

西班牙人在台灣活動考述 (1626-1642)
An overview of the Spaniards in Taiwan (1626-1642)

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The Spaniards stayed in Taiwan in the 17th century for only 16 years. In such a short time they did few things and left behind little influence in the island when they left (a huge fortress, some place names, more than one thousand converts, etc.). But if we see them exploring their own self-consciousness, we can think that their presence was a metaphor of the decline of the Spanish Empire, which became a secondary power after the treaties of Westphalia in 1648. In this paper I would like to present, first, an introduction of all the driving forces that brought the Spaniards to Taiwan; second, the encounter that they had with the Chinese, focusing particularly in the parian of Manila and the small parians of Quelang and Tamchui, and finally how the idea of law was very much present in the official self-consciousness: on their arrival by “justifying” the conquest, and on their departure by looking for the responsibilities of the defeat. I will focus in the ideology behind one of the most important trials ever held in Manila, the one against the Governor General Corcuera, accused of being the ultimate culprit of the loss of the Spanish garrison of Quelang (present Jilong).

Spaniards in Taiwan, Spaniards and Chinese in the 17th century, The parians of Isla Hermosa, Corcuera’s trial.

Introduction

The arrival of the Spaniards in the East was motivated by their search for easy access to the Spice Islands. They arrived there in 1521, but later they spent 40 years finding and securing a route along the Pacific Ocean. They found out afterwards that in their territorial dispute with the Portuguese they were left with a bare archipelago where the only rewarding thing was the conversion of the natives to the Catholic Faith. To make things worse, they realized over the years that going to the Philippines was an uncertain journey, since of every two persons that had arrived in the Philippines only one (in fact, less) was able to return.¹ Amid several doubts they decided to accept this situation, to hold the archipelago and to see which other possibilities the land might offer. In the early years, the Philippine archipelago basically

¹ See J. E. Borao, “The arrival of the Spanish galleons in Manila from the Pacific Ocean and their departure along the Kuroshio Stream (16 and 17 centuries).” In: 《地理研究》(Journal of Geographical Research, NTNU), No. 47, 2007, pp. 17-38.

meant just Luzon and few other islands around Cebu. The whole territory was surrounded by Muslims in the South, the kingdom of Siam in the far West, the feudal Japan in the far north along their route back to Mexico, and the most important power was the great kingdom of China in the Northeast.

During the last decades of the 16th century all these kingdoms were attracted by the silver of Manila that had crossed the Pacific Ocean from Mexico, and from other opportunities that this city populated by white people, dressed in a different fashion, offered to them. But, these overseas barbarians—as they might have been considered—were still worthy of some attention. Manila very quickly became a multicultural society under the control of the Spanish elite, where the Chinese were the most respected settlers since they provided the most important services, not only as silk suppliers for the cargo of the galleon, but also as artisans and farmers. Their abundant and fine silk and porcelain was loaded once a year on two or three galleons going to Mexico, in July. It is important to say that the route of the galleons from Acapulco to Manila was shorter (three months) and much more secure than the other way around (the so-called “*tornaviaje*”, five months with many hardships). Consequently the flux of silver to the islands was more regular and stable than the flow of silk to Mexico. In other words, while the common Spaniards might get poorer after the failure of a ship going to Mexico, as their agents could not be able to cash the loaded silk, on the other hand the colony and their administrators could survive since the annual flow of silver, or *situado*, always arrived. This unexpected fame of Manila brought her three crises, with Japanese, Dutch and Chinese in the turn of the 16th century.

1600: The changing panorama in Manila at the turn of the century

In the first case, the Japanese at the end of the 16th century were in a process of unification of the country under the shogun Hideyoshi. He had already heard about the Portuguese, the Spaniards and even Mexico, especially since the fully loaded galleon San Felipe was shipwrecked in 1596 in the coast of Japan awakening his avarice. Since some years before, he was engaged in military expeditions against Korea and now he even thought of conquering the Philippines. The Spaniards prepared for a possible attack and they explored Isla Hermosa (Taiwan) as a possible “middle fortress” and battlefield between themselves and Japan. But, the sudden death of Hideyoshi dissipated the threat and the Spanish interest in Taiwan.

The second crisis came with the arrival of a Dutch fleet under the command of Oliver Noort. The reason is that Phillip II had excluded the Dutch from the Portuguese harbors and consequently to the participation in the spices trade. The Dutch, who had privately joined the Portuguese galleons, were using now their recently acquired knowledge to reach the Moluccas on their own. The arrival of Noort to Manila after crossing the Pacific Ocean in 1600 should be understood in this context. He came on a private basis, since the powerful VOC was not yet in existence; in fact, his success upon return to Amsterdam might have accelerated the creation of that Company in 1602.

The third crisis came with the Chinese. The regular supply of silver from Acapulco attracted more and more Chinese who “believed” the rumor that a mountain of gold was located near Cavite, the harbor of Manila where the galleons docked. By the very end of the 16th century some mandarins were even dispatched from China to investigate. But at the

same time, they came to see in which way they could control that colony of Chinese that somehow considered under China's jurisdiction. A series of misunderstandings, mistrust, and even an attempt at rebellion ended in the first massacre against the Chinese in 1603.²

At the end of the 16th century it was clear that the Spanish presence in the Philippines, was going to be tough in relation with the neighboring countries. Some initial expectations in the Eastern kingdoms, like Siam, evaporated since everything was affected by the inner power struggle in those kingdoms.³ Regarding the Chinese, the initial image was very favorable since the doors were opened immediately after the help provided by the Spaniards to the Chinese authorities in their fight against the Chinese pirate Limahong, whose base was in Taiwan. Nevertheless, after Limahong's final escapade, the apparently open doors of China closed again. The Spanish governors of Manila, as later the Dutch, always envied the Portuguese of Macao for their formula of peacefully staying at the doors of China, and they tried in one occasion to establish a similar post in Lantau island, and adventure that lasted few weeks until was stopped by the Portuguese.⁴ The only success that they could claim was to take over some posts in the Moluccas islands in 1606, since the Portuguese were unable to hold them after the pressure of the Dutch, whose presence in those waters was growing.⁵

In the following twenty years the international panorama was defined by the growing presence of the Dutch, entering in the trade in Japan as competitors of the Portuguese and pressuring Macao and Manila with blockades to cut the Chinese trade with the Philippines. The Spanish governor of Manila reacted in 1626 by occupying a post in Isla Hermosa to counterbalance the Dutch post established two years earlier in Tayouan (present Tainan), and at the same time to see if this could be a second point of attraction for the Chinese trade. But the move had other significance for missionaries as it offered a better opportunity to sneak into Japan, in a moment of growing persecution, especially since 1624; and to find a way to enter China avoiding the Portuguese control of Macao. These were the parameters that defined the Spanish presence in the island.

1. The economic background (*see the annex*)

To understand the Spanish presence in Taiwan we have refer to the role of the island in the maritime commercial framework during years 1543 to 1683. These years go from the moment that China prohibited private overseas trade (1543) until the moment the ban was totally lifted (1683). At that time, Taiwan had an important role as a commercial entrepôt in the area, where Japanese pirates *wokou* (wakô) and Chinese pirates *haikou* met for their commercial exchange. According to T'sao Yung-ho,⁶ we can differentiate three periods in this general view and its influence on Taiwan. The first one (1543-1567) was characterized by a lack of formal trade relations between Japan and China. In 1543, the Japanese shogunate decided to break the

² See J. E. Borao, "The massacre of 1603: Chinese Perception of the Spaniards in the Philippines." In: *Itinerario*, vol. 23, No. 1, 1998, pp. 22-39.

³ See Florentino Rodao, *Españoles en Siam (1540-1939). Una aportación al estudio de la presencia hispana en Asia*, CSIC, Madrid, 1997.

⁴ See Luís G. Gomes, "Efêmero estabelecimento dos castelhanos nas vizinhanças de Macau no Século XVI", *Boletim do Instituto Luis de Camões*, Macao, 1970, pp. 325-339.

⁵ See Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola, *Conquista de las Islas Malucas*, Zaragoza, 1609.

⁶ Ts'ao Yung-Ho. "Taiwan as an entrepôt in East Asia in the seventeenth century", *Itinerario*, 1998, vol. XXI, No. 3, pp. 94-114

previous tributary system with China. This meant a lack of formal relations that led the traders of these two countries to find informal ways of interaction. In March, April, and August of 1553, Wang Zhi invaded China with hundreds of ships along the coast from Jiangsu to Zhejiang. The Chinese commanders Yu Dayou and Qi Jiguang resisted the *wokou*, and later defeated him at Putuoshan (1553) and Taizhou (1555). The *wokou* sought refuge in Taiwan, which became a center of buccaneering activities.

The second period (1567-1642) was defined by the appearance of Western merchants. The first stage (1567-1622) of this period coincided with the consolidation of the international routes with the arrival of the Portuguese (Malacca, 1511; Hirado, 1543; Macao, 1557), who had, by the end of the 16th century, practically monopolized trade between China and Japan. In fact, one of the reasons why Portuguese were accepted in Macao was that they could help the Chinese authorities in controlling *wokou* activities. In 1568, the Ming Court partially lifted the ban on private trade and Yuegang was the port designated to conduct these activities. As a result *Taiwan* grew in importance as a meeting place of the Sino-Japanese smuggling trade. During this time, among the most famous Chinese *haikou* operating in the Southern seas was Limahong (Lin Feng). In 1574, Limahong went to the Philippines with a fleet of 200 ships and 10,000 men to conquer Manila. He almost succeeded; but after the Spanish counteroffensive he had to retreat to Pangasinan. This helped the Spaniards enter in good relations with the Chinese authorities. Limahong escaped to Taiwan and disappeared from history. Tayfusu was one of the most famous Japanese *wokou* and in 1582, he was in Cagayan (northern Luzon) with 10 ships; governor Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa sent Captain Juan Pablo de Carrión and other Japanese who had fortified at the entrance of Cagayan River to face him. Finally, Carrion defeated those 600 Japanese. The second stage (1622-1642, coinciding with the Spanish presence in Quelang) of the period was of Dutch dominance – little by little, the Portuguese were substituted by the Dutch, who converted Taiwan into a strategic point in their intra-Asiatic commerce as well as connecting Taiwan to the international trade routes. This started in 1636 when the Dutch gained more control of the Tayouan area after defeating the natives of Mattaw and grew until 1642. Li Tan was one of the most famous Chinese *haikou* during this period. This merchant-pirate was also known as *Captain China*. He went as a young man to Manila to try his fortune. Later he became the leader of the Chinese in Hirado, using the bay of Tayouan as transshipment base of Chinese goods. He also played an important role in the negotiations between the Dutch and the governor of Fujian; and in 1624, he convinced the Dutch to give up their fortress in Pescadores and move to Taiwan. Li Tan died in 1625 (*SIT*, 62-69).⁷ Besides Li Tan and Yan Siqu, the so-called *Pedro China* who was the second in command of Li Tan, there was Nicolás Iquam (Zheng Zhilong, 1604-1661). He was originally the lieutenant of Li Tan and later controlled the China Sea. This coincided with the period of Spanish presence in Taiwan although he had few dealings with the Spaniards. During the second half of this period, the *haikou* system ended for the following reasons. On the part of China, Iquam surrendered, in August 1628, to the new governor of Fujian, Xiong Wencan, who offered to invest him as an admiral of the Chinese coastal defenses forces in return for abandoning his piratical activities.

⁷ By the initials “SIT” we refer to the collection of documents published in J. E. Borao, *Spaniards in Taiwan*, Taipei, vol. 1 (2001) and vol. 2 (2002).

He accepted and defeated former ally pirates Quitsick, Tousailack, and Jan Lauw, and gathered all their followers under his influence. Between years 1635-1640, Iquam cooperated with the Dutch in sending Chinese merchandise to Tayouan, which the Dutch reshipped to Japan, and via other actions, such as assisting the Dutch in expelling the Spaniards from northern Taiwan. Iquam was succeeded by his son Koxinga (Zheng Chenggong, 1624-1662).

The third period (1642-1683) can be defined as the Chinese competition. At that time, the Dutch encountered Iquam, seeing him as an important competitor for he started to trade directly with Japan and caused the drastic decline of the VOC trade. This forced the Dutch to rely on the island resources (deer hunting, leasing land to the Chinese for sugar cane, etc.), until the conquest of Koxinga. Once the Zheng regime was established in Taiwan (1662-1683), Koxinga attempted to compete with the Dutch in Southeast Asia – he even considered invading the Philippines. Occasionally, his sons cooperated with Dutch (1664-68) and English (1670-1680) traders but achieved little. Two years after the conquest of Taiwan by the Qing navy general Shi Lang, the Emperor Kangxi lifted the ban on maritime commerce, and the traditional framework of East Asian trade revived. Taiwan once again found itself lying outside the main routes of international trade, switching to the local development of a rural society.

2. The Spanish dealings with the Chinese in Isla Hermosa

In 1626 the Spaniards finally settled in Quelang (modern Keelung), and from there increased their relations with the Chinese. We can consider three formal attempts to contact the Chinese authorities. The first happened during the times of the first governor, Carreño, when a fleet dispatched from Manila tried unsuccessfully to reach Taiwan in September 1627. Only two galleys managed to stop over in Pescadores, where they were well received by the Chinese authorities (*SIT*, 134). As a result, a couple of months later (towards the end of 1627), the above-mentioned mandarin visited the fortress in Quelang in order to know more about the intentions of the Spanish settlement but he did not offer any commercial commitment (*SIT*, 132-133). The next governor, Alcarazo, also tried to establish some formal contact with China in two occasions. The first happened by chance when he set off for Isla Hermosa. One of his galleys lost its bearings and passed by China. There, the Spaniards received a warm welcome, and after the news reached San Salvador, Alcarazo sent a lieutenant to start contacts. But he came back with news of the political changes in China, particularly the death of the emperor and his powerful minister, the eunuch Wei Zhongxien, which had resulted in the freezing of all maritime political activity. He tried again on 30 December 1630, when he sent a formal embassy to China led by the Italian Dominican Cocci. It was a failure because he was attacked by the crew of the sampan. Maybe the main achievement of Cocci as ambassador was to discover a factory of fake Spanish coins in Fuzhou. After these attempts, no formal talks were resumed and the China project was abandoned. But like in Manila, Chinese traders approached the Spanish post in Quelang looking for commercial opportunities, but to a lesser extent than they did with Tayouan, the Dutch factory and city under the protection of Fort Zeelandia. In all these cases the Chinese settled down following the parian system that we can find also in Pattani, Batavia, etc. To better understand the parians in Isla Hermosa we can make a reference to the one in Manila

The parian, alcaizería or Chinese market in Manila

This new kind of settlement which appeared in the Philippines had no counterpart in the Spanish cities of America, the parian or Chinese market,⁸ although was in some ways similar to a type of Spanish market called alcaizería, where all kind of goods were sold. The parian in Manila was composed of provisional houses with roof of straw, that easily burnt down and it had to be relocated several times; but always near the riverside of the Pasig River. The first one was established in 1581 by Governor Gonzalo Ronquillo inside the walled city, but it was burnt down on 30 January 1583. Soon later Governor Diego Ronquillo made a second one nearby. In 1588 it was also burnt down, but it was reconstructed in the same place by Governor Santiago de Vera, who expanded it in 1590. This is the parian where the Dominicans Benavides and Cobo started their first missionary contact with Chinese, and the place where they published in 1593 the three first books of the Philippines, two of them in Chinese, the *Shi Lu*,⁹ and a *Doctrine*.¹⁰ It lasted in this location until November 1593, when Governor Gómez Dasmariñas was assassinated by some Chinese forced rowers on a military expedition to Ternate. The third parian was located in the exterior area of the walled city; and, in 1594, Luis Dasmariñas made a new one (the fourth) in the other part of the River, in the area called Binondo, which until today is the heart of the Chinese quarter of Manila. It was burnt down again in August 1595, and Luis Dasmariñas reconstructed it soon after in the area called Arroceros (fifth parian), near the walled city, the number of Chinese residents reached 8,000, but two years later, in 1597 was burnt down again. Reconstructed probably by Governor Tello de Guzmán, it lasted six years, because in the above-mentioned Chinese uprising of 1603, and the succeeding massacre of Chinese, it was destroyed. This time it was not reconstructed until 1605 by Pedro de Acuña, when the Chinese decided to return to Manila for trade. In 1628, when the Chinese population reached 28,000 persons, it was burnt down again, and Governor General Niño de Tavora had to reconstruct it. During the governorship of Corcuera, it was destroyed again when a second uprising of the Chinese took place (1639-1640) with some cooperation of the pirate and merchant Iquam (Zheng Jilong), which was followed by another massacre.¹¹ Gonzalo Portillo at that time “captain of the Spanish infantry in the fort and garrison of San José de Tondo [Manila]” (*SIT*, 312) participated actively in the Chinese repression in 1639 just before being assigned to Isla Hermosa as governor. When the situation calmed down, Governor General Hurtado de Corcuera reconstructed the parian in 1640 in Tondo, but in 1642 there was another fire.

The Jose Luis Bello Art Museum of Puebla (Mexico) keeps an oil painting on the inside of a wooden chest representing the city of Manila around 1640, where the Chinese quarter can be easily recognized. As we have implied earlier, this urban structure of the parian was also developed in Isla Hermosa, but on a smaller scale.

⁸ See Alberto Santamaría, “The Chinese parian (el parian de los sangleyes)”, in Alfonso Felix, Jr. (ed.), *The Chinese in the Philippines, 1570-1770*, vol 1, Manila, 1966, pp. 67-118.

⁹ See Fidel Villarroel (ed.), *Pien Cheng-Chiao Chen-Ch'uan Shih Lu*, UST Press, Manila, 1986.

¹⁰ See Jesús Gayo Aragón (ed.), *Doctrina Christiana en letra y lengua china, compuesta por los padres ministros de los Sangleyes, de la Orden de Santo Domingo*, UST Press, Manila, 1951.

¹¹ See *Relación verdadera del levantamiento de los Sangleyes en la Islas Filipinas, y de las victorias que tuvo contra ellos el Governador Don Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera, el año de 1640-1641*, Ed. Catalina de Barrio y Angul, Madrid, 1642, 4 fls.

The parian of Quelang

Chinese were frequent visitors of Quelang before the arrival of the Spaniards, but—according to Aduarte—the small parian of San Salvador started taking shape just before 1630; and it even had a small church which was destroyed in 1631 by a typhoon, the same day that the zealous missionary Esquivel arrived in Isla Hermosa (*SIT*, 204). One of the earlier descriptions of this “embryonic city”, recorded by the Dutch in that year, includes a first reference to the embryonic *parian*:

“In between the fort and the hill, on which a chapel has been built, stand about thirty wooden houses inhabited by the governor and about the married men, mostly officers of the garrison, merchants, and some other persons. No more than ten Chinese houses are located there, all belonging to Chinese workers”.¹²

In 1632, when Esquivel referred for the first time the *parian*, he considered these houses as an existing district (*SIT*, 185). Certainly, it is difficult to imagine there would be more than those ten houses, since Fujian was very near and the Sangleys tried to minimize their stay when arriving in Quelang just for business (*SIT*, 178). The Chinese living in Quelang also engaged in subsistence agriculture. We know this because as soon as Lamotius arrived in Quelang in 1642 (once the Dutch took over the Spanish garrison), he ordered his Dutch soldiers to remain in the fort and respect the plantations of the Chinese.¹³

These Chinese quarters extending throughout South East Asia (Patani, Batavia, Manila, etc.) were well known by the Chinese authorities, who never gave up their claim to exercise a possible control over them. As we have said, the arrival of three mandarins in Manila to visit the *parian* and to administer justice, is well documented before the massacre of 1603 occurred.¹⁴ In the case of the *parian* of San Salvador something similar is documented. It happened towards the end of 1627, when the above-mentioned mandarin came for inspection in order to make an official report on the rumors that had reached Fuzhou about the different trade behavior of Dutch and Spaniards (*SIT*, 132). Also we know about the complaint that the mandarin in Fuzhou made to Cocci, on his arrival in China, in 1632, about some smuggling of goods (called Tibuca) carried out near San Salvador using unlicensed sampans. He warned Cocci—who acted in his position as ambassador of the governor of Isla Hermosa—that if things continue in the same way “a mandarin will be assigned to collect those duties in [Quelang]” (*SIT*, 178). However, soon the political instability of China seems to have reduced the coastal magistrates’ interest for the *parian* in Quelang.

After 1634 the small church in the *parian* was re-established (*SIT*, 573), but no other records of missionary action with the Sangleys were reported. In 1639, there is a reference which shows that the life in the *parian* had some elements of administration, since the governor, Cristóbal Márquez made a formal notification to it, saying that the trade with China should be conducted in Quelang, not in Tamchui, notification that also was sent to China (*SIT*, 307). Márquez also commented in a letter that the Sangleys went to see him to solve a dispute

¹² Blussé, L.; N. Everts and E. French. *The Formosan Encounter. Notes on Formosa’s Aboriginal Society: A Selection of Documents from Dutch Archival Sources*. Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines, Taipei, vol. I (1623-1635), 1999.

¹³ VOC 1140, f. 301v

¹⁴ Borao, “The massacre of 1603...”, p. 25.

among Chinese merchants. He was not able to solve the problem due to his incapacity of understanding it, but at least it shows the fact that the Chinese regarded him as an authority on the matter, showing at least indirectly a kind of legal relation. In fact, in these last years of the Spanish presence, the next Chinese who started to exercise a major influence among the Chinese in North Taiwan was Iquam, not only in Quelang, but more prominently in Tamchui, as he was emerging now as the main competitor with the Dutch in the trade with Japan.

The parian of Tamchui

In Tamchui another *parian* was in existence at least since the times of Esquivel, who reported that “near the harbor of Tamchui the Sangleys are setting up a small parian, that is bound to grow in time as more and more Sangleys have said they will go there to sow the fields and plant sugarcane” (*SIT*, 185). Esquivel, in his interest for Japan, also envisioned another quarter for Japanese—like the one in Dilao (Manila)—who could come for agricultural purposes. The *parian* of Tamchui grew specially after the Dutch conquered the North and placed the capital of the area, not in Quelang but in Tamsui. For example, in April 1648, Plockhoy reported that there were 78 Chinese in Tamsui, and three of them had recently married non-Christian women.¹⁵ But this population fluctuated, since two years later only 35 are mentioned. They appear under the leadership of Siotangh, “who dominated them with intolerable pressure”.¹⁶ In any case, the *parian* grew in a regular shape, as is shown in the map of Keerdekoek (1654).

After consolidating the main Spanish settlement of San Salvador and its extension in Santo Domingo, the Spaniards were considering extending their influence to other parts in the northern territories, especially to secure the arrival from Manila. Esquivel recommended the port of Catinunum (San Lorenzo) as the most suitable place (*SIT*, 162), but no special settlement in Catinunum was reported during the sixteen years of Spanish presence. Besides, in these Eastern coastal areas of Isla Hermosa no Chinese were living, although they had some commercial intercourse.

3. Cosmopolitanism, laws and spirit of reform

Probably one of the main conceptual problems that eastern civilizations may have experienced upon the arrival of Westerners was to differentiate the nationals of the different countries. First, they have to learn—as it happened with the Japanese—the difference between Portuguese and Spaniards, and once they knew it, they had to overcome the fact that being two different nations in fact they been ruled by the same king since 1580. More confusion was added when the Dutch appear there, since they were also under the same king, at least formally speaking, but in fact they were in open rebellion against him, consequently Spaniards and Dutch were enemies. Later the English and the Dutch were seen to be cooperating, but after the Amboyna incident this ceased. The Japanese, after getting familiar with the Jesuits, also had to differentiate them from Dominicans and Franciscans, and even later on from Augustinians; all of them missionaries of the same church but wearing different habits. Those living closer to the Spaniards, for example, in the Chinese and Japanese parians

¹⁵ *The Formosan Encounter* III, p. 230.

¹⁶ VOC 1176, f. 752

of Manila, probably coped faster with these differences and easily started to understand the differences of social status of people living in Manila, the galleon trade system, and the fact that those colonies included a cosmopolitan aggregate of nationals.

Cosmopolitanism under a common law

For Eastern societies, like China, cosmopolitanism was not a new experience. But for them it was more as a multicultural kind of aggregation of different people living together, with different laws and customs. Maybe, the novelty brought by Westerners in cities like Manila, was that the new cosmopolitanism was under a single rule of law. A law that, even if it was used for the benefit of the rulers, defending their privileges and creating differences among the people, was still somehow a referential law for everybody, with a clear differentiation of rights and duties. Maybe they were surprised by institutions like the Audiencia (or Supreme Court) in which the judges had an authority independent from the governor, even though he was officially the president of such a court. This system counterbalance of power was extended to other spheres, for example the bishop, whose moral authority had an impact on government decisions.

There were two kinds of cosmopolitanism, one resulting of the “power of attraction of silver”, that brought Chinese, Japanese and other South-East Asia nationals into another multicultural aggregation, and the other of the dominant group. The main particularity of those coming across the Pacific was political unity, even though they were people speaking different languages. Among the group of soldiers were Spaniards, men of the Mexican nation, even Flemish; and, if we consider those arriving in Taiwan, there were Pampangas, Cagayanes and Tagalos, with a clear national distinctions manifested in the fact that they were marching under their own banners. Among the clergy, they were not only Spaniards, but Portuguese, Italians or Sardinians.

On the other hand, the people who had joined the armies were classified under a clear structure: sailors, artillerymen, infantrymen, adventures, and all of them were integrated in a common stratified system, which applied to salary, benefits, honors, rights and duties. This stratification reached even the slaves, some of private ownership, others of public such as the “slaves of the king”, usually black people. Certainly such a complex society can only be organized through laws that need to be updated and rewritten whenever circumstances changed. For example, the natives of the Philippines had some particular laws for their own protection in the Leyes of Indias,¹⁷ and even the Sangleys were included.¹⁸

Reformation and the arbitrist spirit

The law is usually attached to a policy of reformation, and the man that championed this spirit of reformation during the times of Philip IV was his prime minister the Count-Duke of Olivares (1622-1643), a hard working committed man who carried out an ambitious policy of

¹⁷ The “Compendio de Las Leyes de Indias” was edited in 1690, under the orders of King Charles II. There are four volumes (tomos), that includes eight books (libros), containing in total 218 titles (títulos), leading to the different laws (leyes). For example, the titles of Book III have 410 laws. Every law has a short description, the year, the king and the place where it was issued, accompanied with an explanation. Regarding the laws for Philippine natives see Patricio Hidalgo Nuchera, “Origen y desactivación de la protectoría de indios en la Presidencia-Gobernación de las Islas Filipinas”, *Revista Española del Pacífico*, No. 8, 1998, pp. 213-233.

¹⁸ The laws in the Compendio regarding the Sangleys are in the Title 18 of Book VI (located in Volume II).

reformation, through the creation of *Juntas* (i.e., special committees). But his policies failed in the end after some military defeats, those of Montjuic (June 1641), Lérida (October 1642), a conspiracy in Andalusia (Summer of 1641), and his final *destierro* (1643), first in his own lands near Madrid, and later after new accusations to the city of Toro (1643). To add more trouble he was tried by the Inquisition (1644) the year before he died. During the governorship of Olivares the *arbitristas* flourished. This name comes from *arbitrio*, or “solution” given to particular problems of the kingdom. Consequently, the *arbitristas* (considered as the first economic thinkers) were those clergymen, military men, businessmen or public servants, who during the second part of the 16th century and along the 17th century wrote several reports or treaties dealing with political or economic problems. The government itself had its own policymakers, and a case for the Philippines can be seen in the long report that Grau y Monfalcón,¹⁹ the procurator in the Council of Indies made on the archipelago. There we can see a lengthy report of the situation, with some recommendations. The same analytical spirit can be recognized in the Junta of 1637 for the dismantling of the fortress of Isla Hermosa, or even in the detailed proceedings of the Corcuera’s Judgment of residency. Nevertheless, the *arbitristas* were more thinkers than public servants. For example, even if some of them like Luis Ortiz was a Royal accountant, Tomás de Mercado was a theologian, and González de Cellóriga was a lawyer.

Regarding the Spanish presence in Taiwan, we can see some reports full of the arbitrist spirit. First, those of Luis Pérez de Dasmariñas and his rationale for the conquest of Isla Hermosa, second that of De los Ríos Coronel, with the same purpose, both in 1597. Later, that of Bartolomé Martínez on the advisability of the conquest of Isla Hermosa in 1619. More sophisticated were the two reports presented by Cevicos in the court of Madrid (1627 and 1628) opposing the Spanish presence in Taiwan as a way of counterbalancing the Dutch presence and as a route for the missions to Japan and China. The same can be said of the report of bishop Aduarte after his visit to Isla Hermosa (based in the draft of Esquivel of 1632), who was probably an *arbitrio* on hand down to the royal officers in Manila. On the other hand, other subsequent reports like those of De los Ángeles or Quirós, cannot be considered as *arbitrios*, since they were made in retrospect, not to suggest ways of action.

4. The trial of Corcuera

The sense of law was very important for Spaniards, and it was generally understood that a man is the subject of some rights and duties, something important in the sophisticated society that they came from. They started their presence in Taiwan with a formal concern for the law and amid many legal disquisitions,²⁰ and they ended it creating another legal issue two years later that ended in the trial of the Manila General Governor Hurtado de Corcuera, accused of the loss of Isla Hermosa.²¹ The trial lasted five months, from August 1644 to January 1645,

¹⁹ See Nicolas P. Cushner, “Manila-Acapulco Trade and the Grau y Monfalcón Memorial (1635-1637),” *Historical Bulletin*, vol. 3, No 2, Manila, June 1959, pp. 40-50.

²⁰ See, José Eugenio Borao, “The ‘Justification’ of the Spanish Intrusion in Taiwan”, in *Humanitas Taiwanica*, No. 60, NTU, Taipei, pp. 338-372.

²¹ Corcuera had been Governor of Panama. At 48, he was appointed Governor General of the Philippines, holding the position for nine years (1635-1644), until his successor, Diego Fajardo, arrived in Manila. In the two months after being relieved as Governor, Corcuera was making ready to go back to Mexico and then to Spain.

and it can be considered as a turning point of the Spanish colonial mentality in the Philippines. In order to better understand the case we will divide it into three phases.

The three phases of the Corcuera's trial

The first phase (from August to September 1644) started when the public prosecutor, Sebastián Caballero, presented the initial charges on 20 August, establishing the grounds for his succeeding arguments (*SIT*, 482-484). His main premise was that Corcuera, having convoked a council in 1637 to discuss the dismantling of the forces of Isla Hermosa, resolved the matter with the majority favoring a withdrawal. Despite the resolution, Corcuera not only failed to pursue the plan; he also drastically reduced the number of military personnel on the island. The next day, Antonio de Santibáñez, solicitor of the Royal Prosecutor, summoned to the stand two former governors of Isla Hermosa who were then still living in Manila (*SIT*, 484-489). The first was Sergeant Major Alonso García Romero, who not only participated in the said council of 1637, but who also figured as the chief advocate of maintaining the forces in Isla Hermosa. The second witness was Sergeant Major Cristóbal Márquez Valenzuela, predecessor of the controversial Gonzalo Portillo. Santibáñez called in three more officers from 31 August to 3 September to corroborate the above-mentioned statements (*SIT*, 489-496). These officers were Second Lieutenants Felipe Tamargo and Antonio Pérez de Herrera and Sergeant Major Pedro de Jara Quemada. Basing his arguments on the statements of these officers, the public prosecutor wanted to establish that Corcuera was ultimately responsible for the defeat. At the end of that month, the general auditor of the islands, Nicolás Antonio de Omaña, secured Corcuera's statement (*SIT*, 496-498). The former governor answered the questions and justified his actions, asserting, for example, that he delayed the dismantling of the forces because he awaited specific instructions from the King.

The second phase was held a few weeks later (from 2 October to 13 October). Once the summary was formulated on 2 October, Sebastián Caballero again accused Corcuera before Governor Diego Fajardo, President of the Royal Audiencia, repeating his arguments from the first trial and even using the same words to demand Corcuera's conviction (*SIT*, 498-505). To this, Corcuera presented his formal defense (*SIT*, 505-508) through Second Lieutenant Gabriel Ruiz de Angulo, the lawyer, who was granted to him 10 days earlier. In a lengthy report, Corcuera reiterated that he did not dismantle the forces because he had not yet received an answer from the King regarding the matter. However, he started to make preparations for the eventual withdrawal by centralizing the entire force in Quelang, under the command of the last governor Gonzalo Portillo. He also said that 300-strong force was sufficient to defend the post and, if it had suffered defeat, then it was on account of Portillo who disregarded orders and did not know how to defend the location.²² The prosecutor likewise wanted to highlight a

His *juicio* was just made public and he had already set aside bail money and designated a legal representative to answer to the charges. He was denied bail and so had to face trial and personally respond to the accusations that turned up against him in the succeeding days. On 14 September 1644 the public prosecutor had Corcuera imprisoned and his possessions confiscated, on the charge of having deprived Isla Hermosa of the necessary defense facilities and thus made it vulnerable to assault and conquest by the Dutch. A narration of whole Corcuera's *juicio* may be found in Navas & Pastells, *History of the Philippines*, vol. IX.

²² Finally, Corcuera pointed out that it was an unfair move to call in an avowed enemy to testify against him. To counter this defense, the prosecutor's office once again summoned Second Lieutenant Diego Felipe Tamargo, Sergeant Major Pedro Jara Quemada, and Second Lieutenant Juan Pérez de Rueda on 13 October and subjected

more serious neglect from the point of view of the evangelization, which was of primary interest to the Crown when it conquered the island. The efforts of the missionaries had already produced almost 1,800 baptized native Christians whose instruction had to be abandoned once the Spaniards pulled out of the island.

The trial entered its third phase on 17 October. Its highlight was the debate between the public prosecutor (Sebastián Caballero) and defense lawyer (Gabriel Ruiz de Angulo) regarding the above-mentioned statements. The former alleged (*SIT*, 519-522) that Corcuera's defense could actually be used to convict him. First, if he had thought of consulting the King about dismantling the forces, then why did he have to convoke a council? Second, Corcuera contradicted his earlier statement when he pointed out that there were not enough soldiers to defend the island. Lastly, if Portillo was really as good a soldier as Corcuera claimed him to be, then why did his soldierly courage and military skill fail precisely when defending his forces? Perhaps Portillo was not that trustworthy at all and Corcuera had actually given the position to an incompetent person, as all his detractors averred. As for his enmity with one of the witnesses, the prosecutor declared that it was practically impossible for Corcuera to avoid hostilities with one or another person because for the past nine years he had been the governor of a place populated by a little over 70 Spanish citizens. Ruiz de Angulo (*SIT*, 522-526) however insisted on specific points, particularly on Portillo's weak character. For this purpose he requested a cross-examination of nine soldiers from 20 October to 7 November. But their answers to the 14 questions (*SIT*, 526-557) certainly confirmed the indecisiveness of Portillo. Moreover, the witnesses invoked the ideals of Spanish patriotism, which would never allow capitulation in the face of an affront. They felt that this ideal had to be put into play in the face of an "evident" affront from the Dutch aggressors. In addition, the soldiers opined that instead of having put up a token resistance of 20 men, Portillo could have handled the situation more effectively by tripling their number and by exerting more effort to help them.²³

Sentence, appeal and annulment

The judicial proceedings had run their course and all that remained was the passing of the sentence, which was delayed for almost two months. For one thing, Corcuera exerted great pressure, clamoring for a new lawyer because he did not trust the one he had. He demanded a lawyer from among the judges of the Royal Audiencia—Diego de la Rasa in particular because this man favored him (*SIT*, 557-560). Finally, on 19 December, in a session presided by Governor General Diego Fajardo, assisted by the other judges, including Pedro Zárate and Felipe de Soto, Corcuera was declared guilty as charged (*SIT*, 560-561) and penalized a hefty 100,000 pesos in material damage, excluding the value of the fortress herself. The sentence was ratified a month after (*SIT*, 564-565) on 21 January and communicated the following day to Corcuera who was incarcerated in Fort Santiago. When the whole trial (including other

them to a six-point interrogation. The first two had already testified earlier, hence they often refer to the answers they gave in the previous testimony. The interrogation aimed to make the witnesses reaffirm Corcuera's negligence in ordering the demolition of the forces (Tamsui and those that surrounded the main fortress in Kelang) and having left just 40 Spaniards to man the place (compare the 300 declared by Corcuera).

²³ As we go over the facts, it seems that Portillo was caught in a serious dilemma: to save the life of his men or to have them massacred in a suicide mission. It also seems quite possible that, from the start, he favored the first option, which was why he organized a kind of symbolic resistance.

cases) was closed, the judge imposed on him a fine of 828,007 pesos and a six-year suspension of his functions in government and war. He remained a prisoner in Manila for five years and a half, until 8 February 1650.

From prison, Corcuera appealed to the Council of the Indies, protesting the governor's ill-treatment of his person and asking to be released on bail and to have his possessions restored to him (*SIT*, 562-564). The Council endorsed the petition and ordered him to make an appearance in Madrid. Meanwhile, in 1646, the Audiencia ordered the formulation of three reports in Mexico and in Acapulco. These reports contained the testimonies of witnesses who confirmed that Corcuera was indeed denied legal representation and that he had suffered grave moral damage during his *juicio*. From his end, Diego Fajardo wrote the Council of the Indies on 8 May 1648, explaining his motives for putting Corcuera in jail. To this, the Council responded on 23 April 1649: "It seems that you have acted in the interest of justice but the reasons mentioned here do not seem to merit such a harsh punishment." The Council therefore ordered Corcuera's release and to send them a duplicate of the papers of the trial. Fajardo issued the release order and sent the former governor to Nueva España.

Corcuera's prison sentence was suspended as soon as he reached Spain. On 27 April 1651, he pledged for the nullification of his *juicio de residencia*, stating that Diego Fajardo has been a long-professed enemy of his. This, he claimed, should explain why Fajardo had treated him and his friends and defenders in that manner, and why his own objections were not sustained, unlike those of the scribe Alonso Baeza del Río, the assessor Nicolás Antonio de Omaña, and Diego Fajardo himself. Corcuera also declared that he requested legal representation from among the members of the Audiencia after his lawyer had died, but was given one who was handicapped and another who was inexperienced.

Corcuera therefore requested again the annulment of the entire proceedings and to have a new instruction passed to an impartial judge who would pass a new sentence. Corcuera wrote other memorials to the Council of the Indies, such as that of May 1651 or 1653. After studying the case from 14 February to 11 May 1656, the Council annulled all the documents processed by Diego Fajardo. We can finally say that Corcuera had a similar fate to Olivares on his trial, although he was luckier. In 1657, one year after he was absolved of his charges, Corcuera got back all his possessions and was soon granted pardon and reinstated. In fact, he was even appointed Governor of Asturias and later, of the Canary Islands. He died at 73 in Tenerife on 2 August 1660.

Certainly if we can associate great trials with the end of important historical cycles, the end of Corcuera (1644), as with the end of Olivares (1643), coincided with the end of the final decline of Spanish power in the East, and with the end of Spain as a leading empire in global affairs.

5. The rhetoric of Corcuera as a metaphor of the Spanish Empire decline

The history of the Spanish presence in Taiwan can be summarized as a Renaissance adventure that after few years of consolidation lost its mission, and ended in a Baroque pessimism. The reasons for their arrival were as neatly squared as the fortress they built and left behind: trade, counterbalance of Dutch power, and evangelization, but after ten years some people in Manila considered it a very costly enterprise for the little gain. And all these ideas can be traced not

only along the documents of the Spaniards in Taiwan, but also along all the papers gathered for the trial of Corcuera.

In the Junta of January 1637 they agreed to leave Isla Hermosa (*SIT*, 484), and to dismantle the peripheral fortress of Tamchui, el *cubo*, la *retirada*, la *mira*, leaving only the main fortress with only 40 Spanish soldiers, 18 Pampangos and a Company of Cagayanos. But Corcuera, as well as the other officers, considered that for the meantime the fortress was still able to face a Dutch attack. For this reason, only Gonzalo Portillo was responsible because of his fear to present battle against the Dutch, and he—defenseless and afraid to return to Manila from Macassar—was accused of being an illiterate, and of other personal shortcomings, as if he was the villain of a Spanish Baroque novel, something at odds with his valiant defense of the post in the first Dutch attack in 1641.²⁴ At that time good luck was on his side and he claimed a victory, after “blasting the flagship with an 18- [pounder] from the fort of San Salvador, ... And because the current brought them to a shallow part, or because the north wind that night was so strong that their cables broke, the said flagship crashed against the coast where friendly natives, seeing its masts, sails and riggings [floating] on the water.” (*SIT*, 501)

This defeat manifested also a very important aspect of the Spanish character and the Spanish armies: the sense of honor and of the shame after a defeat after not having put up a proper resistance. Corcuera accused Portillo because he did not behave according to the oath he had made to defend the fort entrusted to him by His Majesty (*SIT*, 492). And the worst was that “the enemy seized the forces with the artillery, provisions, supplies, banners and other items that were kept there, to the discredit of the arms of His Majesty, and this was witnessed by two great empires like Japan and China and other neighboring kingdoms” (*SIT*, 495). Consequently,

“The armed forces of His Majesty got a bad reputation, because without firing the Dutch enemy no even a single shot, he surrendered the said fort to [the Dutch enemy], and His Majesty received [not only] severe damage as regards the reputation of His naval forces, but also in the loss of the fort, the artillery, the supplies and the men, and the new Christianity that has begun to flourish [in the land] from the preaching of the holy Gospel.” (*SIT*, 502)

We can see along the Corcuera’s trial the rhetoric of the empire, using sounding statements to accuse others, or to defend personal actions. For example, Corcuera, defending his decision to delay the dismantling of the fortresses said: “For honorable soldiers, without His Majesty’s express command, are obliged not to leave the King’s armed forces undefended as these were built at his orders and expense” (*SIT*, 500). Secondly, mentioning the negligence of Márquez (the governor before Portillo) and defending his withdrawal from the post, Corcuera said: “As for disobedient soldiers, particularly officers and others of like responsibilities; the most lenient punishment is not to give them any order for His Majesty’s service (this I learned from good masters in the state of Flanders)” (*SIT*, 502). Corcuera, justifying his innocence due to the unpredictable behavior of Portillo, whom he had appointed, said “[the defeat] was due to the cowardice and poor government of the chief [i.e.: Portillo] who was in charge. And this [courage] could not be given to him by [the governor of] Manila.

²⁴ Also during the Chinese massacre of 1639, Portillo was assigned “to build a barricaded stockade in Tondo to accommodate the 7,000 sangleys who were left behind after the massacre. (*SIT*, p. 503)

It is a gift that God alone can grant” (*SIT*, 501). Another great example, of the justification coming from previous imperial practice was quoted by Corcuera, when he justified his innocence recalling the Battle of the Downs (or Nieuwport) of July 2 1600, where the archduke Alberto was defeated by the Dutch general Maurice of Nassau near Dunkirk. He said that the lieutenants were held responsible for the defeat, not the generals:

“That great retreat saw the loss of hundreds and more of His Majesty's flags. Being thus so, the said banners were entrusted to the noted captains by His Majesty... In the loss of the said banners—to which the captains willingly entrusted to the soldiers—, justice was not asked from the said captains; neither were they blamed for the loss. Rather, they threw into prison the surviving second lieutenants who lost the banners; and those who did not have good excuses were beheaded.” (*SIT*, 504).

It was an irony that in another Battle of the Downs, near the same place as the previous one, the Spanish fleet commanded by Oquendo was defeated by the Dutch in its attempt to bring supplies to the Spanish forces in Flanders. This happened in 1639, on the verge of the Dutch attack to Quelang. That Battle of the Downs was a strong blow to Spanish sea power with important influence in their colonies. The next defeat, although small one in relative terms, but morally very important was precisely the overall mentioned battle of San Salvador, in 1642, on the other side of the world, leading to the final transfer of maritime leadership from Spain to Holland. No wonder, the Spanish cannons of San Salvador were transferred to the Dutch fortresses of the Banda Islands (*SIT*, 490).

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Annex:

