[115] De Jesús, p. 37. The *San Juanillo* was lost on the return voyage to Mexico. For a disturbing list of all lost Manila Galleons, see Efren B. Isorena, "Maritime Disasters in the Spanish Philippines..." *(IJAPS,* Vol. 11, No. 1: 2015, pp. 53–83,) pp. 66-67.

Chapter Three: Polite Fiction: Sino-Spanish Relations in the 1570s

The Philippines in the 1570s was a very dangerous place, even in the context of a world where a case of food poisoning could carry off six devout men of God almost overnight. So Pedro de Alfaro reflected as the *San Juanillo* carried him and the rest of the friars across the Pacific. Only God and his saints knew what would happen to them in the Philippines, where pirates lurked the waters and warlike tribes roamed the hills and typhoons sprung up without warning to drown men in their very beds—and that was if they survived the voyage itself. Prayer was their best defense against calamity in the islands, of course, but at the same time Alfaro intended to keep his eyes open for any danger that might threaten him during his residence in the small new colony.[116]

This was not merely the anxious musing of a traveler worried about the unknown. The first decade of permanent Spanish presence in the Philippines, in the unchanging tradition of new colonies everywhere, had been marked by violence and instability, and would indeed continue to be throughout the colonial period as virtually every power in the region attacked or seriously threatened the islands.[117] In fact, Pedro de Alfaro would,

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[116] For the dangers of the colonial Philippines, see Antonio de Morga, *History of the Philippines.* Project E-Gutenburg, Online edition at: https://archive.org/stream/historyofthephil07001gut/7phip10.txt, Chs. 2-3. For Alfaro's thoughts on his journey, Carta de Pedro de Alfaro sobre su llegada a filipinas. AGI Filipinas, 79, N.5, v. 2.

[117] In the three hundred years of Spanish colonial rule, the list of aggressors includes not only various indigenous or Malay Filipino kingdoms and tribes, but the Chinese, Japanese, Dutch, and British, finally culminating in the seizure of the country by the United States in 1902 following the forcible dissolution of the First Philippine Republic. Patricio Abinales and Donna J. Amoroso. *State and Society in the Philippines*. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), p. xvii.

upon his arrival, be greeted by a newly-fortified city as a result of these dangers. Manila was still a town made mostly out of wood, but in the mid-1570s the colonial administration ordered the construction of a thicker stone wall as well as additional guardhouses and earthen breastworks about the Intramuros section where the Spanish population lived. This flurry of fortification had been conducted after a terrifying attack and besieging of Manila by the pirate Lin Feng (known in Spain as Limahong or Limajon) in 1574.[118]

The Context of the First Mission to China

Lin Feng was a notorious pirate whose predations along the South China Sea had made him feared throughout the region.[119] Before his 1574 attack, he had had a price put on his head by two successive Chinese emperors after years of notorious violence and plunder in his repeated raids of ports in Guangdong and Fujian, and as a result had fled to a remote area of Luzon. In the 1570s this part of the island was not yet under Spanish control, and he holed up there with a fleet of nearly one hundred ships and three thousand men. A chance capture of a pair of unlucky Chinese merchant ships led to the tantalizing information that Manila, primitive though its urban development was, was not only the

[118] Morga, ch. 1.

[119] The term *wokou* (倭寇) is a common descriptor for pirates in the Western Pacific in this period. Piracy was such a prevalent part of life in the early modern Pacific that no research on the subject can fail to discuss it. Unfortunately a proper examination of its effects on maritime history of the region is beyond the scope of this work. For recent research on piracy in the early modern Asia-Pacific world, see the following articles: Robert Antony and Sebastian Prange, "Piracy, Sovereignty, and the Early Modern Asian State—An Introduction", *Journal of Early Modern History* 17 (Special Issue 1, 2013), pp. 1-7.; Dolors Folch. "Piratas y flotas de China segun los testimonios castellanos del siglo XVI." *La investigacion sobre Asia Pacifico en Espana*. Granada: Granada, no 1 (2010), 267-86.; and the following articles in Tonio Andrade and Xing Hang, eds., *Sea Rovers, Silver, and Samurai: Maritime East Asia in Global History, 1550-1700.* (Hawaii: Honolulu, 2016): Robert Antony, "Trade, Piracy, and Resistance in the Gulf of Tonkin in the Seventeenth Century"; Michael Laver, "Neither Here nor There: Trade, Piracy, and the "Space Between" in Early Modern East Asia"; Cheng-heng Lu, "Between Bureaucrats and Bandits: The Rise of Zheng Zhilong and His Organization, the Zheng Ministry (Zheng Bu)."

destination of many ships laden with silks and other luxuries, but was very poorly protected indeed, certainly by Chinese standards at least. Lin Feng, ever resourceful, set off at once for Intramuros, but was repulsed immediately outside the city at Parañaque by the combined forces of the Spaniard Juan de Salcedo (the young grandson of Miguel Lopez de Legazpi), and a Tagalog convert named Galo, who for his efforts was later given the title Don and today has a *barangay* in Parañaque named after him.[120]

Lin Feng was retreating with the Spanish in full pursuit when the Ming Admiral Wang Wang Gao (family name 王) arrived at Manila Bay with a force of thousands in order to capture the pirate by order of the Wanli Emperor.[121] Upon beholding the carnage in and around Manila, he diverted his forces to assisting the Spanish treat their casualties and flush the remaining pirate forces out, and in return the Spanish promised him that Lin Feng, when captured (as he surely would be by the Spaniards who were in hot pursuit), would be immediately conducted to Macau and surrendered to the Chinese authorities.[122] The first official contact between Chinese and Spanish authorities was thus concluded on the most amicable of terms, to the delight of the ever-ambitious governor of the Philippines, Guido de Lavezaris. The only thing that marred this felicitous first meeting was the fact that Lin Feng proved as elusive as ever, evading both the Spanish and Chinese forces and managing to establish himself at a hidden base in Pangasinan, 120 miles overland from Manila on the other side of Luzon. He proved impossible to dislodge

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[120] Morga, Ch. 1. For Don Galo's barangay, Barangay Don Galo City of Parañque Website, accessed April 2nd 2016. http://paranaque.gov.ph/barangay-don-galo/. A barangay is the smallest administrative division in the Philippines, analogous to a *barrio* or neighborhood, and often forms the basis of local identities.

[121] Hsu, "Writing", p. 326. Admiral Wang's name is variously given as Wang Wang Gao, Wen Kao, Homocon, Omocón, and Wang Gao, making him difficult to track down in the sources—a common problem in early modern Spanish writing in Asia.

[122] Hsu, "Writing ," p. 325 and Cesar V. Callanta, *The Limahong Invasions.* (Manila: Self published, 1979), pp. 35-48. Lin Feng is a figure who is in need of updating in the historiography; Callanta's work (also republished in Quezon City by New Day in 1989) is still the best and most thorough account of his career.

for the time being, but at least this new base was less strategically-located than previous hiding places and there was hope that he would be unable to launch attacks from there.[123]

In this felicitous atmosphere of compromise and assistance, the time therefore seemed ripe to develop this potential relationship with China even further, so at the end of 1574, Governor-General Lavezaris, flush with the recent victory over Lin Feng and confident in the support of the Chinese who had helped drive the pirate's fleet away from Manila, asked the venerable Augustinian friar Alfonso de Alvarado, head of the order in Manila and one of the first Europeans to set foot on New Guinea, to select the men who would embark on the first Spanish mission to China.[124] This mission would be for the purpose of both establishing a direct line of communication between representatives of the Ming and Habsburg monarchs, and setting the groundwork for a future permanent religious mission in Ming territory.

This does not mean that the conquest plans had been disposed of—far from it. Throughout the 1560s and 1570s, the Spanish Empire had repeatedly indicated interest in a full-scale conquest of China *a la mexicana* (that is, using the model of Cortés's seizure of the Aztec seat of power by a small group of Spanish soldiers). However, the conquest idea, while taken quite seriously, was by no means the only plan Philip II and other Spanish administrators had in regards to China. *El Prudente*, as he was becoming increasingly known in Europe, was also personally involved in active plans to establish a

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[123] Callanta, p. 48-49.

[124] The narrative for the 1575 mission is taken, with reserve, from Mendoza's *Historia de las cosas...* and Martín de Rada's 1576 letter, Carta de Fray Martín de Rada sobre su viaje a China...(AGI Filipinas 84 N.5)., later published in translation as Charles Boxer, ed. *South China in the Sixteenth Century: Being the Narratives of Galeote Pereira, Fr. Gaspar de Cruz, and Fr. Martín de Rada*. (London: Hakluyt, 1956). Mendoza indeed names Francisco de Sande, who would not arrive in the Philippines until August 1575, as the motivator behind this mission, p. 56.

formal embassy to negotiate a trade relationship with China, as the Portuguese had done earlier in the century.

Historiographical Background

By 1578, the Portuguese had had direct contact with China for over sixty years and had established formal trade relations with the Ming, despite a rocky relationship that had seen large-scale Chinese-led massacres of Portuguese traders as recently as the 1540s (as well as military assaults on China by the Portuguese; the Spanish were not the only bellicose Iberian power in the region).[125] The Spanish, on the other hand, had no real relationship, formal or otherwise, with the Chinese, a state of affairs that, given his actions, presumably bothered Philip II, particularly in light of the rapid expansion of Spanish control over much of Europe and the Americas.[126] To remedy this, the Spanish crown, or administrators acting on its behalf, would attempt to send embassies a total of four times in the sixteenth century, all of which failed to achieve any kind of agreement or formalized relationship with the Ming and two of which never actually entered Chinese territory.[127] (Eventually, the beginning of the seventeenth century, the demands of the Eighty Years' War on Spanish concerns, the rise of a brisk trade in Latin American silver with the Ming despite a lack of official relations, the beginning of the decline of

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[125] For massacres, Boxer, *Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, p. 110. For a Portuguese plan to conquer China, see Andrade, *Gunpowder Age*, pp. 119-123. This plan was a more "traditional" invasion rather than the *mexicana* model beloved of Spaniards—fertile ground for a future comparative study. See also Chapter Two for a more thorough discussion of Spanish plans in comparison.

[126] Philip II began his reign with the declaration "I would very much like to justify my actions to the whole world and show that I do not lay claim to other states," but throughout the 1560s to the 1580s, he showed a persistent interest in, alternatively, conquering or entering into a formal relationship with China. Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II.* (Yale: New Haven, 2000), p. 4; also, pp. 8, 95, 189.

[127] This does not include Alfaro's mission, deliberately designed to be clandestine, as the repeated descriptors "en muy secreto" in the letters of Alfaro, Sande, and Gonzalo de Ronquillo show. For a representative example, see Pregón de Ronquillo, AGI Filipinas 84, r.1.

Ming power, and the dynastic union with Portugal combined to make the establishment of a formal embassy between the two powers superfluous.[128])

Whatever lay in the future for Sino-Spanish relations, in 1574, the Spanish Empire's attitudes towards opening a direct line of communication with the Ming were quite different—this was something that rivaled conquest as a primary motivating factor in their dealings with the Chinese. Trade with China and its burgeoning luxury market was always a point of anxious concern for the Spanish, and the Spanish hoped that there would be even greater rewards following Beijing's acceptance of a proposed formal embassy that could, perhaps, lay the groundwork for a military conquest once the Spanish had gotten a clearer understanding of China's infrastructure. The Eighty Years' War, at that point merely an eight years' war, was proving to be significantly expensive, but by the middle of the decade the tide was beginning to turn (albeit temporarily) in Philip II's favor, brightening the empire's international prospects. China was naturally still the dominant power in the Asia-Pacific region, but the fact that had recently come to the aid of the Spaniards in ejecting Lin Feng was taken as a positive sign that perhaps the Spanish could enjoy a profitable trade relationship with the Chinese in the near future.

It remained to be seen whether or not the Chinese would be even slightly interested in this plan. By the end of the sixteenth century, the Ming Dynasty had developed a complex diplomatic and trade system with other regional powers, and arguably Spain did not represent a particularly attractive proposal for them in the 1570s, when silver was not in high demand throughout the empire and the Portuguese were

[128] More on these factors and their effect on Sino-Spanish relations in Chapter Five.

already established in Asia.[129] As the major power in the Pacific Rim, whether or not Spain would be successful in establishing themselves in some kind of sustained trade or diplomatic relationship with the Chinese was entirely dependent on Ming interest in the project.

The Ming tributary system (朝貢體系) was a complex set of rules that governed both diplomatic relations and trade agreements with other states and territories in Asia. John Fairbank, writing in 1942, described it as a system by which other states rendered tribute to China in the form of not only a complex choreography of obeisances performed by an envoy, but the presentation of a material gift in the form of a locally-produced item, in return for what would now be termed diplomatic recognition and trade rights—that is to say, the countries giving the tribute were not actually tributary states, but independent territories rendering gifts to the Chinese in exchange for the recognition of mutually-beneficial relationships.[130] This system had its roots as far back as the Han dynasty, but reached its zenith in the early modern era.[131]

The historiography of the early modern Chinese tributary and trade system is dominated by two events: the Zheng He (鄭和) voyages of the early fifteenth century, and the infamous Macartney mission of 1793. The expeditions of Zheng He, in which the

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[129] For recent research on Sino-Portuguese relations in this period, see Zoltán Biedermann, "Portuguese Diplomacy in Asia in the Sixteenth Century: A Preliminary Overview."*Itinerario* Volume 29, Issue 02 (July 2005), pp 13-37; Lucio de Sousa. *Macao: Trading Law in the 16th and 17th century (1557-1614)*. (Macau: ICM, 2009); and Antonio Vasconcelos de Saldanha, "Embassies and Tributes: Three Centuries of Portuguese Diplomatic Missions in China" *Ming Qing Yanjiu - 明清研究,* (2000): pp. 1-22.

[130] John Fairbank, "Tributary Trade and China's Relations with the West". *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 1, 2 (Feb. 1942):pp. 129-149, pp. 135-139. Fairbank, incidentally, repeatedly uses the word "barbarians" to describe the residents of non-Chinese Asian territories.

[131] John E. Wills, ed. *Past and Present in China's Foreign Policy: From "Tribute System" to "Peaceful Rise".*(Portland: Merwin Asia, 2010), p. Xi.
For an excellent overview of Ming China's interactions with all its neighbors, see Dennis Twitchett et al, eds, *The Cambridge History of China: Vol 8, the Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 2.* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1998), chapters 4-7.

Yongle Emperor (永樂) sent forth "treasure voyages" (鄭和下西洋) to project Chinese power internationally and bring back envoys to be integrated into the tribute system, have been traditionally viewed as a "missed opportunity," wherein a shortsighted China opted to ban all subsequent naval activity (the famous *haijin* □□ order, variously implemented, rescinded, and re-implemented throughout the Ming and Qing dynasties) rather than expand their knowledge of the outside world.[132] The Qing-era Macartney mission as well long dominated much of the historiography of Chinese international relations in the traditional period, with its narrative of inward-looking Chinese scorning sound British proposals for freer trade (that is, trade agreements that benefited Britain more), all because the British were displeased at the notion of kowtowing to the Qianlong Emperor or explicitly recognizing their "inferior" status as demanded by Chinese diplomatic custom. This set the tone for decades of historiography which presented Eurocentric views of China as a slow, languid place, static in time, without any real interest in anything not set forth by their own philosophers—a place stubbornly existing in defiance of all modernity that was destined to quickly founder when the West imposed modernity upon it.[133]

However, the reality of the Ming tributary system and overseas trade in the late sixteenth century was quite different, and recent revisionist historiography has illuminated much of what is now known to be a dynamic system of trade and diplomatic

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[132] Fairbank, "Tributary Trade...", pp. 141-142, is representative of this viewpoint, calling Zheng He's journeys the "high point" of Chinese overseas interactions. Other twentieth-century historians who supported this interpretation include Fairbank's collaborator S.Y. Teng and Owen Lattimore.

[133] This is a very simplified version of the events of the Macartney embassy, but it is this simplification that has been handed down in not only the historiography of Sino-Western interactions, but in popular conceptions and pedagogy on the subject as well. For more information on the Macartney mission and its outsize influence on the historiography of China's interactions with the West, see James L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793*. (Durham: Duke, 1995), especially pp.84-110, 226-244.

interactions between China and European powers in particular that allowed for considerably more flexibility than earlier works suggest. This is due in large part to scholarship in the past decade that approaches China not as a land-based power as it has traditionally been viewed, but in the context of maritime zones—primarily the South China Sea and the East China Sea, but increasingly the entire Pacific Ocean as well, a shift that my work builds upon and furthers.[134] This revived Braudelian approach, emphasizing the importance of the sea itself as a conduit for the development of exchange and communication networks, has been termed the "new thalassology" by Kären Wigen in her 2006 article "Introduction: Oceans of History."[135] In the context of the history of China's international relations, this school and other similar approaches open ups and illuminates what Mark Ravina terms "officially unofficial" trade relationships between China and other powers (Japan in this particular case)—trade that flourished and was discussed at "the highest levels" of the Chinese state despite the lack of a formal tributary relationship.[136] This situation also (eventually) existed for Ming China and Spain—without ever becoming a tributary state, Spain was able to enjoy a long and thriving trade with China, as aspect of the historiography that has been neglected until the rise of global history illuminated the importance of the trans-Pacific

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[134] Harriet Zurndorfer, "Oceans of History, Seas of Change..." *International Journal of Asian Studies*, 13, 1 (2016), pp. 61–94, p. 63-64. For examples see: Derek Heng Thiam Soon, "Structures, Networks and Commercial Practices of Private Chinese Maritime Traders in Island Southeast Asia in the Early Second Millennium AD." *International Journal of Maritime History* 22 (2008), pp. 27–54.; Derek Heng, "Trans-Regionalism and Economic Co-dependency in the South China Sea: The Case of China and the Malay Region (Tenth to Fourteenth Centuries AD)." *International History Review* 35.3 (2013), pp. 486–510; and Geoff Wade and Sun Laichen, eds. *Southeast Asia in the Fifteenth Century: The China Factor.* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010). An exhaustive list of citations on the subject can be found in Zurndorfer, pp. 63-70.

[135] Kären Wigen, "Introduction: Oceans of History." *American Historical Review* 111.3 (2006), pp. 717–721., p. 718.

[136] Mark Ravina, "Japan in the Chinese Tributary System." in Tonio Andrade and Xing Hang, eds, *Sea Rovers, Silver, and Samurai: Maritime East Asia in Global History, 1550-1700.* (Hawaii: Honolulu, 2016), pp. 353-364., p. 359.

silver trade. These revisionist approaches to Chinese diplomatic and trade history, emphasizing maritime links and relationships outside the traditional scope of the tributary system, represent a further contribution to recent decades of research emphasizing the relative "openness" of China in the early modern period. The research of Timothy Brook, Dennis Flynn, and Richard von Glahn, among others, have positioned China as a state that participated in larger Asian and maritime networks, acted as imperialist powers in their own right, and reinterpreted reluctance to allow unfettered Western access to China as growing out of concern for European expansionism rather than a sense of cultural superiority. My contribution to this growing body of work is to further illuminate both the willingness of China to conduct a thriving trade relationship with Spain outside the context of the tributary system and to point out once again China's unrivaled place as the dominant power in a maritime zone in which it was an active participant.

Martín de Rada in China

Guido de Lavezaris, meanwhile, was not motivated solely by a desire to see Spain and China as diplomatic brethren (as much as the Ming system allowed for such a notion), or even to gather the rich pickings customarily awarded to those who helped grease the wheels of diplomacy when making preparations for his mission. Lavezaris was interested in a conquest of China—it was he who had elaborated the *conquista a la mexicana* in Chapter Two—and this mission is best seen in the dual lights of the potential windfalls of a formal trade relationship, and a means to begin the process of conquest. Direct contact with China was essential in laying out a plan of attack, as Spain, for all its enthusiasm for information on China, had yet to send a representative there and therefore had no firsthand information on Chinese infrastructure, aside from the reports of the

Portuguese in Macau, who were naturally not attuned to the long-term interests of the Spanish crown and were to be viewed with suspicion anyways, being Portuguese.[137] This mission was therefore Lavezaris's chance to be the one to set in motion the events that could—would!—culminate in the great Ming Empire prostrated under the banner of Philip II, as the sickly Almanza similarly hoped in faraway Mexico. Lavezaris had a man he could trust in Alvarado, who was wise and experienced with tricky foreign missions, having spent decades dealing with the Portuguese as well as the disparate kingdoms of what is now Indonesia, and he had the trust and goodwill of Admiral Wang. The situation looked promising.

The elderly Alvarado, overcome with excitement upon being asked to coordinate this important mission, the first to send Spaniards in an official capacity to Ming China, personally begged Lavezaris for the chance to head the mission himself, but, in one of the more tender scenes in Mendoza's narrative, the governor gently remonstrated with him, pointing out the great need for the old man's expertise in Manila and reminding him of the extraordinary services he had already rendered the Crown.[138] A younger man was needed, one who could take the imparted wisdom of Alvarado's experiences and combine them with his own abilities to win the favor of the Chinese and keep a sharp eye out for information that might become useful to the Spanish later on. So Alvarado bowed to the inevitable and duly selected two Augustinian friars, Geronimo Marín, a Mexican-born Spaniard renowned for his piety and learning, and the spirited Navarrese linguist Martín de Rada (also called Herrada), a man whose longing to travel to China was so desperate

[137] Boxer, "Portuguese and Spanish...", p. 221.
[138] Mendoza, p. 32.

that he had once offered to become the slave of some Fujianese traders in order to enter the country (to his eternal disappointment, they firmly rejected his selfless offer).[139]

De Rada, perhaps one of the more admirable and personally pleasant characters in this narrative, was in his early forties, an Augustinian who had been a member of Legazpi's expedition and in the ensuing years had been trusted with nearly every major Spanish dispatch to various Tagalog and Malay kingdoms in the area. He had also devoted the past decade to steadfastly protecting the Filipino people from abuse by the Spanish, which culminated in his 1575 authorship of a lengthy exposé claiming that not a single one of the islands under Spanish control had been acquired legitimately, and that conversions had been carried out by force rather than genuine spiritual desire.[140] While the Spanish response to his accusations was minor, it was followed by centuries of posthumous honor as the "de las Casas of the Philippines."[141] When he was not reporting the cruelties of *encomenderos* to Lavezaris and demanding that something tangible be done about it, he worked on expanding his extraordinary linguistic talents—in his short tenure on the islands he had already mastered Tagalog, Cebuano, and enough Chinese to serve as the translator for Wang Wen Gao.[142] Lavezaris approved wholeheartedly of Alvarado's choice—de Rada had a brilliant mind, a sharp eye, diplomatic experience, a fascination with China, and, as Lavezaris knew well from what he considered to be de Rada's incessant do-gooding, he was excellent at spotting weaknesses and lies. In short,

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[139] de Rada, v.2

[140] Parescer del Provincial fray Martín de Rada, agostino, sobre las coasa de estas tieras. AGI Patronato, 24, R. 29, r. 5.

[141] He also shares this honor with Bishop Domingo de Salazar, his contemporary, who spearheaded his efforts to secure justice for the Filipino people. Jon Malek, "From Conquest to Colony: The Legitimation of Spanish power in the Philippines." Online article, accessed Feb 20 2016. http://www.academia.edu/3377446/From_Conquest_to_Colony_The_Legitimation_of_Spanish_Empire_in_the_Philippines., p. 3.

[142] Boxer et al, *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 2-6.

he was the perfect man to scout out China and see if a formal mission, and perhaps one day a conquest, could be established. In addition, de Rada, as a devout Augustinian, would attempt to evangelize among the Chinese and turn them away from the "idolatry" that distressed the friar so in his writings about China.[143] This dual mission—conversion on one hand, state affairs on the other—was not seen as having contradictory goals at the time, nor was there concern expressed over whether or not attempts to spread Christianity might hobble efforts to establish a trade relationship or gather intelligence. In early modern Catholic Europe, the roles of devout cleric and state ambassador (or would-be ambassador) were very commonly merged; nowhere was this more evident than in Spain's sixteenth-century attempts to forge some kind of relationship with China or gather intelligence on it. Of the three missions to actually enter China that could be said to have a direct order regarding the interests of the Spanish Empire (the de Rada mission, that of Pedro de Alfaro, and an ambiguously-recorded 1581 mission), all were staffed entirely by Augustinian or Franciscan friars, charged with both spreading the word of God and securing the much more worldly goals of the Spanish state. Unfortunately, this connection is not readily apparent in the historiographies of early modern European diplomacy or of religious missions to China—the former has seen some excellent research on embassies in cultural history but is often quiet regarding religion, while the latter tends to focus primarily on evangelization attempts.[144] Nor does the historiography of the clerical-secular state in the Philippines, examined in Chapter Two, focus on this

[143] For a representative sample of Martín de Rada's very real concern of the state of Chinese souls, see Boxer, *South China...*, p. 257., in which de Rada claimed to have pushed over an "idol" in a temple because he was so upset at the site of the locals worshipping a "false" god who would ensure their damnation. Whether or not this actually happened is unknown; certainly the friar never recorded any non-immediate reaction to his behavior on the part of the Chinese.

[144] The historiography of missions to China has been examined in Chapter One, but for an overview of the historiography of diplomacy and culture, primarily in England, see Robyn Adams et al, eds. *Diplomacy in Early Modern Culture*. (New York: Palgrave, 2011).

aspect of diplomacy that so closely combines the two aspects of Philippines administration—a lapse that should eventually be corrected with the rise of both studies of the Philippines and of the Pacific in the field of global history.

They were to be accompanied by two soldiers, a selection of suitable gifts personally selected by Lavezaris (including a miniature gold reliquary and a small stack of unnamed books), and, significantly, every Chinese slave taken from Lin Feng by the Spanish earlier that year, to be returned home as free people as a gesture of goodwill from the Spanish governor.[145] The return of these slaves was to be a highlight of the mission, of course—a magnanimous display of Spanish power and civility, the unselfish kindness of a nation that could surely therefore be trusted enough to enter into a formal trade agreement. That was about the extent of the planning that went into this mission, however—the gifts and slaves were simply to be presented to whatever high officials de Rada and Marín happened to meet. This was left as much up to chance as a diplomatic mission could be, as Lavezaris, like all Spaniards, really had very little accurate idea of how Chinese bureaucracy and government functioned. One of the Admiral's captains would be accompanying them, but other than that they had no guidance and no idea as to what kind of customs and requirements they would be encountering.[146]

Lavezaris asked neither the permission of the Viceroy of New Spain nor that of the Crown for this mission, judging that the timing was too good to risk losing it by the long turnaround time for correspondence (nearly two years round trip between Manila and Madrid at a time when the new Manila Galleon only operated once annually) and that he had been given the authority to make diplomatic and military decisions on behalf of

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[145] de Rada, p. 5.
[146] Ibid.,p. 6.

Philip II. While this authority was more nebulous than Lavezaris believed, he had already proven himself to be an extremely capable governor, and he felt little fear of either remonstration or erosion of his authority from his superiors. Indeed, the expectation in this period, not just for the Philippines but for all colonial administrators (although this expectation fell particularly hard on Philippines administrators, was that he and others like him would show some level of independent operation—the Crown certainly wanted to be kept apprised of the situation, but neither Lavezaris, nor the Viceroy, nor the King expected him (Lavezaris) to simply wait for permission if an opportunity to further the interests of Spain presented itself.[147]

These overlapping, nebulously-defined layers of authority would prove to be a significant component in the history of sixteenth-century Sino-Spanish relations, as the administrators of the Philippines in particular found themselves responsible for not only their own territory, but the representation of Spanish interests in Asia as well. Most works on Philippines administration in the early Spanish colonial period written before the past few decades are simply cursory accounts reliant solely on Spanish sources that position the administrative history of the islands as merely an extension of processes undergone in Latin America, such as Conrado Benitez's *History of the Philippines,* published in 1929.[148] As noted in Chapter Two, these works make little distinction between the Spanish colonial system in place in Latin America and that in the Philippines. Administration in the Americas was hardly all-encompassing, and the Spanish did apply the same overall systems in the Philippines, but the long distance from Spain, the comparative lack of Spaniards in the Philippines, and above all the islands' strategic

[147] Abinales et al, pp. 97-98.
[148] Conrado Benitez, *History of the Philippines.* (Boston: Ginn, 1929), p. 41.

location near China which made the governors-general responsible for greater regional interests as well as internal administration combined to make the context of administration quite different. I argue that these factors, particularly in the first two decades of Spanish colonization, made administrative authority within the Philippines more ambiguous than in the Americas, a distinction not clearly made in the historiography, particularly in its earlier years. Today, with the rise of global history, the Philippines themselves are a subject of renewed interest by scholars, but this has generally not extended into institutional history within the Philippines. Edward Slack marks the 1970s as heralding a new phase in the historiography of the Philippines that, in his estimation, continues into the present as of 2014—works that integrated previous research emphasizing Asian and indigenous history with a renewed focus on resistance and assimilation vis-a-vís Hispanization in the islands.[149] In these works, many of them penned by Filipino scholars, the administrative history of the Philippines is presented in the context of the *longue durée* of the country's history, which, while a useful approach, has the tendency to present the ambiguous, weak colonial administration has having relevance primarily in the context of the problems plaguing the contemporary state, rather than being an issue that affected international and inter-colonial relations across the Pacific and into China as well.

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[149] Edward R. Slack, "Philippines Under Spanish Rule." Accessed April 8, 2016. http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199766581/obo-9780199766581-0164.xml . Slack names works such as Abinales and Amoroso's *State and Society in the Philippines*, Nicholas P. Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines: From Conquest to Revolution*. (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University, 1977), and Raymundo Punongboyan and Prescillano Zamora, et al. *Kasaysayan: The Story of the Philippine People*. 10 vols. (Manila, Philippines: Asia Publishing, 1998) as being particularly representative of this approach. I would add a fourth phase including more recent works on the Philippines by Ethan Hawkley and Birgit Tremml-Werner; in these works, administration of the Philippines is globalized.

Meanwhile, the two friars, loaded down with gifts and accompanied by a long train of the former slaves, arrived in Fujian in July 1575 in the company of one of Admiral Wang's captains, whose name is unrecorded but who had distinguished himself in assisting Lavezaris's repulsion of Lin Feng (who was now, unbeknownst to the Spanish, holed up in his new base on the northern part of the Luzon island group and busily building a secret fleet of ships). This captain's commission was located in Zhangzhou (漳州, Fujian), and it was to the mandarin of that city that the friars were led after their arrival, via a palanquin journey that de Rada thoroughly enjoyed.[150] Unfortunately for the grand humanitarian designs of the Spanish, the freed slaves, eighty all told, scattered almost immediately, proving to be of little use as a goodwill gesture. Nevertheless the mandarin received them with obvious interest, giving both men "bouquets of silver" and lengths of beautiful silk and asking to see their manner of writing. De Rada happily demonstrated by carefully writing out the Lord's Prayer, using it at an excuse to begin telling the man all about Christianity. Marín was gravely polite and followed de Rada's lead in everything, down to writing out the same prayer for the mandarin's edification and imitating de Rada's clever impulse to use his new silks to fashion a wrap around his torso similar to the waistcoat of the *hanfu* (漢服). Unfortunately for the would-be ambassadors, the official's interest was merely sparked by novelty and curiosity, rather than by any genuine diplomatic interest in their

[150] Two notes on terminology: The term used for Zhangzhou in these sources is "Chincheo" when used in the early modern period; confusingly, it can also refer to Quanzhou, another Fujianese city. It is almost certainly Zhangzhou in this case. For a thorough discussion of the various meanings of "Chincheo," see Armando Cortesão, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires,* vol. 1, (New York: Columbia, 2000), p. 119, footnote 2., and Appendix 3 of Boxer, *South China....*, pp. 311-315.
Mendoza does not use the term *mandarin* to refer to the *guan* rank; he uses the common sixteenth-century term *Loutea.* For positive identification of the two terms, see the introduction for Boxer, *South China*, p. 10.

proposals, which were frankly vague and consisted of little more than a request for permission to found a mission house and a general request for a formal audience with the Emperor.[151]

Upon questioning de Rada and learning that Guido de Lavezaris was a mere lieutenant governor of the upstart new Philippines colony and not a king or anything similarly impressive, the mandarin blandly told de Rada and Marín that in that case, he would need to apply directly to the Wanli Emperor (萬曆) in Beijing, in 1575 a mere boy of eleven whose government was handled by the powerful Grand Secretary Zhang Juzheng (張 居正). The requirement that an applicant for a foreign audience with the Emperor be the representative of a king was not a regular feature of Ming diplomacy—a further indication that the Zhangzhou mandarin had no intention of actually facilitating the friars' meeting with anyone higher-ranking than he himself. Having made it clear that they would get no further at his court, he then politely invited the two friars to stay as his guests or return with an escort to Manila to await the Emperor's reply.[152] Martín de Rada, finding this a much better option for exploring China than as a slave on a merchant ship, naturally opted for the former, and the pair spent an enjoyable few weeks sightseeing around the town, escorted by a small retinue of officials as was the norm for Westerners in China at the time. The friars took particular delight in a temple which contained several carvings that to them were strongly reminiscent of Catholic iconography. Ever the

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[151] This embassy is briefly mentioned in the following Chinese annals: the Ming *Shen Zong Shi Lu* (明神宗实录), *Guo Que* (国榷), and *Quan Zhou Fu Zhi* (泉州府志). However, this chapter relies on Spanish sources, as the Chinese sources are confined to recording the mission's existence and do not go into significant detail. These Spanish sources—de Rada's letters and Mendoza's work—are confusing and contradictory; for example, Mendoza claims that the friars went on a tour of sorts, visiting several different Fujianese cities. De Rada's own testimony contradicts this, but Mendoza's version has passed into the secondary sources.

[152] Mendoza, p. 32.

optimist, de Rada took these carvings as a sign of the Chinese people's unconscious willingness to convert.[153] De Rada was generally very fond of finding similarities between China and the West; he even described women's fashions in Zhangzhou as being akin to those in Spain and Genoa, although he did take careful note of the practice of footbinding.[154]

Martín de Rada did not forget about the promise to send a message to the Emperor and asked repeatedly if word had arrived yet, only to be put off again and again with the excuse that the distances involved and the burdens of ruling such a large empire meant that the response was again delayed, and wouldn't the friars be more comfortable waiting at their own homes in Manila in the meantime? It is frankly doubtful that the imperial government was ever actually consulted; available Chinese records do not record it and the Zhangzhou officials' repeated polite remarks to the friars about the ease of simply returning to Manila to await an answer there give the distinct impression that they were being stalled and that the Chinese didn't really know quite what to do with them.[155] The only bright spot for the friars was that the tours of the city continued, but even that privilege was soon stripped from them.

It transpired that one day de Rada and Marín went on a visit to the city gates and were seen by their escorts closely inspecting its many doors and guardhouses and other features—these gates were an extremely important aspect of Chinese urban fortifications and were far more complex than European city gates.[156] Whether they did this out of a desire to report any perceived military weaknesses to Lavezaris or out of simple curiosity

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[153] This may have been a reach; de Rada counted one hundred and eleven carvings, three of which reminded him of Catholic images. Mendoza., p. 32.
[154] Ibid., p. 31.
[155] Hsu, p. 330, although Hsu interprets this as interest and not stalling.
[156] Andrade, *Gunpowder Age*, p. 70.

is unknown, but the Chinese certainly interpreted their intentions as malicious. Indeed, the list of information de Rada compiled that eventually made its way into Mendoza's account was certainly enough to raise suspicion:

> All their cities for the most part are situated on those rivers that are navigable; the cities are moated round, which makes them very strong. Not only cities but towns also are walled with high and strong walls of stone one fathom high with all the rest brick, but brick so strong it cannot be broken with a pickaxe...they are garnished with many bulwarks and towers...and between the wall and the moat a space so broad six horsemen may ride together...Their walls are kept in such good repair through their great care and diligence that they seem to be newly made, but in some cities there are records of [it being] two thousand years since the foundation was laid.[157]

De Rada even compiled a list of all the Chinese provinces and the number of cities and towns in each, suggesting that he had been asking quite a few people quite a few questions that could have been perceived as threatening by the Chinese.[158] After this incident reached the ears of the mandarin, the friars continued to be well-treated but were no longer permitted outside their guesthouse as often, and the number of escorts was increased. This had gone on long enough, the Chinese felt, and preparations began to be made for a farewell banquet. De Rada attempted to plead his case to be allowed to remain roaming in Zhangzhou until he heard back from the Emperor, only to be told blandly that

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[157] Mendoza, p. 24.

[158] De Rada was of course relying entirely on hearsay conversations conducted with his non-fluent Chinese language skills for his list, but his figures for "Canton" and "Foquien" provinces (approximately modern Guanggdong and Fujian), the provinces closest to Manila and the most probable sites of any proposed Spanish attack, should have given the Spanish some pause. He listed a combined 70 cities and 289 towns for the two, while taking care to point out that there were many municipalities that were designated villages but surpassed towns in size. For the full list see Mendoza, pp. 23-24. The actual population of China in this period is a subject of debate as historians shift from relying on Ming censuses to using gazetteers; for an overview of research on the population of China during the Ming Dynasty, see Wenxian Zhang, "The Yellow Register Archives of Imperial Ming China." *Libraries & the Cultural Record*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (2008), pp. 148-175.

the laws of China did not permit strangers to roam their cities at will and that he would surely be delighted by the banquet.[159]

After a few more weeks of polite confinement indoors, the two friars were summoned before the mandarin and told that at long last there had been a reply from the Forbidden City. The Wanli Emperor would certainly consider their request for a formal audience—on the condition that the pirate Lin Feng was captured by the Spanish and presented to Chinese officials, dead or alive.[160] This request being well beyond the immediate capabilities of two middle-aged friars, the pair agreed to terminate the mission and return to Manila to deliver this message to Lavezaris, their offer to send the soldiers with the message while remaining in China having been politely rejected. However, they were fêted marvelously at their farewell banquet, and they were loaded down with even more gifts for themselves and for Lavezaris as a token of Chinese friendship and goodwill. The same captain in Wang Wang Gao's retinue who had escorted them from Manila was now entrusted to bring them back to their post, and they returned home in September 1575, having spent a little less than two months in China.[161]

Upon their return, the friars were aghast to discover that Lin Feng had made a daring escape from his latest stronghold in Pangasinan, foiling not only a Chinese blockade, but a clever Spanish attempt to destroy his fleet by impaling it on hidden stakes in the water. The ultimate fate of Lin Feng is a matter of speculation, but in the meantime he fled to the island of Mindoro, on the other side of the archipelago and quite beyond the bounds of Spanish control at the time.[162]

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[159] De Rada, v. 12.
[160] Ibid., r. 13.
[161] Ibid., r. 13.
[162] Morga, Ch.3.

With Lin Feng out of reach on Mindoro, the Chinese terms were now impossible to fulfill, to the extent that they were ever seriously issued, and Lavezaris's mission to China, the first official attempt at an embassy from Spain, ended ingloriously with the unnamed Chinese captain assuring the governor before his return home that he (the captain) would certainly consider converting to Christianity in the future if his career circumstances were ever different. This polite fiction, along with the captain's equally-courteous remark that the people of China would probably be very interested in Catholicism if it was ever permitted to take hold there, was all Lavezaris had to show for his lovingly-crafted embassy, at least until de Rada visited him and gave Lavezaris the "bouquets of silver" he had received in Zhangzhou.[163]

Lavezaris's term as governor ended almost simultaneously with the return of his embassy when his replacement Francisco de Sande arrived from Mexico on the Manila Galleon, and he retired to his *encomiendo* in the fall of 1575.[164] The new governor, a man of equally-fierce martial ambitions, was just as interested in China, but for the time being he temporarily turned his attentions to the subjugation of Borneo for Spain while simultaneously soaking any Chinese and Portuguese visitors to Manila for any available information on Ming government and diplomatic customs.[165] This Borneo attempt, just as ill-fated as the embassy to China, cost poor Martín de Rada his life when he died of a "sea pestilence" en route to Indonesia in 1578.[166] However, he used the short time remaining to him to excellent advantage—having already learned enough Chinese in

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[163] Cartas del gobernador Guido de Lavezaris... AGI Filipinas 79 R.22, v2.
[164] He died in 1581 at the age of approximately 83. Morga, online edition, ch. 9.
[165] Cartas del gobernador Sande sobre Borneo..., AGI Filipinas 79 R.24, r. 2.
[166] Ibid.,, ch. 7. The death of Martín de Rada is an excellent example of the difficulty of trusting Mendoza's accounts. In *Historia...* , Martín de Rada dies peacefully in the Philippines in 1577, following a distressing episode in which he was "stripped of everything and left naked" by pirates on an island in the northern Philippines before being rescued by a passing Spanish ship. This almost certainly never happened as no other contemporary record corroborates this tale. Mendoza, p. 44.

Manila to serve as a translator during Lin Feng's 1574 attack, he spent his spare time in Zhangzhou compiling a dictionary of Chinese characters and after his return wrote a treatise of his time in China, the scope of which is considerably wider than the length and geographical limitations of his stay in China would indicate.[167]

Assessment

Thus ended the first attempt at a formal relationship between Spain and China. While certainly not a total disaster as diplomatic missions go—de Rada felt that he had done a rather good job at patching up the affair of the city gate and that perhaps the reassurances of the captain could be taken at face value—Lavezaris and his successor Sande (who took a keen interest in this mission) had nothing of particular import to report to either the viceroy or the king. Worse, the governors were little more informed of Chinese political and diplomatic customs than he had been before, de Rada having aggravatingly concentrated on his linguistic work and book-buying rather than using his existing Chinese skills to gather information of interest of Spanish martial concerns, although he did observe a "very ill-wrought piece of artillery of great antiquity," supposedly used for executing criminals, which he supplemented with the disquieting intelligence that he had been informed that "excellent good" weapons were to be found elsewhere in the kingdom.[168] However, such information was vague and based almost

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[167] Morga., ch. 9. The dictionary is no longer extant and seems to have disappeared before ever reaching Europe, meaning that the first publication there with Chinese characters was Mendoza's own second- and third-hand compendium, which contains very few characters, many of which are incorrectly rendered. Martín de Rada's treatise, however, survived and is the primary source for the first book of *Historia*... . Boxer, *South China*..., p. Xi.
For an illustration of the inaccuracy of Mendoza's Chinese characters, the character 城, signifying a walled city, is rendered as a cross with a seemingly random series of strokes resembling the letter V to the right of it. Mendoza, p. 122.

[168] Ibid., p. 130.

entirely on hearsay—indeed, it is not difficult to imagine Martín de Rada's hosts deliberately feeding him misleading information on China's military and civil infrastructure, and perhaps the same thought occurred to Lavezaris and Sande. On a more positive note, the mission had not particularly damaged the nascent relationship between the two countries, nor had it shown that the Chinese were completely unwilling to cooperate with Spain and allow Spaniards to visit—information Sande stored up for the future.

Carmen Hsu, in her excellent article on gift-giving as an aspect of Christian kingship, assesses this mission as a success, noting that the friars were fêted and treated with honor by the Chinese officials.[169] But was it? I argue that the Martín de Rada mission was at its best possible interpretation a neutral event in the history of Sino-Spanish relations—it did little to nothing to advance the cause of Spain vis-a-vís China, either in terms of prompting a formal trade agreement or allowing the participants to gather information that could be used in ongoing conquest plans. Indeed, the incident of the city gate probably confirmed Chinese suspicions of Western motivations, as, of the two other Spanish missions in the next ten years to actually enter China, *both* were at some point detained on suspicion of espionage, and for one of them it was also an examination of fortifications that prompted their arrests.[170]

I would argue instead that that the banquets and gifts, however lavish and courteously-given they may have been, belong to the fine old diplomatic tradition of firm, unassailable politeness regardless of the actual level of interest in the emissary's proposals, rather than any sign of real diplomatic success. This is not to accuse de Rada

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[169] Hsu, p. 330.

[170] These two missions, that of Alfaro and of Philip II's 1582 mission, are discussed in Chapter Four and Chapter Five respectively.

and Marín of any ineptitude—their behavior was rather exemplary given the context. But the main stumbling block, one that proved impossible for them to overcome no matter how well they handled a difficult situation, was what must be described as China's total lack of interest in the friars' proposals. China had already established trade relations with one Western country (Portugal), and in the years before the rapid rise of the silver trade made Spain an attractive economic partner, an additional agreement with Spain probably seemed more than a little superfluous. As for the request to allow a religious mission to be founded on Ming soil, this was something that frankly had little benefit to the Chinese and would not in fact be permitted on a large scale until several years later.

Finally, it must be pointed out that, while China was a subject of obsessive fascination for Westerners at the time, the same can hardly be said of Chinese attitudes towards Westerners, at least not to the same degree. There was of course a great deal of curiosity and economic interest from the Chinese (as well as suspicion), as the de Rada mission amply illustrates, but this curiosity was not joined by a longstanding fixation with Spanish luxury products or a burgeoning interest in a military conquest of Spanish territory. Overall, China's interest in Spain was neither as strong as Spain's interest in China, nor founded on the same militaristic goals the Spanish harbored—an important distinction when assessing the success of the de Rada mission. The mission was a landmark event in Spanish history—after all, successful or not, it was still the very first official embassy they sent to China—but it barely registered in the annals of the Chinese, to whom it was just a curious visit from some foreigners who, ultimately, had nothing to offer the Ming.

In Chapter One, I qualified Pedro de Alfaro's journey to China, pointing out that he was the first *Franciscan*, not the first Spaniard or the first friar to enter China. De Rada has the honor of heading the first Spanish mission to China, religious or secular (or both, as it was in his case and indeed all missions sent by the Spanish in the sixteenth century), but it pales in long-term historical significance besides that of Alfaro. Indeed, the particulars of the de Rada mission illustrate why it was considered necessary to dispatch another emissary (albeit an unofficial one) so soon after de Rada's return. While de Rada had distinguished himself on this mission, he was not in a situation to significantly inform Spanish officials interested in a conquest of China. Zhangzhou was no backwater hamlet—in fact it was a major center for silk production from the beginning of the Ming through the end of the Qing dynasty—but it was not one of the premier cities of Ming China.[171] Martín de Rada's information on military and defensive infrastructure, such as he provided, was insufficient for the needs of Spain. For all de Rada's hard work on Chinese language and customs—he enjoyed the same posthumous acclaim as Alfaro with the publication of Mendoza's compendium—his mission simply did not have any tangible significance to either Spanish or Chinese history. At the close of the year 1575, Spain's relationship with Ming China was arguably in much the same place it had been upon the permanent arrival of Spaniards in Asia ten years previously—a vaguely-articulated geographical coexistence, alternately quasi-friendly (as when the Chinese and Spanish banded together to drive back Lin Feng) and imbued with threat,

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[171] Zheng Zheman and Michael Szonyi, trans. *Family Lineage Organization and Social Change in Ming and Qing Fujian.* (Honolulu: Hawaii, 2001), p. ix. Today Zhangzhou is a prefecture-level city whose metropolitan area is home to approximately five million people—a medium-size metropolitan area by contemporary Chinese standards. Zhangzhou Municipal Statistical Bureau (漳州市2009年国民经济和社会发展统计公报), accessed April 2, 2016. http://www.tjcn.org/tjgb/201003/7959.html.

but, most importantly, with Spain's ultimate plans regarding China still unknown, for all the careful planning of Lavezaris and other administrators.

What de Rada's mission does illustrate, however, is the sheer complexity of Sino-Spanish relations in the late sixteenth century. The Spanish were avidly interested in conquering the Ming, but they were also open to negotiating a formal trade relationship with them the way the Portuguese had done. In the 1570s, the ultimate long-term place of the Spanish in the Western Pacific was anybody's guess, and in keeping with the legendary prudence of Philip II, both peaceful economic partnership with China (or would it have been an intense rivalry?) and the violent toppling of the Ming Dynasty by Spanish forces were equally pursued in both councils and, in some form or another, on the ground in the Philippines and China. Nor was this dual pursuit considered paradoxical—they could easily feed into each other, and there was not necessarily a need to articulate any kind of formal policy in regards to China. The successful establishment of a formal trade agreement with the Ming might very well, from the early modern Spanish point of view, have paved the way for conquest, and ultimate victory over the Ming would of course lead to rich pickings for Spain in what had once been the wealthiest nation on earth.

Upon Alfaro's arrival, then, the Spanish had sent a total of two semi-official representatives to China at the sole behest of a governor working without the knowledge of senior officials in either Mexico or Spain. These two would-be ambassadors had spent mere weeks in a city that, while important regionally, lacked the resources to either establish the kind of trade relationship with China the Spanish coveted or to give the Spanish the kind of pertinent information needed for a military invasion. Indeed, for half

the time they were in China their activities had been curtailed after the affair of the city gates. Alfaro's mission would last nearly three times as long as de Rada's and take place in Guangzhou, a city of greater strategic and economic importance in Ming China. This difference in scale, in both time and location, would have a proportionate effect on the long-term historical importance of the Alfaro mission.

When Pedro de Alfaro landed at Manila Bay in 1578, no Spaniard in the service of the Empire had spent more than two months in Ming China, and none had entered a truly major city or had the chance to observe major military and defensive infrastructure of the Ming Empire. For all Martín de Rada's beautifully-written descriptions of temples and exotic Chinese dress (of historical significance in their own right, of course), his reports nevertheless could not provide the vital information Spain needed to assess the feasibility of their longstanding conquest plans. It would fall to Alfaro to provide this information, and the outcome of his mission would spark a major shift in Sino-Spanish relations.

Part Three: Pedro de Alfaro and a Re-Assessment of Sino-Spanish Relations

Chapter Four: "'We Entered the City Barefoot:' Pedro de Alfaro in China"

Pedro de Alfaro arrived in the Philippines on July 24th, 1578, after a journey of about four and a half months—longer than average, but not particularly arduous by the standards of the time. He wrote that he "hardly felt" the privations of the journey, which included a population of rats that Agustín de Tordesillas, one of the friars accompanying him, found rather shocking.[172] Their arrival in the Philippines was met with "hearty welcomes" but little fanfare, at least compared to the raised daises and marzipan castles of Viceroy Almanza—the Augustinians, their official hosts and, until then, the only religious order in the islands, apparently did not go in for elaborate confectionaries and lavish banquets.[173]

Alfaro and his fourteen surviving companions were lodged in the wooden cells of the Augustinian monastery, where they endured with poor grace and much discomfort the high point of the intense southern monsoon season, during which rain "poured forth from the heavens as though the Virgin and all her angels wept at once."[174] The roofs of their humble cells, at cramped double occupancy until the building of a stone structure seven years later, were thatched with nipa palm fronds and reinforced with bamboo. While the thatched roofs presented a picturesque tropical setting, it was not the best waterproofing,

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[172] Carta de Fray Pedro... v.2
[173] De Jesús, p. 34.
[174] Carta de Fray Pedro, v. 4.

and moreover the leaves had to be replaced frequently as they rotted and became infested with bugs, the size of which amazed the friars. One particularly disturbing creature, probably the outsize roach *Blatta orientalis*, positioned itself atop the picture attached to a devotional scapular in such a manner that it entirely obscured the image of Francis of Assisi, an impiety that cost it its life.[175] The rest of the town offered accommodations that were but marginally superior. In the 1570s, Manila itself was a small outpost consisting of a few wooden buildings (the first stone structures aside from defensive walls were not built until the 1580s), and the more remote settlements the friars visited after arrival were even less impressive to men who had spent their lives in Spain or in the well-established cities of Mexico.[176]

The Philippines, then, was not China. The riches and wonders they had perhaps expected to see on the geographical doorstep of the Middle Kingdom were nowhere in sight, and Alfaro, along with de Jesús, brooded about it. The sunset over Manila Bay was lovely on days when it wasn't raining, and the local people friendly and accommodating, but it was no substitute for China. Geronimo Marín, who shared Alfaro's enthusiasm for China but was an altogether more optimistic personality, tried in vain to convince them that there were wonders here too, if only they would look, but Alfaro proved to be uninterested in looking on the bright side.[177] Alfaro's time in the Philippines was marked by restlessness and a poor relationship with Governor-General Doctor Francisco de Sande, who seems to have returned his dislike almost instantly. The exact origin and development of their mutual distaste for each other is maddeningly nebulous, but both

[175] Ibid., v.4- v.5.
[176] De Jesús, p. 35.
[177] de Rada, p. 31. He seems to have disliked Alfaro.

men marked their correspondence with petty jabs at one another—Alfaro bewailing the "blindness" of Sande, Sande at one point referring to the friar as a "barefoot knave."[178]

Alfaro was frankly not interested in cultivating felicitous relationships with Sande or any other colonial administrator in the islands. During the long voyage across the Pacific, and indeed probably during his stay in Mexico, he had formed a plan. His stay in the Philippines would be of short duration, despite his genuine concern over the ultimate fate of the souls of the unconverted Tagalog people he was supposed to be converting. Instead, he was planning to forge a path that would be taken by many of his countrymen in the decades to come, to the intense irritation of both clerical and secular officials—essentially, he was using the Philippines as a springboard into the vast un-Christianized expanses of Ming China.[179] This was by no means unusual for Catholic religious (and European in general) of the period—China was an obsession for many, with Pedro de Alfaro himself stating that while in Manila he and the other friars "did nothing but dream of China."[180] In the Castilian university town he had lived in, to say nothing of his hometown in Galicia, Alfaro largely had to be content with the few recent firsthand accounts, mostly from Portugal, that were published or distributed in Spain, and of course with the ubiquitous reprints of Marco Polo. In Manila, he could actually meet Chinese merchants face to face and hear, via interpreter, firsthand descriptions of life in what Robert Parke, translating Mendoza's report on Alfaro's mission a decade later, called "the Mightie Kingdome." This close proximity to China, tantalizingly close and yet so far away, only whetted his appetite for the adventure to come and strengthened his resolve to leave.

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[178] Relación..., AGI Patronato, 46, v. 5; and Cartas del gobernador..., AGI Filipinas 79, v. 3.
[179] Relación... r. 30-v.31.
[180] Ibid., r. 28. This important quote illuminates why he was so eager to accept the Viceroy's mission.

This account of Alfaro being further inspired to enter China by hearing firsthand tales in Manila also appears in Mendoza. In his accounts, Alfaro had always intended to enter China eventually, but the tales told to him in the Philippines by both the merchants and his Augustinian associates fired him up and turned him away from the mission in Manila that had "converted a hundred thousand souls" and towards a greater one in Ming China.[181] He heard dubious tales of devilish pagan temples soaring higher than any cathedral, of Moorish traders snatching away the heathen souls that rightfully belonged to Christ, of a nation where even the poorest and most downtrodden wore silk garments and yet did not know the first word of the catechism. Frantic at the thought of "the infinite number of souls which the devil had deceived and brought unto his service with false idolatry" in China, Alfaro and the most fervent of the Franciscans resolved to leave at the first opportunity, both for their own interests and to carry out the clandestine mission entrusted to them by Almanza (which does not appear at all in Mendoza's accounts).[182] Mendoza, for whom the friars can do no wrong, asserts that they repeatedly begged Sande for permission to leave the islands for China, only to find him "but lukewarm" at the prospect, forcing the friars to take matters into their own hands.[183] While Mendoza is often very elastic with his source material, this is corroborated by the letters of Alfaro and

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[181] This estimate is grossly overstated. At the first census in 1591, the population of the Luzon islands was estimated to be approximately 660,000; when Alfaro arrived, the number of clergy and religious was still less than 30. Katsumi Nozawa, "History of the Philippine Statistical System." (Tokyo: Asia University: 2003), online at http://www.ier.hit-u.ac.jp/COE/Japanese/Newsletter/No.13.english/Nozawa.html. For the quotes, Parke, *Historie of the Great and Mightie Kingdome of China*. London: Hakluyt Society, 1857, reprint of 1588 edition. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/42551/42551-h/42551-h.htm, par. 126. and Mendoza, p. 234.

[182] Parke, pp. 126-7.

[183] Mendoza, pp. 234-5. Mendoza seems to have gotten this account from associates of Pablo de Jesús, one of the friars on the journey. Neither de Jesús, Alfaro, nor Sande discusses this in their letters.

Sande themselves—they did indeed attempt to get permission from Sande to travel to China, and were repeatedly rebuffed.

By any reasonable measure, Sande was absolutely justified in refusing these requests. Alfaro was needed in Manila, where there were already very few friars, and moreover Sande, as we shall see in the future, hoped to take credit himself for any future Spanish incursions into China, diplomatic or otherwise. Alfaro was not inclined to be reasonable and therefore spent a few months denouncing Sande for his refusal to help his cause while halfheartedly building up the Franciscan mission in Manila. He repeated his request regularly, always with a no (Sande wearily reported in November 1578: "The good barefoot friar has again asked for permission to leave for China, permission I once again denied him.").[184] Alfaro, in desperation, even resorted to Martín de Rada's old trick of asking Fujianese merchants to take him on board as a slave, a request that was similarly denied by the traders, who had no need for the services of a haughty man in bizarre garb who did not even speak Chinese.[185] By the end of 1578, he was no closer to the Mightie Kingdome than he had been on his arrival in June. Only a sign from God, it seemed, could change his circumstances.

In March of 1579, God sent his sign in the form of a *chino,* newly arrived in Manila from Zhangzhou (漳州) . This was a young "priest," perhaps a Daoist or Buddhist, who arrived with some merchants and, curious about these newcomers to his part of the world, visited the Augustinian monastery to talk with the friars via interpreter. He regaled them with tales of the vast population and riches of China, and according to the friars, soon evidenced a burning zeal for Christianity simply by witnessing the simple

[184] Cartas del gobernador Sande..., v.8.
[185] Relación...., r. 7.

piety of the men around him. Alfaro duly baptized the man at his express request, christening him Juan, and Juan was immediately permitted to live with the friars, surpassing them all in piety by surviving on a diet of bitter herbs and praying hourly in the night. After a few months of this punishing routine, Juan visited Alfaro's cell one morning, apropos of nothing, and personally begged him to go to China and convert the millions of lost souls there. This, according to Alfaro, was a sign that he must proceed to China as soon as possible, and now the refusals of the governor were irrelevant, since the friars had been, essentially, given permission by God himself.[186]

This tale of Juan the penitent priest appears twice in the record—once in a letter from Alfaro to Sande justifying his departure, and again in Mendoza, neither of which are particularly trustworthy sources. It is of course entirely possible that this event or something very like it actually occurred, and it is even more possible that Alfaro, whatever the actual impetus, genuinely believed that his mission to China was divinely ordained—it was hardly a stretch for a devout man to believe that a conversion mission had divine favor, after all. In all other aspects the story is unlikely to have actually happened as the friars described. Not only does Juan not appear in any other record of either the mission to China or the Augustinians in Manila, but the story bears a striking resemblance to the kind of propagandistic conversion tales that the Spanish had promulgated in Latin America earlier in the century. This Juan, whoever he was (or wasn't) simply stepped into the place formerly occupied by the "good *indio*" of the Americas, and Pedro de Alfaro had his justification.[187]

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[186] Mendoza, pp. 235 - 236.

[187] Nicholas Cull et al. *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*. (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2003), p. 223.

So it was that on the morning of 15 June 1579, the friar simply disappeared, leaving the governor in total ignorance of his whereabouts (or so Sande later claimed).[188] Obviously, in a small outpost such as Manila was at this time, and especially given Alfaro's repeated requests to enter China, Sande had to have been aware of Alfaro's departure and probable destination. It is likely that his professed ignorance of the friar's plans stemmed from a ploy to cover for himself in the event that any of Alfaro's actions in China were blamed on him, a desire to feign outrage in order to assert his authority over the Philippines in the larger Asian sphere, or both. Alternatively, he may simply have been pleased to be at least temporarily rid of a man he disliked on a personal level. My own inclination is that Sande was neither deeply concerned nor particularly surprised by Alfaro's departure until he found out later that it was causing trouble abroad and, most importantly, that it had been instigated by his superiors, a position supported by the fact that his successor to the position of governor-general continued to rage against the friars long after Sande left the Philippines and Alfaro met his end.[189] Disobedience wasn't the issue; the erosion of Sande's jurisdiction in Asia was. However, this lay in the future.

The Journey to China

Several primary sources exist for Alfaro's mission to China. Alfaro wrote two long epistles himself, both to his friend Juan de Ayora, a fellow Franciscan who had shared his close friendship with Almanza and come over to Manila with him. One letter was written from China, the other after his return to Manila. Alfaro also co-authored the forty-page "Relación del viaje a China del Franciscanos" with Agustín de Tordesillas,

[188] Cartas del gobernador Sande, r. 12.
[189] See chapter six for a detailed examination.

which forms the primary source for the second book of Mendoza's *Historia de las cosas*... and its many translations. And after Alfaro had, in Pablo de Jesús's words, "been gathered into eternal beatitude," de Jesús wrote an account as well.[190] The following narrative is primarily from Alfaro's own letters, with supplementary material from Mendoza.

Alfaro, along with several companions, had boarded a Chinese merchant ship "*en muy secreto*," after leading Francisco de Sande to believe that he and his companions were visiting the newly-founded outpost of Ilocos del Sur.[191] Besides Alfaro, there were three other friars, Agustín de Tordesillas, Pablo de Jesús, and Juan Baptista, as well as two soldiers and a young ensign named Juan Diaz Pardo. All seven solemnly swore on an image of the Virgin that they would go to China together to "convert the pagans there, or perish in the quarrel." With them also was a Chinese youth who had been captured by Lin Feng and brought to Manila as a slave, where he had been seized by the Spanish. He had declined to return with the rest of the former slaves sent with de Rada's embassy, preferring his work with the Augustinians to a return to China. Baptized Simon, he would attempt to serve as their translator. The little group boarded a "reasonable frigate" staffed with mariners who, though earnest, were "not very expert."[192]

The journey from Manila to China generally took fifteen to twenty days in this period and required the services of a skilled pilot, as the sea passage was difficult to navigate.[193] Alfaro and his band of secret evangelists took over a month to arrive,

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[190] Carta del francisano Pablo de Jesús sobre su viaje a China. AGI Filipinas 84.,N.16, r.1.
[191] Relación... v.. 3.
[192] Ibid. r. 4. How they were able to commission a Chinese ship for this voyage remains unclear.
[193] Cui Weixiao (崔维孝). *Ming Qing zhi ji Xibanya fang ji hui zai Hua chuan jiao yan jiu, 1579-1732 明清之际西班牙方济会在华传教研究, 1579-1732*. (Beijing Shi : Zhonghua shu ju; 北京市 : 中華書局, ; 2006), p. 35.

embarking at Macau in mid-July, where they were greeted warily by the Portuguese. Their journey had been a wretched one, with the ship being flung "allí y ahí" by storms so that they constantly feared that they would be drowned at any moment, although this fear was "nothing" next to the fear that they would be forced to return to Manila to face the wrath of Governor Sande. Due to poor handling, the sail was torn asunder by a rough wind, which delayed them further as they had to "crouch in a miserable cove" while it was resewn. Once in Macau, they thanked God for a safe arrival, and immediately made plans to sail on to Guangzhou, after leaving Juan Baptista behind to join the fledgling Franciscan mission there. Alfaro engaged the same inept sailors to take them on to Guangzhou, a much shorter journey certainly, but probably an indication of his general poor planning on this mission.

The journey from Macau to Guangzhou was marred not by poor seamanship, but by confusion. How they got into Guangzhou is frankly a mystery, as the only record is that provided by Alfaro himself, who told a tale that he may have believed earnestly but is otherwise wildly improbable:

> In this gulf [the Zhu River Estuary] there sailed three other ships and when they came to anchor near us, I bade Simon our interpreter to demand of them what city this was, as we greatly desired to know where we had arrived. They answered nothing in their insolence, but merely looked upon us and the one upon the other, and in beholding of us and our garb they merely gave a great laughter...Others who chanced upon us did the same, only laughing as though under an enchantment.
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> The next day there happened unto us a great miracle, for we passed silently through the guard, which in that city is a strait that was but a quarter of a league in breadth betwixt the firm land and a small island [this could be any number of channels further up the Zhu River and may no longer exist]. In this strait there are continually anchored four score ships of war, but I call upon the Holy Ghost and

> all the saints for witnesses, for truly we did pass through them unseen as though we too were enchanted by some benevolent spirit. All around us devils danced and corsairs lurked, but through them all we sailed smoothly until we came to a great tower at the front of the city.
>
> Simon, who is a coward, feared that we would suffer the grievous punishment of this kingdom [China] towards strangers who come unbidden, and to appease his fear, for we felt none ourselves, we furled our sails according to the use and custom of the ports of Spain, and we saw that neither the tower nor the people took any notice of us.[194]
>
> Seeing that we had been at anchor a good while and there were none that came unto us to demand any question, we hoisted out our boat and went in it onto the shore, whereupon we all knelt and I with great devotion sang the *Te Deum Laudamus,* giving thanks to God that he had so miraculously brought us here into the Kingdom of China, so much desired by us, without any pilot or other human assistance. Having given thanks, we sought out the gates of the city, encountering such a multitude that we passed through past the guards put there for that purpose without them ever seeing us. Thus barefoot we entered the great city of Canton.[195]

This tale seems rather unlikely—how could they elude not only the watchmen at the harbor, but the guards at the gates to the city? Perhaps Alfaro was overstating the fearsomeness of the Cantonese guards; after all, de Rada had been able to enter the city of Zhangzhou unmolested just a few years before, and, while Portuguese traders were not allowed to settle permanently in Guangzhou, they were permitted to arrive regularly from Macau for stays of short duration. It is therefore perhaps not too improbable that they were able to simply walk into the gates, particularly as they arrived during the day from Macau. Less likely is their successful navigation of the Zhu estuary without a pilot—after all, it was not the friars or Simon who was sailing their ship, but the Chinese traders who had taken them on from Manila and about whom Alfaro is suspiciously silent after their departure from Macau. Perhaps he omitted them out of a desire to present his voyage to China as a miracle ordained by God, rather than a somewhat worldlier venture driven by

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[194] Why this would assuage Simon's fears is not explained in any of the sources; perhaps the furling of the sails was meant to clarify that they were not pirates.
[195] Relación,r. 5-8, similar to Mendoza, p. 246-252.

the twin ambitions of himself and Almanza. Alfaro may have genuinely believed in the presence of devils and enchantments influencing his entry into Guangzhou, but given the suspicions of the Chinese towards Westerners and the importance of Chinese military and naval infrastructure to this work, it is well worth examining the practicalities of exactly how he managed to enter the city.[196]

The Bureaucratic Hurdle

Alas for Alfaro, his evasion of Chinese bureaucracy could not last. Upon entering Canton, he and his friars were, according to all of their testimonies, almost immediately approached by a *chino* who spoke to them in fluent Portuguese, having been converted in Macau many years before. This man introduced himself as Canguin, and informed them where they were and that the laws of Guangzhou required all foreigners to have an official license from the magistrate to enter the city. Canguin, who in the Spaniards' accounts seems to exist solely to admire them and make life easier for them, brought them back to their ship while he arranged for their appearance before the magistrate. They stayed on their ship two more days, during which they sampled their first Cantonese dishes—in Alfaro's expert culinary opinion, rice with "loathsome meats and sauce." Alfaro found the food to be "foul stuff, not fit for a man of God," but Agustín de Tordesillas ate heartily.[197]

Canguin returned to fetch them, and, after a few more moments of fulsome praise (Canguin, despite having spent enough time around Europeans to speak fluent

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[196] Many modern writers, when faced with a historical figure's expression of religious belief that seems incredible to contemporary readers, struggle over whether to take the figure's faith at face value or approach it skeptically. While some argue that a cynical use of "miracle" imagery by an early modern Catholic is ahistorical, I argue that manipulation of faith is entirely reasonable in this era.

[197] Relación, v. 7.

Portuguese, apparently considered Alfaro and his friars the most amazing men he had ever encountered), brought them before the magistrate. This individual, an impressive man, was

> ...set in a very rich chair with so great majesty that we were very astonished to see it, and even the more when we were made to understand that he was not the governor, nor a supreme judge, but simply a common judge of a lesser rank than an *oidor*. He was apparelled in a robe of silk the like of which I never saw even at the Viceregal Palace. The robe was clasped from above down to the foot, with the sleeves very wide, and the waistcoat embossed, and on his head a cap full of brooches, such as bishops wear on their mitres. Before him was set a table upon which was paper and the blackest of inks, and around him two rows of men as though to guard him, yet needing no weapons. All of these men had upon their heads a manner of helmet made of black leather, and on them great plumes of peacock feathers.[198]

Once the friars recovered from this awesome sight, their first taste of Chinese pomp and ceremony, they were asked what nation they were from and what their business was in China. Caguin having withdrawn, perhaps to mediate on the glories of Alfaro, the business of interpretation was left to Simon. The friars told Simon to tell the magistrate that they were Spaniards, come out of Manila, and that they wished to preach the Gospel. They appended to this simple declaration a long list of pious Catholic sentiments, included a rather tactless announcement that the entire Chinese empire worshiped idols and that they would ensure that such shameful displays ceased immediately in favor of worship of God and his only begotten son.[199]

It is here that the record diverges. Alfaro claimed that Simon simply stammered a few words and told them that he could not understand the language the magistrate spoke. Alfaro may have been unaware of the existence of multiple Chinese dialects, and as Simon was probably Fujianese, it was not improbable that the young boy (Simon was

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[198] Relación, r. 8 similar to Mendoza, pp. 253-254.
[199] Mendoza, p. 253.

probably in his early teens) really did not fully understand what was happening, especially since the Ming policy of never assigning officials to their home provinces meant that it was also possible that any linguistic issues lay with the magistrate himself.[200] Alfaro's account simply states that after this, the judge searched their belongings and, satisfied, gave them temporary permission to stay in Guangzhou in the company of the Portuguese who were also lodging there.[201] After this, Simon was branded "our traitor interpreter" and spent the remainder of the trip on the receiving end of Alfaro's sharp tongue.

Pablo de Jesús, writing after Alfaro's death, told a somewhat different story. In his account, Simon spoke well, if haltingly, and later confessed to deliberately misleading the magistrate, out of fear that if he presented to them the exact words of the friars, they would be cast out of China and Simon himself subject to arrest. So in the age-old tradition of diplomacy, the boy lied, allowing the magistrate to believe that the friars were members of a harmless religious sect similar to Daoism, even pointing out that Alfaro and his men raised their eyes to *tian* (天) when they prayed, in the manner of Daoist and Confucian religious—shades of the future Rites Controversy! De Jesús was appalled by this maneuver, and even more so when Simon told him that, in response to the magistrate's question of where he, Simon, had come from, he had told a wild tale of escaping from Lin Feng's men, only to be captured by Spaniards who enslaved him on their ship. He had only met Alfaro, he claimed, two weeks before, when leaping out of his master's ship to escape his cruelties, he happened to be rescued by the friars on their

[200] Huang, p. 76.
[201] Cartas del franciscano... v. 11.

way to China.[202] In these falsehoods, Simon frankly demonstrated far more acumen and tact than any of the friars would while in Ming territory.

Since Simon displayed general competence in Cantonese both before and after this incident, and since his fears were legitimate, Pablo de Jesús's account seems more likely even if Simon wasn't actually fully fluent in Cantonese. Regardless of Simon's abilities as a translator, his response did get them their coveted permit, particularly after the magistrate searched their belongings and found no weapons of any kind. Their "uniformity of dress and beards" and lack of footwear may also have played a role in convincing the magistrate that they were simply members of an obscure religious sect, or at least Pablo de Jesús thought so. They received a paper with "very strange" writing on it—the license to remain in Guangzhou temporarily, as long as they slept on their ship every night—and Simon was given permission to either return to his homeland or remain with the friars. Presumably a glutton for punishment, he remained with Alfaro for the duration of the China mission, where he was referred to ever after in Alfaro's correspondence in very unflattering terms.[203]

"We Will Die Here If God Commands It:" Alfaro in China

Alfaro now had official permission from the Chinese to remain in Guangzhou on a temporary basis (though no precise timeline was given, presumably to allow their easy expulsion in the event that the situation soured). The dream had been achieved; he was in China at last! All his long labors, his sea voyages with rats swarming him, the terrible

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[202] Cartas del Pablo de Jesús... R. 22. This is the account preferred by Chinese historians also relying on the same sources. Cui, pp. 63-64. As to why Simon felt it necessary to inform the friars of his duplicity in speaking with the magistrates, the Alcantarines placed a heavy emphasis on the importance of frequent, sincere confessions. Turley, p. 63.

[203] Cartas del Pedro de Alfaro..., v. 21.

palm roof that leaked and rotted over him, the debilitating stomach pains in Mexico, all had culminated in his arrival in Guangzhou. Alas for Alfaro, he was not to enjoy it. He had not been greeted as the proud representative of both a powerful empire and the only true faith—quite the contrary. Alfaro was rapidly learning that the Chinese were not impressed and awed by his person, his faith, or by the empire he represented. In one of his more memorable remarks, Alfaro forlornly observed in a letter to Juan Ayora that the Chinese "look upon us as we look upon *indios*"—an expression of ethnocentric surprise and irritation that remains sadly familiar to the modern reader.[204] In addition to this immediate disappointment, further troubles crowded in.

The first problem was the mirror. The friars had brought with them a beautiful mirror made of black jasper—a gift from Viceroy Almanza to the Franciscans as a group that had been crafted in Michoacán. Almost immediately after their permit was issued, they were obliged to make a gift of it to the magistrate after he sent his men to conduct repeated searches in order to admire it. After this loss, Alfaro became convinced that the Chinese were greedy and covetous. Less than a week later, this perception was further strengthened when some of the men who had served as guards at their hearing came and also demanded a gift, else they would inform the magistrate that Alfaro and the friars were there with evil purpose after all. The friars, who had been "very merry and not mindful of anything, for they had all day taken the Sacrament," were taken aback and, after much conversation, yielded a silver chalice worth twelve Venetian ducats, a princely sum for just about anyone in those days, much less men living under a vow of poverty.[205] The loss of the chalice infuriated the friars—Alfaro had all the usual indignation of the

[204] Carta del Franciscano Pedro de Alfaro a Juan de Ayora., r. 2.
[205] Mendoza, p. 263. Whether the friars' merriment was due to the joy of communion or the potency of the wine, Mendoza does not say.

interloper who, finding that the population of a foreign land is unwilling to conform to his expectations, strikes out against the entire populace:

> The Chinese are a most untrustworthy people; they lie and dissemble just like a Portuguese or an Italian does. If you ask what color the heavens are, if it suits a man of this kingdom to tell you it is vermilion, he shall tell you it is vermilion without the slightest hesitation.[206]

Added to the manifold crimes of the Chinese people was their utter resistance to conversion. According to Mendoza, the magistrates were indeed very cautious about the whole process of preaching, demanding repeatedly that the friars become fluent in Chinese before starting to preach so that the people of Guangzhou would not be misled (in this narrative, Alfaro astutely pointed out that by the time they learned Chinese their temporary license would no doubt immediately expire). There is no reason to believe this was an actual condition imposed upon them by the Chinese; it is not a regular feature of mission history in the years immediately following, when it was much more likely for a Westerner to know some of the language. If Mendoza was not simply mistaken, he may have embellished this tale in order to portray the inexplicable (to him) Chinese resistance to the missionaries in the most ridiculous bureaucratic light possible—Samaritans reborn, as it were.[207] Alfaro himself did not mention the requirement, and indeed had very little to say about their actual attempts at conversion at all, perhaps covering for the fact that they could do very little without fluency in the language and without the cooperation of the local authorities. Their few converts have the air of exaggeration about them, again echoing the conversion propaganda narrative seen earlier in the story of the Daoist Juan—one man almost immediately vowed to live solely off the sacramental wafer, and another, hearing the tale of Francis of Assisi, wanted to strip naked in the middle of the

[206] Carta a Juan Ayora.. v. 9.
[207] Mendoza, p. 263.

market square too.[208] Unfortunately for the friars, it seems unlikely that they were able to amass more than a handful of interested observers. The facade of evangelization collapsed permanently when the two remaining silver chalices, valued at fourteen ducats apiece, were unceremoniously snatched from their makeshift altar by a duplicitous would-be convert, prompting Alfaro to rant in a letter to Juan Ayora, one of the friars who had joined the group in Mexico and now remained waiting for his return in Manila, warning him to "never trust the Chinese."[209]

In addition to troubles with the locals, Alfaro and his friars could not even get along with their fellow Europeans. Two months after Alfaro's arrival in Guangzhou, Sande, back in Manila and presumably enjoying his time away from this friar who nagged him constantly about going to China, was appalled to receive a letter from a group of Portuguese merchants based in Macau who had been staying in Guangzhou temporarily to make trade agreements with the locals. The letter to Sande was signed by no less than five representatives of the Portuguese temporarily residing in Guangzhou (presumably sleeping in their ships at night as well), who claimed that the three friars argued publicly with Portuguese merchants, were openly disdainful of the upper-class Chinese, and demanded undue privileges and recognition from the Portuguese for their tiny, struggling mission:

> These barefoot Franciscans have behaved in such a manner as does not befit men of God, especially in regards to the other Christians of this city. They have commanded us Portuguese as though we are lesser men and not kin to you, and have spoken words against the mandarins of this city as would cause a man of this kingdom to be beaten on his legs as is the custom here.[210]

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[208] Carta a Juan Ayora., r.3.
[209] Ibid., v. 6.
[210] Carta sobre discordias con portugueses... AGI Filipinas 79, r. 1-v.4.

These Portuguese, beneficiaries of exclusive trade agreements with China, were worried that Alfaro's behavior would cause trouble with the Ming authorities and endanger their own privileges, and hoped that Sande would recall the troublesome friars.[211] In an era when Spaniards and Portuguese had little love lost between them and were openly contemptuous of each others' pretensions, both personal and national, it is tempting to relegate the merchants' complaints to the kind of petty proto-nationalistic insults that characterized disputes between the two at the time. Indeed it is unlikely that the friars openly insulted the city officials, but the friars' own accounts make it clear that they behaved with an almost bizarre lack of restraint in regards to the Portuguese while in Guangzhou. Pablo de Jesús himself reported telling a Portuguese who asked for clarification on the friar's license to repent for the devil's influence that had led him to ask such a question, and Alfaro is reputed on one occasion to have counseled the soldier Francisco de Dueñas, who accompanied them as a guard, to pay no heed to the complaints of the Portuguese, but to simply demand assistance from them, as any gentleman might demand from a common person.[212] Why they were so antagonistic to the Portuguese, beyond the general contemporary Spanish disdain for their Iberian neighbors, is unknown—the details concerning this scuffle with the Portuguese are irritatingly nebulous, and both the Spanish and the Portuguese in sixteenth-century Asia frequently invoked the other as the source of any discord whatsoever.

Altogether, considering the pains of converts, chalices, and Portuguese machinations, Alfaro was finding that life in China was not quite the stuff of dreams,

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[211] Ibid., 4.

[212] Cartas del Franciscano Pablo de Jesús. AGI Filipinas, v. 2, r. 5.

despite an over-dramatic declaration that he would "die here if God demands it."[213] However, he still wrote a brief note in response to Sande's demand that he return home immediately, in which he primly informed the governor that everything he did was for the glory of God and that Sande would simply have to be "content" with that, as he would not return to Manila unless and until the Chinese cast him out or his body was borne back to the city on a bier.[214] Of course, it was not just bravado that made him refuse to return home—the mission was only half-complete, as it were. Alfaro had given conversion of the Chinese an honest effort, and now it was time to implement Almanza's orders.

Espionage and Expulsion: The End of the China Mission

Thereafter, the business of conversion being largely fruitless, they settled down to a rather un-friar-like activity: examining the civil and military infrastructure of Guangzhou in order to inform Martín Enríquez de Almanza and his representatives of everything they saw and formally assess the feasibility of a Spanish invasion of China. They carefully wrote down the arms of every guard or soldier they saw, the kinds of locks and fortifications on the city gates, the size of the population both inside and outside the city (being unfamiliar with Ming gender seclusion customs, they were bewildered by the apparent lack of women), and other pertinent information.[215] As was noted in Chapter Three, Spain, fresh on the heels of a series of conquests and dynastic

[213] Cummins, p. 42.

[214] Sande's letter is no longer extant, but based on Alfaro's response it is clear that he responded to the Portuguese's request. Carta del franciscano Pedro de Alfaro sobre su llegada a China. AGI Filipinas, 79, N.4, r.. 2.

[215] Relación..., v. 32. Of course, not all Ming women were confined to their homes (Martín de Rada saw enough women in Zhangzhou to comment on their dress), but the practice was widespread enough for the friars to notice the comparative lack. For an overview of recent scholarship on women's history of premodern China that has elaborated upon traditional views of premodern Chinese women as homebound and subjugated, see Harriet Zurndorfer, "Gender Issues in Traditional China." Accessed April 13th, 2016. http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199920082/obo-9780199920082-0074.xml

marriages that had given it direct control over much of the European continent, most of the known Americas, and now a foothold in Asia, was deeply interested in continuing its expansion into China in hopes of seizing the wealth and power of the Ming for itself. Alfaro, to his immense regret, was the first Spaniard of sufficient rank and education to set foot in a major city in Ming China and thus had to personally extinguish these hopes.[216]

Guangzhou, it was true, was reputed to be one of the largest and most magnificent cities in China, but even if there were only five other cities half as grand, there was no way that a Spanish fleet could take them, particularly since Spain was also engaged in war on the Continent:

> All the country is very populous, with the towns so near each other that it is better to say that it is all one town and not many and the kingdom might be more properly called the City of China. In all this country there is not one foot of ground unoccupied, as there is a great abundance of people, and moreover unlike Spain they permit no idleness. So it is that in the Kingdom of China they have all things in great abundance and at a low price...
>
> In this great city of Canton, which is the principal city of this part, the gates are thrice as thick and sturdy as those of Sevilla, with a great many soldiers all in very good order and armed with lances and arquebuses.[217] This gate is opened but once a day, and though we were able to enter unremarked, we are but three in number and such fortune cannot be repeated. The same warning for the harbor also; the galleons of Spain cannot pass where a small frigate did unaided... China is guarded more tightly and straitly than a convent of nuns...
>
> The men we met in Canton are not the viceroys or governors of this part of the kingdom but even the meanest officials here are so sumptuously dressed and so well guarded by Tartars with arquebuses that the papal courts would be as a shepherd's hut to them...There is nothing we have that they do not have in greater abundance...[218]

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[216] Martín de Rada was of course more than an intellectual match for Alfaro, but his experiences in China were considerably more curtailed and geographically limited in terms of the kind of information Spain was interested in.

[217] The arquebus had been in use in China for approximately three decades before Alfaro's arrival; for more information, see Andrade, *The Gunpowder Age*, pp. 171-175.

[218] Cartas del franciscanos..., AGI Filipinas 84, R3, r. 2-7. Governors: the *zongdu* (總督) of what is now Guangdong Province was not based in Guangzhou at the time. Tim Brook, *Geographic Sources of Ming-*

The harbor was vast and well-guarded, and the viceroy should not hope that the "miracle" that had conducted Alfaro and his band to safety could be repeated for an entire armada. The population was vast and wealthy, the civil and military bureaucracy extensive and well-ordered, and what soldiers they had seen were "aptly trained in the arts of war." In short, the answer to the Spanish query *Can we take China?* was, in Alfaro's words, an emphatic "*no es posible."* He repeated this assessment once more on the same page: Spain could never hope to conquer China "*porque es imposible*"—or in more poetic terms, "with or without soldiers, wanting to take China is like trying to grasp the moon." [219] The use of the phrase "with or without soldiers" is plausibly read as a reference to the *conquista de china a la mexicana*, in which a small number of soldiers was deemed sufficient—here Alfaro is stating that neither the *a la mexicana* plan or a more straightforward military invasion have any chance of success. This letter does not feature in the brief and intermittent historiography of Spanish attempts to conquer China—as there were so many letters on the subject and it has never been a major aspect of either Spanish or Chinese historiography, it is no surprise that previous historians have missed it. Moreover, all previous research on the subject has placed the end of the Spanish conquest dream later than 1579-1580, meaning that historians who are familiar with Alfaro's writings have not properly contextualized it.

Despite the deep and sincere religious zeal of the friars, this disappointment shone through even more than the failure to convert in their own writings—Alfaro wrote that he

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Qing History. (Ann Arbor: Michigan, 1988), p. 50. The reference to Tartars should not be taken literally in the sense that Alfaro actually witnessed Mongol or Turkic soldiers; Great Tartary, as the region comprising the vast stretch of land between the Urals and what is now Manchuria was once known, was often used as simply a byword for anything exotic, particularly if it had a martial flavor. Stephen Kotkin. "Defining Territories and Empires: from Mongol Ulus to Russian Siberia 1200-1800." (1996). Accessed April 13th, 2016. http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/sympo/Proceed97/Kotkin1.html.

[219] Cartas del franciscanos., r. 8.

felt like he was disappointing the hopes of the viceroy, the king, and even God himself.[220] (He might have added "Francisco de Sande" to the list as well, if he had ever cared much about the governor's opinions. Alfaro's activities concerning the projected conquest, once revealed, would prompt swift and decisive action from the Philippine authorities against their nominal superiors in New Spain, and would indeed reverberate throughout much of the Pacific world.)

For the time being, however, Sande and his frustrated staff, still unaware of exactly what the friars were doing, concentrated their efforts on recalling Alfaro to his rightful post. The departure of the friars to China, which may have pleased Sande on a personal level given his dislike of Alfaro, actually caused quite a few difficulties in the Philippines. At the time, there were about thirty friars, both Augustinians and Franciscans, in the colony, including the four who had left for China, making it almost impossible to both evangelize among the locals and maintain the spiritual health of the resident Spanish—an observation actually made by Alfaro himself during his tenure in Guangzhou.[221] (The incongruity of his own departure from such a desperate situation seems not to have struck him.) While huge amounts of friars were not required to maintain the clerical-secular state that was developing in the Philippines (and in fact the Latin American colonies often made do with similarly small numbers of friars), the need for more friars in the Philippines was a constant preoccupation in the primary sources for the late sixteenth century, suggesting that the need was at least perceived to be dire.[222] Aside from the obvious political repercussions of Alfaro's behavior in China, Sande needed Alfaro back in Manila to do his designated job, and to that end wrote a

[220] Ibid, v.. 7.
[221] Ibid.,v. 5.
[222] Turley, p. 177, and Abinales, pp. 27-35.

conciliatory letter to the Portuguese assuring them that he would do everything in his power to bring the friar back.

Soon after Sande wrote this letter, however, matters in China came to a head and Alfaro and his small band were arrested by the local authorities on suspicion of espionage and confined to a house in Guangzhou.[223] Exactly what prompted their arrest is unclear, but due to the charges leveled against them, it seems likely that their general inability to remain inconspicuous in Guangzhou extended to their examination of Chinese military infrastructure. They were confined to "a magistrate's house" in Guangzhou for over a month, their papers and belongings searched once more, and their doings sharply questioned by magistrates terrified that their previous laxity towards the Spaniards would be held against them by their superiors. In a turn of events characterized in Mendoza's account as "wonderfully miraculous," the Chinese determined that the friars posed no real threat—possibly prompted by the uneasy state of affairs regarding Spain, a new power in the region whose ultimate designs concerning China were unknown to the Ming at the time.[224] It might be better to simply banish the friars in light of the tense ambivalence that characterized Sino-Spanish relations at the time. Spain had yet to establish a formal relationship with China (that is to say, a tributary relationship or possibly a tacitly-recognized trade partnership), but their trade contacts in the area were increasing rapidly, and who knew but that they might succeed in establishing formal relations sometime soon? The Portuguese, wary as the Chinese were of their presence, were proving to be rather useful, and maintaining a tentative, semi-friendly relationship with Spain might help strengthen that profitable bond even if a trade relationship was

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[223] Francisco de Sande, *Copias de cartas.* Microfilm, U Santo Tomas, p. 314-15.
[224] Mendoza, p. 246.

never established with Madrid. Besides, suspicious as the Chinese were of foreigners in this period, the three men and their guards really didn't pose any real threat to the safe functioning of Guangzhou—what could three unarmed, barefoot men really do against the might of the Ming? So Sande was once again contacted by the Portuguese, now on behalf of the Cantonese authorities, and this time his attempt to recall Alfaro was successful. The Chinese released the friars to the custody of the Portuguese, who conveyed them to Macau before putting them on a ship bound for Manila.[225] The Alfaro mission was over, and, at least when it came to an armed conquest of China, so were the hopes of Spain.

Alfaro's assessment of Chinese military power was quite correct, and it was taken as accurate by his superiors as well when his report made its way to both Mexico City and Madrid. But for many years, the notion of Ming China being significantly militarily superior to Spain at the height of its glory would not necessarily have been accepted by historians. As outlined in Chapter One, the Chinese were supposed to have entered a protracted period of decline while Spain was rapidly increasing in power and influence—the "great encounter" was a narrative of active Western powers on the rise imposing their (implicitly superior) military and economic might on the passive Chinese sphere of influence. What Alfaro found, and what increasing numbers of historians have found as well, is that this encounter was not anything particularly great, and that Chinese power on a global scale far outstripped any European state in the sixteenth century.[226] However, the belief in the Ming as a period of decline vis-a-vís the West has been difficult to counteract in pedagogy and popular culture. In this context of a pervasive belief in

[225] Cartas del Virrey..., AHN, Diversos-COlléciones 25, r. 2-r. 4.

[226] For major works on the Great Divergence that examine China and the West, see Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient*, Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence,* and William McNeill, *The Rise of the West.*

sixteenth-century Chinese decline that remains common outside of the academy, it is worth asking the question: was China really a military power superior to Spain in this period?

In Chapter Three, I quoted Guido de Lavezaris's assessment of the Chinese as an inherently peaceful people who lacked the bellicosity required to stave off a Spanish invasion. While the Chinese were by no means strangers to war, Lavezaris can perhaps be forgiven for his characterization—he was writing from the perspective of an outside observer who happened to find himself in Asia at the precise time when China was slowly concluding a century-long period of relative peace, at the same time that Europe was experiencing a century of increased warfare.[227] Spain almost certainly did not know the full chronological scope of this long stretch of peace, but the information available to them concerning Chinese military prowess probably reflected this peaceful period, if only implicitly. This coincidence distorted the apparent military prowess of China to Spanish observers, leading them to conclude, wrongly, that China could be integrated into the expanding fold of the Spanish Empire, despite the Chinese defeats of Portuguese forces at the battles of Tunmen (屯門海戰) and Xicaowan (西草灣之戰) earlier in the sixteenth century. Whether or not the Spanish knew about these defeats in the late 1570s is unknown but if they had, as they had taken place half a century earlier, they were (quite reasonably) not taken as evidence of what might happen in an actual battle between the Spanish and Ming.

China, however, had more military might than the newly-arrived Spanish gave them credit for. The population alone was a significant military asset—every European

[227] For databases showing a rough tabulation of the frequency of warfare in both China and Europe, see Appendix 2 of Tonio Andrade's *The Gunpowder Age,* pp. 312-315.

observer in this period commented on the vast amounts of people they observed in China. Population estimates for the late Ming period are difficult to come by, but range as high as 150 million, representing a tremendous pool of potential soldiers, as Alfaro alluded to in his report.[228] In addition to this, the late Ming military made extensive use of guns and cannons (in a far more innovative context than Westerners have historically given them credit for, considering the long-held belief that the Chinese used gunpowder primarily for fireworks displays), and, as the dazzled friars discovered, their fortifications were far more imposing than anything European cities at the time could boast.[229] When Alfaro wrote that the gates of Guangzhou were "thrice as thick and sturdy as those of Sevilla," it was almost certainly an understatement. The Seville city gates that remain extant are certainly impressive with their menacing guard towers and sloped walls, but they are no comparison to Chinese gates from the same period, which could rise to one hundred feet in height and were really large complexes in which prospective entrants had to traverse several entrances and outworks before gaining access to the city (small wonder Alfaro was so proud of his easy entrance).[230] In short, Alfaro had never seen the like, and it was instantly obvious that contemporary Spanish might could never batter down those fortifications.

What Alfaro witnessed during his six months in Guangzhou was the everyday functioning of a major metropolis in the world's most powerful nation—there was no ongoing mobilization when he visited, no threat of attack, simply business as usual in one

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[228] Tim Brook et al., *Geographic Sources of Ming-Qing History*. (Ann Arbor: Michigan, 1988), p. 44.
[229] Gunpowder: Late sixteenth-century Spaniards did not hold the belief that the Chinese did not develop innovative uses for gunpowder; Robert Parke's translation of Mendoza openly states that credit for the invention of the cannon belonged to the Chinese and not to "the Alemanes" as Europeans had thought. Parke, p. 129.
[230] Andrade, *Gunpower Age,* pp. 2-3, 70-71.

of the most splendid cities the sixteenth-century world could boast. This, however, was completely sufficient for him to fully internalize the impossibility of a Spanish conquest of China, much less in the small-scale *a la mexicana* model favored at the time. And when his report reached Almanza and Philip II, they too were convinced. Such was the might of Ming China—a depth of power that, once perceived, was so profoundly obvious that those who had access to firsthand knowledge doubted the weakness of China no more. The consequences of his report, and above all its fortuitous timing, would prove to be pivotal in the development of a distinct Pacific World.

Chapter Five: "'King of the Ocean Sea'?: Philip II and Habsburg Expansion into the Pacific in the 1580s and Beyond"

The details of Pedro de Alfaro's ignominious return trip to Manila are sparse, perhaps understandably so—after the dreadful disappointment that was the mission to Guangzhou, it's quite probable that nobody involved felt much like chronicling it. We do know from references in later correspondence that Alfaro, Pablo de Jesús, Agustín de Tordesillas, and their guards were the guests of Melchior Carneiro Leitão, the first bishop of Macau, on their way back to Manila. And Agustín de Tordesillas wrote later that the young translator Simon wept when it came time to board the ship to the Philippines—whether it was because the mission had failed or because he was once again leaving China (or both), Tordesillas did not say.[231]

All in all, the spring of 1580 was a difficult time for Pedro de Alfaro. Forcibly bundled back to Manila via Macau without winning either the converts or the glory he had hoped for, he spent much of what little free time he had pacing back and forth along the northern boundary of Intramuros facing the Pasig River, knowing that a walk along the western wall opening onto Manila Bay would arouse too much suspicion.[232] After his ejection from Guangzhou under Portuguese guard, he was unceremoniously returned to

[231] For the stay with Carneiro, Cartas de bispos, ANTT. Contos do Estado da Índia, p. 422. For Simon's tears, Carta de Agustín de Tordesillas sobre franciscanos en china. AGI Filipinas, .r 30.
[232] Cartas del franciscano Pedro de Alfaro..., v. 7

his original post and his shared cell in the Augustinian church under the watchful eye of Governor Francisco de Sande, who seemed perversely determined to spend the remainder of his term thwarting Alfaro's plans to return to China. And indeed he was—like Guido de Lavezaris before him, Francisco de Sande was vitally interested in both Spain's future regarding China and maintaining his own authority, and he was furious at the friars for endangering both. The old animosity between Alfaro and Sande flared up again with the former's return, and the governor was determined to prevent any future embarrassments.

This in turn left Alfaro stymied. How was he to get back to China and successfully pursue his mission? While Almanza's orders to him concerning gathering information on Chinese infrastructure had been satisfied (though of course not in the way the Spanish hoped), the dream of establishing a Franciscan mission in China remained, and Alfaro, having learned much while in China, was anxious to return and apply his knowledge, if only for the sake of the souls of the pagans he had left behind. It seemed quite hopeless. The situation in the Philippines was bad enough with Sande watching closely and a vigorous new governor about to begin his term (Alfaro wrote repeatedly of the "cruelty" of Sande in forbidding him re-entry to China), but now Alfaro knew the odds he and his fellow friars faced in China itself.[233]

The Ming were much more powerful, numerous, and cultivated than he or any other Spaniard had suspected—a spiritual *conquista a la mexicana*, with organized missions established in tandem with a military conquest, was definitely off the table. Worse, the affair of the stolen chalices aside, the Chinese seemed strangely uninterested in his liturgical books and the mysteries of the Mass, unlike the *indios* of the Americas, who, Alfaro had been assured while in Mexico, were positively hungry for the word and

[233] Ibid., v. 8.

the wafer. These potential converts (all "pagans" were potential converts) would of course only grow in their "wicked inconstancy" if they were allowed to continue on their godless path, and Alfaro, whose concern for the souls of unbelievers was quite genuine, brooded about this terrible possibility.[234] Worse, the possibility of being a pioneer in the great missionary field of China was rapidly shrinking—"other friars clamor to enter China, a fine thing for the infidels but my sinful pride causes me to wish I was there to greet them."[235] The crowd of prospective missionaries to China was growing, with the Jesuits in particular making considerable strides in learning the language, establishing guidelines for their religious to follow in order to foster success and win converts, and making the connections necessary for a legitimate entry into China.[236] Alfaro, always one to help foster a rivalry, was deeply concerned about the prospect of a Jesuit, of all orders surely the worst possibility, for "they love the souls of the rich the most," snatching the acclaim and conversions he had hoped would be his in 1579.[237] (The famous rivalry between the Jesuits and the Mendicant orders, to which the Franciscans belonged, was a feature of religious life long before the Rites Controversy, stretching back to the founding of the Society of Jesús when the two groups found themselves on opposite sides of Counter-Reformation spiritual reform debates. Alfaro as a Discalced Franciscan railed against both the traditional Franciscan worldview and that of the upstart Jesuits.[238]) Altogether, a dire situation— from the friar's point of view, the need to return to China was desperate, but Alfaro, under virtual guard in Manila, had no immediate prospects of getting there.

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[234] Mendoza, p. 246.
[235] Cartas del franciscano..., v. 9.
[236] Dunne, p. 13.
[237] Mendoza., p. 216.
[238] Piotr Stolarski, *Friars on the Frontier...* (New York: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 37-39.

As the sweltering Manila spring wore on, Alfaro slipped into a state of what contemporary physicians might have termed *melancholia.* According to Pablo de Jesús, he brooded incessantly over his failures in China and inability to return there ("the good friar was long occupied with dolorous thoughts"), and even the rising number of Tagalog and Ilokano converts and the increased stability of Spanish power on the island of Luzon brought him little joy, although he was pleased to reflect that an attack like Ling Feng's 1574 assaults seemed somewhat more remote than it had when he arrived in the islands in 1578.[239] At the same time, he was certainly not idling his time away in a state of depression—in March 1580 the Augustinians praised him for his efforts in preaching "powerfully" through an interpreter to the residents of remote Luzon villages.[240] Alfaro was finding some solace in the position of *custodio* he had once scorned in favor of the glories of China.

For all his efforts to keep busy, the ouster from Guangzhou ate at him—his few surviving letters from this period all contain gloomy observations on the difficulty of his situation, with even his penmanship suffering as he contemplated the obstacles in front of him.[241] In one letter to Melchior Carneiro, thanking him for his courtesy during the friars' return trip to Manila, his handwriting looped outward alarmingly as he moved from perfunctory thanks for his hospitality to the subject of his "cruel" dislodging from Guangzhou and his fears that he would never be able to get back. "China," he wrote to the Bishop, repeating his words to Juan Ayora, "is as tightly guarded as a convent of

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[239] De Jesús, p. 40. Piracy was a more or less universal—and very understandable—preoccupation for not just the residents of Manila, but everyone in this period with a vested interest in sailing or living in coastal areas of the Pacific Rim.
[240] Conquista Espiritual de las Yslas Philippinas: Por los religiosos de N.P.V. Augustin, Years 1577-1583. LL Philippines MSS, p. 33.
[241] Cartas del franciscano..., pp. 17-22.

nuns." (When Alfaro hit upon a phrase he particularly enjoyed, he did not hesitate to share it again.)[242] So was Manila now—Sande, despite the fact that he had just received notification that his term would be ending and he would be returning to the Americas, was doing his best to ensure that there would be no more unauthorized departures.[243] The ever-faithful Pablo de Jesús did his best to keep his superior buoyed up, but it was in the bleak months of March and April that Alfaro's haughty, prideful spirit came closest to admitting defeat as he accepted that he would never be the *custodio* of a Chinese Franciscan mission established in tandem with the Spanish conquest of China.

Over the course of May 1580, however, Alfaro's gloom lifted. It was not that he had re-assessed Spain's likelihood of conquest and found new hope—indeed, as he wrote to Juan Ayora, he had none, at least not in terms of conquest. But he did have renewed hope for a new entry to China, this time via Goa, where he had been in sporadic contact with the Franciscans of the Bardez region since his days in Spain.[244]

A ship was sailing from Manila to Macau and from Macau on to Goa, and if he could get on that ship and arrive safely in India, his Franciscan brothers there were prepared to take him in, despite his unpleasant relations with the Portuguese of Guangzhou. (As events in China had shown, Alfaro found it difficult to hide his Spanish scorn, but could do so when necessary, as seen in his warm correspondence with the Portuguese—and Jesuit—Bishop of Macau). In Goa, he could actually study Chinese properly instead of relying on the dubious services of Simon and the *sangley* interpreters available in Manila (*sangleyes* were people of Chinese descent living in the Philippines;

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[242] Primeira parte das Chronicas da Ordem dos Frades Menores... ANTT, p. 129.
[243] Chapter Six examines why exactly Sande was so anxious to preserve the privileges of a position he was about to leave.
[244] Carta del franciscanos...r.2. No documentary evidence for this correspondence other than Alfaro's word exists.

mestizos de sangley were Filipinos of mixed indigenous and Chinese ancestry), and he stood a greater chance of being part of an actual, formal, permitted-in-advance Franciscan mission to China one day, free of the fear of sudden arrest or betrayal.[245] Indeed, this entry through Goa, had he been able to achieve it, would have actually allowed him to have the potential of really being the kind of great missionary he dreamed of being. The 1579 mission, for all its drama, was a tenuous affair from the very start, and without any of the friars involved having fluency in Chinese (nor indeed any recorded study of it, though of course that is not proof that Tordesillas or de Jesús had not been doing so), it would have had little hope of long-term success anyways. Preparation and study in Goa, however, could allow him to eventually make a more permanent impact on the cause of bringing Catholicism to the Chinese.

So Alfaro's dreams of being a herald for Christ in the Middle Kingdom rose up again, this time no skulking intruder warding off devils and guards, but a welcomed guest with the ability to openly set up a monastery, a school to "give these poor creatures knowledge of the catechism," a hospital, and perhaps to one day influence the Ming to fully accept Christianity even if they would never bow before a European monarch. Visions of himself as the abbot of a thriving Franciscan mission in Guangzhou filled his head—he saw himself ministering to thousands of new converts and graciously receiving the very same Portuguese merchants who had driven him out of China, this time as supplicants seeking his blessing. If this dream-mission could not sprawl over a Guangzhou under the Spanish banner (Alfaro never abandoned his conviction that armed conquest was an impossibility), then he could still make his mark on China with the

[245] Teotino de Souza, *Medieval Goa: A Socioeconomic History*, (New Delhi: Concept, 1979) p. 76, and "Carta del franciscanos...", v.7.

resources and connections a stay in Goa would provide. The opportunity was too good to pass up.[246]

Alfaro made his arrangements in secret, wary of the watchful eye of Sande. Pablo de Jesús wrote later that Alfaro issued him what might be termed a spiritual last will and testament. De Jesús was entrusted with the leadership of the other Franciscans (this was an elected position but the nomination of a predecessor was important), the welfare of the souls of the small clutches of converts they had been preaching to, and an order to fulfill his own personal vow of returning to China himself one day, ideally as the honored appointee of Alfaro in his once-and-future capacity as head of the Guangzhou Franciscans. If God in his infinite wisdom chose not to grant Alfaro his wish, de Jesús was to return clandestinely when he judged fit (as he eventually did in 1583, to the intense annoyance of Governor Ronquillo).[247] Otherwise, we know nothing of Alfaro's preparations to leave for Goa. If he felt anxiety at the prospect of two more long sea voyages, he said nothing to Pablo de Jesús, the main source for Alfaro's life in May 1580 (who in any case would probably not have written about any trepidation on the part of a man he regarded almost as a personal hero and whose reputation as a fearless man of God he spent much of the rest of his life promoting in his letters).[248] So it was presumably with a light heart and no fear that on June 1st, 1580, Fray Pedro de Alfaro, *custodio* of the

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[246] Carta del franciscanos... V. 8 -r 9, and Relación, v. 33. All of the particulars in this paragraph were mentioned in Alfaro's letters.

[247] Pablo de Jesús sobre los misioneros en China... AFIO Caja 002, p. 32. On the election of a new *custodio*: Pablo de Jesús won this position handily after Alfaro's death; de Jesús's successor was Juan Baptista, the friar who had been left in Macau. Baptista, a shy man and a gifted musician, is said to have run away and hid upon learning of his election. Juan Baptista, AFIO Caja 002, p. 18.

[248] Pablo de Jesús AFIO, p. 34.

first Franciscan province in the Philippines and the first Spanish Franciscan to set foot in Ming China, sailed from Manila Bay for the second and last time.[249]

A little over two weeks later, on June 16th, 1580, a corpse washed up on the shores of Macau, along with a few pieces of timber and some rough linen of the kind used in making sails.[250] This was a sadly common event, and the requisite authorities were dispatched to handle the removal and internment of the departed. However, this was no ordinary body. According to the Necrology of the Friars Minor, the Europeans of Macau were amazed to find that the body, unshod and clad in the rough robes of the Discalced Franciscans, was posed in an attitude of prayer, knees bent, hands clasped, and eyes gazing reverently towards Heaven. How could this posture have been maintained through the terror of drowning, through the death throes, and finally the journey through the warm summer sea without divine intervention? Most astonishingly, the body was found to be incorrupt, intact, and unbloated, despite its sojourn in tropical waters infested with all manner of carnivorous sea creatures. Indeed, the face was still quite recognizable, with even Bishop Carneiro, old and nearsighted as he was, able to identify the deceased as the friar who had been in Macau earlier that spring after his expulsion from China and from whom he in fact had had a letter from quite recently. He was "deeply amazed" to see his recent correspondent lying dead before him, and quickly called for an altar and celebrated a mass for the dead on the spot.[251]

Afterwards, as the bishop slowly trudged back up the beach, word quickly spread among the European population and the Macanese Christians that a man of God was dead

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[249] Ibid., p. 34.
[250] Atilius Redigolo, ed. *Necrologium Fratrum Minorum in Sinis.* (Hong Kong: Tang King Po, 1978), p. 85. The *Necrologium* is a compilation of historical registers related to the deaths of Franciscans in Asia.
[251] Carta a Gobernador Ronquillo...AGI Filipinas, v 25.

on the beach and that the state of the corpse was such that there could be little doubt that he was someone blessed by Christ and the Virgin. Incorruptibility was (and to a certain extent still is) a major feature of Catholic worship and a major factor in the determining of a miracle—an incorrupt body was a sign of holiness, particularly, as in Alfaro's case, when there existed circumstances that would ordinarily hasten putrefaction. The tale of Alfaro's discovery on the beach—medically speaking, it is extremely unlikely that he actually was posed in a prayer posture, although of course the reality of these events is less important than their interpretation by contemporaries—was in a way a posthumous validation of Alfaro's dreams of glory. The actual state of Alfaro's corpse notwithstanding, it was an indication that those around him, particularly his fellow Franciscans, attached great importance to Alfaro and his actions.[252]

Pedro de Alfaro had perished several days previously and somewhat more prosaically, when his ship went down in bad weather off the coast of Macau with a loss of all hands as well as a a small cargo of Chinese cloth bound for India.[253] What he thought and who he prayed to as the waters closed over him is unknown, and the tale of his miraculous postmortem posture is, of course, unlikely at best. His burial spot is also unknown today, but is possibly in or near the St. Lazarus Church in the old Portuguese city.[254] What is known is that his body was installed on a "grand" bier in a church in Macau, and that perpetual prayers were paid for by a group of local religious, who remained in attendance on the body until it began to decompose in the warm air and was

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[252] Redigolo, 85. For incorruptibility, Christine Quigley, *The Corpse: A History*. (Jefferson: McFarland, 2005), pp. 253-5.
[253] Redigolo, p. 85.
[254] This is at least the view of the current administrators of the church, who had never heard of Alfaro and have no burial records for 1580.

buried several days later—so much for the miracle of incorruption.[255] And we know that the Bishop himself wrote a kind, dignified letter of condolence informing both the Bishop of Manila, Domingo de Salazar, and the new Governor-General of the Philippines, Gonzalo de Ronquillo, of Alfaro's demise.[256]

Ronquillo, who would write of the long-dead Alfaro with fury in his 1582 proclamation against unlicensed departures from the islands, was not particularly overcome with grief at the news of the friar's death, although he naturally responded to the news with the requisite prayers and masses.[257] To Ronquillo, a man who would spend almost the entirety of his three-year term as governor deflecting accusations of tyranny and abuse, the death of Alfaro was, if not exactly welcome news, at the very least a removal of a potential thorn in his side. It was better for the troublesome friar to be cooling his heels in Purgatory than potentially damaging Ronquillo's plans for his new position.

However, Alfaro's death was a terrible blow to Pablo de Jesús, who wrote that this was "the sorest trial" since he had taken orders twenty years before. An emotionally demonstrative man, he was observed shedding copious tears for Alfaro before an image of St. Peter on the apostle's feast day on the following June.[258] De Jesús secluded himself in fasting and prayer for his friend's soul for a time after the news reached Manila, anxious to do his part in assuring that Alfaro's journey through Purgatory would terminate in Heaven as swiftly as possible.[259] When he emerged from his cell in the

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[255] Cartas del Obispo Salazar.... AGI Filipinas 74,N.17, r. 93.
[256] Ibid, r.95. and Cartas del Gobernador...., v.34.
[257] Cartas del Gobernador...., r.33. For more on this proclamation, see Chapter Six.
[258] Pablo de Jesús, p. 69. This might also be an indication of Alfaro's birthday, though unfortunately not his birth year. Textual evidence suggests that he was in late middle age at the time of his death.
[259] Ibid., p. 56.

Augustinian monastery, he was delighted to find that his fellow Franciscans, in Manila and elsewhere, were proclaiming that Alfaro's (temporarily) incorrupt state and the positioning of his body were sure signs of God's displeasure towards not only the Chinese who had failed to heed Alfaro's message, but towards the secular authorities who had opposed his mission—a narrative that de Jesús lost no time in spreading further, to the intense anger of Ronquillo.[260] Unfortunately, most of the sources for exactly what de Jesús was saying and writing about Alfaro are no longer extant—his own account of his career in the Philippines, used as a source throughout this work, goes into some detail about his belief that Alfaro died with divine favor, but the sources for de Jesús's remarks concerning Governor Sande are limited to Ronquillo's own writings and the brief testimony of a handful of contemporaries who simply remarked that de Jesús was spreading "scandalous talk" in Macau.[261]

Pablo de Jesús's motivations were not confined to commemorating his friend or chastising Sande. The Franciscan order, shut out of China for the time being and barely established elsewhere in Asia (what a contrast to those glory days during the Yuan Dynasty!), needed a hero and a martyr, and in this context Alfaro's death appeared to be literally heaven-sent, even if it did cause Pablo de Jesús (and the newly-tonsured Juan Diaz Pardo, who had given up his career as an ensign to take holy orders after seeing Alfaro's example in China) great personal sadness.[262] So the story of Alfaro's heroic death and miraculous postmortem condition spread among the devout of Spanish and Portuguese Asia, a process that is difficult to measure with the available sources, but that crops up periodically multiple times until the influx of Jesuit and Dominican missionaries

[260] Pregón de Ronquillo...., r.1.
[261] Pregón, r. 1, and Cartas del Agustínos sobre China....AGI Filipinas 43, N. 22., v. 26.
[262] Carta de Francisco Dueñas y Juan Díaz Pardo sobre China, AGI Filipinas 34 N. 32., r. 9.

in East Asia drowned out the memory of Alfaro. In the meantime, however, Alfaro's modest legend grew. This interpretation of his miraculous death and heroic efforts on behalf of Christianity in China continued to gain adherents even after the corpse began to turn black on its bier in Macau, and even after the new Governor Ronquillo asserted that he and the recently-departed Francisco de Sande were true and faithful Catholics who wanted nothing more than to see all of Asia kneeling before the crucifix.[263] The tale persisted long enough for it to be duly noted as an essential fact of his demise by the compilers of the *Necrologium Fratrum Minorum in Sinis*, a compendium of death records and primary sources concerning Franciscans in Asia.[264]

The End of the Conquest Dream

Pedro de Alfaro returned to Manila in 1580 with a heavy heart, equally melancholy about the failure of his great mission to China and about the distressing news he was about to impart to Viceroy Almanza, who was waiting patiently to hear what kind of information he had been able to gather on Chinese power. Alas for the hopes of the Viceroy (and Philip II, and Guido de Lavezaris, and Francisco de Sande...), the news was not what the architects of the Spanish Empire's rapid territorial expansion wanted to hear: in Alfaro's words, China was "impossible" to conquer and was "mighty and powerful."[265] China represented a power quite beyond the scope of the Spanish, especially in the context of the *conquista de China a la mexicana* that was the favored option for seizing China in the 1560s and 1570s. Spain was left with no other realistic option but to accept that the conquest of the Philippines was likely to remain the apex of their expansion into

[263] Ordenes del gobernador..., NAP Folio 7, p. 45.
[264] Redigolo, 85.
[265] Cartas del franciscano...., v. 12.

Asia, and to focus their subsequent efforts vis-a-vís China on establishing a trade relationship. The previous chapter detailed Alfaro's troubled sojourn in Guangzhou and the details of his assessment of Chinese power; here the effects of that report are examined in a global context.

The year 1580 marked three significant events in the history of Sino-Spanish relations. Alfaro's report to Almanza showed clearly that an armed invasion of China, heretofore a significant aspect of Spanish policy in Asia, was completely unfeasible and that renewed focus needed to be placed on establishing Portuguese-style relations with the Ming that would allow the Spanish to at least profit from the Chinese if they wanted to remain in Asia long-term. At the same time, Philip II's annexation of Portugal that same year meant that, while the administrations of the two countries were kept separate, Spain did have a natural interest in maintaining Portugal's good relations with the Ming. Finally, the establishment of the Single Whip Reform law (*yi tiao bian fa,* 一條鞭法) as a national reform in Ming China meant that he silver market in China increased exponentially, opening up a significant new avenue for trade between Spain and the Ming. The Chinese silver market was now exponentially increased, opening a new avenue of unofficial—but extremely lucrative—trade arrangements between Spain and the Ming. In this atmosphere of confusion and poor communication, the Spanish attempted to send three more diplomatic missions to Ming China, all of which ended in failure.

Pedro de Alfaro, ever a conscientious correspondent, disseminated his assessment of Chinese power in three different letters, two of which, unfortunately for the modern historian, do not differ significantly in length and content. The first was written to his

fellow friar Juan Ayora while he was still in China and details the "miracle" of their arrival, the sad affair of the Michoacán o mirror and the silver chalices, and the "treachery" of the interpreter Simon. It is essentially a first-impressions catalogue—Alfaro details the richness of the locals' garb, the awe-inspiring majesty of the soaring city gates, and his fascinated reports of the vast population and the impressive spectacle that was their licensure hearing. Already, two months into the trip, his writing is tinged with disappointment—the power of China was such that his proud status as a representative of Spanish power and the Catholic faith was completely ignored.[266] By the time he returned to the Philippines, this first impression had solidified into a steadfast denunciation of the *conquista* plan that he would maintain for the rest of his life.

In April of 1580, after his return to Manila and exactly two months before his death, Alfaro wrote an extraordinary letter to Fray Juan Ayora, the same fellow Franciscan that he had written to from Guangzhou the previous year. Juan Ayora, another of the missionaries of the period who, to the modern reader, is a much more sympathetic figure than Alfaro, was famed for his medical work among the *indios* of Michoacán in his youth. He was moreover a skilled translator (another area in which Alfaro falls considerably short of his contemporaries) whose primary contribution to history is his translation of the catechism into the P'urhépecha language, although since arriving in Manila he had thrown himself into learning Chinese, Tagalog, and Ilokano. Most importantly for the purposes of this narrative, however, he had been a respected Franciscan in high standing in Mexico City before he met Alfaro, whom he credited with

[266] Ayora, v.2.

inspiring him to come to the Philippines, and he therefore had many contacts at the viceregal court.[267]

Ayora was lodged a mere quarter-mile away in a church made of bamboo and nipa palm that would, the following year, be consecrated as Manila's first Cathedral, but Alfaro chose to write instead of taking the sticky, muddy walk from the more comfortable, wooden Augustinian church where he and most of the other Franciscans lived.[268] "Carta del franciscano Pedro de Alfaro a Juan Ayora sobre China" begins, as so many of Alfaro's letters did, with a complaint. "The heat is such that even a man of Seville would faint," he wrote, before recalling that Ayora had been born in the cooler, mountainous climate of Mexico City and thus had never had to endure the oppressive heat on the Isla de la Cartuja while waiting for fair weather to sail out into the Atlantic.[269] But the heat, and the specter of an unpleasant slog through the sweltering streets of monsoon-season Intramuros, though a favorite grousing subject of Alfaro's, was just a cover. Alfaro wanted to write to Ayora so that Ayora would be able to pass along his words intact to the viceregal court in New Spain—"you can send this letter to the people who knew you there."[270] Alfaro, of course, enjoyed excellent relations with the Viceroy and had fond memories of being feted in Mexico City en route to Manila in 1577, but

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[267] Turley, p. 158. Frustratingly, Juan Ayora shared the same forename and first surname as two other sixteenth-century figures—a bishop of Asturias, and one of the most notoriously cruel *conquistadores* of Mexico, making him somewhat difficult to track down in the archives.

[268] Both the bamboo cathedral and the wooden Augustinian church would burn down in 1583, when candles placed about the corpse of Governor Ronquillo set some cloth hangings aflame, burning much of Intramuros. Between that fire, the whirling fortunes of Spanish rule during the colonial period, the wholesale destruction of the Second World War, and the rapid growth of the postwar Philippines, almost nothing remains of Pedro de Alfaro's Manila. Pedro Armengol, *Intramuros de Manila.* (Madrid: Cultural, 1958), pp. 4, 37.

[269] The terrible heat of Manila is a common theme in Spanish colonial writings, even among those who had spent time in the tropical parts of the Americas. Virtually all of Alfaro's letters from the Philippines mention the heat at unusual length, which tacitly supports the contention that he was from the cooler region of Galicia and not Andalusia as some have asserted.

[270] Ayora., r. 13.

Ayora's reputation and contacts there put his to shame, and he wanted to ensure that his words would find "many listeners" once the letter left Manila. Alfaro planned to send a second, identical letter to the Viceroy, but he also wanted to write to his friend as he hoped to re-enter China soon and worried that the "inconstancy" of the sea and the letter couriers would result in the loss of a single letter.[271] (He did write the letter to Almanza—it is the third letter mentioned previously—but as the parts concerning the conquest plans are virtually identical in both letters, I have chosen to concentrate on Ayora's letter as it contains more personal notes.)

The trip to China, it transpired, had been a sobering moment for him. He had known before going that China, despite its pagan populace, was not a land of barbarians and backwards "infidels" (as he believed the Filipinos to be), but seeing it all in person had astounded him—he repeated his assertion that the Chinese looked upon Spaniards as Spaniards looked upon the *indios* of Mexico. China was much more powerful and populous than Spain had suspected, even accounting for the fact that the Spanish had been in direct sustained contact with Chinese merchants and the Portuguese residents of Macau for a decade now. Ayora knew this already of course, having been present when Alfaro, de Jesús, and Tordesillas had returned to Manila and having moreover been in contact with Alfaro during the disastrous trip to China, but Alfaro was repeating it in this letter destined for the viceroy in case his earlier report to New Spain had been garbled or dismissed.[272] There was to be no hope of conquest, at all, ever. Even if China was located "on the very frontiers of Spain," Philip II could never muster enough manpower and

[271] Ibid., r. 13.
[272] Ibid., r. 18.

weaponry to add the Ming empire to its vast colonial possessions—the two huge oceans between them only further confirmed what was already an impossibility.

Moreover, Alfaro wanted to make clear that it was not just a military conquest that was impossible. He believed that it was vital for more and more friars to pour into China, and he cherished hopes of a sizable population of Chinese Christians one day, but there would never be a wholly Catholic China under the dominion of Rome—the Confucian establishment was simply far too powerful. Disseminating his knowledge Spain could never take China, militarily or spiritually—it would be "like trying to grasp the moon"—was to be his greatest legacy, until and unless he could find a way back in to begin his mission anew. [273] These words were a damning assessment of Spain's power in the greater Asian-Pacific sphere, and though they were written in a state of despair, it was the despair that comes of facing a harsh, final truth. Alfaro gave the letter to Juan Diaz Pardo, the former bodyguard, now a Franciscan novice, whose attendance on Alfaro had spurred him to take the robes and throw away his shoes the previous month. Diaz would be the one to make the uncomfortable walk through the muggy, humid streets to the sturdy bamboo church and deliver the letter to Ayora, with a request that the latter please consider coming by the Augustinian church the next day to "succor" Alfaro in his time of sorrow.[274]

Alfaro, for all his bluster, rudeness, and hauteur, was taken seriously by the authorities in both Mexico and Spain. Both of his letters concerning the feasibility of a conquest of China—the one he wrote directly to Almanza and the second, very similar one he penned to Ayora as a safeguard—reached the viceregal court on the 1581 Manila

[273] Ibid, v. 21. Original: "con o sin soldados, querer ir a China es tratar de aferrar la luna."
[274] Ibid, outer envelope.

Galleon to Acapulco. Ayora's letter remained in Mexico City until the independence of Mexico, whereupon it was shipped to the Archive of the Indies in Seville, but Almanza's made its way to the court of Philip II the following year, where it was summarized for inclusion in a report for the king's *Consejo de Estado*. The report stated:

> Having determined that the peoples of China are so numerous, their cities so well defended, and their armies so grand, the writer [Alfaro] advises Your Majesty that a pacification of China by Your Majesty is impossible, a judgement deemed to be true and correct by he who was Viceroy [Almanza].[275]

In the margins of this brief, the handwriting of Philip II—at once dense and spidery and therefore instantly identifiable—acknowledges the veracity of the report: "Verdad. El Rey." And with that brief note, followed by one of the ubiquitous ornamental flourishes beloved of sixteenth-century correspondence, China was tacitly acknowledged to be out of reach of the might of the Habsburgs.[276]

This recognition of the impossibility of a Spanish conquest was, naturally, not made public—this brief acknowledgement is the sole explicit documentary proof of the death of the conquest dream. Nor did this unspoken shift in policy mean that Spain never again alluded to a military invasion of China—on the contrary, threats to take China remained a regular feature of internal and inter-colonial Spanish correspondence for the rest of the sixteenth century, as Manel Ollé's work points out. He details one 1583 instance where a Juan Bautista Róman, a *factor* (business agent) living in Macau, eagerly announced that a mere five thousand soldiers, dispatched via Mexico, could easily overrun the Ming defenses in Fujian, as well as a similar plan by the Jesuit Alonso Sanchez.[277] Five thousand soldiers was also the estimate given by Francisco de Sande a

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[275] Brevas del Consejo de Estado 1582, Patronato 20, r.1.
[276] Ibid., r. 1, margins. For Philip II's handwriting, see Parker, *Imprudent King*, p. 28.
[277] Ollé, pp. 157-158.

year later, long after his return to Latin America—so much for the *a la mexicana* plan of a small core of seasoned soldiers dismantling the Ming system.[278]

These plans are at first glance difficult to differentiate from the dreams of the 1570s of a Ming China under the sway of Spain—without the context of Alfaro's report, and the subsequent knowledge that China was considerably more powerful than they had imagined, these newer plans can appear to be simply the latest in a string of ideas to conquer China. I argue that these bouts of saber-rattling have more to do with a tradition of militarized boasting, as it were, than they do with any kind of serious plan to expand Habsburg control into China—essentially, that there is a difference between a conquest plan delineated on the assumption that China was in some way comparable to earlier civilizations that had been made part of the Empire and a conquest plan articulated after it was understood that the Ming was the dominant power in Asia. Indeed, the shift away from the *a la mexicana* model is an indication of this change—the vastly inflated forces have a ring of braggadocio about them. Those militaristic dreams were simply a relic of an era of limited Sino-Spanish interaction, when China functioned as a sort of blank slate for the rapidly-expanding Spanish world to project its fears and hopes onto. The stark reality of the seemingly-infinite power of China put an end to conquest as a serious discussion—conquest was an impossible dream, best illustrated by the fact that the actual eventual defeat of the Ming by the Manchu in the seventeenth century took over six decades and cost millions of lives.[279] Naturally the Spanish and the Manchu had different goals and different approaches to the idea of toppling the Ming, but the Ming's ability to retain power for decades after the fall of Beijing in the very region Spain was targeting

[278] Carta de Sande sobre una conquista de China. AGI Filipinas 84, R. 2, r. 3.
[279] William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing*. (Cambridge: Harvard, 2015), pp. 4-6.

makes it profoundly obvious that any real attempt by Spain would have ended quickly and bloodily. Moreover, the entire context of the Asia-Pacific region Spain that was so anxious to become the major power in had changed at precisely the same moment the Spanish realized that conquering China was never going to be a reality. The implicit (and sometimes explicit) threat represented by the Portuguese presence in Asia had changed character, and, more importantly, an extraordinary new market was about to open up in the Pacific Rim.

Portugal, China, and Silver: The Changing Face of the Pacific

Spain, having naturally backed away from the idea of an armed conquest of China, concentrated its subsequent efforts on attempting to establish lucrative trade licenses with the Chinese (while maintaining, of course, some of the belligerence that characterized so much of early modern European international communication)—essentially, it was a return to the option explored in Martín de Rada's failed embassy of 1575. A trade agreement with China would not only enrich Spain, it would keep the empire in the loop in the region, opening up opportunities later. However, a major change in the balance of power among Europeans in the Western Pacific meant that the context of establishing a trade agreement between Spain and China was somewhat different than it had been during de Rada's mission—Spain and Portugal were now united under the rule of Philip II.

After several years of dynastic maelstrom and civil war following the 1578 disappearance in battle of the young Portuguese king Sebastian I, Philip II had formally taken the Portuguese crown in 1581 at almost the precise time word reached Madrid of

the infeasibility of a Chinese conquest.[280] While the Iberian Union, being dynastic, did not allow the Spanish direct control over Portuguese international affairs (and indeed, a citizen of Portugal was officially a foreigner in all the Spanish territories), it did mean that Spain had an excellent opportunity to profit from the lucrative trade agreements the Portuguese had so painstakingly cultivated, if only indirectly. This in turn meant that the Sino-Portuguese agreements were no longer to be undermined, but protected—unless, of course, Spain could forge some of its own. Philip II, now also Philip I of Portugal, now realized that something needed to be done to placate both China and Portugal in regards to the Alfaro affair.

Portugal, which was so important to Spanish concerns that it was widely proposed that the capital of the Empire be moved to Lisbon, came first.[281] The Portuguese in their letters to Sande in 1579 had expressed deep concerns about the damage Alfaro was capable of in regards to their agreements with China—the sixty-odd year relationship between the two countries had always been rocky, and they feared that any untoward incident could result in their expulsion. One of the earliest Portuguese in Ming China, Simão de Andrade, had spoiled Sino-Portuguese relations soon after they began in the 1510s, and as recently as 1545, every Portuguese trader present in Ningbo had been killed by the Chinese.[282] By the 1570s, an uneasy peace had been achieved, but the Portuguese were widely treated with contempt and suspicion, and it was (quite reasonably) feared

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[280] Boxer, *Portuguese…* p. 67. Sebastian is presumed to have been killed during the Battle of Ksar El Kebir in present-day Morocco, but his body was never recovered. Eventually Sebastian became a folk-hero and the basis of a mystic belief system in Portugal and Brazil known as *Sebastianismo*—the belief that the missing king would return in times of trouble to save Portugal (or Brazil) and lead it into a glorious new era. Jacqueline Hermann, *No Reino do Desejado. A construção do sebastianismo em Portugal, séculos XVI e XVII.* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998), pp. iv-v.

[281] A.R. Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire, Vol I.* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 2009), p. 198.

[282] Ibid., p. 170, 178.

that the Chinese would seize upon any available excuse to cast them out. Despite the leniency with which the Cantonese authorities had treated Alfaro, there was always the possibility that the affair would be resurrected by the Chinese at an uncomfortable moment. The new Cortés, fortified by the addition of leading Portuguese nobles, quickly sent missives from both Madrid and Lisbon to their representatives in Manila, Macau, and Goa, urging forbearance and calm towards the Chinese, particularly concerning "the troublesomeness in Guangzhou regarding the Spanish friars."[283]

Philip II, now also Philip I of Portugal, sent a conciliatory letter to the Wanli Emperor in his capacity as monarch of both countries. "The Esteemed King of China" was asked by Philip, "King of the Ocean Sea," to preserve the profitable and mutually-beneficial trade arrangements with Philip's Portuguese kingdom, and to please accept the Iberian king's offer to send "tractable Franciscans," who would commit no evils and would be bound by the laws and governances of China, in order that the people of "so great a kingdom" might partake in the even greater goodness of the Gospel.[284] The brief letter is subtle, never alluding directly to Alfaro, but instead choosing to express regret for the dearth of friendly, obedient Franciscans in China—and significantly written after both Sande's report on the whole affair and the formal annexation of the Portuguese crown. Compared to an earlier letter of Philip's to the Emperor, the difference is stark. In a letter of 1580, written before Alfaro's death and before Philip took the crown, the king also asked for kindness and leniency towards a group of friars (Augustinians who were ultimately denied entry to Chinese territory beyond Macau), but the tone of regret and promises of good behavior found in the later letter are missing, to say nothing of Philip's

[283] Cartas oficiales de filipinas: portuguesas. AGI Patronato,24, r.12.
[284] Carta del Felipe II al Rey de China: Franciscanos. AGI Patronato 25,R,51, r. 2-r. 3.

anxiety about the Portuguese trade agreements.[285] The 1580 letter is a letter of a Spanish power unsure of its ultimate plan in regards to China; the 1581 missive one from a monarch who had interests to defend and aims to achieve amid the knowledge that they were unlikely to be successfully achieved by force. For the time being, conciliation was the goal between both Spain and China and the newly united Iberian peninsula.

The Iberian Union in Asia is a significant aspect of the historiographies of both nations, and of European expansion into Asia in general, and what is there has been generally well-executed works of scholarship in a much-needed area. Charles Boxer explored the complex world of the early modern Portuguese overseas empire in Asia over the course of a long and fruitful career, but several historians have written specifically on the Iberian Union in Asia in recent years. John Slater, in "The Terrible Embrace of the Incipient Baroque: Textually Enacting the Union of Crowns," uses the Moluccas as a centerpiece in his study of textual remembrances of "(theoretically) boundless monarchy" to good effect, pointing out the unease many contemporaries felt over the union even while enjoying its benefits, while Graça Almeida Borges uses the 1607 capture of Ormuz in the Persian Gulf by Portuguese forces to illustrate the uneasy integration of the Portuguese overseas infrastructure into the larger Spanish system.[286] Finally, Kevin Sheehan's unpublished 2008 dissertation, "Iberian Asia: The Strategies of Spanish and Portuguese Empire Building, 1540-1700," examines the Moluccas as a symbol of Iberian expansion and interaction in the early modern Pacific.[287] In contrast to these, my own

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[285] Carta del Felipe II al Rey de China (AGI Patronato 25,R.54),r. 2.
[286] John Slater, "The Terrible Embrace…," *Ellipsis* 12 (2014): pp. 191-211, p. 209, and Borges, "The Iberian Union and the Portuguese Overseas Empire, 1600-1625: Ormuz and the Persian Gulf in the Global Politics of the Hispanic Monarchy," *e-JPH*, Vol. 2, No. 12, (Dec 2014), n.p.
[287] Morga, ch. 2.

work seeks to analyze the Union in the context of Portugal and Spain's very different relationships with China, as well as in the context of an expanding Pacific World.

1580 also marked another significant shift in the balance of power in the Pacific: the rise of the global silver trade and with it, the transition of Spain and China from potential enemies on the field of battle to long-term, if still informal, trade partners (although, in the grand tradition of early modern international relations, the silver trade did not quell all tension between the two). While silver had of course been a commodity traded by the Spanish for decades before 1580 (the infamous mines of Potosí had opened in 1545, for example), a major change in Ming taxation doubled the value of silver almost immediately and changed the face of Spanish finances for decades.[288]

This rise in silver trade was the result of the 1580 promulgation of the Single Whip Reform (*yi tiao bian fa,* 一條鞭法) throughout the Ming Empire. This reform consolidated the existing complicated tax system into a single payment, rendered in silver rather than rice, sparking an almost instantaneous demand for silver. This was a demand Spain was quite willing to fulfill, and the trade flourished throughout the remainder of the Ming Dynasty—providing Spain with that lucrative relationship with China they had once hoped to achieve through armed conquest. [289] The Single Whip Reform was the culmination of years of internal monetary policy shifts within Ming China. Hyperinflation in the fifteenth century devalued the copper-backed paper currency, and in response the Ming gradually introduced a silver-based system, which was made the law

[288] For Potosí: N. David Cook, *Demographic Collapse*. (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1981), p. 13. For the doubling of the value of silver: Flynn, "Silver Spoon," p. 86.
[289] Ibid., pp. 84-90.

of the land with the Single Whip Reform.[290] In addition to requiring vast amounts of bullion due to the sheer size of the Chinese economy at the time, this new policy also undervalued silver in comparison with other sixteenth-century economies, requiring yet larger amounts of meet the demand.[291]

The Spanish had begun mining significant amounts of silver in the Americas in the mid-sixteenth century, quickly edging out the Central European silver mines that had been dominant in the Western world before then.[292] Initially, the majority of the silver went back to the metropole in Spain to pay for the ruinously expensive European wars Philip II was wont to engage in; however, the Single Whip Reform opened a new opportunity for trade and pulled the maritime axis of the silver trade from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. Spain had such a tremendous amount of silver—Richard von Glahn describes it as "torrents of gold and silver that cascaded around the globe"—that it was able to surpass Japan as China's primary trading partner in silver.[293] That this opportunity for Spain opened up at precisely the same time as the crown turned from the idea of an armed conquest of China is an example of extremely fortuitous timing—it meant that now Spain had a vested interest in the continued functioning of the Ming system.

The trans-Pacific silver trade has become a significant historiographical topic in recent years—indeed, it is one of the few areas where Sino-Spanish relations are a major

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[290] Flynn et al, "China and the Spanish Empire," pp. 313-315. For another overview of the Ming fiscal reforms, see William Atwell and Ray Huang's respective chapters in Twitchett et al, *Cambridge History of China.* Wan Ming describes the Single Whip Reform as being the "key" to understanding the development of Ming society in the late sixteenth century. Wan Ming, "The Monetization of Silver in the Ming (1368-1644)." *Ming Qing Yanjiu* (2005): pp. 27-39, p. 27.

[291] Dennis Flynn, Arturo Giraldez, and Richard von Glahn, *Global Connections and Monetary History.* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p. 214.

[292] David Brading and Harry Cross, "Colonial Silver Mining: Mexico and Peru." *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol 52, No 4 (1972): pp. 545-579, p. 545.

[293] Richard von Glahn, *Fountains of Fortune: Money and Monetary Policy in China, 1000-1700.* (Berkeley: California, 1996), p. 113.

historiographical debate, and it is also a major aspect of the development of Pacific World historiography. The prevailing view among Western historians until the mid-twentieth century was to approach this trade as a European phenomenon, focusing on the silver trade as an aspect of Western history. However, recent scholarship, particularly the works of Richard von Glahn, Dennis Flynn, Arturo Giraldez, and William Atwell, have emphasized the silver trade as not only a significant aspect of Chinese economic history, but as a landmark event in the development of globalization—what Andre Gunder Frank describes as "the real issue...how China, Europe, and the rest of the world were related by a single global economy." This single global economy, at least in the context of the silver trade, was based in the Pacific maritime zone, establishing the final economic link between all major geographic areas.[294] My research contributes to this historiography by building upon and expanding the Pacific-oriented aspect of the silver trade by linking it with Spain's rejection of a conquest of China based on Pedro de Alfaro's report, theorizing that the simultaneous commencement of these events established a stable balance of power in the Pacific that allowed for the development of permanent links across the ocean. As outlined in Chapter Two, no current research on Sino-Spanish relations places the rejection of the conquest model at the dawn of the trans-Pacific silver

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[294] Andre Gunder Frank, "A Review of Richard von Glahn's *Fountain of Fortune: Money and Monetary Policy in China, 1000 - 1700*." Accessed April 16th, 2016. http://www.rrojasdatabank.info/agfrank/von_glahn_review.html. Also of note in this review is Frank's assertion that "China/Europe comparisons [a la Prazniak, Wong, Pomeranz] enlighten us, but tying them to where and how 'capitalism' sprouted is a snare and a delusion," an argument I find increasingly convincing. Major silver trade works include: von Glahn, *Fountain of Fortune*, and long-running series of articles by William Atwell and by Dennis Flynn and Arturo Giraldez in collaboration. A significant aspect of the silver trade historiography is the determination of what role, if any, was played by the collapse of the Ming and the decline of Spain as a world power vis-a-vís the silver trade in the mid-seventeenth century; something that is beyond the chronological scope of this work but represents a major aspect of global economic history.
For a discussion of the role of Mexican silver in the development of global capitalism, see John Tutino, *Making a New World*. (Durham: Duke, 2011). Tutino attributes the development of the silver trade to Spain's "drive for revenues" more than the Chinese tax reforms, but also situates this trade in the context of the development of trans-Pacific exchange networks. Tutino, p. 278, 41.

trade—a significant lapse that represents a missed opportunity to explore why and how the Sino-Spanish silver trade developed in the early 1580s.

Ambiguity and Arrest: The Final Missions to Ming China

Alfaro's report marked a turning point in Sino-Spanish relations. While the Spanish would prove to still have some saber-rattling left in them at least, the idea of an actual invasion was now known to be impossible, and, with administrators in the Philippines and Mexico still unaware that Philip II's armies had effected a de facto annexation of Portugal by summer 1580, the time was ripe for another attempt at a formal embassy to China in pursuit, once again, of that elusive trade agreement (now implicitly recognized to be impossible to use as a launching point for a conquest). Francisco de Sande, who in the spring of 1580 had just received a coveted appointment to return to the Americas and become the *presidente* of the wealthy Audiencia of Peru, was anxious to cement his legacy as a great governor-general of the Philippines. His five-year term could count some major successes—he had repelled the notorious Lin Feng twice, founded the city of Nueva Cacéres (named after his beloved hometown), overseen the development of Manila as the capital and the destination of the Manila Galleon, and expanded tentative Spanish control beyond the Luzon island group.

This was not enough for Sande, a man of relentless ambition and martial temperament which was often described admiringly as "Extremaduran bellicosity" by contemporaries.[295] Spanish military expansion into China had proved to be impossible,

[295] Extremadura, part of Castile-Leon since 1230, was home to an extraordinary share of explorers and conquistadors, ascribed in part to its crushing poverty and rugged terrain—the ambitious, toughened by the rigors of mountain life on the fringes of Castilian territory, had no option but to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Sande, born two generations after the participants in the first wave of Spanish conquests, would have grown up in close proximity to the hometowns and families of the Pizarros, Cortes, Balboa, de Soto,

his attempt to take Borneo for Spain ended inconclusively at best, and Manila was still primarily a small outpost with many buildings made of grass and bamboo. Something needed to be done to crown his achievements over the past half-decade and overshadow the setbacks he had faced—like nearly all colonial Spanish administrators, Sande knew he could expect to be appointed elsewhere periodically over the course of his career and his successes in one post would determine the prestige of the next.[296] Since the previous attempt at an embassy masterminded by a Philippines governor had foundered, what better legacy than to have overseen the preparations for the embassy that would at last establish a formal relationship with the great Chinese Empire?

Sande had written about the possibility of forming a new embassy in late 1578, when he felt assured of having both the support of the Viceroy and a good enough knowledge of the Ming diplomatic system to prevent the prevarications of 1575, when Spain's would-be ambassadors were strung along for weeks without ever having their proposals considered. The complexities of administration had put a stop to this idea before it ever reached the planning stages, but Sande felt certain that now, in 1580, he was truly prepared for an embassy and that he would still reap the rewards even if he was in the Americas by the time it took place (and he no doubt remembered that the 1575 mission had concluded with Lavezaris as the recipient of some "rich gifts" from the Zhangzhou officials, not to mention Martín de Rada's "silver bouquet").[297]

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and others, and would have often heard of their (dubious) deeds in the Americas. No wonder then that he closely identified with his fellow Extremadurans. Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, pp. 119-121.

[296] Sande would die in Mexico in 1627 at the great age of 86, having served in Peru, Panama, and New Spain after his return to the Americas. Nicholas Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines.* (Quezon City: Ateneo, 1977), p. 30.

[297] Lavezaris, r.9.

Unfortunately for Sande's ambitions, the same ship that brought him word of his long-coveted new appointment to the *audiencia* of Peru also brought some unwelcome news. Philip II, intrigued by the reports of riches by the 1575 ambassadors and as yet completely unaware that Alfaro had been in China and was at that moment penning the report that would change his China policy forever, had taken the initiative to form a new embassy and had chosen the friars who would lead it, along with a long list of proposed gifts for the young Wanli Emperor. This development must have been especially upsetting for Sande as he had just discovered that Alfaro and his fellow friars had circumvented his authority in the islands in favor of that of the Viceroy—would he never get to play a role in delineating Spain's relationship with China? However frustrating the situation was, he could not exactly argue that King Philip II was infringing on his authority. But he could remonstrate and caution, and he proceeded to do so after reading the new ambassadors' instructions and examining the list of gifts meant for the emperor, which included lengths of merino wool, ornamented harnesses, bedsteads, and other objets d'art.[298]

The gift list was an easy target. The Chinese tributary system (outlined in Chapter Three) was quite different from what European monarchs were accustomed to, and gifts had a very different context. What was an exchange of gifts as equals in Europe could take on an altogether less equitable meaning in China, and Sande had no qualms about stretching the truth to scuttle this mission. Sande was quick to proclaim, via a letter to the viceroy, that he had not spent the past several years gathering information on Ming

[298] The proposed list was as follows: merino wool, leatherworks from Cordoba, harnesses, swords, bedsteads, multiple portraits of Philip II and his family, a glass box from Venice, horses, mirrors, a miniature of Philip "chased in emeralds," cloth of gold, a Flemish clock, a cask of Asturian wine, and several live elk. Carta de v.m... AGI Patronato, r.2-5.

political and diplomatic practices for nothing, and he proceeded to point out that the embassy, as laid out by Philip II, was bound to fail and, perhaps worst of all, bring dishonor upon His Most Catholic Majesty. In Europe, lavish gifts were an accepted and essential part of the diplomatic process. Over the course of his reign, Philip would give and receive lengths of cloth of gold, exquisite jewelry, objets d'art, and, on one celebrated occasion, a pair of beautiful white hunting falcons from the ambassadors of Elizabeth I. It was the way diplomacy was conducted in this period, and it was a method that served Philip well while negotiating the precarious system of alliances he encountered over the course of four marriages of state, five bankruptcies, and a dozen or so wars and rebellions—not for nothing was his cognomen *El Prudente.*

Unfortunately, *El Prudente,* however able a statesman he was in Europe, was nearly completely ignorant of how the Ming conducted international relations, at least according to Sande. In Europe, the diplomatic gift-giving system was generally accompanied by a strict observance of equality between sovereigns (regardless of their actual power differentials and the innate competitiveness of these ventures)—two copies of treaties were often made so that both sovereigns could have the honor of signing first, princesses traveling to marry a foreign prince were ceremonially handed over on neutral territory if possible, and the like. No such expectation existed in China. The tribute system also involved gifts, but they were the gifts of a supplicant, and it was in that context that Philip's gifts to the Wanli Emperor would be received, Sande claimed. It would appear that the mighty Emperor Philip II, the most powerful man in the Western world, was offering humble tribute as a supplicant to the young Wanli Emperor. To add to the potential humiliation, it was widely believed among Europeans at the time that the

Chinese automatically assumed all foreigners were Muslims—an unacceptable mistake to make on the part of a king who was busily waging a ruinous war against the comparatively mild specter of Protestantism.[299]

Moreover, Sande wrote, the gifts themselves were unacceptable. Philip's list, prepared with the intention to dazzle the Chinese and buy their friendship with the wonders of his empire, stood a very good chance of insulting the imperial court, he claimed. Surely the Spanish court at Madrid had seen the incomparable beauty and brightness of Chinese silks and satins? In that case, why would they think that lengths of black merino wool would be well-received? "What is customary in the Kingdom of China," the governor wrote, "is rich beyond what we have in Spain. Silver is the only thing needed by them."[300] Sande reserved particular venom for a Flemish clock, claiming that to present such a contraption to the Emperor would be the most offensive of all, without stating a reason for his anger. To send such trinkets, however coveted and valuable they were in Europe, would insult the Chinese, possibly even to the point of open retaliation against Spanish interests in the area, Sande asserted.[301] (The clock claim was manifestly untrue, incidentally—they would become popular gifts in future European visits to China, with both Matteo Ricci and the Macartney embassy offering timepieces to the court at Beijing.[302])

This was, of course, not quite the truth. While the tributary system was generally arranged on the assumption that other nations were supplicants to Ming power, the Chinese in this period valued and sought out objets d'art and examples of craftsmanship

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[299] Hsu, p. 374.
[300] Sande, v.45.
[301] Ibid., r. 45.
[302] Wills, *China and Maritime Europe*, p. 63, 244.

from other countries, and in fact China traded pearls, cotton, and wax from the Spanish in the Philippines as well.[303] The offensive clock might indeed have become a treasured sensation at the imperial court, even if the implied inferiority bound up in sending a formal mission might have bothered Philip II, who consistently addressed all Chinese correspondence to "the most powerful *King* of China."[304] It seems that Sande, ever anxious to maintain control over any Spanish mission to China, was deliberately trying to scuttle this latest attempt in order to maintain control of any subsequent mission. The stakes were higher for him personally now that the possibility of conquest was no longer an option—a trade agreement would be more likely to enrich him, even after his return to Latin America, more quickly and effectively than a long, drawn-out military campaign in which, as governor in the Philippines, he would not be able to participate in personally. Whatever Sande's quarrels with the Viceroy, his expertise on matters relating to China was valued by Philip II (even if it, as in this case, was blatantly self-serving), and when he returned to Mexico that year to take up his new post in Lima, he was told that the embassy would be canceled, terminating the second formal mission to China.[305] The new Portuguese members of Philip II's Cortes were certainly knowledgeable about China as well and could have advised him on this matter, but it seems that the king followed the directives of his own countryman first in this instance. Philip II was a notoriously meticulous administrator, and one well aware of the importance of national origin, as Geoffrey Parker's recent biography *Imprudent King* demonstrates by examining an incident in which the king, approving a routine bequest, noticed that the intended

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[303] Chinese sources for these additional trade items can be found in the following collections: Wen Xian Tong kao文献通考, Dao Yi Zhi Lue岛夷志略, and Ming Shi Lu明实录.
[304] Carta del VM a Rey de China, AGI Patronato 25.
[305] Sande... P. 87.

recipient had a Milanese name. Concerned that the man's compatriots would learn about the grant and ask for similar gifts themselves, Philip instructed his administrators to find out if the man was indeed from Milan and, if so, to "give [the money] to him elsewhere."[306] It is entirely possible, though unsupported by available extant documents, that Philip II weighed the testimony of the Spanish Sande and the Portuguese members of the Cortes regarding China and chose to follow the judgement of the Extremaduran governor—a judgement that in this case turned out to be wrong.

However, due to the vagaries of sixteenth-century global communication, Philip II did not discover that the Viceroy, weighing Sande's judgement as well, had canceled the mission until 1582, and, perhaps fondly imagining that his Flemish clock had won the friendship of the boy Emperor, the king duly planned a follow-up mission in 1581. This mission, unlike its predecessor, is claimed in some secondary sources to have actually arrived in China, but, due to turmoil in Manila (caused by further pirate attacks) and more sixteenth-century communication disasters, was permitted to leave for China without proper guards and translators, and without knowing that Philip II's accompanying missive to the imperial court had been lost. The six friars who had been appointed ambassadors spent a month wandering around southern China, at turns being imprisoned, released, interrogated, and even threatened with execution by the local authorities before being sent under guard to Macau to be returned to Manila by the Portuguese, much as Pedro de Alfaro had been two years previously. Thus ended the third mission.[307]

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[306] Geoffrey Parker, *Imprudent King: A New Life of Philip II.*(New Haven: Yale, 2014), p. 66.This new work is the result of Parker's discovery of a previously-unknown cache of three thousand documents at the Hispanic Society of America in New York; as of spring 2016 I have been unable to determine if any of these sources are about Spain's missions to China.

[307] This mission is extremely poorly documented but is discussed briefly in Carmen Hsu's unpublished paper, "Representing a European Equal: Philip II of Spain's Letters to Wanli of the Ming Dynasty."

However, it is well within the realm of possibility that this mission never actually made it onto Ming soil—available details in the primary sources are so vague and so reminiscent of the Alfaro and de Rada missions that an interpretation of the 1581 mission as a simple mistake in the sources repeated in the secondary literature is not unreasonable.

In 1584, the Spanish would make one more attempt to send an embassy to China, and, like the proposed 1580 mission, this one is known to have ended without a representative of Spain ever setting foot in China. The Viceroy and the new Governor of the Philippines, Diego Ronquillo, envisioned a continuation of the 1575 embassy. Martín de Rada was long dead, but Geronimo Marín was alive and thriving in Manila, and more monks and priests with both the education required to present a cultured, diplomatic face to the Chinese and the toughness required to evangelize in a new land (each of these missions, including Alfaro's, was envisioned as operating in tandem with conversion efforts) had arrived in the past few years. Marín was chosen to head the mission, three supporting ambassadors (two Augustinians and a Franciscan) were added, and a list of gifts was compiled (no longer fully extant), but the plan faded away and was never implemented due to the competing concerns of the ongoing Eighty Years' War, now complicated by the effective independence of the Netherlands. No further embassies would be sent by Spain during the Ming era.[308]

What to make of these final three embassies or planned embassies? Of the three, two never actually entered China, and the only one that is purported to have done so is so poorly documented, and so similar in results to what had happened to Pedro de Alfaro, that I suspect that there is a distinct possibility that it never actually made it to China and that the few vague reports that do exist are simply the result of confusion and

[308] Cartas del virrey Conde de la Coruña, AGN Caja 003,pp. 34-39.

miscommunication in the records—a common feature of the time, and one easily promulgated in the secondary literature, especially given the long and intermittent historiography of sixteenth-century missions to China. Even the missions and embassies that are known to have existed are often subject to wild contradictions in both the primary and secondary sources, so an entirely separate mission being accidentally concocted out of stray references to Alfaro or de Rada or even a subsequent mission decades later is not an outlandish prospect, and not even necessarily the result of sloppy research, given the ambiguity of many of the sources.

What these three missions, or purported missions, or planned missions, have in common is a lack of real impact. De Rada's mission may have ultimately been a failure or at best a neutral event in the history of Sino-Spanish relations, but it established formal contact between the two powers on Chinese soil for the first time, and, through de Rada's linguistic efforts, furthered Spanish knowledge of Chinese culture and society. Alfaro's mission too failed to achieve its goals, but provided the first detailed description of Ming fortifications and military power in a major city to reach Spain. These final three, failures all as well, did nothing to further Sino-Spanish relations or Western knowledge of China—indeed, after such a disheartening parade of unsuccessful embassy attempts, it is likely that the Spanish simply gave up the idea of trade embassies to China, especially since their "officially unofficial" silver trade with the Ming was beginning to take off by the mid-1580s.

In the space of ten years, then, the Spanish crown or its representatives planned four official embassies to Ming China, plus one secret mission—that of Pedro de Alfaro—that had official permission in the form of the Viceroy of New Spain. Of these

five, two never actually entered China, two ended with the arrest and banishment of its members (and one of these two may not have actually existed), and only one—that of de Rada—actually achieved some level of diplomatic communication, only to be received with an almost complete lack of interest from the Chinese and bustled back to Manila within two months with no long-term results. In light of the long-standing and very profitable silver trade between Spain and China in this period, to say nothing of Spain's rapid imperial expansion across the globe, it seems strange that the two empires never established any kind of formal relationship. What caused this string of failures?

From the Chinese point of view, Spain's friendship was simply not a diplomatic necessity. Sande's feigned horror at Philip II's proposed gifts to the Emperor nevertheless underscores the vastly superior wealth and power of the Chinese—mirrors and fine harnesses may have impressed European monarchs, but it was quite believable to the Spanish administrators reading Sande's critique of their planned embassy that they would be received as insulting toys to a monarch accustomed to the finest luxuries in the world (even if the Ming court would most likely have thoroughly appreciated the gifts). Spain was not a major power in East or Southeast Asia, despite its incursions into Borneo and other islands in the South China Sea in this period, and, as Sande astutely pointed out, the only thing China really needed from them was silver. The silver trade with the Spanish colonies was already beginning to thrive without a formal agreement or embassy, so there was no reason for the Chinese to seek one out, particularly if the Spanish representatives were going to be difficult about sending clandestine missions in and out of the country.

Spain needed China more than China needed Spain, but ultimately the same revelation about the superfluousness of a formal relationship when the trade was doing so

well struck them as well, particularly since the Ming also bought large amounts of silver from Japan and thus was not entirely dependent on maintaining the link with Spain. Moreover, the Eighty Years' War dominated Spanish financial and political concerns until 1609, when Philip II grudgingly signed a truce with the Dutch Republic "as if it was a sovereign state."[309] During that time, the Spanish state declared bankruptcy on multiple occasions, and suffered several crippling defeats, to say nothing of the destruction of the Spanish Armada in 1588. A new alliance, perhaps with attendant financial and military costs, could not be considered.[310] Moreover, although the separation of Spanish and Portuguese interests post-Iberian Union extended to their colonies as well, Spain was naturally a significant indirect beneficiary of Portugal's trade agreements with China.

In this context of failed embassies, Pedro de Alfaro's mission takes on a new importance. It had by far the longest duration in China (over six months), visited the most strategic and populous locales, gathered vital military and structural information outside the "wonders of the Middle Kingdom" vein so many European accounts of China confined themselves to at this point, and, unlike the other four missions, actually resulted in a shift in Spanish plans and interactions towards the Chinese. While Spain periodically made militaristic gestures towards China as late as 1592 (though not, incidentally, in Asia or in communication with Asian contacts), these exclamations of military prowess and threat belong to the contemporary Spanish tradition of exaggerated militarism and conquest, not to any legitimate military plans.[311] Alfaro's detailed reports took an armed conquest by Spain off the table forever and forced Spain to re-assess its relationship with the Ming, although the two countries never established a formal relationship.

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[309] Jonathan Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade,* (Oxford: Oxford, 1989), pp. 404-5.
[310] Ibid., p. 407.
[311] Cartas del gobernador Sande, R.6.

The momentous events of 1580—a watershed year in the history of Sino-Spanish relations that has heretofore gone largely unremarked in the historiography—illuminate the importance of Alfaro's mission to the development of a distinct Pacific World. Combined with the promulgation of the Single Whip Reform and the Iberian Union, both of which in their different ways made the continued undisturbed functioning of the Ming Empire an object of vested interest for Philip II, Alfaro's simultaneous assessment of the impossibility of a Spanish conquest of China allowed the Spanish to situate themselves vis-a-vís China not as prospective conquerors but as long-term trade partners. This in turn changed the Pacific Rim from a vast maritime expanse characterized by two powers isolated from each other on opposite sides of the sea (as Spain and China were in the 1560s and 1570s) to a discrete historical zone with a stable (though wary) balance of power, joined by a thriving permanent trade and cultural network in the form of the Manila Galleon. The connecting points of the Manila Galleon, the Spanish colonies of New Spain (Mexico) and the Philippines, are themselves significant aspects of the development of the Pacific World as well, as the next chapter demonstrates.

Part Four: The Globalized Pacific

Chapter Six: "'Authority in These Islands Rests With Me': Mexico as Metropole in the Administration of the Philippines"

On May 30th, 1945, the Manila-based United States Air Force 58th Operations Group welcomed an unusual new squadron to assist in their efforts to drive the Japanese Army out of Luzon. The 201st Squadron was made up entirely of Mexican volunteers, supported financially and politically by the Mexican government, who joined up and trained with American forces specifically to help wrest the Philippines from Axis control. Their efforts on behalf of the Filipino people were met with great fanfare and public celebration at home, with a special correspondent from the Mexican paper *Excelsior* attached to the squadron to supply their readers with regular updates on the extraordinary bravery and discipline of the fighters. Pride in "*nuestros chicos"* and by extension *La Patria* swelled with each news dispatch, and when the first of five combat deaths occurred, the Mexican public's grief was proclaimed to have been "mixed with joy for the knowledge that the world has seen us shed our blood for our Filipino brothers."[312]

The 201st was credited with putting thirty thousand Japanese troops out of action, along with significant enemy infrastructure, and was recognized publicly by General MacArthur. In July 1945, the 58th left the Philippines for the war's final offensives in Japan itself, leaving the 201st behind, but the Mexican public felt no shame for this omission. On the contrary, government figures from the President down, along with all

[312] Monica A. Rankin, *¡Mexico, la patria! Propaganda and Production During World War II.* (Lincoln: Nebraska, 2009), pp. 264-9.

the leading papers, "reflected the joyful pride of the people" by announcing that the 201st was doing "the true work of *La Patria*" by protecting and helping the Filipino people in recognition of the special bond that had existed between Mexico and the Philippines for over three hundred and fifty years. This bond, forged in the sixteenth century by the Spanish Crown's decision to attach the new province of *Las Filipinas* to the Viceroyalty of Nueva España was felt strongly enough for men to give their lives and to be a source of national pride centuries later.[313] Centuries of inter-colonial administration—in fact, of a colony acting as metropole to another colony—had fostered ties that bound strongly enough to evoke in the Mexican volunteers a patriotic sense of quasi-*noblesse oblige* towards the people of the Philippines.

In the sixteenth century, however, when this bond was still new, Governors-General of the Philippines Sande and Ronquillo felt very differently about their ties to Mexico, and their nominal superiors in Mexico harbored feelings considerably less heroic than those of the 201st.[314] Working in a recently-established provincial outpost thousands of miles away from their immediate superiors, the governors held no sentimental notions about the sacred bond tying the two colonies together, felt no stirring calls for a mystical brotherhood between themselves and their counterparts in Mexico City. They were all Spaniards administering non-Spanish peoples they considered to be of a lesser kind than themselves, certainly, but the relationship was decidedly un-cozy and nobody on the

[313] Ibid, pp. 269-71.

[314] Nueva España is the correct historical term for the Viceroyalty that encompassed much of modern Mexico; however, as the term Mexico was also in use at the time I have chosen to use the latter as well as the term New Spain in order to emphasize Mexico as a quasi-metropole in its own right in relation to the Philippines in this period, rather than as a "standard" colony.

ground in 1580 in either colony felt a closeness on that count.[315] While both governors accepted the nominal authority of the Viceroy over the Philippines, their actions during and after the Pedro de Alfaro incident proved that they considered themselves beholden to Mexico only in the loosest administrative sense and that they felt themselves otherwise free to operate more or less autonomously within the Spanish sphere of influence in Asia. The viceroys, on the other hand, naturally considered their powers to be of a much greater extent. A combination of distance, poor sixteenth-century communication links, and lack of clarity over exactly how the Philippines were to be administered from Mexico in the first decades of the former colony's establishment resulted in a fundamental misunderstanding that led administrators in both colonies to express their outrage over the other party's handling of Pedro de Alfaro's behavior in China. Perhaps the understanding was tacit and the misunderstanding willful; either way, the lack of clear boundaries over the viceroy's jurisdiction in Asia resulted in a quasi-diplomatic incident in which both colonies felt the need to discuss their respective rights openly.

This misunderstanding, whether it was willful or not, was the reason why Alfaro's clandestine military scouting mission became an issue in Mexican-Philippine inter-colonial administration in the years immediately following the friar's return to Manila. It was a surprisingly long-lived issue, considering that Alfaro's intelligence concerning Chinese infrastructure was such that all tentative plans for an invasion were effectively halted as soon as the slow speed of global communication allowed—an official

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[315] Shared Spanish background in the most general sense wasn't even a given in this period. The relatively recent union of disparate Spanish kingdoms under the crown of Castile, the question of crypto-Judaism and *conversos*, and the addition to the crown of vast swaths of European land meant that many colonial administrators did not have an ethnic kinship with their colleagues. Of the five Spanish administrators featured in this narrative, one, Sande, was Extremaduran, and another, Almanza, was widely rumored to be a *converso*.

proclamation concerning the mission was issued a full two years after Alfaro's death, and epistolary skirmishing over the respective Asian spheres of influence for both colonies went on for several years after that. While the Pedro de Alfaro mission never resulted in any kind of permanent, explicit clarification of the two colonies' respective roles, the documentary evidence overwhelmingly suggests that the Alfaro incident sparked a struggle that resulted in the Philippine colonial administration holding somewhat greater sway in how the Spanish Crown conducted its affairs in Asia, featuring greater prominence in Spain's attempts to establish a formal embassy in Ming China and, eventually, culminating in the important role played by the Philippine colonial government in the annexation and administration of Spanish Formosa in 1626. (Northern Taiwan's brief entry into the Spanish colonial system was influenced heavily by both the Iberian Union and internal turmoil in the collapsing Ming Dynasty, but Philippine administrators were central to the new colony's establishment—and abandonment—as well.[316])

This chapter examines the ways in which Pedro de Alfaro's mission caused colonial administrators in both the well-established viceroyalty of Mexico and its tiny Philippine outpost to reassess their relationship with one another vis-a-vís Spain's diplomatic and economic interests in Asia. While both colonies implicitly agreed that Mexico had some form of nominal jurisdiction over the Philippines (and would continue to do so until the former's independence in the nineteenth century), exactly how that

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[316] After 1580, these responsibilities also included the defense of the newly-annexed Portuguese territories. For an in-depth examination of the role of Manila in Taiwan's brief period of Spanish colonization, see "The Fall of Spanish Taiwan" in Tonio Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese: Dutch, Spanish, and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century.* (New York: Columbia, 2008), p. 4-6., and José Borao, *The Spanish Experience in Taiwan, 1626-1642: The Baroque Ending of a Renaissance Endeavor.* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong, 2008).

authority would be wielded was very much up for debate when Alfaro sailed to China in 1579. When he arrived in Guangzhou, the Spanish had been established in the Philippines for less than fifteen years, and the famous Manila Galleon had only become a permanent link across the Pacific eight years previously, in 1571. Unsurprisingly, the complexities of inter-colonial administration had yet to be fully explored, particularly in light of the development of the clerical-secular state in the Philippines, which decentralized colonial authority in the Philippines somewhat. The repeated reliance of Alfaro and his companions on Mexico and its viceroys as their source of colonial authority, over that of then-governor Francisco de Sande in Manila, brought these unresolved issues into the open and forced the Philippine colonial authorities to overtly assert their power in the islands. While it would be overreaching to say that Alfaro's mission resulted in a permanent, official change to the inter-colonial power balance in the colonial Pacific, it emphatically set the tone for the next few decades and moreover serves to shed some significant light on the complex world of trans-Pacific inter-colonial interactions, an area often overlooked by English-language historians.

The *Pregón de Ronquillo* and Trans-Pacific Colonial Administration

The discovery of Alfaro's allegedly incorrupt corpse in June 1580 had been interpreted by his fellow Franciscans as a "final challenge" to the "superstitious" of China who had failed to follow his ministry.[317] However, Alfaro himself might have been more inclined to issue that challenge to his own countrymen in Manila—that was certainly the attitude adopted by his friend, companion on the China mission, and successor to the *custodio* position, Fray Pablo de Jesús, in the years following Alfaro's

[317] Atilius Redigolo, ed. *Necrologium Fratrum Minorum in Sinis*. (Hong Kong: Tang King Po, 1978), p 85.

demise. While Alfaro's own death elicited little commentary from authorities in the Spanish colonies, China, or Portugal, the words and actions of Pablo de Jesús helped ensure that the 1579 mission would not be forgotten soon in the islands.

Pablo de Jesús, a fiery man who over his lifetime made two officially-forbidden trips to China and eventually ended his career as head of the first Franciscan Province in the Philippines and founder of a major hospital, showed himself to be Alfaro's true successor in virtually every sense of the word.[318] His fury at what he felt was the audacity shown by Sande's refusal to simply permit the friars to return to China was not only purely in the vein of Alfaro's hauteur, but it illuminated a major aspect of why, in fact, the friars had gone to China in the first place. The governor, who was at this point blissfully unaware of Viceroy Almanza's role in the Alfaro mission and attributing it solely to the contemporary fixation on China especially beloved of Franciscans, was about to find himself once more infuriated by the machinations of the Discalced Franciscans.

Bereft of his friend and unhappy in the Manila mission, de Jesús wrote a letter to Sande in the final days of his governorship (he was recalled to a position in Latin America at the end of 1580). Sande, who at this point probably dreaded the arrival of any letters from or about Franciscans, was incensed at its contents. After a long and acidly-polite preamble praising Sande's work towards bringing the word of God to the "pagan" Filipinos, de Jesús informed Sande that, as the governor seemed not to understand the importance of his mission work in China, he (de Jesús) would explain his side of the disastrous mission story in hopes of opening his eyes to the need for a return to China. De

[318] Arnel E. Joven. "Colonial Adaptations in Tropical Asia: Spanish Medicine in the Philippines in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries." *Asian Cultural Studies* Vol. 38. (Tokyo: International Christian University, 2012, pp. 171-186), p. 179.

Jesús wrote that the mission had actually been undertaken with the approval and under the orders of Viceroy Almanza ("por el comando del virrey"), with the stipulation that the friars make the aforementioned reports on Chinese population, military infrastructure, and naval presence in the Guangzhou area. This task they duly performed, although the clear *no* sent by the friars was a great disappointment to Almanza.[319] De Jesús, not willing to stop there, even remarked that Sande should not feel as though his authority had been usurped by New Spain, since it was common knowledge that the viceroy had jurisdiction over the Philippines.[320] Understandably angry, Sande and his successor, Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa, took immediate and decisive steps to make clear to Mexico that their administration alone would handle matters regarding the Philippines and Asia—as Sande's furious letter to the court of Philip II regarding the whole unpleasant incident asserted, "authority in these islands rests with me."[321]

Sande, with little time remaining in his term, struck back at de Jesús in epistolary format, penning both the aforementioned *carta* to Philip II and another, nearly identical one to the new Viceroy of New Spain, Lorenzo Suárez de Mendoza, fourth Conde de la Coruña. He informed both men that he had replied to the friar by forbidding him to ever return to China, and that he expected to be treated as "His Majesty's true representative" in Asia. Had he not been instrumental in forcibly bringing Borneo under Spanish vassalage?[322] Was he not making extraordinary progress in extending colonial control of

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[319] Carta del franciscano Pablo de Jesús. AGI Filipinas, 84, N.10., r. 2- v. 5.
[320] Ibid.,v. 7.
[321] Cartas a V. Majestad, 1581. NAP, Folio 36, p. 8.
[322] This claim was less clear-cut than Sande indicated. The Castilian War, or Perang Kastila as it is known in Brunei today, ended after a matter of weeks. Sande had indeed commissioned an attack on Borneo, but the Spanish were forced to retreat after an epidemic swept through their ranks. Whether or not regular tribute payments actually occurred is ambiguous. Indeed, the folk history of Brunei describes the event as a heroic rout of the invading Spanish. However, it is unlikely that Sande would have misrepresented his Borneo adventure so drastically to Philip II, notwithstanding the conventions of the *probanza* that had

the Philippines beyond the Luzon island group? Did he not found, for the glory of Spain, the city of Nueva Cáceres (now Naga City in Bicol Region), named for the hometown he had left behind forever to serve the Crown in the Indies? All this he had done, without the overt interference of New Spain, but still "humbly and obediently" reporting back to the Viceroy and respecting his nominal authority in the Philippines, like a vassal to a king. Now the former Viceroy (who ended his days happily ensconced in the much wealthier Viceroyalty of Peru) had turned upon him, had broken the understanding that Sande had taken for granted. An affair as important as the scouting of a potential invasion of China was something Sande should have been included in from the start, given his "close dealings" with the Chinese in Manila and the Portuguese in Macau. He ended both letters by appealing to the "grace and justice" that had been "ever linked" with the names of both King and the Conde respectively, asking that they ensure that nothing of the sort ever happened again, either to him in his subsequent positions, or to his successors.[323]

Philip II, well into the Eighty Years' War in the Spanish Netherlands, had little interest in Sande's plight and merely requested that the colonies handle this dispute on their own, so long as it did not conflict with greater Spanish interests in Asia, (now heavily curtailed by Alfaro's report).[324] The Conde was similarly unsatisfactory from Sande's point of view, although, as a man noted throughout the empire for his unusually upright honesty, he did deplore the duplicity with which his predecessor had deliberately kept the governor in the dark. He could promise that any future political mission to China would include the governor of the Philippines as the most knowledgeable high-ranking

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spread to most other forms of colonial communication, encouraging a level of self-promotion. Graham Saunders, *A History of Brunei*. (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 54-60.

[323] Cartas del gobernador Francisco de Sande a V.M. y otros. NAP Folio 36, 2-5, 10-12.

[324] Carta del Rey Philip II sobre franciscanos, 1582. AGI Patronato, r. 3 - v.4.

Spanish representative in Asia, but he was quick to point out that Almanza had not in any way overstepped his bounds—viceroys had ultimate authority over the Philippines, however differently Sande may have interpreted his position.[325] This assertion of viceregal authority demonstrated the nebulousness with which administrative powers in the Spanish colonies (particularly in the Spanish East Indies) were interpreted at the time—an ambiguity that the now-incumbent governor Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa was prepared to take advantage of. The shift in Latin American historiography away from institutional history and towards histories of identity and culture (examined in Chapter Three) has slowed the pace of studies about this aspect of colonial administration, leaving administration in the Philippines in particular somewhat ignored, but the context of the original documents makes it clear that there was quite a lot of interpretation of the roles of various colonial administrators.

Ronquillo, new and perhaps insecure in the governorship, proved to be considerably more belligerent towards the friars than his predecessor had been. Sande, for all his anger, had largely confined himself to writing scathing letters and personally forbidding the friars to leave again.[326] Ronquillo, despite not having been in office during Alfaro's actual mission, was not placated by either the change in governorship or the death of the friar who had started the whole troublesome incident. The affair continued to trouble him—the Chinese, he claimed, without presenting any proof, had expressed anger at having played unwitting hosts to a group of spying friars, and the Portuguese, who by the time Ronquillo took office were formally united with the Spanish Crown, were

[325] Cartas del Conde de la Coruña. AGI Mexico 1139, r.. 2 -r. 6.
[326] Cartas del gobernador.... NAP 36., p. 2, 11.

nonetheless still wary of potential threats to their coveted trade privileges in Asia.[327] All these people needed to be soothed in a way that protected both the larger interests of the metropolis in Madrid and the more immediate concerns of the Philippine colony in the greater Southeast Asian sphere, and, usurping viceroy or no usurping viceroy, Ronquillo's position as the most geographically-proximate high-ranking representative of Spanish authority meant that this onerous task fell to him.

Ever a man of action, Ronquillo's first move was to personally visit Pablo de Jesús to upbraid him for his stated refusal to stay put in the Philippines despite the great need for religious there. Why was de Jesús so obsessed with China when there were not even enough Franciscans in Manila to fill "the most insignificant ship in the bay"?[328] When the friar, who seemed to go out of his way to show that he had inherited Alfaro's difficult demeanor along with his religious rank, indicated that he would be making every effort to return to China, Ronquillo retaliated by sending orders to every ship in Manila Bay to refuse him boarding, and even sent a small guard to the waterfront on particularly fine mornings when he suspected that the friar might be inspired to make another escape.[329] This was not paranoid fantasy on Ronquillo's part—in December 1581, Pablo de Jesús was found at the bay accompanied by a *sangley* interpreter, clutching a rucksack containing "such things as he is accustomed to carry in his labors" (meaning liturgical books and sacramental items), and was forced to return to his mission-house in Intramuros.[330] As before, the friar faced no punishment for his actions, other than, of course, the grievous punishment of being required to return to his actual post.

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[327] Cartas del Virrey.... . AGI Mexico 1124, r.. 301-309.
[328] Cartas del gobernador Ronquillo. AGI Filipinas 79 25, v.. 3.
[329] Ibid., r.. 6.
[330] Cartas del Franciscano Pablo de Jesús, 1582 Feb. AFIO Caja 004, p. 4.

In February 1582, however, Pablo de Jesús at last managed to evade Ronquillo's guard and land safely in Macau, where the perplexed Chinese did not know quite what to do with him (he eventually returned on his own the following year).[331] While there, he wrote a gleeful letter to a fellow Franciscan in Mexico, exalting at his successful return to China despite Ronquillo's efforts. In this letter, de Jesús detailed Ronquillo's efforts to personally keep him in Manila, a situation he found particularly abhorrent in light of the great need for missionaries in China.[332] The 1580s saw the first intellectual skirmishes of what would become known as the Chinese Rites Controversy, a bitter dispute between Jesuits and Mendicants over the permissibility of using concepts and rituals from traditional Chinese philosophical and religious practice to communicate similar ideas found in Catholicism, and Pablo de Jesús was horrified by the idea of Jesuits snatching the acclaim in China that rightly belonged to the Franciscans. The early 1580s are a bit earlier than the traditional starting point of the early seventeenth century given in the historiography of the Chinese Rites Controversy, but de Jesús was nevertheless concerned about the rise of the Jesuits in Asia. (The Rites Controversy, incidentally, has faded somewhat from the historiography in the past two or three decades in favor of studies of the lives of Chinese Christians rather than the philosophical and theological concerns of the Western missionaries who converted them, and in favor of the rise of mission studies in the context of globalization—this work being part of the latter trend.[333]

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[331] Ibid., p. 2.

[332] While de Jesús ascribes more villainous motives to the governor, his description of Ronquillo's efforts does not really contradict the governor's own claims.

[333] Eugenio Menegon, "Popular or Local? Historiographical Shifts in the Study of Christianity in Late Imperial China." In Gu Weiying 古偉瀛 ed., *Dong Xi jiaoliu shi de xinju: yi Jidu zongjiao wei zhongxin* 東西交流史的新局：以基督宗教為中心 *New Directions in East-West Relations: The Case of Christianity*. (Taipei: Taiwan Daxue Chubanshe, 2005): pp. 247-307., p. 249-250.

However, I would argue that the Chinese Rites Controversy itself represents a valuable opportunity for historians of globalization, with its international communication links.)

Pablo de Jesús feared that the dispute, already rumbling in Macau and as a philosophical debate in Latin America and Europe, might result in an eventual schism among the millions of Chinese Christians he felt sure would be brought under the jurisdiction of Rome in the near future, and harshly condemned both Philippine governors for their role in preventing wave after wave of Franciscans from entering Ming China.[334] He continued in this vein for some time, abusing Ronquillo for his "blindness" in continuing Sande's policies regarding the Franciscans, and, significantly, remarking that he, de Jesús, really did not understand why the governors had been so upset about New Spain maneuvering behind their backs. After all, New Spain had nominal jurisdiction over the Philippines, and Pedro de Alfaro had told him himself that Viceroy Almanza had specifically told him not to bother about an exit permit—meaning, of course, that once again the Viceroy and the Governor had very different expectations for Spanish jurisdiction in the Pacific.[335]

De Jesús did not confine his harsh remarks to his private letters, however. Ronquillo claimed that he received multiple reports from Macau that the friar was spreading "scandalous talk" about himself and Sande's willful opposition to the friars and Ronquillo's own lack of ability to stop them or resist the efforts of the Viceroy to send his own representatives to China.[336] Unwilling to see his authority further eroded by the troublesome Franciscans, Ronquillo issued a proclamation on 30 March 1582, forbidding

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[334] Carta del franciscano Pablo de Jesús sobre ida a China. AGI Filipinas 79, N.4, r 2.
[335] Ibid., r. 3-6.
[336] These reports are presumably no longer extant, but as Ronquillo described them they do not really contradict de Jesús's own words on the subject.

departure from the Philippines without explicit permission from himself. This edict was to be strictly enforced, and both Alfaro and Pablo de Jesús were explicitly referred to in its text as a pair of disobedient "barefoot Franciscans" who deliberately flouted the governor's authority despite their much-needed presence in Manila and subsequently caused "great strife" abroad.[337] The "Pregón de Ronquillo Prohibiendo Salir sin Licensia" made clear that, due to the actions of the friars, the ports of the Philippines were emphatically closed to unauthorized exits—and a copy was delivered to the viceregal court in Mexico City with the next Galleon; significantly, in a separate packet than that containing the mass of administrative paperwork usually sent back to New Spain.[338] While unauthorized departure was already explicitly prohibited and had been since the colony was formally established in 1565, it might be a mistake to read the "Pregón de Ronquillo" solely in the traditional sense that historians read repetitive edicts—namely, that they are a sign of eroding power and general disobedience. There is certainly some truth to that interpretation, as Pablo de Jesús's mere presence in Macau illustrated amply to the frustrated Ronquillo, but the proclamation is more plausibly viewed as a message to the viceroy of New Spain that the Philippine governor would not be made redundant in Asia by his superiors.

The Ties that Bind: Administration Between Mexico and the Philippines

The squabbling between Mexico and the Philippines that Alfaro's mission engendered was a direct result of the complex and often baffling tangle of officials, duties, and jurisdictions that crisscrossed Spanish possessions in the Americas and Asia

[337] Pregón, r. 1.
[338] Ibid., outer envelope.

in the late sixteenth century. Initially modeled on the system used to keep the disparate Spanish kingdoms under Castilian sway, it had been designed to be swift, centralized, and free of corruption, but by the time Alfaro sailed to Guangzhou it had become unwieldy, cumbersome, and increasingly distanced from Madrid, in both the colonies and in Europe.[339] When the first Spaniards took up permanent residence in the new Philippines colonies, this system was simply transferred over from the Latin American colonies, without significant accounting for the extraordinary distance and poor communication between Mexico City and Manila. The governors were to be responsible for heading the new *Audiencia de Manila* (formally established in 1584), for commanding Spanish soldiers and sailors, and for creating and implementing economic plans for the colony, but the question of their diplomatic and military jurisdiction outside the islands was left open. There was a general understanding that the Philippines would be expected to handle these issues on their own to a certain extent due to the yearlong communication turnaround between Manila and Mexico City, but this nebulousness, when combined with Spain's interest in military, diplomatic, and economic expansion into the Chinese sphere of influence, produced a situation ripe with tension, where either side could justifiably feel as though his authority had been usurped.[340]

The Spanish colonial bureaucracy of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was ambiguous and complex in both theory and practice, a situation that naturally lent itself to a degree of fractiousness and disobedience. While the Spanish crown itself tried to issue policy directly to the viceroys and *audiencias*, the wide range of populations and distances involved resulted in these policies being adapted on the ground to the specific

[339] J.H. Elliott, *Spain, Europe, and its Wider World*. (New Haven: Yale, 2009), p. 23.
[340] Charter of the Philippine Islands. Newberry, Ayer 1152, p. 2-4.

needs of individual administrations, which in turn fostered a degree of autonomy in the colonies that both Sande and Ronquillo would feel entitled to in their respective governance of the Philippines.[341] This autonomy, once established, spread not only to the larger administrative system in relation to the metropole, but within the local colonial framework itself. While centralization remained a stated goal of administration, by the 1570s it had become in many areas a mere theoretical construct rather than an actual practice.[342] Over the course of the sixteenth century, the system that had worked quite well in Iberia quickly stagnated into a maddeningly slow and ineffective machine spread across four continents, a bloated mess that was the direct cause of much contemporary frustration and confusion. In a situation where authority was neither centralized nor otherwise clearly delineated in practice, the power struggle over Alfaro's mission was in some sense justified by the bureaucratic climate the principal players operated within.

In addition to these factors, viceroys and other high-ranking administrators were expected to negotiate their own appointments, and "bureaucratic compromise," which often manifested itself in direct disobedience to orders from the crown, was considered a vital skill.[343] The reaction to Pedro de Alfaro's flouting of Sande's authority can be seen in this light—his actual disobedience was not really the issue, nor was it really anything particularly surprising to Sande or Ronquillo. Disobedience was a recurring theme in colonial Latin American administration, the most famous example being Hernan Cortes's secret departure from Cuba to Mexico. In a world where the oft-repeated viceregal

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[341] Ethelia Ruiz-Medrano, *Reshaping New Spain: Government and Private Interests in the Colonial Bureaucracy, 1531-1550*. (Boulder: Colorado, 2006), p. 257.
[342] Mark Burkholder, "Spanish Bureaucracy," in Burkholder, ed, *Administrators of Empire.* (London: Ashgate, 1998), p. 5.
[343] John Lynch, "The Institutional Framework of Colonial Spanish America." *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 24 (1992), pp. 69-81. pp. 72-4.

maxim "*obedezco pero no cumplo"* ("I obey, but do not comply") was a celebrated feature of bureaucratic life, a friar leaving his post without permission was by no means a singular or shocking event—certainly not to the viceregal court, which had itself originated the phrase, nor indeed in the history of missions to early modern China. What was a problem, and what continued to rankle both Philippine governors, was Mexico's usurpation of what they considered their own authority regarding Spanish affairs in Asia, a jealously-guarded privilege that was at the same time rather nebulous, owing at once to the unusual situation of a colony administering another colony, the general stagnation of the colonial bureaucratic system beginning in the late sixteenth century, and the long communication turnaround between Mexico City and Manila.

Because of the extreme distance from Mexico City and the sole reliance on the Manila Galleon (at the time still only an annual round--trip journey), the Philippines had far more autonomy than their American counterparts in New Spain. While most of the ship's logs from Alfaro's lifetime and immediately thereafter are no longer fully extant, the voyage from Acapulco to Manila took as long as 104 days in the 1590s, although one lucky crew was able to arrive in Manila after a mere 55 days at sea. The average for the period between 1590 and 1620 is 79 days of travel, not counting the overland journey from Mexico City to Acapulco, which depending on conditions could add as much as a month to the overall trip. The return route took even longer, averaging four to five months, as the route used by galleons returning from Manila in the sixteenth century ranged far to the north to take advantage of prevailing westerlies, often approaching the Aleutian Islands before creeping all the way down the west coast of North America from

as far north as modern-day Cape Mendocino, California.[344] A year was the minimum amount of time for a galleon to make its way from Mexico to Manila and back again, even assuming that any particular galleon was not one of the many that succumbed to the perils of the sea—or of pirates. Losses indeed were a significant threat—William Schurz in his groundbreaking history of the Manila Galleon estimated the overall losses at around twenty percent, while more recent research shows that for the period 1571-1596, that figure rises alarmingly to thirty-two percent.[345] There was a significant chance that any orders sent from Mexico, much less Spain, would not only be delayed months, but fail to arrive at all.

Therefore, administrators in the Philippines could not wait for specific orders or instructions from Mexico. This was naturally the case with all far-flung European colonies, before and long after Alfaro's lifetime—Goa, Batavia, and Australia, for example, all had to contend with extreme distances and communication delays from their respective metropoles. The "tyranny of distance," a historiographical subject named after Geoffrey Blainey's seminal 1966 work on the role of geography in shaping Australia's history, is a major aspect of Philippines history as well—indeed, a fairly unique aspect in the history of the Spanish Empire, where, despite the long distance between the metropole and its American colonies, very few of the latter were significantly geographically isolated from another Spanish holding. Not so the Philippines—Spain had of course established itself in the Philippines on the assumption that other territories,

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[344] For time estimates, see Susan Bacon, "Manila Galleon Voyages." (Washington: US Dept of Commerce, 2004), http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/psd/spotlight/2004/manila-galleon.html. For routes, William Schurz, *The Manila Galleon*. (Historical Conservation Society, 1939), pp. 107-8. The extreme northerliness of this route was not corrected fully until the 18th century—it had initially been chosen in imitation of Atlantic trade winds. For a list of all Manila Galleons to 1600, see Appendix.

[345] Schurz's estimate, p. 22. 1571-95 estimate, Ifreno, p. 65.

particularly part or all of China, would soon be joining it, but as it transpired the Philippines remained the sole major Spanish holding in Asia. All other Spanish territories in the Pacific were either temporary holdings of a few short years (as in the case of their sojourn in Taiwan, which lasted less than two decades) or small, relatively isolated islands (such as Guam). Distance therefore looms large in the historiography of the Philippines, without necessarily being a specific focus. It often appears as a negative—both Patricio Abinales and Donna Amoroso in their major study of Philippine government and John Newsome Crossley in his recent history of the early Spanish colonial Pacific (like this work, a history told through the life of an individual, in Crossley's case the Procurator-General Hernando de los Ríos Coronel) cite it as a negative force in the history of the Philippines, arguing that the long distance made administrators in Spain and Mexico careless and the local colonial government inclined to abuses, ultimately weakening the colonial government so badly that the people rose up in revolution at the end of the nineteenth century.[346] This is certainly a viable theory for almost the entirety of the colonial period—the long tyranny of friar and administrator throughout the colonial period only intensified as the colonial period wore on, particularly after Mexico gained its independence and Spain found itself administering the Philippines directly for the first time.[347] However, in the context of the sixteenth century, an era when Spain's fortunes in Asia and the Pacific were open to manipulation by quick and able administrators, the long distance could have its advantages from the point of view of the colonial government and the Spanish Crown itself. With a time lapse of a year round-trip to Mexico and approaching two years round-trip to Spain, these

[346] Abinales et al, pp. 81-82, and John Newsome Crossley, *Hernando de los Ríos Coronel and the Spanish Philippines in the Golden Age*. (New York: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 2-3.
[347] Abinales, pp. 82-83.

administrators, charged with not only maintaining the existing colony, but expanding its borders and establishing relationships of some kind with Asian powers about which little accurate information was known, were very much kept on their toes. This is not to argue that the sixteenth century colonial government was strong (it was emphatically not) or that the people of the Philippines fared well in the early years (Martín de Rada, it will be recalled, was reporting widespread abuses within little more than half a decade of the colony's founding), but the distance in the first decades of Spanish presence allowed for a good deal of dynamism on the part of the colony's governors.

This situation—distance coupled with ambiguously-defined powers—assumed increased political and economic importance due to the Philippines' position as the sole representative of Spanish power in Asia at the time. The administration in Manila was essentially allowed to represent Spanish interests in the region with a remarkably free rein—Sande had dispatched a diplomatic mission to China on his own authority in 1575, for example. --Alfaro's mission was so troublesome for Sande and Ronquillo precisely because New Spain had overstepped boundaries they considered to be theirs, despite the lack of official confirmation. To Alfaro and de Jesús (to say nothing of Almanza), however, it seemed quite reasonable and natural to take the Viceroy as their immediate secular superior rather than the Governor of the Philippines--—after all, the Viceroy had been instrumental in securing their appointments to Asia in the first place, and in addition to the powerful ties of patronage felt by sixteenth-century Spaniards (and indeed throughout Europe), the Philippines were inarguably part of New Spain's jurisdiction. Naturally, Sande and Ronquillo saw things differently--—while they recognized viceregal authority and indeed spent their careers navigating the complex world of Latin

American colonial administration, they felt that as governors they should have immediate jurisdiction over matters relating to the Philippines and nearby lands.

While Sande and Ronquillo's efforts to preserve their political autonomy are understandable from a human perspective, their immediate reasons for doing so warrant closer examination. After all, the Spanish Crown had a long-standing policy of moving administrators frequently to prevent them from forming local affinities that could lead to corruption, meaning that neither Sande nor Ronquillo could reasonably expect to end their careers in Manila under ordinary circumstances.[348] Both governors at the start of their appointments anticipated a return to a higher post in the Latin American mainland, so the question of why they cared so much about strengthening the political power of a distant, temporary position is important. The answer lies in the strategic economic and diplomatic importance of the Philippines.

Traditional historiography often portrayed the Philippines as a "profitless archipelago," a fiduciary drain on an empire whose colonies were otherwise tremendous financial successes at the time.[349] However, over the past several decades, research on the sixteenth--century silver market and its connection to the emergence of a global economy shows that the Philippines actually brought in an average of approximately three hundred and fifty thousand pesos a year in profit (an enormous sum) throughout its first century under Spanish control, and that for that period profits increased annually until the mid--seventeenth century. Of those profits, the amount the crown received could vary widely in this period—while the *Quinto Real* (one-fifth) is often cited as the nominal tax in the

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[348] Mark Burkholder and D.S. Chandler, *From Impotence to Authority: The Spanish Crown and the American Audiencias*. (Columbia & London: Missouri, 1977), p. 3.
[349] Dennis Flynn and Arturo Giraldez, "Spanish Profitability in the Pacific," in *China and the Birth of Globalization in the Sixteenth Century* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), p. 25.

first half of the colonial era, crown taxes on Philippine profits could be considerably lower or higher depending on the cargo involved, the scrupulousness of its caretakers, and the financial ebbs and flows of the Empire itself.[350] Regardless of the exact number each year, the amount collected from the Philippines by the crown made the colony a valuable asset.

Aside from the staggering amount of money and goods coming through the islands, their status as Spain's only firm foothold in Asia in this period made the territory extraordinarily important politically, as both a convenient base for establishing coveted trade relationships with China and a starting point for further Spanish conquests in the area (though China was now fully out of reach, as time went on the Spanish used the Philippines to administer additional colonies in Taiwan, Guam and the Marianas Islands). As able administrators with years of experience in the Spanish colonies, both Sande and Ronquillo could hardly have failed to observe the tremendous potential profits in both wealth and power to be made in the islands. Despite the care taken by Madrid to inhibit corruption, a Philippine governor with broad powers in both the islands themselves and their interactions with Asian powers stood to gain much—--provided he could maintain that autonomy.

In fact, Ronquillo, recognizing the potential of the position, made an open bid to become the Governor for Life of the Philippines, attempting to bargain with the viceregal council immediately after arriving at his new appointment. He promised to bring six hundred Spanish soldiers at his own expense to the islands in exchange for the title, and, while the council expressed real interest in the plan given the tremendous expense Ronquillo was offering to shoulder, it foundered on the explicit objections of his

[350] Ibid., pp. 27-8.

cOlléagues in both the Philippines and Mexico. A petition was sent to Spain decrying Ronquillo's "tyranny" and asking for the establishment of a proper royal *audiencia* in the islands to prevent any further requests of that nature from gaining traction, as they were "so contrary to our established behaviors [in the Spanish colonies]." Contemporary rumors even attributed his sudden death in 1583 to this attempt—he was supposed to have collapsed in an apoplectic fit when attorney-general Gabriel de Rivera, a military captain and, in years past, Sande's professional rival, confronted him vocally about his proposed title.[351] This sequence of events, in addition to casting a pall over Ronquillo's term, illustrates the expectation of temporality in sixteenth-century colonial Latin American appointments—Ronquillo's death was held up as the predictable outcome of a tyrant trying to undo a system that was expected to function in a certain way.

The very fact that something as important as reporting on the feasibility of a Habsburg conquest of China was seemingly entrusted to one friar is a reflection of this bureaucratic tangle and the nature of colonial administration in this period. No bureaucrat in Latin America, from the viceroy of New Spain to the *oidores* (judges) of the humblest audiencias, was intended to enjoy the security of a lifetime appointment. Ostensibly to prevent corruption, each official was appointed for short terms and moved around frequently, and Almanza may have feared the interference of Sande, who could reasonably be expected to return to the Latin American mainland to take up a higher post (as indeed happened).[352] Alternatively, of course, the decision to leave the conquest judgement in Alfaro's hands may have been for the simple reason that secret missions are more likely to remain that way if very few people know of them, but the bureaucratic

[351] Carta del obispo de Manila sobre la muerte de Ronquillo.... NAP 68, pp. 2-13.
[352] Burkholder, p. 55.

organization of the Spanish colonies certainly played a role in Almanza's plans and set the stage for the fallout of Alfaro's mission in Latin America and the Philippines.

"The Viceroy Who Is Our Lord:" The Alfaro Mission and Trans-Pacific Administration

Pablo de Jesús's revelation that the mission had actually been undertaken with viceregal approval and orders infuriated Sande and his successor to the governorship, Gonzalo de Ronquillo. Until the end of both their terms (Sande was recalled to a position in the Americas later in 1580 and Ronquillo died in office in 1583, unintentionally achieving his aim of becoming governor for life), they fought tenaciously to both bar de Jesús and other Franciscans from returning to China and to assert their rights as a colony in relation to Mexico.[353] Alfaro's mission marked a decisive moment in early Mexican-Philippine colonial relations; before him, neither had truly attempted to clarify authority for the relatively-new situation of a colony acting as a metropole for another colony. Goa administered Macau and other Portuguese enclaves of the period, and when the Dutch arrived at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Jakarta would administer the rest of their East Indies holdings, but in the early 1580s the bureaucrats in Manila and Mexico City had not only less precedent to model their efforts upon, but a greater distance to contend with than either the Dutch or Portuguese.[354] Alfaro's departure from Manila helped clarify this situation-–—the colonial Mexican government, which had tried to use Alfaro to bypass Philippine colonial authority in Asia, now found itself tangling with the

[353] José Antonio Cervera, *Tras el sueño de China: Agustínos y dominicos en Asia Oriental a finales del siglo XVI*. (Madrid: Plaza, 2013), p. 136.

[354] As far as I know, there exists no recent comparative history of these three colony/metropoles—an intriguing subject for future research that has the potential to make a significant contribution to the historiographies of global history, maritime history, and colonialism.

governors in Manila over just how much control they could enact over the islands and their wider sphere of influence.

The respective attempts of Sande and Ronquillo to make clear to Mexico that their intrusion into the Philippine colonial sphere of influence was unwelcome have already been detailed; however, the viceregal response has yet to be explored. For the most part, both the Conde and Almanza steered clear from direct responses to the governors; they knew that their knowledge and input was needed in Asia and were wary of alienating them completely. As a previous chapter noted, during this same period, Spain had used the viceregal administration to mastermind an attempt to establish a formal Ming embassy. That embassy, which centered on the presentation of lavish gifts to the Wanli Emperor, had foundered before it even reached China due to the machinations of Governor Sande, who claimed that these gifts would enrage and offend the Wanli Emperor..[355] The cancellation of this mission rested entirely upon his vociferous, if not quite truthful, objections, because the viceroyalty bowed to what they thought was his superior knowledge of Chinese diplomatic protocol without recognizing that his motivating factor was his desire to command such a mission himself.[356] Mexico knew that the Philippine administration was in a much better position to gather news and intelligence concerning China; in the light of both the Iberian Union and the blighting of Spain's conquest hopes, it was unwise to antagonize the Philippines governors further. However, they needed to avoid antagonizing them in a way that still protected their sphere of influence in Asia—a difficult endeavor.

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[355] Cartas del virrey conde de la Coruña. AGI Mexico, N. 20, R. 52., r. 2 - r. 14.
[356] Gobernador Sande... Newberry, Ayer 23, 1-4.

The viceroys, then, espoused the time-honored diplomatic tactic of appearing to do absolutely nothing. Certainly they sent no more clandestine missions in the years immediately following the "Pregón de Ronquillo;" in any case, the relative opening of China to Jesuit and Mendicant missions in the 1590s meant that the dispatching and training of subsequent Alfaros was rendered somewhat superfluous. The first Spanish Franciscan to arrive in China was an intelligence opportunity to be taken advantage of; the crowding of that field and the elimination of China as a potential conquest meant that the overall diplomatic importance of individual Catholic missions was somewhat diminished. However, the viceregal government was not completely idle. They—that is to say, the two viceroys—did not indulge in any overt displays of their power over administrators in Asia, but some of their letters to both Sande and Ronquillo made it clear that they still had jurisdiction over the Philippines.

In one letter, former Viceroy Almanza, now Viceroy of Peru, gracefully informed Sande that his role as Spain's foremost representative in Asia was respected and honored, but he was nonetheless still merely the governor-general of a province of Mexico.[357] The timing is significant; he was no longer Viceroy of New Spain and the Philippines were therefore out of his hands, but nevertheless he took time from his new position (and his own fading health) to emphasize clearly the respective role of a Governor of the Philippines vis-a-vís a Viceroy of New Spain. A year later, the new Viceroy responded to the "Pregón de Ronquillo" by informing its author that naturally the viceroyalty sympathized and agreed with his attempts to keep the Philippines closed to unauthorized journeys to China, and gave him permission (probably considered completely superfluous

[357] Martín Enríquez de Almanza... . AGI Peru 4, r. 4.

to Ronquillo) to enforce his edict in any way he saw fit.[358] That same galleon that carried the viceroy's response to Ronquillo, incidentally, also carried the official confirmation of the new governor's appointment, which delineated his position as the viceroy's subordinate two more times than Sande's had.[359] With these subtle jabs at the Philippine administrators, the two viceroys carefully avoided both ceding too much authority and alienating men who were not only valuable contacts, but would in all likelihood return to the Americas to take up positions there after their terms expired.

In the end, the Alfaro mission forced both colonies to attempt to establish the actual extent of their powers in Asia and across the Pacific. The Philippines proved to be the primary beneficiaries of this power struggle; post-Alfaro, they became more and more prominent as representatives of Spanish power in Asia, as they moved into greater prominence once the possibility of a Chinese colony was eliminated. The Spanish attempted to send two more embassies to the Ming before its effective collapse in the first decades of the seventeenth century; although they were never able to replicate the success of the Portuguese in that regard, the input of the knowledgeable Philippine colonial government was asked for from the start, not months after the plans had been set in Madrid and Mexico City, as was the case with Rada's embassy and Alfaro's clandestine mission.[360] The power-hungry Ronquillo found himself with a freer hand than Sande had had in regards to extracting tribute and manpower from Borneo and other areas not directly under the Spanish crown.[361] Overall, the Alfaro incident had allowed the Philippine governors to assert their authority in Spanish affairs in Asia.

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[358] Cartas al gobernador-capitan..., Newberry Ayer 887, p. 24-6.
[359] Ibid, pp. 1-5
[360] Mendoza, p. 227, and Cartas del gobernadores.... NAP Folio 2, p. 44-51.
[361] Cartas del Ronquillo... . NAP Folio 2, p. 33.

The “Pregón de Ronquillo” proved to be successful in its secondary, unstated aim—that is, preventing the viceroyalty of New Spain from embarking on any major acts of diplomatic or military significance in Asia without the input of the Philippine administration. As the focus of Spanish interests in Asia shifted from a proposed conquest of China to the establishment and maintenance of trade links with China, and of the Philippines as the home base for Spanish interests in the Pacific, the role of the respective colonial governments shifted to accommodate this new reality. Alfaro’s mission was a pivotal moment in both these shifts, as it prompted the turn from a conquest of China to a trade-based relationship with the Ming and allowed the colonial governments of the Philippines and Mexico to openly examine their respective jurisdictions in Asia.

In short, Pedro de Alfaro unintentionally stepped into a politically--volatile situation when he arrived in China in 1579. Though he himself had no quarrel with the way trans-Pacific administration was conducted in the 1570s, his actions nevertheless provided what is essentially the first major testing ground of the extent of both Philippine colonial authority and the administration of Mexico in Asia, with interesting outcomes for both colonies. New Spain drew away from their earlier model of conducting Crown business in Asia while deliberately keeping the Philippine governors in the dark, and the Philippines received tacit acknowledgement of its superiority in matters relating to Spanish interests in Asia. That that acknowledgement arrived simultaneously with an explicit reminder that they were still bound to viceregal decisions ultimately mattered less. The success of the “Pregón de Ronquillo,” in the sense at least that Mexico did not send any more clandestine political missions in the years following, firmly established

the authority of the Manila governor in the wider Spanish sphere of influence in Asia. Generally speaking, Alfaro's mission increased and clarified the role of the Philippine governors in relation to their superiors in Mexico.

Emphasizing the role of inter--colonial power grabs in the larger context of the international fallout of Alfaro's mission serves to highlight the important role colonial representatives and colonial concerns, as opposed to those of the Spanish metropole, played in the development of trade and diplomatic links across the Pacific. Indeed, the Spanish Crown, that bastion of power and wealth throughout the early modern world, is in many ways relegated to a bit player in this particular aspect of the narrative; while Francisco de Sande did hasten to report Alfaro's doings to King Philip II, the Crown neither directly interfered nor offered any significant assistance to either colonial party. Nor are the direct concerns of the European metropolis present in any significant political sense—all the decisions made after the mission were based on concerns and interests of colonial administrators. Far from being a mere extension of the Iberian metropole, Latin America played a pivotal role in the development of globalization and the establishment of permanent trade routes on its own merits. This perspective—that of a Pacific-centric focus bridged by two influential Spanish colonies—serves to emphasize the role of Mexico as a semi-metropole in its own right (raising the question of whether English-language historians should begin to explore the Mexican metropole more often) and to bring the Philippines into clearer focus as a place of vital strategic and economic importance.[362]

The relative diminishment of the European metropole and the emphasis on the Pacific region in the Alfaro mission story also serves to further reorient the traditional

[362] Elliott, *Spain, Europe, and the Wider World*, p. 131.

perception of the "great encounter" of China and the West—a historiographical concept that has been greatly weakened in the academy but still influences popular thought. Much of the previous work on Christian missions in East Asia takes the Eurasian landmass as its geographic focus, portraying the much-heralded "meeting" of China and the West as an encounter of major imperialist powers only. However, this approach, intentionally or not, diminishes the importance of European colonies as diplomatic and political powers in their own right—while nominally under the jurisdiction of their respective metropoles, European representatives in far--flung areas more often than not acted on their own without explicit guidance from their homelands. Even Catholic missions like Alfaro's, originating in Europe but at the behest of colonial authorities involving trans--Pacific travel and people who spent their entire careers in the colonies are often described as European missions "encountering" China.

Examining Alfaro's mission (and others) from a trans-Pacific perspective places geographic focus on areas that are traditionally considered peripheral—in this case, for example, placing focus away from Spain and on New Spain and the Philippines. It also alters the way we perceive territories as actors on the "global stage;" for example, rather than a traditional view of European states as active powers encountering a passive China, a Pacific focus allows us to see Iberia, New Spain, the Philippines, and China as parts of an active, interconnected whole, giving greater emphasis to both China as the primary imperial power in the early modern Pacific and the Spanish colonies as the direct representatives of European—and their own—interests.

Chapter Seven: "These Rascals Continue to Trouble Us:" Pedro de Alfaro and the Pacific World

In the days immediately following the abrupt end of Pedro de Alfaro's brief career in the depths of the South China Sea, the tale of his supposedly incorrupt body, discovered on the shores of Macau in a posture of prayer, spread with pious excitement among his fellow religious in Asia, making him a saintlike figure for the few days before his corpse began to decay on its bier. The metaphor is apt—in both the acclaim of his contemporaries and in the historiography, Pedro de Alfaro was destined to enjoy only a brief period in the spotlight before he faded from view, a forgotten figure in a crowded historiographical era. His epitaph has been left unwritten by his contemporaries and by the first waves of historians to write about the "great encounter" of China and the West—he was neither a saint, nor a great missionary, nor the victorious agent of Habsburg military ambitions he and Viceroy Almanza hoped he would be.

Soon after his fellow Franciscans in Asia were becoming enthralled with his romantic death and miraculous postmortem condition, Alfaro's judgment on the feasibility of a Spanish conquest of China was beginning to spread throughout the educated Spanish-speaking world. Juan Ayora, stunned by Alfaro's death, lost no time in sending his April letter back to New Spain on the next galleon, along with the longer "Relación del Viaje a China," written in the hand of Agustín de Tordesillas with

extensive input from Alfaro. Both accounts were in the hands of the Spanish court by the end of 1581, where they featured prominently in changing the course of Spain's evolving relationship with Ming China.[363]

This work has primarily examined the effect of Alfaro's mission on international and inter-colonial relations, but Alfaro also had a brief posthumous period of renown in the world of letters, which, had he known, would frankly have pleased him far more than his role in the history of Sino-Spanish relations. For the first half of the 1580s, the course of Alfaro's career was, in all probability, known only to Franciscans, Spaniards in Asia, and of course Philip II, the Viceroy, and those privy to high-level discussions on a proposed conquest of China. By 1585, however, Alfaro's adventures and assessments, in the form of Tordesilla's report, were poised to receive their greatest audience yet—they formed an important source for Juan González de Mendoza's royally-commissioned compendium of all things concerning China, *Historia de las cosas mas notables, ritos, y costumbres del Gran Reyno de la China,* a contemporary bestseller and the longest account of the country to reach European audiences since the days of Marco Polo.[364]

The relative obscurity of Mendoza's work in the modern historiography of Western accounts of China should not be taken as a sign of its lack of impact or importance for early modern European thought.[365] Today historians generally discuss it briefly before moving on to the more historically significant, erudite, and, frankly, factually accurate works of Matteo Ricci and his seventeenth-century heirs—Mendoza's work appears in the history of European writings on China as a sort of informational

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[363] See Chapter Five.
[364] Staunton, ed, *Mendoza*. Introduction, 3.
[365] Perhaps it is not so obscure—an original printing sold for $16,000 at auction in 2013. Sotheby's Auction Results, June 2013.

way-station, a temporary fix sixteenth-century Europeans made do with until something better came along. There is of course a great deal of truth to this assessment, but it tends to obscure the importance of this work in the decades before long-term European travel to China became less rare. Dolors Folch i Fornesa describes Mendoza as an "armchair travel writer" but nevertheless gives him credit for promulgating an "extremely positive" European view of China that persisted into the eighteenth century, but this is an unusual approach to Mendoza in the historiography and one that I am unsure I agree with, as Mendoza is not overly positive in his assessment of China and his work was out of favor by the mid seventeenth century.[366] Generally, however, Mendoza's work goes unremarked in contemporary historiography.

Juan González de Mendoza was an Augustinian friar and former soldier, hailing from the La Rioja region in northern Spain. His intelligence and gift for writing won him the attentive interest of Philip II, who, in 1580, commissioned him to gather all available contemporary written sources concerning China and work them into a massive compendium to provide a source for all recent European reports of the Ming Empire.[367] No direct evidence for this assertion exists, but given the Spanish crown's keen interest in obtaining firsthand information of China for military purposes in the 1570s, it is quite possible that the book was commissioned at least in part in order to gather sources for the much-proposed *conquista de china a la mexicana.* Such a proposal would have been an excellent way to gather all available information into one place, ready for perusal by Philip II, his Council, or the Viceroy of New Spain. Regardless of whether or not the conquest plans were involved in its commissioning, Mendoza was duly dispatched to

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[366] Dolors Folch, "Como se escribio un gran libro: las fuentes de *Historia de las Cosas...*" in *Album Asia: del siglo xxi al siblo xv.* Barcelona: Casa Asia (n.d.): pp. 587-591., pp. 587-588.
[367] Staunton, p. ix.

Mexico to make copies of all the reports on China that came through on the Manila Galleon.[368] However, by the time Mendoza was finished with his book in 1585, the proposed conquest was no longer a viable option—a lucky coincidence of timing if indeed the work had been commissioned with the conquest in mind, for Mendoza was not a particularly reliable source. He garbled names and dates (Sande, not Lavezaris, is credited with masterminding the de Rada mission, for example—a completely impossible situation), and was not averse to embellishing an account either. For Alfaro's mission, he rendered the dates correctly (a significant achievement given that Pablo de Jesús himself once gave a date for his own arrival in the Philippines that is flatly contradicted by multiple ship's logs and customs records), but added in bits and pieces of other accounts, making the friars travel on to Xiamen for their hearing before the magistrates.[369] Interestingly (and perhaps significantly), he omitted any references to a conquest of China.[370] (For clarification, this work uses Mendoza frequently, but with corroboration from other sources.)

In true bestseller fashion, however, none of these glaring errors stopped the *Historia* from being an instant success. By 1600, it had been translated into six languages and gone through thirty editions, and for a time, Alfaro's words and deeds were known throughout an educated Europe avid for any reliable (or not so reliable) contemporary analysis of Chinese customs and power.[371] In the decades before the proliferation of travel accounts from Europeans who had years of experience in China, Mendoza's work

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[368] Ibid.,p. x.
[369] Mendoza, p. 244.
[370] In contrast, Robert Parke's 1588 translation of Mendoza is quite frank about the political goals he hoped the book would help his country achieve—Englishmen were supposed to be inspired to go to China themselves to undercut Spanish interests in Asia. Parke, p. 3.
[371] Donald Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe, Vol. I,* (Chicago: Chicago, 1979), pp. 743-50. Mendoza was translated into Portuguese, French, Italian, English, German, and Latin.

was a major, albeit temporary, milestone in the development of European thought about China, with such luminaries as the French philosopher Michel de Montaigne remarking that the work had taught him "how the world is more ample and diverse so that neither the ancients nor we do penetrate."[372] Given such a reception, Alfaro's place in the history of Catholicism in China, if not in the history of Sino-Spanish relations, seemed assured.

But soon after this, there was silence.

The Record Goes Silent

Over four hundred years after Alfaro's death, the despairing letter he wrote to Juan Ayora in April 1580 was quoted by Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, then the Superior General of the Society of Jesús, who was discussing the long and rich history of his order in China in an interview. Talk naturally turned to the Society's famous missions to China in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and from there to the Jesuit's rivals in mission work, the mendicant Franciscan order. Alfaro, Kolvenbach opined, was a man of much wit and shrewd judgement whose assessment of the Chinese situation had an extraordinary influence on early modern European attitudes towards a conquest of China, both spiritual and military.[373] Alfaro's cry of despair to Ayora was such a sound, shocking summation of the shortcomings of Spanish pretensions in Asia that it "dominated" sixteenth-century European thought on the subject, at least until it became feasible for larger numbers of Europeans to enter China.[374] Ayora, who would die in

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[372] Ibid., p. 49.

[373] "Fray Pedro de Alfaro, Misionero Franciscano en China," Antonio Alfaro de Prado Sagrera. Accessed Sept. 22, 2014, http://www.franciscanos.es/index.php/ofm-santiago/historia/38-historia-ofm-santiago/67-fray-pedro-de-alfaro-misionero-franciscano-en-china

[374] Ibid., n.p. Incidentally, Kolvenbach is notorious in conspiracy-theorist circles as the "Black Pope" who supposedly personally ordered the September 11th terrorist attacks. Though Alfaro is mostly a complete unknown outside of Franciscan histories, Kolvenbach's praise of him was construed by some conspiracy

Manila a year after Alfaro, took special care to send Alfaro's judgement of Spain's chances in China along to Acapulco on the next Manila Galleon, where it was carried directly to Viceroy Martín Enriqué de Almanza in the final days of his term. Almanza in turn sent it immediately to Philip II, where, as noted, it featured prominently in his councils concerning Spain's expansion in the Far East.[375]

Unfortunately, Kolvenbach is one of the few contemporary figures to even remember Alfaro, much less ascribe any major importance to his words and deeds. Over the centuries, Alfaro moved from a figure who may not have achieved his or his superiors' goals but whose work had a significant impact and who was respected and recognized for his attempts to evangelize in China, to a mere footnote in the historiography of unsuccessful missions, a minor figure marked by failure despite his status as the first Spanish Franciscan to enter Ming China and his pivotal role in the development of a distinct Pacific world. In the first chapter, I examined how he was gradually forgotten by historians, and here I will examine the primary reason for his absence in the historiography—the perception of failure, not necessarily by his own lights or by those of his immediate contemporaries, but in a larger historical context, as well as the attendant silence that accompanies such perceptions.

Naturally, in the months and years immediately following his death, when he was celebrated as a martyr to the cause of Chinese conversion and, more quietly and only in certain quarters, a shrewd judge of the extent of Spanish power in Asia, the fact that Alfaro had never actually achieved his oft-stated goals was no hindrance. Indeed, it

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theorists as a nod to an imminent secret alliance between the Vatican and the Chinese Communist Party. Thom Burnett, *Conspiracy Encyclopedia*. (Berlin: Steiner, 2006), p. 262.

[375] The letters came close to being lost forever, as the 1580 Galleon voyages were particularly difficult even in the context of sixteenth-century transoceanic travel, due in no small part to the predations of Sir Francis Drake. Schurz, p. 55.

actually contributed to the growth of his brief legend. Few societies could claim to revere the futility and defeat of martyrdom more than the early modern Spanish world, and the vision of a friar completely willing to perish in a strange land for the love of Christ and his saints—especially one who delivered such a compelling account of Chinese power at a time when all of Europe was avid for news on the subject—was irresistible for many.[376] But as time wore on, more and more Europeans entered China and took the place Alfaro had had in the imaginations and policy talks of early modern Europe, particularly after 1615 when Matteo Ricci's *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas* was published.[377]

His apparent lack of tangible long-term contributions, at least in the context of conversion, became noticeable among people who could compare his words with those of others who had been in China longer and who spoke the language, or who had suffered more, or whose political and military assessments were more in line with the political and economic reality of a Spain that had acquired Portugal, but had been defeated by Elizabeth's England in 1588 and was continuing to lose tremendous amounts of money and manpower in the Eighty Years' War.[378] What use were the writings of a friar who had only been in China for a few months, who had not contributed significantly to the growth of Christianity in Asia, and whose political writings were becoming woefully outdated and irrelevant (never mind that they were irrelevant precisely because Spain had dispensed with the idea of conquest as a direct result of Alfaro's judgement)? And, it must be said, particularly one who didn't even die a bloody death in a heroic stand for

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[376] Jose Antonio Cervera, *Tras el sueno de China: Agustínos y dominocos en Asia Oriental a finales del siglo XVI.* (Madrid: Plaza y Valdes, 2013), p. 49.
[377] Matteo Ricci, *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas,* (Augsburg: n.p., 1615), p. xi.
[378] Cervera., p. 236.

Christianity, like the twenty-six Franciscans whose 1597 crucifixion in Nagasaki horrified and captivated Catholic Europe.[379]

So it was that Pedro de Alfaro, briefly hailed as a martyr in Asia and a major contributor to late-sixteenth-century perceptions of China in the West, slipped out of the collective consciousness of Western Europe. Had the Chinese never permitted any further missions, or if perhaps Alfaro had been more intellectually-minded, like Martín de Rada and Matteo Ricci, maybe Alfaro's preeminent place in the mission rolls would have endured long enough for him to feature in the early works of mission history in the nineteenth century, and from there have a more enduring place in contemporary historiography. But these things didn't happen, and when the field became crowded with missionaries and travelers who had greater intellectual talents, or who had better and longer access to the Chinese, or who had died more spectacularly, Alfaro's estimation became less and less remarkable, and he was gradually branded a failure; a person who was, in the words of the nineteenth-century historian who had enraged me and Francisco de Alfaro, "unworthy of further note."[380]

It is this perception of failure and irrelevance on every conceivable long-term front (from the point of view of early modern Europeans and historians in the centuries following) that contributed the most to the gradual disappearance of Alfaro from the historiography. Had Alfaro merely only failed to be bloodily martyred, or only failed to deliver an enduring portrayal of China that could overcome shifts in Spanish fortunes, or only failed to establish a Franciscan mission lasting longer than a few months, he might enjoy some kind of long-term regard, as many of his contemporaries do today in the

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[379] Arnulf Hartmann, *Augustinians in Seventeenth-Century Japan*, (New York: Augustinian, 1963), pp. 138-41.
[380] *Cathay....*, p. 228.

academy and among members of modern religious orders. But with the devaluing of his reputation on all fronts, followed by several decades of historiographical focus on areas of history besides mission studies (as detailed in Chapter One), he gradually disappeared from the roll of notable travelers to China—an unfortunate mistake that has made the historiography of not only Catholic missions, but of Sino-Spanish relations and of the Pacific World, less rich.

Pedro de Alfaro's Legacy

On a sweltering spring day at the end of my field research, I spent a sticky few hours climbing up and down the narrow streets of the Old City of Macau, looking for the church of St. Lazarus. Having found that Portuguese was not quite as useful there as I had believed and being quite unable to speak Cantonese, I was entirely reliant on tourist signage and an increasingly-grubby slip of paper upon which I'd carefully written the church's Chinese name. After pushing this paper in the faces of approximately half the city, I finally found the church. It was a small, tidy, nondescript nineteenth-century structure and was thus ignored by the throngs of tourists en route to the ruins of St. Paul's half a kilometer away. This church, or rather this church site, had spent most of its existence as a hospital for lepers. However, before that, it had been the only Franciscan-affiliated edifice in Macau on the muggy day in June 1580 when Pedro de Alfaro's body washed ashore, and I had a hunch that he had been buried here.[381]

[381] Sixteenth century European burials in Macau are somewhat complicated—the Ming code required that all Westerners who died on Ming soil had to be buried there (Matteo Ricci, who is interred in a splendid tomb in Beijing, was the lone exception), and the options for burial ranged from common unmarked graves outside the city to internment at the altar of a church. As a prominent religious, it would have made sense for Alfaro to be buried at the local Franciscan church. Rachana Sadchev, ed. *Encountering China: Early Modern European Responses.* (Lewisburg: Bucknell, 2012), p. 134.

The deacon, a cheerful young man who was very proud of the fact that Mick Jagger had once stayed in the parish, shared my hunch once I explained who Alfaro was and that he had been found dead in Macau, but regretfully informed me that he had no burial records from the 1580s and that the years of service to those afflicted with leprosy, and the subsequent razing of the old structure once the colony moved outside the city, had disturbed and disinterred so many graves and changed the layout of the grounds so radically that even if a grave was found, it would be very difficult to determine even the century it belonged to, much less the identity of its occupant. Perhaps the body had been moved to the nearby Crypt Museum, he suggested. As a researcher, it would be very easy for me to get a pass to access the stock, as it were, and look through them for any indications that one of them was Alfaro. Many of the bodies had of course crumbled to dust in the humidity, but perhaps some clue remained, like a disintegrating habit or a yellowed register of burials. (The deacon was an extremely helpful man.)

As the idea of combing through hundreds of potentially-leprous skeletons was distinctly unappealing, no matter how much the deacon extolled the cleanliness of the climate-controlled facility, I decided to let Alfaro lie, wherever that happened to be. This seemed fitting in a way—an obscurity in death that mirrored his obscurity in the historiography and, to a lesser extent, the historical record. Indeed, despite the relatively large amount of sources available, years of researching his career had only yielded references for five years of his life—the last four, plus the municipal record from Alcalá in 1567. I didn't know when he was born, I didn't know where he was interred, and it was quite possible I never would. Making peace with that was difficult after putting years of effort into resurrecting him in the historiography.

In this work I have argued forcefully that Pedro de Alfaro and his ill-fated (from his point of view) journey to China represent a significant turning point in both global history and historiography. His testimony on the impossibility of a Spanish conquest of China drastically changed Spain's policies in regards to China, re-centering them solely on trade just in time for Philip II to take advantage of the tremendous demand for silver caused by the promulgation of the Single Whip Law and drastically improve the finances of Spain. The title of this dissertation, "Never Trust the Chinese," is a direct quote from Pedro de Alfaro written after the loss of his second silver chalice by a duplicitous convert; one that I had chosen early on, feeling that it did a good job of both indicating the global aspect of the work and summing up Alfaro's peevish demeanor. It did not occur to me until I was far along in the writing process that Alfaro had failed to follow his own advice: that he *had* trusted the Chinese, and that Philip II had in turn trusted Alfaro. The friar trusted the power of China implicitly and without question as soon as he had been exposed to its realistic extent in Guangzhou, removed from all the contemporary Spanish rhetoric of wondrous luxuries peddled by a peaceful people ripe for conquest. And as soon as Alfaro's report reached Spain, the Crown trusted it as well, to its great and almost immediate material advantage. The Dutch would eventually replace the Chinese as Spain's biggest adversaries in Asia, but in the meantime the Ming and Habsburg Empires settled down to a profitable, though very uneasy, trade partnership.

Alfaro's implicit trust in the power of Ming China also reflects the mission's second major contribution to the historiography—the furthering of ongoing revisionist scholarship arguing for the dominance of China as a world power long after the West is

traditionally thought to have drawn ahead. The Spanish, once they had been made aware that the population of China was far greater, better armed, and more thoroughly fortified than they had believed, immediately backed down from any serious consideration of a conquest of China—a valuable and significant salute to their rival's power. Indeed, the power and prominence of the Ming was a surprise to the Spanish only in its real extent—even before the first known Spaniard in the pay of the Empire had set foot in Ming China it was well known that the Chinese were extremely formidable adversaries, as Lavezaris's plan for conquest *a la mexicana* attests. The Spanish prior to Alfaro did not believe that the Chinese were insignificant or weak, only that there was a distinct possibility, worth taking advantage of, that the southern coast was not representative of the rest of the country and that the Ming were not militaristic and would be unwilling or unable to repel a Spanish offensive. With the withdrawal of the conquest option from Spanish policy, their recognition of China's place as the dominant power in not only Asia but the world was affirmed, if only implicitly.

"The Inconstancy of the Seas"?: China, Spain, and the Rise of the Pacific

The combination of these two factors—the removal of the conquest option and Spain's recognition of Chinese dominance—at a very precise time in global history allowed for the development of a stable, discrete Pacific World sooner than might otherwise have been. What the Spanish would have done if a *pacificación* of China was still on the table when the Single Whip Reform was implemented and the Iberian Union was finalized is purely conjectural, but the fact that conquest was removed from consideration at the precise time when China suddenly needed tremendous amounts of silver and the continuation of Portugal's trade relationship with the Ming became an

object of interest to Philip II allowed for a quick stabilization of the two powers based on opposite sides of the Pacific.[382] This is not to imply that the Spanish lived in harmony thereafter with either the Chinese or the Portuguese of course (conflicts erupted into bloodshed regularly throughout the colonial period), but the timing of all three events—Alfaro's report, the Single Whip Reform, and the Iberian Union—meant that Spain's rivalry with China was now considerably eased. And it also meant that Spain's further encroachments into Asia would be of a much smaller scale, and that in turn Latin America came into stronger focus as the center of Spanish overseas empire, rather than the Chinese holdings Philip II had hoped for.

Peace, or relative peace, between all major powers is not enough to build a discrete maritime region, of course. Indeed, if that was the main criterion, maritime regions as such probably wouldn't exist. But the absence of ongoing open conflict between Spain and China opened up avenues of trade at the precise moment when Spain, at long last, had a commodity the Chinese were in great need of. Spain and China had traded before in the Philippines, but that trade had been confined to small-scale luxury goods and such bland necessities as wax and cotton. The silver trade was something quite different in both scope and duration—until the protracted and bloody collapse of the Ming in the mid seventeenth century, the silver trade was arguably the backbone of the Spanish economy, so much so that the Ming-Qing cataclysm plunged Spain into what historians have argued was a financial quagmire from which it never really recovered.[383]

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[382] Counterfactual history is not my forte, but it could be argued that an actual military conflict between China and Spain would also have had the effect of strengthening links across the Pacific. To that I would add my own counterfactual argument: that the conquest of China would have ended quickly and ingloriously, probably culminating with the ousting of the Spanish from the Philippines, either by choice of the Spanish or by force.

[383] Flynn and Giraldez, "Born With A Silver Spoon...", p. 202.

The stability engendered by the effective removal of China as a feasible military rival allowed for this trade to blossom, which in turn strengthened the ties across the Pacific Rim. With the silver trade came not only the doubling of the Manila Galleon voyages to two annually, but an increase in cultural exchanges across the Pacific. More profit meant more people, and the speed and scope of travel in both directions across the Pacific increased drastically in the decades following the rise of the silver trade. With Spain and China well-established as, respectively, the dominant powers in the Eastern and Western Pacific, the development of permanent, large-scale exchange networks quickly followed.

Spain and China were not the only powers in this new Pacific World either. Japan's own silver trade with China (and Europeans) flourished in the same period, powered by the extraordinary Iwami Ginzan mines and making the Tokugawa *bakufu* a major trade partner in the East Asian maritime world that included the Western Pacific.[384] Spain and Japan had a fractious relationship all their own in this era as well, culminating in the infamous crucifixion of a group of Franciscans on the orders of Hideyoshi Toyotomi.[385] The Empire of Brunei, drastically larger than modern Brunei and comprising large swaths of Malaysia and the Philippines, alternately traded and clashed with both the Spanish and Portuguese in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as did the Khmer Empire. In addition to these Southeast Asian powers, the Philippines themselves maintained independent or semi-independent kingdoms apart from Spanish rule well into the seventeenth century, fully aside from remote interior regions where no

[384] Ibid., p. 203.
[385] Ikuo Higashibaba, *Christianity in Early Modern Japan*. (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 126. The history of Hispano-Japanese relations is unfortunately outside the scope of this work, but the relationship between the two powers is itself a significant aspect of early modern global history.

real contact with the Spanish (or any subsequent foreign government) ever occurred.[386] And of course Spain was not the only European representative in the vast Pacific maritime region. The Portuguese have been discussed throughout this work, but the Dutch too would make their mark as a major regional power upon their arrival at the end of the sixteenth century (arguably they would replace the Chinese as the focus of Spain's military ambition in the region). Finally, the English, though lacking a permanent base of any kind in the region, pursued Spanish and Portuguese ships—and the rich cargoes they contained—with relish throughout the early modern period, even inadvertently scuttling Gonzalo de Ronquillo's attempt to have himself named Governor for Life by repeatedly attacking the ship he had personally paid for.[387] The predations of Francis Drake in the Eastern Pacific and the multitude of pirates of various Asian ethnicities who roamed the Western Pacific were also part and parcel of the Pacific World. The Pacific Rim in the early modern era was a complex landscape (or rather seascape) of different empires, kingdoms, pirates, and tribes that interacted with each other and formed permanent links across all major regions of the Pacific. But this region was dominated by the two powers that anchored its eastern and western shores—Ming China, the most powerful state in the world at the time, and the aggressively expansionist Spanish Empire, represented by its Latin American colonies.

In writing about his long voyage to Manila, Pablo de Jesús referred to "the inconstancy of the seas" as a fact of life—one could never be certain of the outcome of a sea voyage.[388] This was a poignant and frightening truth for the early modern traveler.

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[386] For the best cOlléction on research on Southeast Asia in this era, see Anthony Reid, ed, *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Period: Trade, Power, and Belief*. (Ithaca: Cornell, 1993).
[387] Dahlgren, p. 44.
[388] De Jesús, p. 34.

The sea route was faster than going overland and often ultimately safer, but it was still beset with danger—approximately one-fifth of all the Manila Galleons that ever set sail now lie at the bottom of the sea, the victims of foul weather, pirates, or simply the kinds of routine nautical misfortune that have plagued sailors throughout history.[389] Pablo de Jesús was quite right—the seas were certainly inconstant in the context of guaranteeing a safe, swift passage from one port to another, and would remain so until the advent of modern seafaring techniques. But with the development of permanent economic and cultural exchange networks across the Pacific in the late sixteenth century, the sea became, in many respects, a constant—individual Galleons might sink on a basis alarming to the modern reader, but the route itself remained and indeed was in operation for over two centuries until the independence of Mexico severed it. The centering of these networks on a maritime rather than a continental nexus made the sea an active component of this newly-developed historical zone—a constant that continues to this day with the importance of the Pacific Rim in contemporary economics.

Alfaro's mission did not spark the development of the Pacific in and of itself, any more than Alfaro's personal qualities were the determinant in Spain rejecting the notion of a conquest of China. But his fortuitous accident of timing allowed for both major Pacific empires to establish a relatively-stable balance of power at a moment advantageous to both—had Spain still been focused on a conquest of China, that development would have been rendered considerably more difficult. This balance of power, despite the occasional flaring of tensions between the two, persisted in some form or another until the collapse of Spain's Latin American empire in the nineteenth century.

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[389] Schurz, p. 7.

The Rise of the Pacific World

The disparate elements that make up this work—Alfaro's report, the Iberian Union, the rise of silver, and the final Spanish embassies to Ming China—serve to illustrate not only the extraordinary complexity of Sino-Spanish relations in this period, but to emphasize the growing importance of the Pacific Ocean as a globalized zone beginning in the 1570s. The accident of timing that caused the Iberian Union, the Single Whip Reform, and Alfaro's judgement of the impossibility of a Chinese conquest to all occur in the same year is vital to the history of the Pacific World—it allowed Spain to, by necessity, shift focus to a more peaceful approach to China at the exact moment when China began to need exponentially higher amounts of silver and when the preservation of Portugal's own existing agreements with China suddenly became a vested interest of the Spanish Empire. That is this work's contribution to the historiography of the Pacific World—it is the first to contextualize all three of these momentous 1580 events in the development of a discrete trade and cultural exchange zone centered on the Pacific Ocean.

The historiography of the Pacific World is comparatively sparse and generally lacking the stringent debates that characterize the global history field (reflecting perhaps a persistent belief that there is no integrated Pacific zone and thus there cannot be historiography on something that does not really exist).[390] Much of what we might call history of the Pacific Rim exists only for a later period, prompted by the American occupation of the Philippines and related emergent post-World War II interest in the region up to and including the recent re-rise of China as an economic superpower in the

[390] Dennis O. Flynn, Arturo Giráldez, and James Sobredo. "In Search of Periodization for Pacific History: An Introduction." In *Studies in Pacific History: Economics, Politics, and Migration*, edited by Dennis O. Flynn, Arturo Giráldez, and James Sobredo, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002): pp. 1-21, p 1-3.

contemporary world (much as the initial stirrings of what would become the Atlantic World historiography were prompted the establishment of NATO and the Cold War concept of a Western world clustered around the Atlantic).[391]

For the early modern period, the preeminent early scholar is William Schurz, whose 1939 book *The Manila Galleon* was the first major work on the galleons and their importance for the development of Pacific trade. A work of narration and explanation rather than deep analysis, *The Manila Galleon* nevertheless lays the foundations for approaching the region not from the viewpoint of one nation or ethnicity, but as an integrated maritime whole based around the Spanish trade route. He takes care to establish the importance of the Galleons not only for their Spanish administrators, but for the Chinese who depended on their silver, the colonial elites of Mexico and Peru who waited eagerly for the silk and spice shipments, and the European pirates who stalked the Pacific hoping to capture one. (While obviously out-of-date in many ways, Schurz displays a refreshingly modern take in his chapter classifications—territories within the Americas and what he terms "The Orient" are simply listed by name, whereas the English, Dutch, and Spanish are accurately termed "foreigners" in the context of the Pacific.)[392]

Schurz laid the foundation for a brief flowering of Pacific history linked to an equally-brief mid- to late-twentieth-century interest in early modern Latin American administration and trade. Because the Philippines were administered not by Spain but by Mexico until the latter's independence in the early nineteenth century, and because all communication with Asian powers was done through the islands, this linkage resulted in

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[391] Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History*. (Cambridge: Harvard, 2005), p. 6-7
[392] Schurz, p. 12.

several minor works that, purposely or not, dealt with the Pacific as an emergent world region. Among them, Oskar H.K. Spate's 1979 work *The Spanish Lake* has been the most enduring. While Eurocentric to a degree (he asserts that the political and economic complexes established in the Pacific were basically "a Euro-American creation"), he goes a step further than Schurz and fully articulates how he conceives of the Pacific as a region.[393] He describes it as "Oceanic" rather than "Insular," meaning that this is not a history of the Pacific islands or of the states lying along its shores, but a history of the ocean itself, the (mostly European, in Spate's case) people who crossed and interacted in it, and how the ocean as a historical zone of inquiry in its own right affected the peoples involved—one of the first major works to situate the Pacific as a historiographical region in and of itself.[394] My own work serves to augment Spate's argument by situating the importance of the Pacific World as part of a larger global zone in which the Chinese were the dominant power and were recognized as such by the Spanish. The latter power dominated the eastern half of the Pacific Rim but their interactions and travels through the ocean were shaped by the force of Chinese power and trade.

Then, for a significant period of time, there was relative silence in the historiography. In Latin American history, where the cultural turn was perhaps strongest, scholars moved away from works on administration and trans-oceanic trade and focused particularly on ethnohistory. Global history was just beginning to establish itself as a legitimate subfield, and, particularly in its early years, was focused primarily on the Eurasian landmass and its interactions with other continents rather than on the oceans. In recent years, however, there has been a small renaissance in Pacific history, dominated by

[393] Oskar Spate, *The Spanish Lake* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1979), p. 20.
[394] Ibid, p. 6.

the joint works of Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giraldez, who, together with James Sobredo, have written a long series of influential articles on the development of the Pacific World (though largely without using that term). The most important of these are contained in the 2010 collection *China and the Birth of Globalization*, particularly "Born With a 'Silver Spoon': The Origin of World Trade in 1571," "Conceptualizing Global Economic History: The Role of Silver," and "Spanish Profitability in the Pacific." Together, these articles make a strong case for both the Pacific's importance in the development of globalization, as well as for the delineation of the Pacific as a distinct historiographical zone. Flynn and Giraldez argue that silver in particular—silver that was mined in Potosí and Zacatecas, poured into Madrid and Bruges, and formed the backbone of the Chinese economy during the late Ming—was a linchpin for the development of globalization, and the Pacific was the zone in which it was established. I too emphasize the importance of silver to the development of Spanish power and profits in the region, but this work joins the significance of the silver trade with an emphasis on the administrative, quasi-diplomatic, and religious linkages between the two halves of the Pacific to present a unified whole—a maritime region with ties beyond those of finance. The Manila Galleon may only have been an annual round trip in this era, but it was the method by which the ambitions of Spain in regards to China were first furthered, and then halted, opening a new emphasis on the Philippines as Spain's only significant permanent territory in Asia.[395]

The work of Flynn and Giraldez ties into current work arguing for a significant revision of China's role in maritime history. The traditional view of China is

[395] Flynn and Giraldez of course discuss these aspects as well, but their work focuses overwhelmingly on the financial aspect of the development of the Pacific.

continentally-oriented; that is, the historiography focuses on China as a landmass, with the frontiers situated inland. Ming China, as the dominant narrative went, represented in particular a decidedly non-maritime-oriented society, as after the famous Zheng He (鄭和) voyages in the fifteenth century, the Ming were presumed to have turned away more or less permanently from significant sea navigation and trade.[396] Zheng He's explorations undoubtedly represent the apex of Chinese maritime ambition, but they were by no means the end of it. Indeed, as Chapter Three examined, sea trade flourished throughout the Ming and represented a significant source of income for both legitimate merchants and the pirates that flourished in the South China Sea during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The contribution of my own research to this brief history of the high points of Pacific World historiography is to examine the Pacific as a Spain-China nexus based not just on trade, but on an implicit understanding of their relative power bases in the region—Spain in Latin America in the east, China in the west, with the Philippines serving as a contact point. This understanding was forged in 1580 with the tacit acceptance of Spanish administrators in the metropole, Mexico, and the Philippines that Pedro de Alfaro's assessment of Chinese power vis-a-vís Spain was correct and that a conquest of the Ming was therefore not a feasible option. Moreover, the date of this assessment represents a new contribution to the historiography as well—the tacit acceptance of dual spheres of influence in the Pacific at the precise time that Portugal became part of the Spanish Empire and the Ming implemented the *yi tiao bian fa* meant that Spain's approach to the two other major powers in the Pacific was essentially

[396] Harriet Zurndorfer, "Oceans of History, Seas of Change.." *International Journal of Asian History*, 13 (2016), p. 62.

peaceful at the exact moment it stood to gain significant financial advantage from the Chinese silver trade.

Pedro de Alfaro, Historiography, and Writing

Pedro de Alfaro, a man whose longing for renown was profoundly obvious from his writings, has come in for some very harsh criticism in this work. I have characterized him as ignorant, haughty, arrogant, bigoted, and pompous; as an ostentatiously pious man whose love for the finer things in life verged on hypocrisy; and as a person who essentially gave his life to the cause of being the dupe of Spain's manifestly-impossible conquest dreams. The historian Dolors Folch i Fornesa wrote that he was "not up to the measure" of his contemporary, the saintly and scholarly Martín de Rada, and I agree with that assessment—Alfaro had neither the brilliance, nor the innate tact, nor the social consciousness of the man who had beaten him as the first Spaniard to enter Ming China on official business by only four years.[397] However, I do not think that Pedro de Alfaro was an evil man, or a stupid man (after all, he was hardly alone in his belief that a conquest of China was feasible), or that because he had several negative characteristics he must have had others. I hope that I have balanced my criticisms with both the proper historical perspective and an honest portrayal of his good qualities—his wit, his devotion, and his tenacity, to name a few. If my criticism of Alfaro seems too personal, it is a reflection of the personal nature of his career. In the world Alfaro operated within, the personal *was* political—he was expected to take direct control of the task given to him by Almanza and make major, globe-spanning political assessments based on his personal judgements. The Great Man in History might be dead, but Alfaro's personal, individual

[397] Folch, "Escribir…" p. 72.

mark is important to this analysis of early modern Pacific World relations, even if his selection was simply an accident of historical timing.

I do not consider this work to be a biography, although it does follow the narrative progress of Alfaro's life—Alfaro is essentially a microhistorical device in what is a work about Sino-Spanish relations and the development of a discrete Pacific World. However, in writing this I did consult several works on biography, and I devoted a great deal of thought to my portrayal of Alfaro as a person and my growing fascination with him. As I found myself increasingly thinking of Alfaro with resigned, slightly irritable fondness, somewhat reminiscent of a sports fan's feelings for a losing home team, I re-read Leon Edel's seminal work on biography, *Writing Lives: Principia Biographica*. He articulates the struggles of the "participant-observer," the writer who is at once tasked with inhabiting the mind of their subject while at the same time maintaining enough detachment to ensure that the work remains historically accurate.[398] This was something I struggled with, particularly given the vagaries of early modern sources in general and the maddening intangibility of diplomacy in particular. For example, was my interpretation of the tale of Juan the penitent Chinese convert as a partial or total fabrication designed to give Alfaro a pious excuse to leave his post a reflection of what actually happened, or a cynical twenty-first-century spin on the sincere beliefs of a devout man? When I rejected the notion that literal devils had attempted to prevent Alfaro from entering Guangzhou, was I approaching the subject from the point of view of a scholar trying to determine the efficacy of Ming urban fortifications in the context of an important argument about Chinese infrastructure, or was I dismissing something that seemed perfectly plausible, maybe even likely, to a sixteenth-century Spaniard? I do believe that my interpretations

[398] Leon Edel, *Writing Lives: Principia Biographica*. (New York: Norton, 1984), pp. 63-66.

of Alfaro's writings reflect the likely course of events as accurately as is possible with sixteenth-century sources, but did this come at the expense of losing that essential early modern insight? I hope I was able to accomplish this balance and that my assessments of Alfaro as a person, as a missionary, and as a spy are firmly rooted in an appropriate sixteenth-century contextualization that leaves room for the practical concerns of the researcher.

I similarly took a dim view of the policies and plans of the Spanish Empire as well, criticizing their atrocities in both Latin America and the Philippines, and repeatedly pointing out their lack of realistic perspective on the subject of a conquest of China. It occurred to me that this work could be interpreted as being unconsciously influenced by the Black Legend, a propagandistic tendency to portray the Spanish Empire negatively that was already becoming current among non-Spanish Europeans of Alfaro's day with the spread of the Eighty Years' War across much of northern Europe (in 1573, for example, the Duke of Alba counseled Philip II not to respond to accusations of barbarity and tyranny, pointing out that the Dutch would respond with "700 other pamphlets containing 100,000 other insolent gibes.")[399] The Black Legend has a long history in the American academy and remains common in popular conceptions of Spanish history, and as this work does not mince words about the hubris of the Spanish, so misplaced as to appear ridiculous to subsequent generations, I began to wonder if I had been taken in by the unconscious biases of a historiographical school that is in many ways still influential.

After some thought, I rejected this explanation. My pointing out that the Spanish (and perhaps especially Spanish Franciscans) saw Cortés's conquest of the Aztecs as a

[399] K.W. Swart, "The Black Legend During the Eighty Years' War." In J.S. Bromley et al, *Britain and the Netherlands* (The Hague: Springer, 1975), p. 36.

clear sign that a similar plan could work in China, in the absence of any kind of reliable evidence that China was in any way similar to the societies they had encountered in the Americas, is not a flattering argument from the Spanish point of view, but it is based on sound documentary evidence.[400] The idea that successful conquests in the Americas would naturally be followed by successful conquests in China is not necessarily unreasonable at first glance, but a second glance at the distances involved and the population and fortifications of the only part of China well-known to Europeans at the time ought to have been sufficient to halt the idea without actually sending an emissary to scout out Guangzhou's fortifications. My work is less an indication of bias against the Spanish or a condemnation of them as a people than it is a condemnation of hubris and outsize ambition.

As I wrote, I noticed that my work touches upon another aspect of Latin American historiography as well—the ambivalence of conquest, articulated first by Inga Clendinnen in her 1987 work on the Maya in the sixteenth-century Yucatan. Conquests are rarely "complete," the argument goes, and hidden forms of resistance unseen or misunderstood by the would-be conquerors are rife. As a historian, I agree with this assessment. However, the concept of *conquista de China a la mexicana* hinges entirely on the assumption that the *pacificaciónes* of Cortés and Pizarro were not only successful, but more or less total for the purposes of the Spanish—otherwise the entire idea collapses and the reader is left questioning why they thought that was a feasible model in the first place. In the sixteenth century, despite the existence of wide swaths of New Spain and Peru that remained unintegrated into their respective viceroyalties (as Almanza knew

[400] For more information on Franciscans and their close identification with Cortés, see Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*. (Oxford: Oxford, 2004), pp. 14-16.

personally from his battles with the Chichimecs) and the ongoing resistance of indigenous people to the systematic destruction of their cultures, the Spanish were satisfied enough with the Cortés model to apply it repeatedly elsewhere. In this dissertation, I have treated the conquests of Mexico and Peru as though they were essentially unambivalent, taking the Cortés narrative at face value when discussing the plans to conquer China, in order to maintain a historical context vital to the primary arguments of this work.

A somewhat unexpected side effect of the rise of Pacific World historiography is its continued marginalization of the Philippines, although in a very different context—a tendency that is frankly continued in this very work. At first glance, it seems that the Philippines have been enjoying a renaissance as a historical subject with the rise of maritime history, and that is true to a certain extent. I am one of several junior scholars or doctoral candidates in history with works in progress that examine the Philippines in some aspect, and I argue both implicitly and explicitly that the Philippines were a vital component in the development of both a full-fledged Pacific World and of globalization in general. So far, so good—with the exception of Second World War history, the Philippines have been marginalized in the English-language historiography of the past, where they were considered not quite part of Asia and yet not quite part of Latin America either.[401] But many of these new works, including my own, examine the early modern Philippines primarily as a connection between other powers and not as a place with its own rich history—the complex interplay of religion, ethnicity, and geography that made up what we now know as the Philippines in both the pre-Hispanic and colonial eras tends

[401] The situation is different in the Mexican academy where the long colonial association means that the Philippines have generally been implicitly treated as part of Latin America.

to be flattened and simplified in order to focus on its importance as a nexus of global exchange. Of course, not all recent works that examine the Philippines are guilty of this—Linda Newsom's excellent work on demographic collapse has been vastly influential, and the Philippines themselves are home to a robust academy that has produced superb research in the past decades.[402] It is a source of some distress to me that this work is not among them—that it so often reduces the complexity of the people living in the Philippines to a faceless mass to be encountered, converted, fought variously with and against, but always from the point of view of the Spanish. This is of course due primarily to the availability of sources and the focus of this work (which is not, after all, the history of the Philippines), but at the same time it reflects an ongoing historiographical tendency that I dislike and hope to avoid in subsequent research. In a more positive light, this research illuminates the need for more works of global history that include Latin America. The Americas played a major role in the development of a global economy as its silver was transported from Bolivia and Mexico to China in exchange for more gold bullion to back up the finances of Europe. Moreover, as the representatives of Spain (and, during the period of the Iberian Union, Portugal as well,) colonial representatives in Manila and Mexico City found themselves the direct conduits for Spanish interests in Asia.

A final historiographical reflection: Alfaro's journey to China highlights the globalized nature of missions themselves in the early modern period and contributes to ongoing research in what Luke Clossey refers to as Global Salvific Catholicism—an approach that emphasizes the global nature of missions and religious orders in history.

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[402] For Filipino and Filipino-American historians writing about the Philippines and its diaspora, see the works of Luis H. Francia, Ambeth Ocampo, Dawn Bohulano Mabalon, and Vincente L. Rafael.

Catholic missions in this period were not simply dispatched from Rome or a European metropole to a specific location on an individual basis; they were a "macrohistorical phenomenon...a single world-spanning enterprise."[403] Even contemporaries recognized the cOlléctive missionary orders of the early modern Catholic church as essentially global institutions, with individual missions often traveling on their own initiative and ignoring secular authorities in both Europe and beyond (as Alfaro certainly did on both counts).[404] While I have chosen to emphasize one particular mission in my dissertation, I did so in a deliberate decision to frame it as part of the development of global networks—Alfaro was part of a system in which is was regarded as quite normal, if not a little infuriating, for a friar to sail halfway around the world to take up a post, only to abandon it for a different calling. This approach emphasizes not only the decentralized nature of mission work, but allows us to view Alfaro's arrival in China not as a monumental clash between friar and mandarin, but as part of a gradual, much--anticipated global process, even if Alfaro himself, never one to shrink from a confrontation, might have preferred the clash.

Misinterpretation and Pedro de Alfaro's Legacy

Translation and mistranslation occur again and again in this work—not just literal translations, but misinterpretations of events and situations by so many of the figures featured in this narrative. The most obvious example is "our traitor interpreter," the long-suffering translator, Simon. His willful mistranslation of the friars' mission when they were confronted at Guangzhou was interpreted as gross treachery and shocking impiety by the Franciscans, but Simon was undoubtedly acting in the best interests of the Catholic

[403] Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions.* (New York: Cambridge, 2008), pp. 3, 238.
[404] Ibid, p. 1.

faith and the Spanish Crown when he told the Cantonese magistrate that Alfaro and his men were something akin to Daoists and thus no real cause for concern. This moment, for which the young man was pilloried in the Spanish sources, illuminates the total lack of preparation Alfaro had made for this journey—he couldn't speak the language, he had no conception of the social norms of China, and he had no idea of the true extent of Ming power. Simon was the only person in the Spanish fold to interpret the friars' situation correctly and the only one to exhibit any real social or political acumen while the group was in China. His interpretation, that the friars were in way over their heads and had no idea what kind of situation they were dealing with, remains the best summation of the mission by any of its participants. In this work, it is the clear-headed Simon who exemplifies the struggles of being in-between, moving as he did between his Fujianese origins, his new life in the Philippines, and his emergent Catholic faith—a complex process of code-switching and cultural translation that appeared again and again as Simon tried his best to protect the friars against the consequences of their own misinterpretation of Ming legal and social customs.[405]

Indeed, Alfaro's very presence in China is another example of mistranslation—the Spanish, having blithely misread the strength of the Chinese, had themselves interpreted the situation incorrectly. Whatever Alfaro's personal fascination with China, the willful misinterpretation of the viable extent of Spanish conquest by himself and others was ultimately responsible for actually bringing him to Ming territory. This misconception was itself a major factor in the initial development of Spanish power in Asia—without the belief in at least the possibility of a Spanish conquest of China, the

[405] Nicholas Standaert applies the concept of in-betweenness to Chinese history, using the character 間 (jian). Standaert, *Chinese Voices in the Rites Controversy.* (Leuven: Leuven, 2014), p. 5.

conquest of the Philippines may have been a very different process, perhaps something more akin to the Portuguese enclave at Macau than an actual full-fledged colony.

The two governors, Sande and Ronquillo, who fought for the rights of authority in Asia they felt Viceroy Almanza had violated, were arguably also victims of mistranslation—they had interpreted their roles vis-a-vís Spanish interests in China to be something quite different from what the viceregal authorities had envisioned. Alternatively, the prim responses of both viceroys—that the governors knew full well that they were under the jurisdiction of viceregal authority—can itself be read as a willful misreading. Sande also used the concept of mistranslation to his own advantage as well, arguing that Philip II had grossly miscalculated the effect of his proposed gifts to the Wanli Emperor when in fact he knew that the gifts were likely to be well-received. Sande, a clever and able administrator, was able to scuttle this proposed embassy solely because Philip II was fully aware of the strong possibility that he and his Council were themselves misreading the norms of Ming diplomacy.

At the same time, translation—in the sense of actual linguistic translation—is also a recurring theme. The same Castilian metropole that had embarked on a centuries-long policy of erasing Pedro de Alfaro's native language of Galician was also an enthusiastic supporter of friars and scholars in the colonies who produced dictionaries and translations in indigenous languages (until such a time as the local population learned *castellano*, of course). Martín de Rada was merely the first and most prominent of the men in the service of the Spanish crown in Manila who devoted his time to composing translations, in both indigenous Filipino languages and in Chinese—itself a continuation of the ongoing efforts to translate catechisms, hymns, and other works into indigenous Latin

American languages.[406] Alfaro's lack of any kind of expertise in this area simply further points out how ill-prepared he was for the adventure that eventually cost him his life. And yet at the same time, he enjoyed a brief period of posthumous renown simply because his journeys had found a home in Mendoza's work, which was in turn translated into seven other languages. Alfaro, who made little effort to participate in the culture of translation and interpretation so many other missionaries of the era were involved in, owes what little posthumous renown he was able to obtain in his own time to the translations of others.

Francisco Alfaro and I discussed translations briefly when we met in Madrid. I had remarked that, as much as I found myself grudgingly enjoying Alfaro's writings, he was no Matteo Ricci, who, among other achievements, labored over a translation of Euclid into Chinese.[407] I had unwittingly touched on one of Sr. Alfaro's sore spots—he is of the opinion that Pedro de Alfaro is one of the great unsung heroes of the Golden Age of Catholic missions to China, quite comparable with Ricci if only in tenacity, and that only ignorance or the specter of Jesuit propaganda, still so effective after all these years, keeps his name out of the history books. It will be profoundly obvious to the reader that I

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[406] Regina Harrison. *Signs, Songs, and Memory in the Andes: Translating Quechua Language and Culture*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), p.3, and Vicente Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society Under Early Spanish Rule*. (Durham: Duke, 1988), p. 5. For an overview of recent research on translation and historiography, see Theo Hermans, ed, *Translating Others.* (New York: Routledge, 2014). See also Alan Durston's *Pastoral Quechua.* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame, 2007) (on the "linguistic imperialism" of the Spanish in Peru, p. 40); Louise Burkhart's *The Slippery Earth* (Phoenix: Arizona 1989) (on Nahua translations of Christian liturgy); and Mark Christiansen's *Nahua and Maya Catholicisms* (Stanford: Standford, 2013) (on religious texts in colonial Mexico). These latter works represent recent scholarship in translation in the context of colonialism and conquest in Latin America.
Translation and mistranslation are major aspects of Latin American historiography in particular, most notably represented by the New Philology school, which advocates for the use of indigenous sources where possible and often examines the effects of translation on historians' perceptions of the source materials. See Matthew Restall, "A History of the New Philology and the New Philology in History," *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (2003), pp. 113-134, for an overview of this school.

[407] Peter Engelfreit, *Euclid in China*. (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 60-61. Ricci was unable to complete the translation himself, but oversaw its translation later.

do not agree with this assessment. Alfaro is a fascinating historical character, but his contributions to the missionary effort in China were minimal, and, while the Jesuits did crowd out their contemporaneous Mendicant brothers in the historiography, in Alfaro's case it was a well-deserved exclusion—he was manifestly not of the same caliber as Matteo Ricci. He made no effort to understand the Chinese, except inasmuch as they were useful (or, ultimately, not useful) for Spanish purposes, he only considered learning a Chinese language after he had been expelled from Guangzhou, and his efforts to convert the Cantonese fell apart almost immediately. In terms of mission studies, there is no real reason to remember him except, simply, as the first Franciscan to enter Ming China—certainly an impressive feat in and of itself, but one that he conspicuously failed to back up with any real contribution to the Franciscan cause. His significance lies elsewhere.

Alfaro's failure to establish a permanent mission and the accident of timing that put him on the cutting edge of European thought regarding China for only a few short years ensured that this formerly-obscure monk, briefly known throughout educated Europe, sank into obscurity once more within a few decades of his death. As China allowed more and more foreigners to reside within its borders, his information, gathered during a sojourn of mere months, seemed quaint and inaccurate next to the erudite works of such luminaries as Matteo Ricci or Michele Ruggieri who could boast of not only years in China but fluency in the language. However, it is that same accident of timing, immediately before the start of the great early modern missionary era that ensured his real importance.

Alfaro's significance lies in the fact that he set foot on Chinese soil at a precise moment. Spain still believed in the feasibility of a conquest of China, the Iberian Union was imminent, Mexico and the Philippines had as yet left many aspects of their inter-colonial relationship untested, and the Single Whip Reform was about to significantly expand the worldwide silver trade. His report dashing the hopes of Spain coincided with the near-simultaneous annexation of Portugal and the currency reform laws and its prompting by the orders of Almanza over the authority of Francisco de Sande combined to emphasize the rapidly-growing importance of the Pacific Ocean as a distinct historical zone, not simply as an extension of Atlantic-based Spanish power. This is not the influence he set out to make—as his descendant does today, Alfaro wanted himself to be remembered as a great missionary, one who paved the way for not only a China that looked towards Rome for spiritual guidance, but a China prostrate under the heraldic eagles of Habsburg Spain as well. His despondency upon his return to Manila is ample evidence for the despair he felt when that dream was dashed.

At the end of the first chapter, I cited hubris as the major fault of both Alfaro and the Spanish Empire in general in regards to China—a classic failing and one that marked Alfaro's career. It was hubris, on both a personal and a global scale, that brought Alfaro to China in the first place and hubris that eventually cost him his life in an attempt to impose his worldview upon the Chinese once more. I do not scorn Alfaro for his grandiose and ultimately unrealizable ambitions, and I rejoiced only a little at his inevitable humbling within the walls of Guangzhou. As unfeasible and repellent as many of his views were, there was altogether something pitiable about his ultimate failure.

The hubris of Spain is a different matter. The plan to conquer China was untenable at best and frankly ludicrous at worst—had it ever been implemented, its total failure would have been almost a certainty. That the idea was seriously considered decades after Europeans had established bases in the Chinese sphere of influence is a greater tribute to the efficacy of Ming security in preventing major Western incursions and Spanish mistrust of the Portuguese than it is to the military prowess of Spain. While Spain was legitimately the most powerful Western nation at the time, it was also manifestly no match for the Ming, if only for sheer manpower. But it was not just in terms of manpower that the Chinese were superior—militarily, they were more than a match for Spain. This was so profoundly obvious to Alfaro and his friars that he lost no time in bluntly informing Almanza that there was no conceivable way that a Spanish force could take China. It is the collapse of this ambition, more than anything, that set the stage for the development of a permanent Pacific World. With the impossibility of a conquest of China implicitly acknowledged by Spain, the effective boundaries of the respective Chinese and Spanish spheres of influence in the Pacific were drawn. They would vary little throughout the colonial period, despite the slowly-declining fortunes of both empires as the eighteenth century wore on.

I have done my best to redeem Pedro de Alfaro's historiographical reputation, though I could not reinstate him as the great missionary he once hoped to be. With his sense of grandeur and his genuine piety, it is more than likely that he would have considered being instead credited as one of the many forces that shaped the development of the Pacific World a sorry substitute for the glories he had anticipated while en route to China. Unfortunately for Pedro de Alfaro, he did not get the chance to write his own

epitaph. I have taken it up myself in this work, situating him as the person who, through an accident of timing, validated the supreme power of the Chinese in Asia, forced Spain to give up the unfeasible idea of conquering China, and thus allowed for the development of a stable, permanent Pacific World sooner than might otherwise have been.

Appendix

Contents

Timeline of Events

1513	Portuguese arrive in China
1517	Portuguese lead first European embassy to Ming China
Mar 16, 1521	First Spanish arrival in the Philippines
c. 1525	Pedro de Alfaro born in Galicia
1550	Haijin order reinstated in Ming China
1557	First permanent Portuguese settlement established in Macau
1565	Legazpi arrives in the Philippines, first Augustinians arrive, Philippines established as an official colony of Spain; Guam claimed for Spain
1567	Alfaro becomes abbot sometime before this date
1567	Haijin order lifted
Nov 5, 1568	Almanza becomes Viceroy of New Mexico
1571	Manila founded; Manila Galleon makes inaugural voyage (disputed)
Nov 1574	Lin Feng besieges Manila at least once; Simon rescued from Lin Feng by the Spanish
Dec 1574	Wang Wang Gao arrives in Manila to assist Spanish against Lin Feng
Jun 26, 1575	Wang Wang Gao returns to China with Martín de Rada and others for Spain's first embassy to China
Aug 25, 1575	Sande becomes governor of Philippines
Oct 28, 1575	First embassy returns to Philippines without success
May 31, 1577	Pedro de Alfaro receives travel permit to the Indies
Fall 1577	Alfaro and fourteen friars arrive in Mexico City; Alfaro meets Almanza; Almanza requests a report on Chinese military infrastructure from Alfaro
1578	Sande successfully cancels a planned embassy to China
Mar 15 1578	Alfaro sails from Acapulco
Jul 29 1578	Alfaro arrives in Manila
1579	A Chinese convert allegedly begs Alfaro to journey to China
Oct 1579	Alfaro leaves Manila secretly for China
Fall 1579	Friars in Guangzhou; Alfaro taken before the magistrates; attempts at evangelization of the Chinese
1580	Single Whip Reform becomes law throughout the Ming Empire

Winter 1580	Alfaro and friars arrested in Guangzhou and deported back to Manila
Feb 1580	Alfaro and Agustín de Tordesillas write the *Relación* of their journey to China; Alfaro assesses Chinese military power in letters to Mexico
April 1580	Sande's term as governor ends; Ronquillo becomes new governor
Summer 1580	Philip II invades Portugal and gains effective control of the country
Jun 1580	Alfaro departs for China (via Goa); shipwreck soon thereafter
Jun 30 1580	Alfaro's body found on shores of Macau
Oct 1580	Almanza's term as Viceroy ends; 4th Conde becomes Viceroy
1581	Philip II crowned King of Portugal
Summer 1581	Philip II receives Alfaro's report; writes to the Wanli Emperor
Mar 30, 1582	Ronquillo mentions Alfaro in edict banning unauthorized departures from Manila
1582	Pablo de Jesús leaves for China
1582	The first Jesuits arrive in China
1583	Almanza dies
Mar 10, 1583	Ronquillo dies
Mar 19, 1583	Ronquillo's funeral starts a fire that burns most of Manila, including Alfaro's former residence
c. 1584	Pablo de Jesús returns to Manila and founds a hospital
1584	A Spanish embassy is sent to China and returns in failure shortly thereafter
1585	The last proposed formal Spanish embassy to Ming China is canceled
1586	An account of Alfaro's journey to China is published in Mendoza's *Historia de las Cosas...*
1587	*Historia...* translated into Portuguese, Latin, and Italian
1588	*Historia...* translated into English, French, and German
Summer 1588	Spanish Armada destroyed
1596	The first Dutch ships arrive in Asia
1597	Trans-Pacific silver trade from Mexico to China reaches 300+ tons
1603	Spanish forts established in Moluccas
1615	Matteo Ricci's *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas* is published; largely supplants *Historia...*
1626	Spanish Formosa established in Taiwan

Manila Galleon Voyages, 1565-1600 (next three pages)
Adapted from Bruce Cruikshank, "Manila Galleon Listing." 2011.
https://sites.google.com/site/manilagalleonlisting/home

"Unknown" indicates lack of record and may or may not signify the loss of the ship.

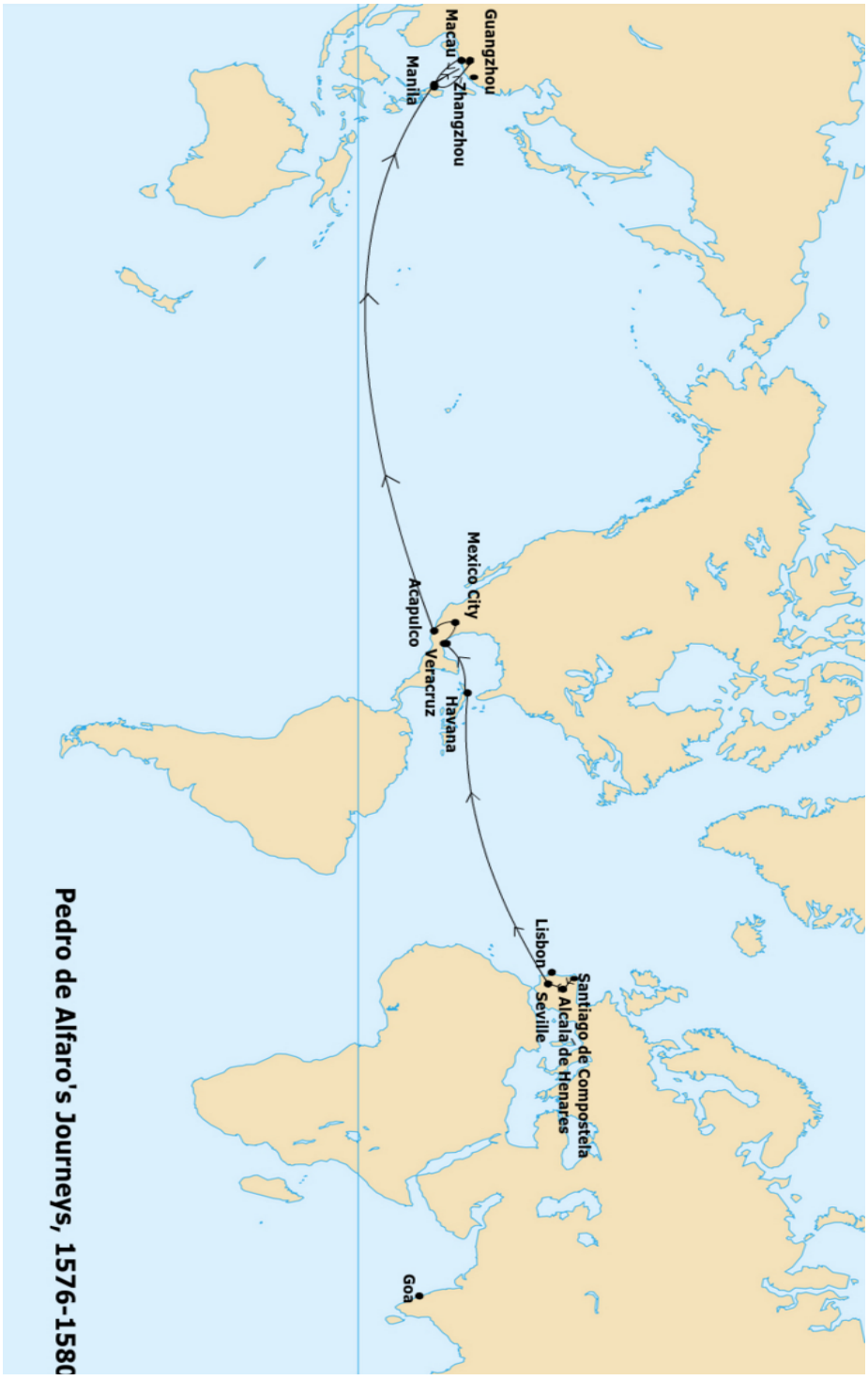
Year	Arrival Philippines	Departure Philippines	Arrival Mexico	Departure Mexico
1565	April 27	1 June	3 October	Unknown
1566	October	Unknown	Unknown	May
1567	October 15	Late July	November 16	April
1568	Unknown	July 1	Lost	Unknown
1569	June 11	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
1570	June 3	July 27	November 21	March 9
1571	July 17	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
1572	Unknown	August 3, forced to return to port	Unknown	Unknown
1573	Unknown	July 1, one ship forced to return to port	November 15 and 24	Unknown
1574	July 6	July 19	Unknown	Unknown
1575	August 24 or 25	Unknown	Early 1575	April 6 (one ship lost)
1576	Unknown	June	Unknown	November 18 (one ship lost)
1577	June 24	Unknown	Unknown	March 15 (Pedro de Alfaro's ship)
1578	July 2 (Pedro de Alfaro's ship)	Lost	Unknown	Unknown
1579	Unknown	Unknown	November 2	Unknown

1580	April	Forced to return to port	Unknown	Unknown
1581	March and November (separate ships)	Unknown	Unknown	March 29
1582	May 24	Unknown	Unknown	March 10
1583	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
1584	March 9, May 16 or 26, June (separate ships)	July 24 or 29, from Macau	Unknown	February 29 and December 15
1585	September and June (separate ships)	Unknown	Unknown	March 25
1586	May or June	June 29	Unknown	Unknown
1588	July 21	June 24 (a different ship)	January 1 and November 15 (separate ships)	April 6
1589	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
1590	May 31 and June 20 (separate ships)	Unknown	December	March 1
1591	June 21	June	January 19	March 25
1592	May 3 or 31	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
1593	September 25	Unknown	Forced to return to port	February 8 and April 4 (separate ships)
1594	Spring	June	November	March 21
1595	June 10-12 and late July (separate ships)	July 5	Lost	March 22/23
1596	Summer	July	January 31 (one ship lost)	March 6 and March 26/28 (separate ships)

1597	June 4	Unknown	Unknown	March 21 and November 23 (separate ships)
1598	May	July	January 21	February 9/10 and March 10 (separate ships)
1599	June 17 and July 9 (separate ships)	Unknown	Unknown	March 16
1600	June 24	July (two ships lost)	December 1	February 16 and March 25

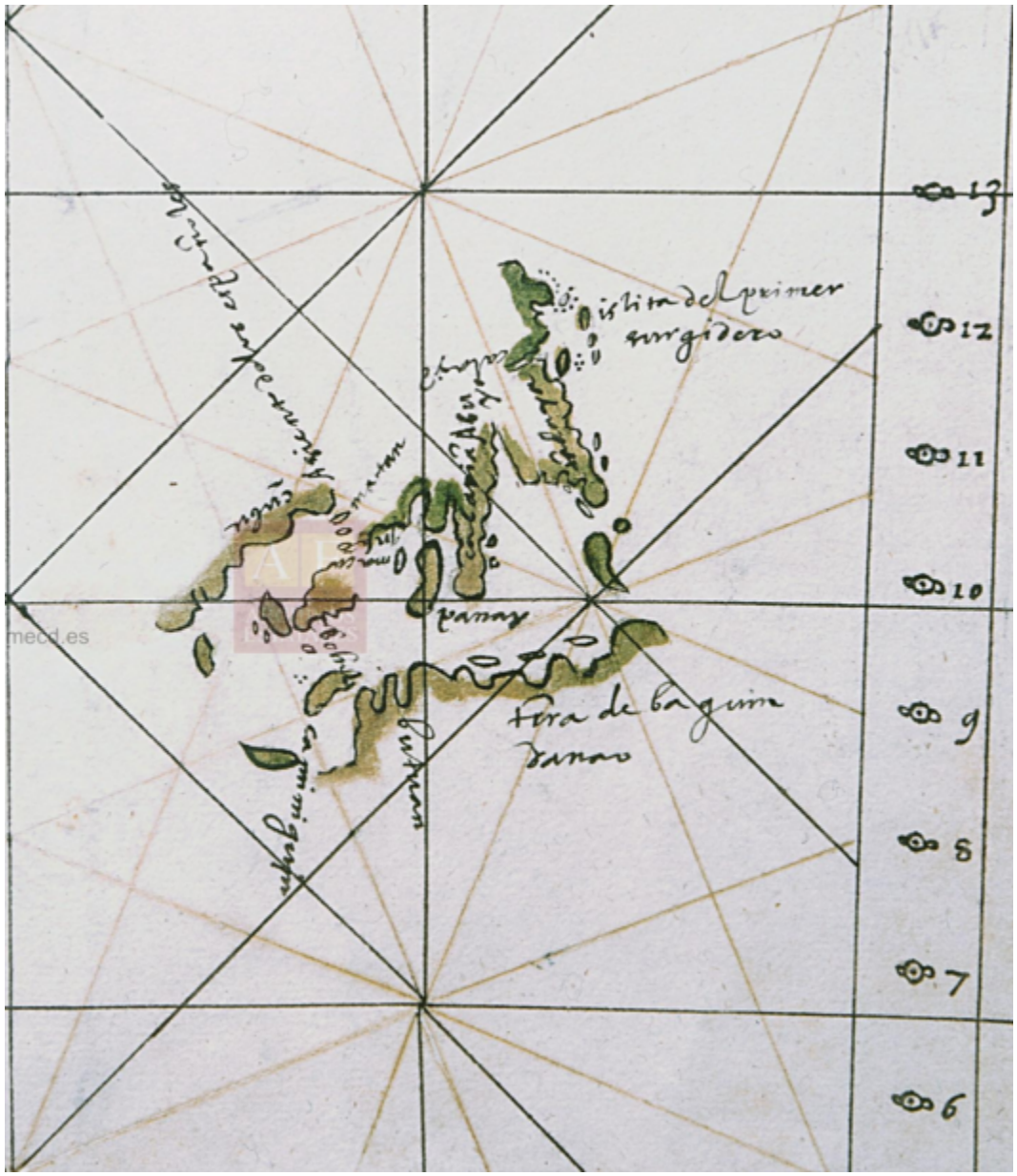
Maps

Map of Pedro de Alfaro's voyages. Background map in public domain.



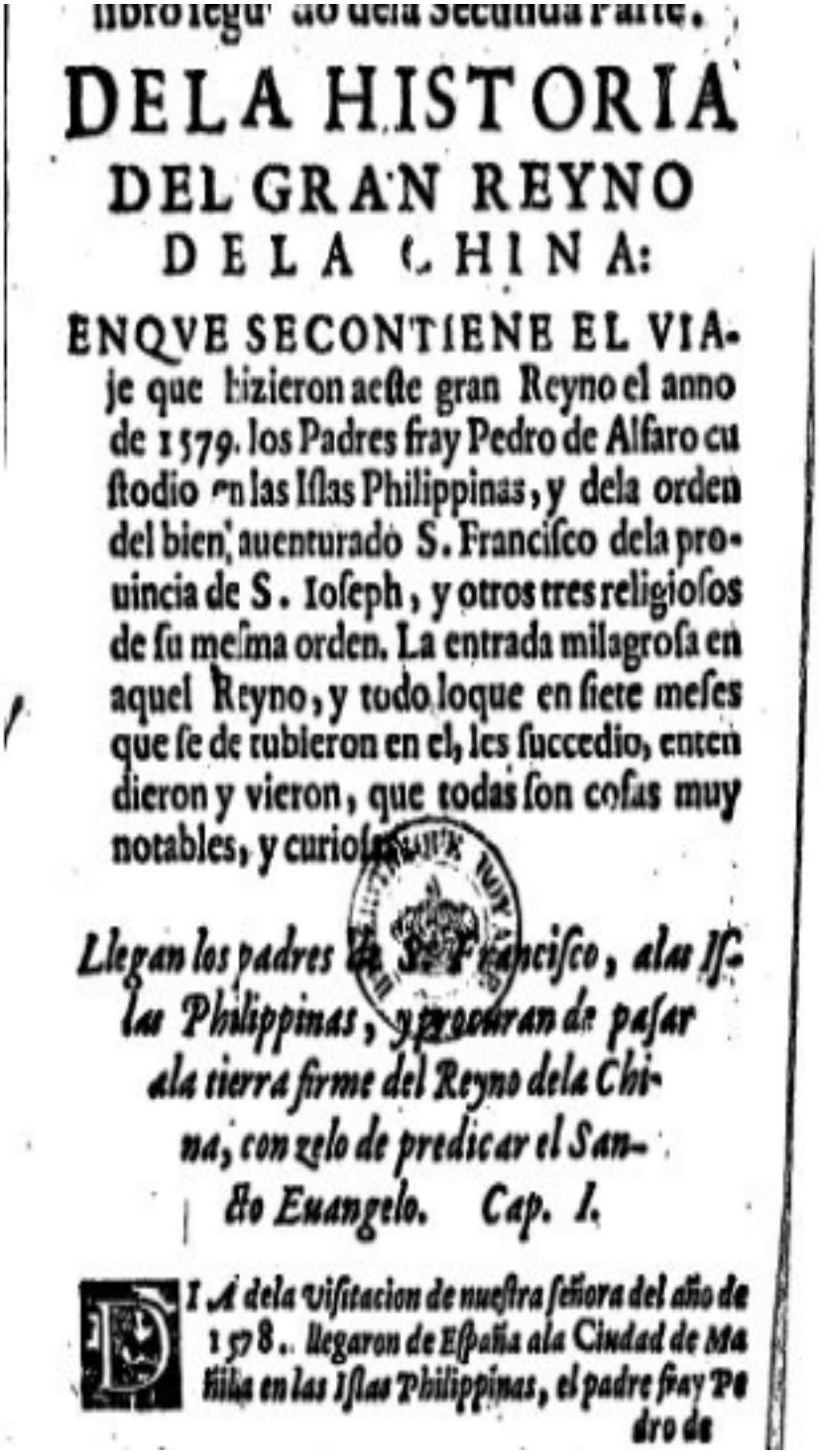
Physical map of the Philippines, 2003 Seav. Released under GNU Free Document License.

Nautical chart from the Legazpi voyage to the Philippines, 1565. AGI, MP-Filipinas 4.



Map of Taiwan, part of Luzon, and the southeastern coast of China, early seventeenth century. AGI MP-Filipinas 14.

Cover page for the section of *Historia...* devoted to Alfaro's journey. Mendoza, *Historia de las cosas mas notables...* Rome: Grassi, 1585.



libro segu[n]do dela Segunda Parte.

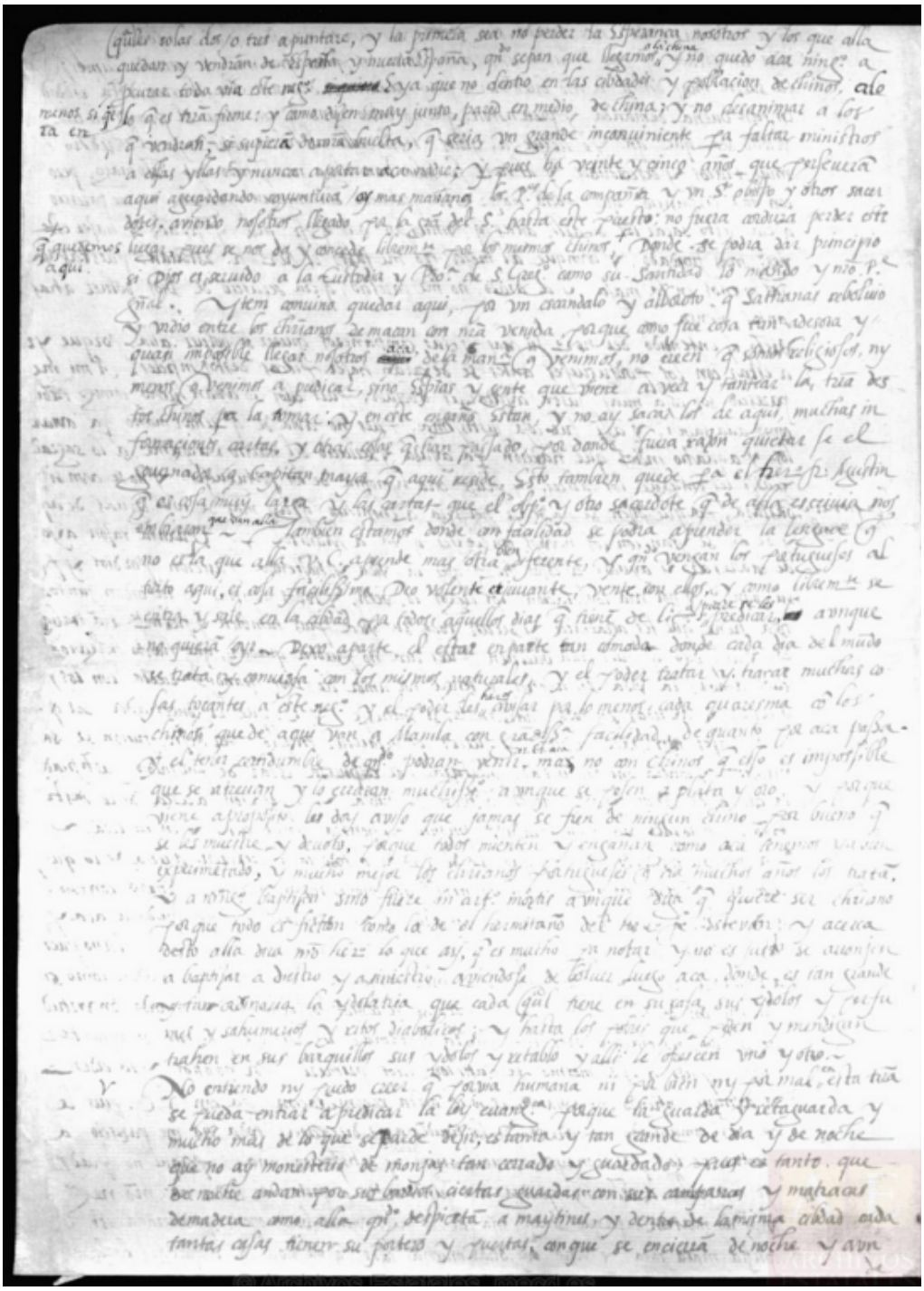
DELA HISTORIA DEL GRAN REYNO DE LA CHINA:

ENQVE SECONTIENE EL VIAje que hizieron aeste gran Reyno el anno de 1579. los Padres fray Pedro de Alfaro custodio en las Islas Philippinas, y dela orden del bienauenturado S. Francisco dela prouincia de S. Ioseph, y otros tres religiosos de su mesma orden. La entrada milagrosa en aquel Reyno, y todo loque en siete meses que se detubieron en el, les succedio, entendieron y vieron, que todas son cosas muy notables, y curiosas.

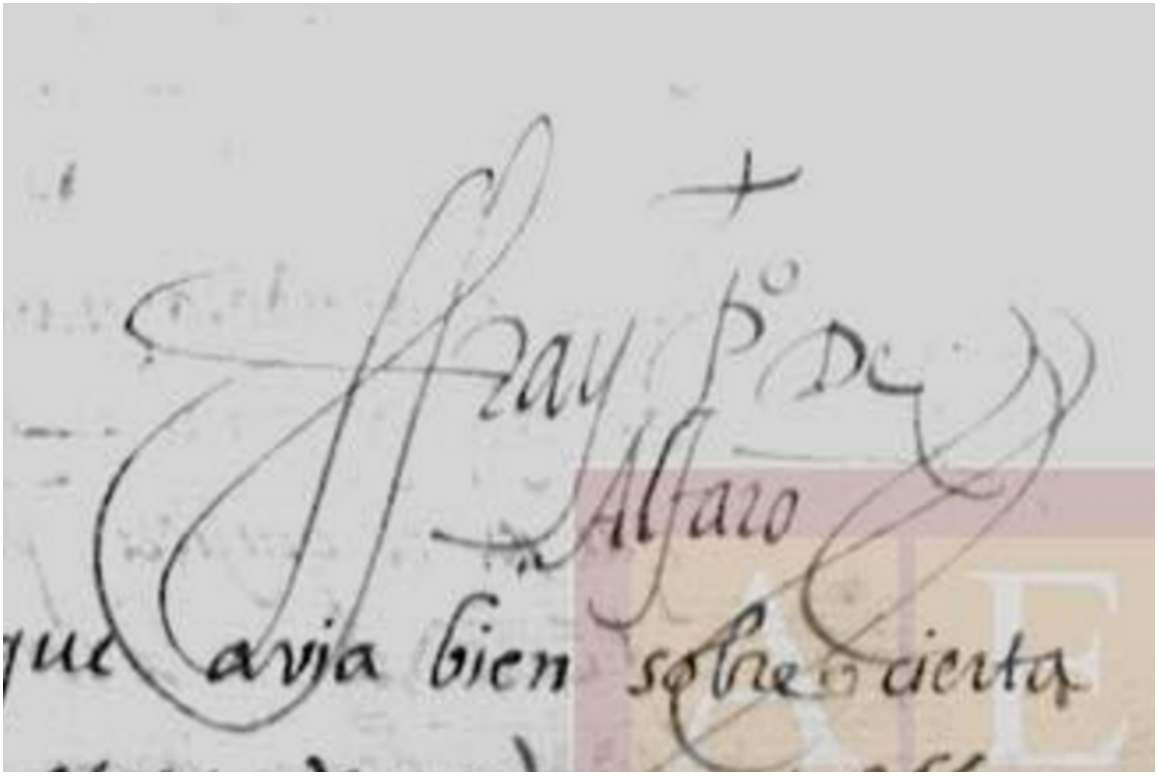
Llegan los padres de S. Francisco, alas Islas Philippinas, y procuran de pasar ala tierra firme del Reyno dela China, con zelo de predicar el Santo Euangelo. Cap. I.

DI A dela visitacion de nuestra señora del año de 1578. llegaron de España ala Ciudad de Manilla en las Islas Philippinas, el padre fray Pedro de

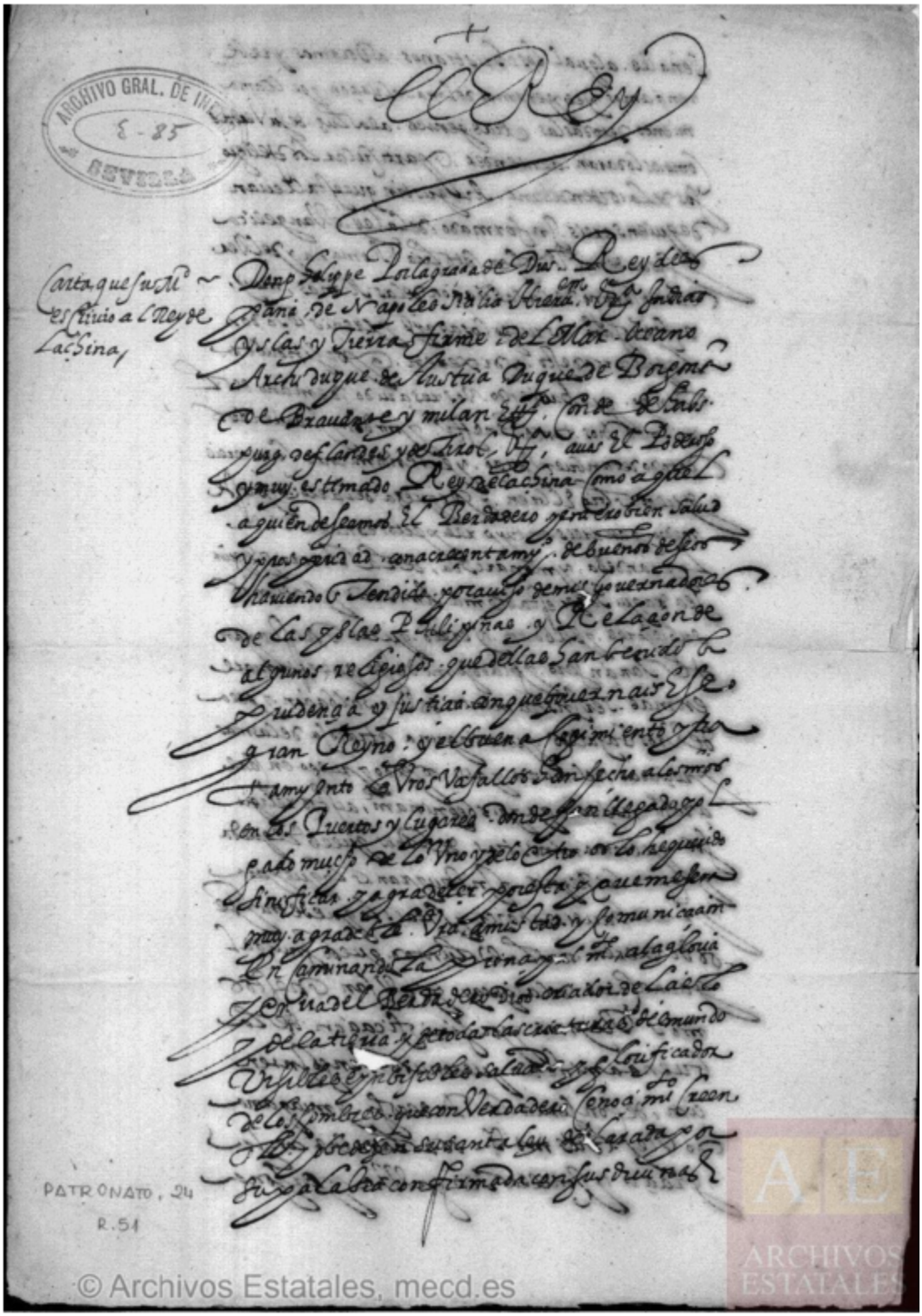
Next two images: Carta del franciscano Pedro de Alfaro sobre su llegada a China, 1579. AGI Filipinas ,79,N.4. v. 2 and v. 4 respectively. The page below details Alfaro's opinion on China.



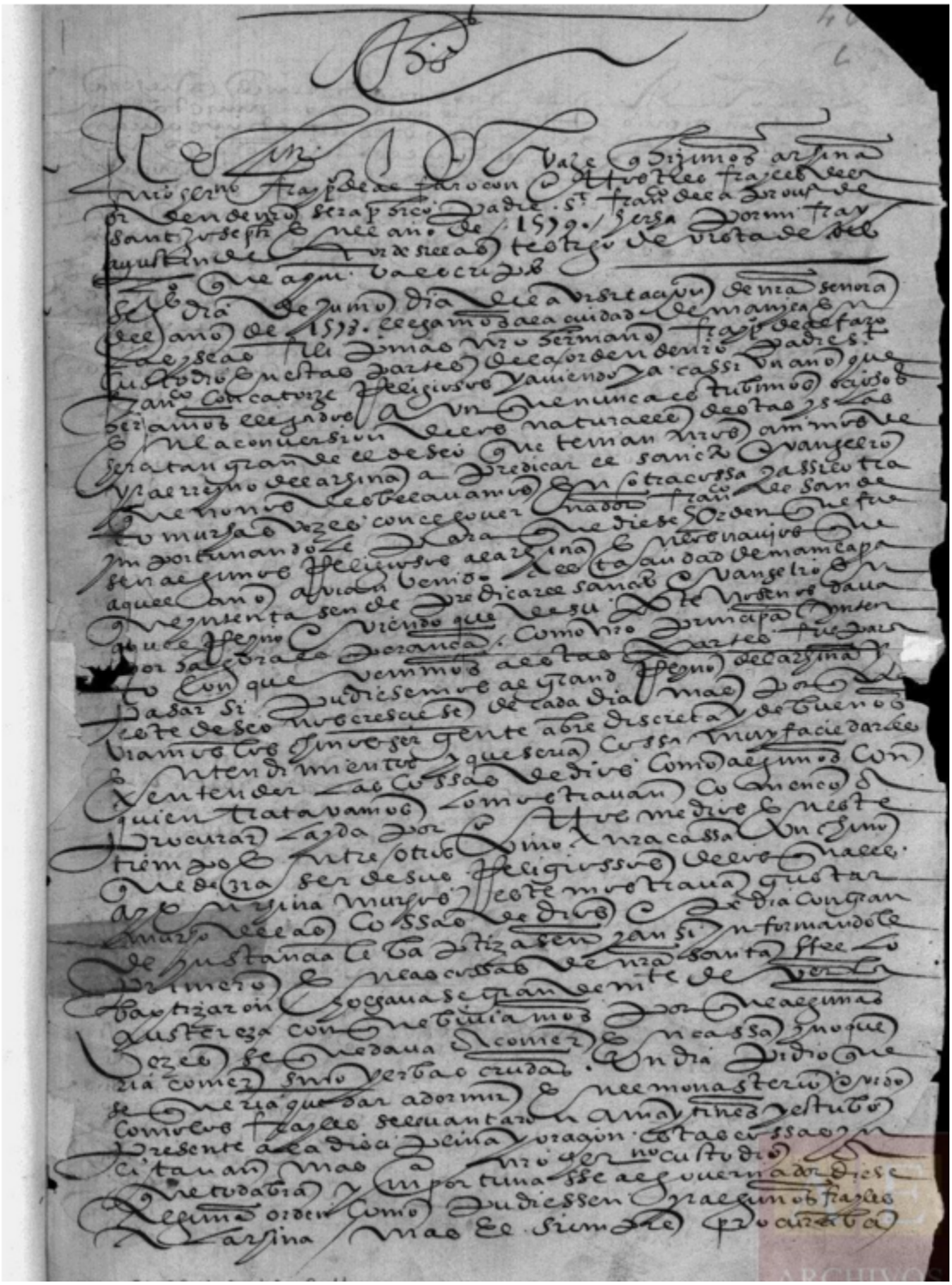
Pedro de Alfaro's signature.



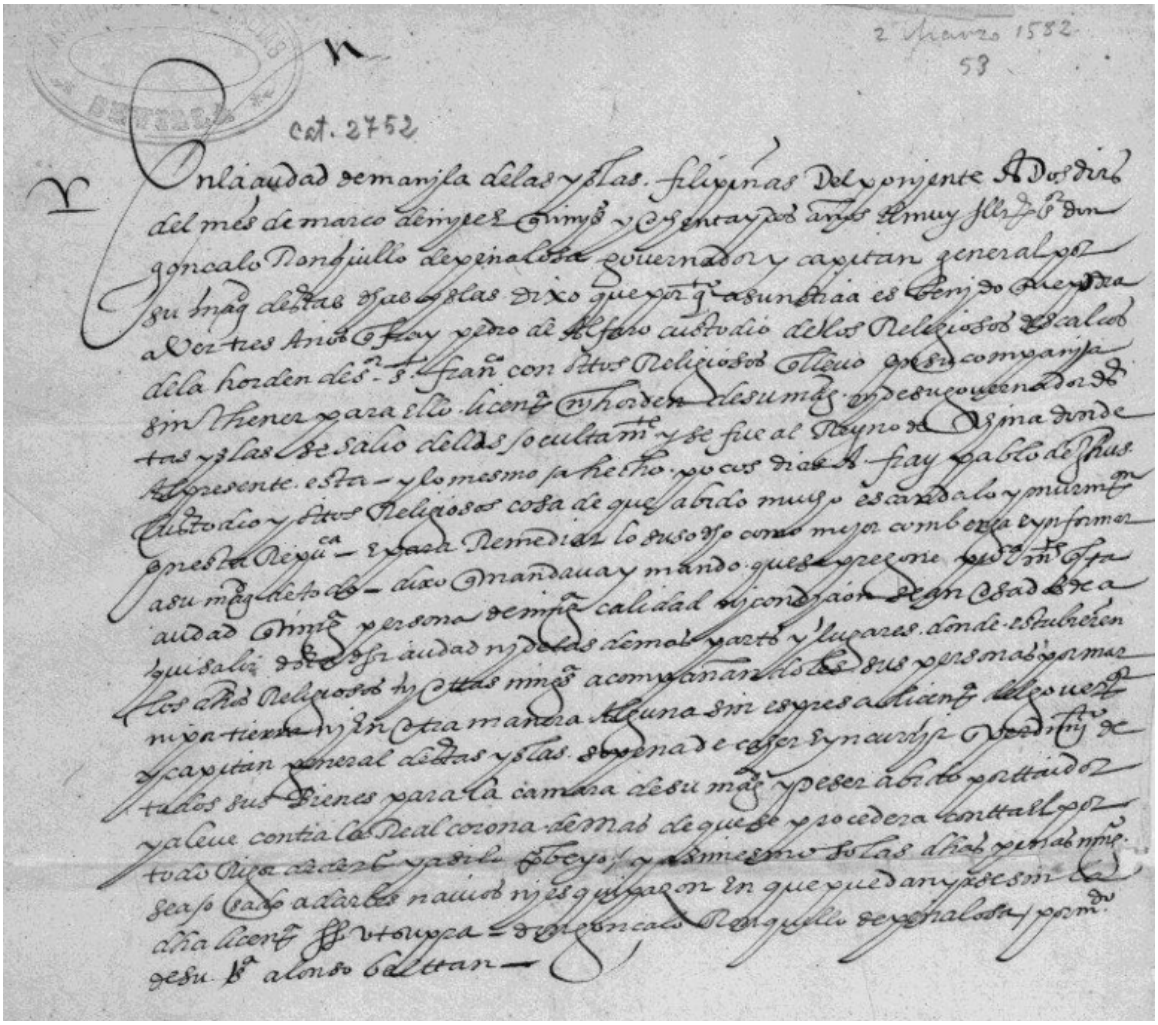
Carta de Felipe II al rey de la China, 1581. AGI Patronato 24, R. 51, r. 1.



Relación del viaje a China de Pedro de Alfaro y religiosos, 1580. AGI Patronato 46, R.11. r. 1. This document arrived at Philip II's Council in 1581.



Pregón de Ronquillo prohibiendo salir sin licencia, 1582. AGI Filipinas 6, R. 4, N. 47. R. 1. This decree forbade unauthorized exits from Manila Bay, using Pedro de Alfaro's journey to China as justification.



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Estado - México
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