



The School of
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José Antonio Cervera
(El Colegio de México, Mexico City)

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end of the known world in the
16th century: Martín de Rada,
Domingo de Salazar and Juan
Cobo in the Philippines,
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Abstract

This paper focuses on the life and work of three of the most important men who arrived in the Philippines during the 16th century: the Augustinian Martín de Rada (1533–1578) studied at the universities of Paris and Salamanca. He was one of the best European scientists of his time in East Asia. The Dominican Domingo de Salazar (1512–1594), first bishop of Manila, studied the legitimacy of the conquest of the Philippines and wrote against the Spanish plan to conquest China. The Dominican Juan Cobo (? –1592) was the first Spanish to master the Chinese language and, through his book *Shilu*, the first European who introduced Christianity to the Chinese from a rational point of view and the first one to introduce European science into Chinese context. All of them were very influenced by the School of Salamanca and, from Manila, they always had their eyes on China. These three men of the late 16th century are paradigmatic examples of the influence of the University of Salamanca in the production of global knowledge in the early modernity.

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Introduction

The University of Salamanca was founded in 1218. In 2018, we celebrated the eighth centenary of this institution that influenced study topics such as law, philosophy, science, ... Men trained at the University of Salamanca in the early modern era developed a legal and political language, and at the same time, they shared a worldview, an idea of the world that also included the new lands in which the Europeans were arriving during the 15th and 16th centuries. Nobody doubts about the importance of the School of Salamanca in the Iberian and European worlds, or even in Spanish America. However, as I will show in this paper, its influence arrived much further, reaching East Asia: the Philippines ... and China.

Thomas Duve, in his paper "La Escuela de Salamanca: ¿un caso de producción global de conocimiento?", emphasizes that the School of Salamanca can be considered as a discursive community.¹ This phenomenon has often been studied from a Eurocentric perspective, under the interpretation that Salamanca projected knowledge, rules of behaviour, a certain worldview. However, we are now in a position to change this idea. Although the city of Salamanca was (and still is) in Europe, we have to consider the School of Salamanca as a global phenomenon that breaks that Eurocentric vision. The actors we can consider as members of that community, most of them religious men, moved in a huge geographical area, in an imperial space that filled the whole world. It is possible to speak about a global sphere. Many of the missionaries trained or influenced by the School of Salamanca, such as the ones I am going to study in this paper, faced very different peoples and cultures, but they all had a common vision of the world. That vision of the world, at the same time, was transformed. The production of knowledge took place in very different places of the world, responded to local circumstances. It was a real global knowledge, an idea that gives rise also to this paper.

In this text, I will focus on the life and work of three paradigmatic figures to understand the huge influence that the School of Salamanca had in East Asia. If I speak about East Asia in general is because, although the three men spent several years in Manila (one of those enclaves that, in spite of their enormous distance from Europe, were very close to Mexico City and Salamanca, in the words of the Professor Duve's text), their eyes were on the great empire in front of the Philippines: China. We might consider that Spanish and Chinese empires were the most important ones in the world during the second half of the

¹ Duve, "La Escuela de Salamanca", 24.

16th century. Both empires were very different in many ways, but the two of them shared an ethnocentrism that placed them, from their respective points of view, at the center of the world.

Spain and China met in Manila. In that city, the three men I will focus on developed their work: the Augustinian Martín de Rada (1533–1578) and the Dominicans Domingo de Salazar (1512–1594) and Juan Cobo (? –1592). The three of them moved in an imperial space, beyond a fixed place or even a continent. From Europe, they travelled to the Americas and from there to the Philippines, with their eyes on China. In addition, the three belonged to religious orders to be considered as fundamental for the community we call the School of Salamanca: the Augustinians and the Dominicans. Studying their lives and their writings, we will have more elements to understand the enormous influence the University of Salamanca had on the formation of a global world in early modernity.

Spaniards' arrival in East Asia

It is a well-known fact that the spice trade was the primary object of the Spaniards and Portuguese to reach East Asia. The unexpected encounter with the unknown American continent delayed for several decades the Spanish appearance in East Asia. Their arrival happened in the expedition of Fernando Magallanes and Juan Sebastián Elcano (1519–1522). Aside from being the first time anyone sailed around the world, this trip marked the opening of the road to Asia for the Spaniards. During the kingdom of Charles I, the Spanish would still carry out several more expeditions to East Asia, one from Spain (under the command of García Jofre de Loaysa) and three from New Spain (Álvaro Saavedra Cerón, Hernando Grijalva, and Ruy López de Villalobos). Finally, it was Miguel López de Legazpi who got a permanent settlement in East Asia for the Spaniards, in 1565.²

During the first years, the Philippines were considered by the Spanish as a platform to get a better goal. They planned to go to the Spice Islands (the Moluccas), but also, they dreamed of China. At that moment, in the Philippines, the Spaniards were facing this dilemma: Should they continue in Cebu, an appropriate place to arrive in the Moluccas, or

² There are many books about the first travels in the Pacific Ocean and the Spanish arrival in the Philippines. See, for instance, Gil, *Mitos y Utopías del Descubrimiento*; Bernabéu, *El Pacífico Ilustrado*; and Hidalgo, *Los primeros de Filipinas*.

should they move to the Manila Bay, better placed to do business with China? The transfer of the main settlement of the Spaniards from Cebu to Manila in 1571 answers this question. The idea of a settlement in the Moluccas was abandoned (at least at the beginning, because there was a Spanish expedition to Ternate Island at the beginning of the 17th century). A closer approach to China was chosen. This fact, very important to understand the whole history of the Philippines, is now recognized by most researchers.³ The route of the Nao de China or Manila Galleon would link the capital of the Philippines to Acapulco for more than two centuries and a half. Manila became the place for the exchange between Chinese goods and American silver.⁴

In addition to the economic interest, China was also an important objective for the missionaries who travelled to Asia. Several religious orders tried to establish a permanent mission in the Ming Empire during the second half of the 16th century, from Macao or from the Philippines. If we focus on the members of the mendicant orders, the first ones to arrive in the Philippines were the Augustinians. In the expedition led by López de Legazpi, who arrived in Cebu in 1565, there were five members of the Order of Saint Augustin: Andrés de Urdaneta, Martín de Rada, Diego de Herrera, Andrés de Aguirre, and Pedro de Gamboa. Among them, the most famous is Urdaneta, considered as the discoverer of the navigation route between Asia and America, or *tornaviaje*.⁵ However, from an intellectual and scientific point of view, the most important one was Martín de Rada.

³ See, for example, Ollé, *La empresa de China*, 46; De Miguel, *Urdaneta y su tiempo*, 125; Folch, “Biografía de Fray Martín de Rada”, 45; and Sánchez, “Tiempos Malucos”, 624.

⁴ There are many books about the Manila Galleon, such as the classic work by Schurz, *The Manila Galleon*, or recent books, such as Fish, *The Manila-Acapulco Galleons*. The topic is also studied in several recent edited volumes: Bernabéu (coord.), *La Nao de China, 1565–1815*; Bernabéu and Martínez-Shaw (eds.), *Un océano de seda y plata*; and Yuste and Pinzón (coords.), *A 500 años del hallazgo del Pacífico*.

⁵ Many books have been written about Andrés de Urdaneta’s life and work. In 2008, the centenary of his birth was celebrated with several international conferences, which gave rise to collective works with much information about Urdaneta and his time, such as Truchuelo (ed.), *Andrés de Urdaneta: un hombre moderno*; and Barrón (coord.), *Urdaneta novohispano*.

Martín de Rada (1533–1578), scientist in the Philippines and China

Martín de Rada was born in Pamplona (Navarra) on 20 July 1533.⁶ He belonged to an aristocratic family. When he was 12 years old, he was sent to study at the University of Paris. He studied Greek, mathematics, physics, and natural sciences. From the beginning, Rada showed great talent for mathematics and astronomy. He returned from Paris and went to Salamanca in 1553, where he entered the order of Saint Augustin on 21 November 1554. He studied theology at the University of Salamanca between 1554 and 1556.⁷ In that city, he was able to meet theologians and scientists, and he participated in the debates that were taking place in that university. Several years later, this experience would help him in his relationship with native Americans and Asians. In 1560, he enlisted to go to the missions of New Spain, where he remained for several years.

When Rada knew that Augustinians were needed to go to East Asia, with the expedition led by López de Legazpi, he joined this expedition. They departed from the Puerto de la Navidad in November 1564 and arrived in Cebu on 27 April 1565. Rada learned the Bisaya language very early. He is considered as the first preacher of Cebu island.⁸ In 1572, he moved to Manila, where he was elected as Provincial Prior on 3 May 1572.

In the Philippines, Rada faced significant ethical problems. His training in Salamanca was basic for his recognition of the bad situation of the native people in the islands, as a consequence of the abuses committed by the *encomenderos* and soldiers. For example, in a letter written in 1570, Rada said:

... dicen que si no es rrobando y captiuando y bendiendo que no nos podemos sustentar; y así ogaño se á hecho más daño que en todos los años atrás, y con agora tres años más de çinquenta pueblos de grandísima abundancia de comida, que deçían todos que cada uno de los más de ellos nos podía sustentar, agora no se halla comida sino sólo en el rrió de arauz y en la baya de ybalón, porque en todos los demás está

⁶ Rada's life and work have been studied by several historians of the order of Saint Augustin. The work by Isacio Rodríguez, who collected all the writings by Rada in volume 14 of his extensive work *Historia de la Provincia Agustiniiana*, deserves special attention. The biographical encyclopedias by Santiago Vela, *Ensayo de una Biblioteca Iberoamericana*, vol. 6, 1922; and Rodríguez and Álvarez, *Diccionario Biográfico Agustiniiano*, vol. 1, also contain much information about Rada. Nowadays, the researcher who has most studied Rada is Dolors Folch ("Biografía de Fray Martín de Rada"; "Martín de Rada's Book Collection").

⁷ Folch, "Biografía de Fray Martín de Rada", 35.

⁸ Santiago Vela, *Ensayo de una Biblioteca Iberoamericana*, vol. 6, 445.

la gente la tierra adentro huída por miedo de los españoles, porque ni an guardado la cara a amigos ni a enemigos.⁹

One of the historical events where Rada had much influence is related to his scientific skills: the demarcation of the Philippines. To understand the question of geographical longitude and its influence on the history of the Philippines, two treaties have to be considered: the first one was the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494). The treaty itself does not establish a world distribution. It talks of a “pole-to-pole line” (a meridian), situated 370 leagues west of Cabo Verde islands. Everything (lands and seas) to the east of that meridian was assigned to Portugal, and everything to the west, to Spain.¹⁰ At that time, in 1494, they had not yet considered what would happen when they arrived in the other part of the world: East Asia. Several decades later, the idea of the anti-meridian of Tordesillas emerged. In 1529, a new treaty was signed: the Treaty of Zaragoza, in which the king of Spain (at that time, Charles I), pawned to the king of Portugal his rights over the Moluccas (in fact, the entire area to the west of a meridian located 17 degrees east of those islands).¹¹ When the Legazpi expedition was carried out, many years later, it was very clear that the Philippines were within the pawned zone. Therefore, the Spaniards had no right to settle there. When they arrived in Cebu, they broke the Treaty of Zaragoza. However, as it was a pawn, the king of Spain could return the money to the king of Portugal and recover those rights. The measurements made by Rada showed that the Philippines were within the Spanish demarcation according to the first treaty (Tordesillas). Andrés de Urdaneta wrote a *Parecer* (Opinion) on this question in 1566, when he returned to Spain after the *tornaviaje*. There is a fragment where he talks about Rada’s scientific work:

Pues digo agora que, hallándome yo el año pasado de 1565 en la misma ysla ya dicha de çubú, a donde fui en la Armada que fue por general miguel lópez de legazpi por perlado de otros quatro Religiosos que fueron allá, uno de los quales dichos Religiosos, llamado fray martín de rrada, saçerdote y theologo, natural de la ciudad de pamplona, buen matemático y astrólogo e cosmógrafo y muy gran aresmético, hombre de claro entendimiento, llevó consigo desde la nueva españa por mi ynterçesión un instrumento de mediana grandeza, para por él poder verificar la longitud que avría desde el meridiano de toledo hasta el meridiano de la tierra, a donde dios fuese servido que aportásemos, e como susçedió que fuymos a la ysla de çubú de suso contenida, donde yo estuve 31 días antes que diésemos la buelta para la nueva españa, en este tiempo el dicho fray martín de rrada, por estar de asiente en

⁹ Reproduced in: Rodríguez, *Historia de la Provincia Agustiniiana*, vol. 14, 41–42.

¹⁰ Rumeu de Armas, *El Tratado de Tordesillas*, 207.

¹¹ Rumeu de Armas, *El Tratado de Tordesillas*, 226.

el pueblo de çubú donde resydía de noche e de día con españoles, que allí poblaron, tubo lugar para muy a su plazer poder verificar por estrellas con el dicho instrumento la longitud que ay desde la dicha çiudad de Toledo, o su meridiano, hasta el meridiano del dicho pueblo de çubú, y abiéndolo verificado, halló computando su quenta hazia el poniente que ay 216 grados y 15 minutos de longitud, conforme a las tablas Alfonsinas, enpero conforme a Copérnico 215 grados y 15 minutos, ques menos un grado, de los quales grados de longitud, sacados de los 43 grados y 8 minutos suso contenidos, quedan segúng la quenta de Copérnico, a quien en esta quenta seguiré, como más moderno, 172 grados y 7 minutos de longitud, que para los 180 grados, que pertenesçen a la Corona Real de Castilla, faltan 7 grados y 53 minutos, y tantos más al poniente del meridiano de çubú llega la demarcaçión de su Magestad.¹²

The previous fragment is very significant because, in addition to showing the fundamental role that Rada had from the scientific point of view, it can be highlighted, above all, the use of Copernicus' book. The previous text was written in 1566. Nicolaus Copernicus published his famous book, *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*, in 1543. Throughout the 16th century, very few scientists followed him in Europe. In fact, Copernicus theory was discussed much later, during Galileo's famous trial, in 1633, decades after Urdaneta and Rada's time. The previous text shows that these two Augustinian friars (Urdaneta and Rada) were extremely modern, from a scientific point of view.¹³

After the establishment of Legazpi in the Philippines, the Portuguese tried the Spaniards to leave the islands. In 1568, the general governor of the Moluccas, Gonzalo Pereira, arrived in Cebu with a fleet. He asked the Spaniards several times to leave the Philippines, under threat of war. The Spanish did not accept the threats of the Portuguese, who, finally, retired themselves to the Moluccas.¹⁴ Legazpi asked for advice from the best cosmographer (astronomer) of those who were in the Philippines at that time: Martín de Rada. Rada proved to Pereira, by means of his geographical and astronomical knowledge, that the Philippines belonged to the Crown of Castile.¹⁵ Finally, Spaniards remained in the

¹² Reproduced in: Rodríguez, *Historia de la Provincia Agustiniiana*, vol. 13, 551–552.

¹³ In short, according to Rada's calculations, the Tordesillas anti-meridian would be located almost 8 degrees west of Cebu, and therefore the Philippines and the Moluccas would be located within the Spanish demarcation. Today, we know that the true anti-meridian was farther east. All the Philippines were located within the Portuguese demarcation. However, at the end of the 16th century, there were no reliable scientific methods for measuring geographical longitude. This would only be achieved two centuries later, at the end of the 18th century. For more details, see Cervera, *Tras el sueño de China*, 118–135.

¹⁴ Hidalgo, *Los primeros de Filipinas*, 38.

¹⁵ Rodríguez and Álvarez, *Diccionario Biográfico Agustiniiano*, vol. 1, 96.

Philippines and Portuguese in the Moluccas. Both kingdoms kept the status quo.¹⁶ Spain never paid back to Portugal the money of the pawn. However, a few decades later, the illegitimate establishment of the Spaniards in the Philippines was no longer important, especially after the union of the Crowns of Spain and Portugal under Philip II from 1580.

Rada was one of the first Spanish to propose that they had to go to China. What were his motivations? There is a text, a letter from Rada to the Viceroy of New Spain, written in 1572, where these motivations are clearly expressed:

... suplico embíe a mandar que si pudiere ser se embíen allá [China] vn par de Religiosos, porque demás de que podrá ser se abra gran puerta al euangelio y seruicio de nuestro señor, seruirá también de que ternemos de allá verdadera noticia de lo que ay, y ellos declararán a los chinos la grandeza de nuestro Rey, y quán bien les está en tener su amistad, y si ellos reciben la fee, les darán a entender la obligaçión que tienen de seruir a S.M., pues a su costa y minsión les embía ministros que les enseñen, y aunque no fuese más de seruir lenguas, y que se pudiese contratar con ellos, no sería poco importante su yda, y para ello, si a mí me lo mandasen, lo ternía por particular merced y lo aría de muy buena voluntad.¹⁷

In this interesting text, it is observed that, in addition to the missionary motivation (“se abra gran puerta al evangelio y servicio de nuestro señor”, to open a big door to the Gospel and service of our Lord), an important objective was to have “de allá verdadera noticia de lo que hay” (to have true news about what there is in China), that means, a scientific motivation, the exploration of new lands. Also, probably with the idea of convincing the authorities (the letter was sent to the viceroy of New Spain), there was a political motivation, of conquest (“les darán a entender la obligaçión que tienen a servir a S.M.”, they will understand their obligation to serve Your Majesty) and economic (“que se pudiese contratar con ellos”, to do business with them).

The opportunity for the Spaniards to go to China arrived in 1575, after the arrival of the pirate Lin Feng (*Limahon* in the Spanish texts of that time) in the Philippines. The Chinese captain Wang Wanggao (*Homoncon* in the Spanish texts) invited several religious men, including Rada, to go to his country. They arrived in China on 5 July 1575, but in August they were expelled. They arrived in Manila on 11 October 1575.¹⁸

¹⁶ Gil, *Mitos y Utopías del Descubrimiento*, 67.

¹⁷ Reproduced in: Rodríguez, *Historia de la Provincia Agustiniiana*, vol. 14, 112–113.

¹⁸ Rada’s trip to China and the circumstances around it are described in detail in Folch, “Biografía de Fray Martín de Rada”, 51–54.

The 1575 voyage to China is important from several points of view. First of all, Rada wrote a *Relación*, an account or travelogue about this expedition. It is also very important the acquisition of Chinese books by Rada, which were brought to Manila.¹⁹ According to several researchers, this expedition can be considered as the first scientific exploration of China by a European person.²⁰

Rada died during a trip at sea, possibly between 8 and 15 June 1578, and his body was thrown into the ocean.

What are the main writings by Rada? Several letters are kept, addressed to the king of Spain, to the Viceroy of New Spain, to the Augustinian Alonso de la Veracruz, etc. There are several uncertain works attributed to Rada.²¹ The *Relación del viaje que se hizo a China* (the account of his trip to China) is probably the most important of the written and conserved documents by Rada. It has two parts. The first one tells of Rada's trip to China and the second one gives a description of China's geography, history, customs, people, and so on. This *Relación* has been reproduced several times.²² What are the sources used by Rada for his *Relación*? According to himself, he used his personal experience in China and, also, the Chinese books he brought to Manila.²³

Rada's *Relación* is important because this is one of the first European contributions about topics such as geography, history, policy, and religion of the Chinese Empire. It became the basis of knowledge about China in Europe during several decades. The *Historia del Gran Reino de la China* (History of the Great Kingdom of China), by Juan González de Mendoza (1545–1617), was published for the first time in 1585. Its success was amazing. Only in the period between 1585 and 1590, there were thirty editions in Spanish, English, Italian, French, and German.²⁴ González de Mendoza's book was the most widely circulated in Europe about China for three decades. He might be considered as the successor of Marco Polo's book. Rada's *Relación* was one of the main sources used by González de Mendoza for his influential book.

¹⁹ The books that Rada probably brought to Manila after his trip to China have been recently studied by Folch, "Martín de Rada's Book Collection", 9–18.

²⁰ Bernard, *Aux portes de la Chine*, 108.

²¹ There is a very clear description about the conserved, uncertain, and lost works by Rada in Folch, "Martín de Rada's Book Collection", 18–22.

²² For instance, Rada's *Relación* is entirely reproduced in Rodríguez, *Historia de la Provincia Agustiniense*, vol. 14, 262–330.

²³ Rodríguez, *Historia de la Provincia Agustiniense*, vol. 14, 291–292.

²⁴ Sola, "Juan González de Mendoza y la *Historia del Gran Reino de la China*", 21.

As indicated above, Rada was a great mathematician and astronomer, probably one of the best Spanish scientists of his time. Unfortunately, the numerous scientific works he wrote were lost in Rada's time, as he himself describes in a letter addressed to Alonso de la Veracruz in 1576:

Yo ya escribí a V.P. me embió a pedir si tenía alguna obra hecha, cómo algunas que tenía se me habían perdido. Yo escribí vn libro de recta hydrographiae ratione, y había escrito gran parte de geometría práctica en romançe, por parecerme que no ha salido de esta materia en romançe cosa de leer, y va distinta en siete libros. Y después pensaba escribir otros siete de cosmografía y astronomía. Y los años pasados escribí de astrología judiciaria, del qual libro me á quedado el borrador; [...]. También escribí vn libro de toda manera de hacer reloxes. De todo esto, si a V.P. le parece ser cosa que es justo que nos ocupemos en haçer, procuraré de trabajar, y mucho me han quitado el ánimo ver mis trabajos perdidos por esas mares. Pero sabiendo que doy en ello gusto a V.P., reşibirlo he en merçed que V.P. me lo mande, y no sólo eso, sino qualquier cosa que V.P. mandare de cosas de matemáticas, porque entiendo que para ello me dio el Señor particular havidad y inclinación, aunque falto de libros, porque no tengo más de geometría a Euclides y Archymedes, de astronomía a ptolomeo y Copérnico, de perspectiva Vilellión, de judiçaria Hali aben ragel, y el ephemeride de çipriano Leovitis y las tablas Alfonsinas y Pruténiccas. Si otros algunos libros buenos V.P. [roto] reşibiré toda charidad en lo que por ay no hiçiere falta.²⁵

The previous text shows the scientific category of Rada. It is really very remarkable, for example, that he had written a book on practical geometry in romance (that means, in Spanish language). At that time, most of the scientific works were written in Latin. Probably, the fundamental source for this work on geometry was Euclid's *Elements*. The fact that Rada wrote a book on geometry in Spanish shows his modernity.

From the previous fragment, we also know that Rada had a large number of scientific books in his hands. He complained that he had "only" Euclid's and Archimedes' geometry, or Ptolemy and Copernicus works for astronomy ... Rada was not in the University of Salamanca, neither in Paris or Oxford. He was at the end of the known world at his time. This is why it is really impressive that he complained about having so few books. This gives an idea that his intellectual level, his scientific knowledge, was very high.

That letter to Alonso de la Veracruz may provide some clues about the kind of academic training that Rada could have at the universities of Paris and Salamanca. It is not easy to know the contents of the courses or the books he used while he was a student. We do

²⁵ Reproduced in: Rodríguez, *Historia de la Provincia Agustiniiana*, vol. 14, 378–383.

know several of the books he took to the Philippines, because Rada himself talked about them in several letters. For example, he took some travelogues related to China (certainly, Marco Polo's book, and probably, some Portuguese texts) and also, at least, a book by the Dominican Fray Luis de Granada (1504–1588), an author related to the School of Salamanca, as we will see later.²⁶ However, most of the books he had in Manila were scientific ones. I have already pointed out the importance of the use of Copernicus' book to carry out astronomical observations in order to measure the geographical longitude of the Philippines. For this purpose, Rada's stay in Salamanca was very important. During the second half of the 16th century, one of the few Copernican astronomers in Spain was Diego de Zúñiga (1536–1598). He was nearly the same age as Rada and he was too an Augustinian friar. When Rada entered the convent of Salamanca, in 1553, Zúñiga was a student at that university. According to Dolores Folch, Rada certainly took Copernicus' book to East Asia from Salamanca.²⁷

There is no doubt that his studies at the universities of Paris and, above all, at Salamanca, provided Rada with an intellectual knowledge he kept for the rest of his life. Although Rada wrote several scientific books that, unfortunately, have been lost, we know that he was a very remarkable scientist, in contact with the leading mathematical and astronomical European works of his time.

Domingo de Salazar, first bishop of the Philippines

The order of St. Augustine was the first one to be established in the Philippines, since the arrival of Legazpi's expedition. It has already been told that one of the fundamental objectives of the Augustinians, from the beginning, was to establish a mission in China. In 1578, the first Franciscans arrived in Manila. They also tried by all means, without success, to found a permanent mission in China.²⁸ In 1581, the Society of Jesus arrived in Manila. Among the first Jesuits who arrived in the Philippines, Alonso Sánchez (1547–1593) was one of the most

²⁶ Folch, "Martín de Rada's Book Collection", 3.

²⁷ Folch, "Martín de Rada's Book Collection", 6.

²⁸ The arrival of the Franciscans in the Philippines and their attempts to enter China are described in several books, such as Pérez, *Labor Patriótica de los Franciscanos*. A recent paper that discusses this topic in depth is Cervera, "Los intentos de los franciscanos para establecerse en China".

influential men of his time and the main promoter of the military conquest of China by the Spaniards.²⁹

Between 1581 and 1586, there was a process of discussion, with several meetings, usually called the Synod of Manila. This synod had great importance for the future of the archipelago, since it set the framework of relationships between natives, encomenderos, and missionaries. The third of these meetings, during the spring of 1583, focused on China, discussing the legitimacy of the king of Spain to conquer the Asian country. That moment was one of the most critical periods for the Spaniards in Manila (several fires, the delay of the Acapulco galleon for several months ...).³⁰ These disasters helped launch the plan to conquer China, as a way to escape from the Philippines towards a better place, both from an economic and a religious points of view.

That meeting about the China topic tried to give evidence that legitimized a “just war”. It would be the bishop of Manila, Domingo de Salazar, who gave that legal and theological legitimation. Salazar asked eight Spanish soldiers and sailors who had been in China. In the discussion, the ideas of Salazar's teacher, Francisco de Vitoria, were decisive. War is just if it is the response to an unjust prior act. Discussions were based on the Chinese affronts to the Spaniards, by preventing their entrance and free preaching in the Ming Empire. With Alonso Sánchez and Domingo de Salazar in favour of the military conquest of China, most of the elite of Manila agreed with the project.³¹

That project of military conquest of China was never carried out. One of the main reasons was the change of attitude of Salazar, who, in a few years, became one of the biggest opponents to that project. It is time to focus on Salazar's life and work. He was one of the most influential men at the early history of the Philippines and, without any doubt, he belonged to the School of Salamanca.

Fray Domingo de Salazar was born in Labastida, in the north of Spain, probably in 1512.³² He studied at the University of Salamanca. At that time, one of the most influential intellectual men of the 16th century was teaching in Salamanca: Francisco de Vitoria (1483–1546). As it is well known, this Dominican is considered one of the founders of modern law.

²⁹ The researcher who has best studied the attempt to conquer China from the Philippines and, particularly, the role of the Jesuit Sánchez in these events, is Ollé, *La empresa de China*.

³⁰ Ollé, *La empresa de China*, 28.

³¹ Ollé, *La empresa de China*, 129–132.

³² Much of this section comes from the biography written by Gutiérrez, *Domingo de Salazar, O.P.*

He developed a system of laws to regulate relations between the inhabitants of the New World and Europeans.

During the first half of the 16th century, the intellectual capacity of native Americans was being discussed in Spain. Vitoria strongly supported the idea that Indians were not inferior human beings, and therefore they should have the same rights as Europeans. Salazar arrived in Salamanca in 1526, when Vitoria was beginning his post in his chair of theology, and he obtained his degree in Canon Law in 1532. Subsequently, between 1537 and 1539, Salazar completed his studies in Civil Law. This period coincided with the most fruitful period of Vitoria. It is not strange, therefore, that his theological and juridical ideas had an enormous influence on young Salazar. Vitoria's thinking would be fundamental for the defense of the native Filipinos that Salazar would undertake decades later.

Another Dominican who greatly influenced the formation of Domingo de Salazar was Bartolomé de las Casas (1484?–1566), the most famous of the defenders of the native Americans. As it is well known, Las Casas fought against the abuses of the Spaniards towards the inhabitants of the conquered lands. When Salazar arrived in Manila, he would also defend the native Filipinos against the Spaniards, this is why Salazar has been called “the Las Casas of the Philippines”.³³

With models such as Francisco de Vitoria and Bartolomé de las Casas, it is reasonable that Domingo de Salazar became a Dominican. This happened in 1546. After that date, he still studied philosophy and theology at the University of Salamanca. After completing these studies, he was ordained a priest, probably in 1551.³⁴ Shortly after, he enrolled for the missions of the New World, where he travelled at the beginning of 1554. He would spend more than twenty years in the Americas, before crossing a new ocean, the Pacific, towards the Philippine archipelago.

Salazar was elected by the Dominicans as representative in Madrid and Rome. He left for Spain in 1575, to deal, among other topics, with the question of justice or injustice of the conquest of America. After spending some time in Madrid, he returned to Salamanca, where he remained in the convent of San Esteban. He was there when he was chosen by Philip II to become the first bishop of the Philippines.

To understand the creation of the episcopal see of Manila, it is necessary to go back to the history of the struggle between Spaniards and Portuguese for the control of trade routes

³³ Gutiérrez, *Domingo de Salazar, O.P.*, 14.

³⁴ Gutiérrez, *Domingo de Salazar, O.P.*, 37.

in East and Southeast Asia. It has already pointed out in the section dedicated to Martín de Rada that, shortly after taking possession of the Philippines (violating the Treaty of Zaragoza), the Portuguese of the Moluccas tried the Spaniards to leave the Philippine archipelago. In addition to the military way, Portuguese also tried the diplomatic way to assert their right over the Philippines. In 1576, at the request of the Portuguese king Sebastian I, Pope Gregory XIII created the episcopal Diocese of Macao, with jurisdiction over China, Japan, “and nearby islands”. This meant that the Philippines were under the Portuguese Padroado. Spanish diplomacy counterattacked, with the result of the creation of the episcopal Diocese of Manila in 1578.³⁵ In 1579, a year after the creation of the episcopal see, Philip II issued a Royal Certificate by which Domingo de Salazar was appointed first bishop of the Philippines.³⁶

Salazar spent some time gathering a group of Dominicans to accompany him to Asia, all of them residents of the convent of Salamanca. They spent a year in Seville and left in May 1580 to New Spain. However, almost all the Dominicans who accompanied him died on the ship due to a contagious disease. Despite this, Salazar continued his trip to the Philippines. He left Acapulco in March 1581, along with several missionaries from other religious orders. Alonso Sánchez was one of them. The weeks spent on the ship, where few things could be done except to talk, were probably decisive for the friendship between Sánchez and Salazar. The new bishop arrived in Manila on 7 September 1581.³⁷

For the rest of his life, Salazar was involved in expanding Christianity in the Philippines (both among the natives of the archipelago and among the many Chinese residents of Manila, or *sangleys*), and trying to improve the relations between the Filipinos and the Spanish. Just one month after arriving, he organized the Synod of Manila. Several problems were discussed, all of them related to the conquest and evangelization of the Philippines (the abuses on the natives, the methodology for preaching the Gospel, etc.). The fundamental question was the legitimacy of the Spanish conquest of the Philippine archipelago.³⁸

It was during the Synod of Manila when Alonso Sánchez had more influence on Domingo de Salazar. This was decisive for the bishop of Manila to support the Sánchez ideas about the possible military conquest of China. Salazar signed in 1586 the *Memorial general de*

³⁵ Gil, *Mitos y Utopías del Descubrimiento*, 67–68.

³⁶ Sanz, *Primitivas relaciones de España con Asia y Oceanía*, 129.

³⁷ Gutiérrez, *Domingo de Salazar, O.P.*, 98.

³⁸ Gutiérrez, *Domingo de Salazar, O.P.*, 124.

las juntas generales de todos los estados de las islas Filipinas (General memorial of the meetings of all the states of the Philippine Islands), which included an appendix about the plan of conquest of China.³⁹ Sánchez continued to be the main supporter of that plan. To defend his ideas, he left for Madrid in 1586. His own experiences in the trips he had made to China, as well as the problems with the Portuguese authorities of Macao, convinced him to try by all means to prevent future missions by missionaries of the mendicant orders from Manila to China. In 1587, in Mexico City, Sánchez met forty Dominicans going to East Asia. The Jesuit tried to prevent the continuation of the trip of the Dominican group. When Salazar knew about Sánchez's action, he became very angry. He was also a Dominican and he had advocated from the beginning for a Dominican mission to be established in the Philippines and, if possible, also in China. It was at that moment when Salazar separated himself from the project of the conquest of China. The good harmony between Sánchez and Salazar ended. From that moment, the bishop of Manila became the main supporter of the peaceful approach to Chinese culture.

One of the most interesting writings by Salazar is his *Carta-relación de la China y de los chinos del Parián de Manila* (Letter-account about China and the Chinese of the Parián of Manila), written to the king Philip II on 24 June 1590.⁴⁰ This text is important to know the atmosphere of the city of Manila in the late 16th century, especially the relationship between the Spanish and the community of *sangleys*. But Salazar's real objective when he wrote this text was to oppose the military conquest of China. The text begins by stating that the information the Spaniards had when they arrived in the Philippines was that the Chinese leaders prevented foreigners from entering their country, and that this fact made him support the option of the conquest of China:

... quedé persuadido á que era verdad que ningún extranjero podía entrar en la China sin peligro de muerte; [...] escribí á Vuestra Magestad afirmando que con justo título podía Vuestra Magestad enviar su armada á aquel Reyno y quando no quisiese rescevir los predicadores, abrir por fuerça de armas camino para que los resciviesen.⁴¹

³⁹ Ollé, *La empresa de China*, 171.

⁴⁰ This text remained as a manuscript for centuries. It was published for the first time at the end of the 19th century (Retana, *Archivo del Bibliófilo Filipino*, vol. 3, 1897, 47–80). It was also published by Sanz, *Primitivas relaciones de España con Asia y Oceanía*, 309–327. There is a complete transcription with a critical study in Cervera, *Cartas del Parián*, 102–120.

⁴¹ Reproduced in: Retana, *Archivo del Bibliófilo Filipino*, vol. 3, 50–51.

But soon after, in the text, Salazar tells how he came to understand the reality of the situation, saying to the king:

... agora que sé la berdad, digo que una de las mayores ofensas que á Dios se haría y el mayor impedimento y obstáculo que se podrían al Evangelio, es ir á la China con mano armada ni con género de violencia, porque asta agora ninguna causa, derecho ni razón a abido, ni hay de nuestra parte, para poder entrar en aquel Reyno con mano armada, pues es çierto que ni á ellos se les a dicho, ni an entendido lo que nosotros pretendemos, sino que nos tienen por gente que no tratamos sino de usurpar Reynos extraños, y teniéndonos en esta posesión, muy bien haçen de guardarse de nosotros; y para desaçerse tan mala opinión que de nosotros tienen, no ha de ser yendo allá con grandes armadas y exércitos formados, porque destos ningún otro efecto se puede seguir sino alborotar y scandalizar el mayor y mexor Reyno que ay en el mundo.⁴²

This is how Salazar talks about China, as “el mayor y mejor reino que hay en el mundo” (the greatest and best kingdom in the world). Most of his letter-account is dedicated to sustain this statement, describing the Chinese community of Manila and the enormous wealth that *sangleys* gave to the city. At the end, he describes the work that the Dominicans were already doing with the Chinese, telling the king that, together with that letter-account, he sends one of Juan Cobo's books: the first translation of a Chinese book into Spanish. This helps Salazar to reiterate his fundamental objective and finish his letter-account as follows:

Fray Juan Cobo, que es el religioso de Sancto Domingo que dixè arriba saver la lengua de los sangleyes y sus letras, ques lo que ellos en más tienen, envía á Vuestra Magestad un libro sacado de otros que de la China le han traído, que esta comunicación comienza ya á aber entre ellos y nosotros, que no es mal principio para lo que deseamos. Va el libro en letra de China la mitad de la hoja, y en la otra mitad en la lengua castellana, correspondiéndose la una á la otra. Es obra digna de Vuestra Magestad y como tal, sea de Vuestra Magestad resçevida, no por lo que ella es, sino por ser tan peregrina y nunca vista en el Paríán y fuera de la China. Contiene, á mi juicio, cosas dignas de consideración y á donde se vee la fuerça de la razón humana, pues sin lumbre de Fee, se alcançan cosas tan conformes á lo que la Ley cristiana nos enseña; y por aquí verá Vuestra Magestad quán fuera de camino ba el que pretende que en tal Reyno como el de la China, adonde tales cosas se enseñan, entremos con guerra y fuerça de armas á predicarles nuestra Ley; pues se ve claro que con tal gente como esta, más a de poder la fuerça de la razón que la de las armas.⁴³

⁴² Reproduced in: Retana, *Archivo del Bibliófilo Filipino*, vol. 3, 57–58.

⁴³ Reproduced in: Retana, *Archivo del Bibliófilo Filipino*, vol. 3, 79–80.

Shortly after arriving in the Philippines, Salazar had problems with religious orders. The monks had acted very freely for years in their tasks of evangelization. The new bishop tried to recover for the secular Church the functions that, until his arrival, had been exercised by the missionaries of the orders established in the archipelago, especially the Augustinians. Salazar wanted to plan and supervise the religious life in his enormous episcopal see.⁴⁴ One of the harder confrontations he had for this reason was with the Augustinian Andrés de Aguirre. This conflict would have an important effect on the Order of Saint Augustine, since it was removed from the community of the Chinese of Manila, or *sangleys*, with whom they had been worked the first years. This point is important to understand the work by Juan Cobo, to be developed in the last part of this text.

In 1590, a new governor arrived in the Philippines: Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas. A conflict arose between him and the bishop of Manila. This would affect the last part of Salazar's life. The controversy was about the legitimacy to collect taxes from the natives. According to the governor, both Spaniards and Filipinos were under the jurisdiction of the king of Spain, and therefore everyone had to contribute money to the state. On the contrary, according to Salazar, the taxes to the natives were only licit if these were Christians and had at their disposal missionaries or priests to teach them the Christian religion (the main justification for the Spaniards to be in the Philippines was the evangelization of their people). Therefore, for him, collecting taxes from natives who had never heard about Christ was a robbery and was not justified at all.⁴⁵ The differences between the governor and the bishop led to serious disputes, and this was probably the reason why Salazar decided to travel to Spain at the end of his life.

The Dominican embarked in June 1591 to New Spain, and then to Spain. In 1593, Salazar defended in Madrid, in a meeting with Felipe II and the Council of the Indies, his ideas in relation to the situation of the Philippines. Salazar's greatest interest was to help the natives, especially in the matter of the taxes of the pagan Indians, illicit according to his opinion. His search for justice made him unpopular and, after much discussion, the decision was contrary to Salazar: all natives, without exception, including non-Christians, should contribute with taxes to the Crown.⁴⁶ But in 1597, at the end of his life, Philip II sent the new bishops of the Philippines the order to try to return the taxes that had been taken from

⁴⁴ Gutiérrez, *Domingo de Salazar, O.P.*, 228.

⁴⁵ Gutiérrez, *Domingo de Salazar, O.P.*, 277–315.

⁴⁶ Gutiérrez, *Domingo de Salazar, O.P.*, 328.

the unbaptized Indians. Salazar's request was heard, but he never knew about his success, because he had died years before. During the time he was in Madrid, Salazar was already sick. He died in the Spanish capital on 4 December 1594. He was buried in the convent of Santo Tomás in Madrid.

Juan Cobo and his book *Shilu*

The Order of Preachers, or Dominicans, was the last of the four main religious orders that went to the Philippines in the 16th century, but they were the first systematically dedicated to preaching to the Chinese settled in Manila.⁴⁷ When Dominicans arrived in the archipelago in 1587, the other religious orders were not learning Chinese language, and the *sangleys* were not being evangelized. This is why Domingo de Salazar entrusted the task of evangelizing the Chinese people to the members of his own order: the Dominicans. From the very beginning, they considered such a task as one of the most important ones in the Philippines.

The first Dominican friar who was able to dominate Chinese, both written and spoken, was Juan Cobo. Along with the Augustinian Martín de Rada, Cobo was one of the most prominent missionaries in the Philippine archipelago during the 16th century, at least from the scientific and intellectual point of view. Although he did not study in Salamanca, he was undoubtedly influenced by the intellectuals trained at that university. As we will see, his main work is the translation into Chinese of a book published in Salamanca.

Juan Cobo was born in Consuegra, near Toledo, in 1546 or 1547.⁴⁸ He was educated at the convent of Ocaña, also very near to his hometown. There, he joined the Order of Preachers, in 1563. He moved to Ávila, where he studied at the convent of Santo Tomás. In Ávila, he knew about the Dominican's request for the Philippines missions. He left Spain in

⁴⁷ The main author on the arrival of the Dominicans in the Philippines and their attempts to enter China is Aduarte, *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario*, ed. Ferrero. In the 20th century, there are the works by Fernández, *Dominicos donde nace el sol*; González, *Historia de las Misiones Dominicanas de China*; and González Valles (ed.), *Cuatro Siglos de Evangelización (1587–1987)*. A very recent paper dealing with the establishment of the Dominicans in China in the 17th century is Busquets, “Primeros pasos de los dominicos en China”.

⁴⁸ The two sources of that time in which there are more information about Cobo's life are Aduarte, *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario*, ed. Ferrero; and Remesal, *Historia de la Provincia de S. Vicente*. Among modern books, Cobo's life and writings are deeply studied in Cervera, *Tras el sueño de China*, 335–481.

1587. Cobo remained in Mexico City for a few months and, later, he arrived in Manila in May 1588. From the very beginning, he was sent to preach the Christian religion to *sangleys*. Another Dominican, Miguel de Benavides (1552–1605), had started preaching to the Chinese before, but his language skills were not as good as Cobo's. According to Diego Aduarte, Juan Cobo learned Chinese in a very short time. He was able to read and write three thousand Chinese characters, “con que se bandeaba y leía, y entendía sus libros, y tradujo algunos, por tener muy graves sentencias, aunque de gentiles, como los de Séneca y otros tales entre nosotros”.⁴⁹

During the last years of the 16th century, after decades of internal conflicts, the new powerful man in Japan was Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598). In 1592, he sent an ambassador to the Philippines to ask for money, under the threat of invasion. Pedro Gómez Dasmariñas, the Spanish governor, sent Cobo to Japan. The Dominican monk met Hideyoshi, but when he was going back to the Philippines at the end of 1592, his ship sank and Cobo died.

Cobo had very good skills for foreign languages. Helped by some of the *sangleys*, he probably studied Chinese culture, a fact that would influence the writing of his two important books. It is usually believed that the Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) was the first Catholic missionary who mastered Chinese language, philosophy and culture, and who was able to adapt the European religion, science and philosophy to the Chinese context. But Cobo took the lead in this adaptation. This is evident when we take a look at his works in Chinese.

Despite the short time he spent in the Philippines before his death, Cobo was able to write several very interesting books. Apart from several doubtful works, there are four extant texts.

The *Carta de la China* (Letter about China), addressed to the Dominicans of the Province of Guatemala and Chiapas, describes the *Parián* of Manila, the neighborhood where Chinese people lived.⁵⁰ This letter or account, in Spanish, follows the tradition of Rada's *Relación* (1575) and Salazar's Letter-account to Philip II (1590). As it was written one year before Salazar's, this Cobo text is the first one that describes in detail the Chinese community of Manila and its relation with the Spaniards during the last decades of the 16th century.

⁴⁹ Aduarte, *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario*, ed. Ferrero, 219. Aduarte refers here to the *Beng Sim Po Cam*, the first translation of a Chinese book into Spanish.

⁵⁰ This letter is fully included in the book by Remesal, *Historia de la Provincia de S. Vicente*, lib. 9, 680–687. It is also transcribed, with a critical study, in Cervera, *Cartas del Parián*, 84–101.

The *Doctrina Christiana en Letra y Lengua China* (Christian Doctrine in Chinese Language) was signed by the Dominican order, but Cobo was probably one of the main authors. This *Doctrina Christiana en Letra y Lengua China* was inspired by a former *Doctrina Christiana en lengua española y mexicana, hecha por los religiosos de la Orden de Sancto Domingo*, published in Mexico City in 1548. The *Doctrina Christiana en Letra y Lengua China* was probably published around 1605, and it contains the fundamental truths that a Christian neophyte should know about his religion.⁵¹

The *Beng Sim Po Cam* (Rich Mirror of the Clear Heart) or *Mingxin Baojian* 明心寶鑑 (in Mandarin pronunciation and pinyin transcription) is a Chinese book translated into Spanish. The *Beng Sim Po Cam* is bilingual. The original Chinese text is in left pages while the Spanish translation is on the right pages. This book consists of statements written by several Chinese philosophers on ethics or human relations: Confucius, Mencius, the Daoists Laozi and Zhuangzi, the Neoconfucian Zhu Xi ... At that time, this book was popular in Fujian, and from there it could have reached the Philippines, where Cobo knew it.⁵² It was not published until the 20th century.⁵³

Why was the *Beng Sim Po Cam* translated by Cobo? According to Borao, Cobo's main goal was his other important book, the *Shilu*. Before this, he translated the *Beng Sim Po Cam* as a practice.⁵⁴ In order to write a book in Chinese, he translated and studied in depth a Chinese book on moral, the *Beng Sim Po Cam*. But his real objective was the introduction of the philosophical and theological foundations of the Catholic faith to the Chinese community in Manila. This was to be conducted through his *Shilu*.

The *Bian Zhengjiao Zhenchuan Shilu* 辨正教真傳實錄,⁵⁵ or *Veritable record of the discussion of the true spread of the orthodox faith*, is one of the most important books concerning scientific, philosophical and cultural exchanges between Europe and Asia.⁵⁶ This is one of the first books printed in the Philippines and, from a sinological point of view, the

⁵¹ Van der Loon, "The Manila Incunabula and early Hokkien studies", 1966, 13–25.

⁵² Chia, "Chinese Books and Printings in the Early Spanish Philippines", 263.

⁵³ The manuscript is in the National Library of Spain (Madrid): BNE, ms. 6040. There are two recent critical editions: Cobo, *Rico Espejo del Buen Corazón*, ed. Ollé; and Cobo, *Espejo rico del claro corazón*, ed. Liu.

⁵⁴ Borao, "Observaciones sobre traductores y traducciones", 37.

⁵⁵ In this text, I use the word *Shilu* as a short form for the title of this book.

⁵⁶ The only extant copy of the *Shilu* is located in the National Library of Spain, in Madrid: Cobo, *Bian Zhengjiao* [BNE, R/33396]. There is a modern facsimile edition, containing the translation into Spanish and English: Cobo, *Pien Cheng-Chiao*, ed. Villarroel.

second Chinese book written by a European, after the *Tianzhu Shilu* 天主實錄 (*The Veritable Record of the Lord of Heaven*), by the Jesuit Michele Ruggieri (1543–1607), published in 1584. What is most important, Cobo's *Shilu* is the first Chinese text that introduces the Catholic religion from a rational point of view, and the first book written in Chinese introducing European modern scientific ideas. According to several researchers, Cobo's *Shilu* is one of the most important Chinese and Spanish books in all history.⁵⁷

The *Shilu* is adapted from the *Introducción al Símbolo de la Fe* (*Introduction of the Symbol of Faith*), by the Dominican Fray Luis de Granada. Granada was one of the most prolific Dominican authors of the 16th century. His books, with ascetic and mystical topics, had an enormous influence in Spain during his life time. One of his main works, the *Introduction of the Symbol of Faith*, served Cobo as the fundamental model for his own book in Chinese, the *Shilu*. Granada's book had just appeared in Spain shortly before leaving Cobo for the Americas and Asia. The first edition was published in Salamanca in 1583. This work by Luis de Granada was very popular and was soon translated into other European languages. And not only European ones. Cobo's *Shilu* was not the first translation or adaptation to an Asian language. Before, it had already been translated into Japanese by the Jesuits.⁵⁸

In his book, Granada proposes a way of approaching the knowledge of God through the description and study of his creation, that is, of nature. This is the way that Cobo would also follow in his *Shilu*, and this is the reason why a large part of Cobo's book is dedicated to the study of cosmology, physics, and natural sciences, which makes it a scientific book. In Cobo's *Shilu*, as in Granada's *Introduction of the Symbol of Faith*, the philosophical, theological, and scientific conceptions that were being discussed in that time among the members of the School of Salamanca are united in a harmonious way.

Why did Cobo write this book? It has already been said that the *Doctrina Christiana en Letra y Lengua China* was written by the Dominicans in order to teach the most important Christian truths to the new Chinese converts. Cobo's *Shilu* is a very different book. The author wrote it for the non-Christian Chinese intellectuals. Cobo tried to prove that Christianity was not a foreign religion, as most of the Chinese believed, but a “universal”

⁵⁷ Sanz, *Primitivas relaciones de España con Asia y Oceanía*, 249, states that the *Shilu* is, in Spain, “la más inestimable joya bibliográfica ultramarina y el libro de más subido valor existente en nuestras bibliotecas públicas o privadas”.

⁵⁸ Borao, “Observaciones sobre traductores y traducciones”, 394.

religion, the “true” religion. The words used in the *Shilu* are different from those used in the *Doctrina Christiana*.

The *Shilu*, written in Classical Chinese, was probably understood by few of the Chinese people who lived in the Philippines. So, why was it written and published? At a time when the Jesuits were trying to introduce themselves in mainland China, and after Michele Ruggieri had already published his *Tianzhu Shilu*, Chia argues that

... the *Shilu* was written to show what the Dominicans were capable of in their task of converting the Chinese. [...] There may not have been very many copies of the *Shilu* printed if its chief purpose was to show off the Dominicans’ achievement rather than to be distributed broadly to potential converts.⁵⁹

The *Shilu* was written as a dialogue between a European friar (probably, Cobo himself) and a Chinese intellectual (probably, the person who helped him to write it in Classical Chinese), to whom the friar explains his ideas and answers his questions.⁶⁰ It seems very clear that, because of the difficulty of the language used in the *Shilu*, “Cobo almost certainly could not have written it without a great deal of help from educated Chinese, most probably the interpreters assigned to work with the Dominicans”.⁶¹ The clerk who helped Cobo had to be an intellectual with a long period of contact with the Spanish culture in the Philippines; otherwise, he would not have been able to express European philosophical and religious ideas in Chinese as correctly as he did.⁶²

The *Shilu* contains nine chapters. In general, the first three ones deal with philosophy and theology, and the other six ones, with science. The first chapter, which might be translated as “Discussion on the proofs of the true religion”, explains Cobo’s main goal: to prove that the Christian religion is the true one. The title of the second chapter is “On the existence of an Infinite being, principle of all things”, and the third one, “Talking about things infinite”.⁶³ To prove the existence of God, who is infinite, Cobo used several arguments similar to famous Aquinas’ five ways. But finally, the friar cannot reach the divine mystery and show it to the Chinese intellectual, because human reason is finite and it will never understand the infinite. However, human being can study and admire the order, greatness and beauty of nature, and then admire the creator of everything, God. This is the

⁵⁹ Chia, “Chinese Books and Printings in the Early Spanish Philippines”, 262.

⁶⁰ Cobo, *Pien Cheng-Chiao*, ed. Villarroel, 43. Cobo, *Espejo rico del claro corazón*, ed. Liu, 16–17.

⁶¹ Chia, “Chinese Books and Printings in the Early Spanish Philippines”, 261.

⁶² Chan, “A note on the Shih-lu of Juan Cobo”, 484.

⁶³ I use the translations for the titles given by Villarroel (Cobo, *Pien Cheng-Chiao*, ed. Villarroel).

reason why chapters four to nine study the structure of the heavens, the earth, and the living beings (plants and animals). Cobo followed the structure of the main source of his work: the *Introduction of the Symbol of Faith* by Luis de Granada.

The fourth chapter is the most important one from a scientific point of view. Cobo (the monk) explains to the Chinese intellectual about the earth and heaven.⁶⁴ Here, the author shows the most usual European cosmological ideas of his time. We know that Cobo had studied astronomy. Diego Aduarte, in his book, clearly says that Cobo taught astronomy to the Chinese.⁶⁵

It is difficult to know which kind of courses he took or the books Cobo read during his training in mathematics and astronomy while he was a student in Ocaña and Ávila. It is likely that he was influenced by the School of Salamanca. For example, the Dominican Domingo de Soto (1494–1560), who taught at the University of Salamanca, published in 1545 his book *In VIII libros physicorum*, printed several times during the following years and subsequently used in several Dominican and Jesuit schools. It is very possible that Cobo studied astronomy with this and other texts of that time. However, with the information on Cobo we have (Aduarte and Remesal's books) and with the texts Cobo wrote by himself, this is a hypothesis that cannot be corroborated.

Inside *Shilu's* fourth chapter, four folios containing scientific illustrations are inserted. One of them shows the geocentric Ptolemaic Universe, the most widespread European cosmological system at that time. Although Cobo's *Shilu* was printed nearly fifty years after Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (1543), the geocentric system was still the common cosmological model among the European intellectuals. This illustration is the first image of European astronomy into the Chinese cultural context. Most important, the text provides the first proof of the roundness of the earth ever written in Chinese language, including several arguments to prove it.⁶⁶ Among the illustrations inserted in this fourth

⁶⁴ The original Chinese title of this fourth chapter is *Lun dili zhi shiqing zhang zhi si* 論地理之事情章之四. It was translated by Villarrol (Cobo, *Pien Cheng-Chiao*, ed. Villarrol, 211), as “On matters of geography”. However, a better translation is “On matters of the earth”, because the topics explained in this chapter are not only what we now understand by “geography”.

⁶⁵ Aduarte, *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario*, ed. Ferrero, 219.

⁶⁶ The historian of Chinese science, Joseph Needham (*Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 3, 210–228) discusses the Chinese cosmological theories and assumes that the Chinese knew that the earth is round. However, later authors, such as Cullen (*Astronomy and Mathematics in Ancient China*, 39) asserts that there is no evidence in old Chinese texts about the sphericity of the earth. That

chapter, there is also a map, probably the first Chinese map showing several parts of the earth, such as the Pacific Ocean, Japan, Luzon Island, and Mexico.

The title of the fifth chapter is “About the reality of the earthly things”. Here, Cobo gives several basic ideas about physics, using both Chinese and European sources. In the sixth chapter, “On the plants of the earth and other vegetables”, the author says that God has given each plant form and purpose. Everything has been created to serve men. The seventh chapter is “On the things of the animal kingdom”, the eighth one, “On how the animals know what they should eat and drink”, and the ninth one, “On how the animals of the world know the medicines they must take”. In these chapters there are also several very interesting illustrations: in one of them, we see how a crab eats shellfish, putting a small stone between the two halves of the shell; in another, we see how a fox hunts crabs, putting its tail in the water. The conclusion is that the fox is “more intelligent” than the crab, and the crab is “more intelligent” than the shellfish. How is it possible? Only the existence of God can explain this kind of “intelligence” in the animals. In the last drawing of the book, we see how a swallow cures an illness of the eyes of its chick, and how a black stork cures itself from a stomach illness. Again, only God can explain that animals can cure themselves.

The nine chapters of Cobo’s *Shilu* show that there is a Creator God, whose infinity, wisdom and goodness might be admired in the natural world. Unfortunately, the book was unfinished. Cobo’s objective was probably to continue this text, maybe with other descriptions of nature following Granada’s book. However, he died in his return from Japan to the Philippines in 1592. Finally, the book remained with those nine chapters and it was published in Manila in 1593.

Conclusion

The Spaniards remained in the Philippines for more than three centuries. After the establishment of permanent missions in China by Catholic religious orders during the 16th and 17th centuries, the evangelization of the Philippine archipelago became a true objective for Spaniards. Today, the Philippines is the Asian country with the highest percentage of

means that Cobo’s *Shilu* is, indeed, the first Chinese text in all the history that clearly states that the earth is round.

Catholic population. However, in the first decades of Spanish presence in the Philippines, the real target was China.

In this paper, we have studied the life and work of three of the most influential religious men in Manila during the last decades of the 16th century. All of them dreamed of China, and all of them were very influenced, in one way or another, by the School of Salamanca. We have now more elements of judgment to answer the question that Professor Duve was posing in the title of his paper "La Escuela de Salamanca: ¿un caso de producción global de conocimiento?"⁶⁷ After studying Rada, Salazar, and Cobo's life and work, missionaries, theologians, and scientists who moved between Europe, America, and Asia, we can answer positively to that question.

⁶⁷ Duve, "La Escuela de Salamanca".

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Notes on Contributor

José Antonio Cervera is a full-time professor-researcher at the Center for Asian and African Studies at El Colegio de México, in Mexico City. He specializes in the introduction of European science in China by Catholic missionaries and the arrival of the Catholic religious orders in the Philippines (16th and 17th centuries). His recent publications include *Las varillas de Napier en China. Giacomo Rho, S.J. (1592-1638) y su trabajo como matemático y astrónomo en Beijing*, Mexico City 2011; *Tras el sueño de China. Agustinos y dominicos en Asia Oriental a finales del siglo XVI*, Madrid 2013; and *Cartas del Parián. Los chinos de Manila a finales del siglo XVI a través de los ojos de Juan Cobo y Domingo de Salazar*, Mexico City 2015.

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6972-3897>

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Contact

The School of Salamanca

Max-Planck-Institut für europäische Rechtsgeschichte
Hansaallee 41
60323 Frankfurt am Main

Tel.: + 49 69 789 78161
www.salamanca.school
e-mail: salamanca@rg.mpg.de