

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

The Mediterranean Connection

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Philippine Studies vol. 37, no. 2 (1989) 131–144

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Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

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WILLIAM HENRY SCOTT

When Magellan's ships and survivors left Philippine waters in 1521 following his death in Mactan, they proceeded to Borneo where, at the mouth of Brunei Bay, they seized a ship commanded by a Filipino prince who fifty years later would be known as Rajah Matanda. He was quietly released after bribing the Spanish commander, but seventeen others of his company were retained for their value as guides, pilots or interpreters or, in the case of three females, for other virtues. One of these was a slave who could speak Spanish or, more accurately, "a Moor who understood something of our Castilian language, who was called Pazeculan."¹ A later account identifies this slave as a pilot and a Makassarese who, "after having been captured and passed from one master to another, had wound up in the service of the prince of Luzon."² His special linguistic proficiency may have been the result of the vicissitudes of his captivity, and so may his faith, since Makassar did not adopt Islam until the next century. Similarly, a Portuguese-speaking negro the Spaniards met in Palawan had been baptized Bastian in the Moluccas.³

Slaves were regularly employed as translators in international trade. When João de Barros, the great Portuguese historian of Southeast Asia, purchased some Chinese maps in 1540, he also purchased a Chinese to translate them. Magellan himself left Spain on his famous voyage

1. "El libro que trajo la nao Vitoria de las amistades que hicieron con los Reyes de Maluco" (Archivo General de Indias, Indiferente General 1528), text in Mauricio Obregón, *La primera vuelta al Mundo* (Bogota, 1984), p. 300.

2. Rodrigo de Agandaru Móriz, "Historia general de las Islas occidentales a la Asia adyacentes, llamadas Philippinas" (MS 1623), *Colección de Documentos inéditos para la Historia de España*, vol. 78 (Madrid, 1882), p. 60.

3. "Navegação a vyagem que fez Fernão de Magalhães de Sevilha para Maluco no anno de 1519 annos," *Colleção de Noticias para a Historia e Geografia das Nações ultramarines que vivem nos Dominios portuguezes*, vol. 4 (Lisboa, 1826), p. 164.

with two slave interpreters—Arabic-speaking Jorge and Malay-speaking Enrique. Jorge presumably also understood Persian since he was able to communicate with one Calin of Bachian in the Moluccas who spoke the language.⁴ Magellan could have acquired him himself during the Moroccan campaign of 1513-14, or he might have bought him in the Seville slave markets in Calle de las Gradass, Calle de Bayona or the Plaza de San Francisco. Enrique he purchased in Malacca—at the age of thirteen, one account says—for which reason he was listed as Enrique de Malacca in the ship's register of Magellan's flagship, though he was actually a native of Sumatra, homeland of the Malay language. Malay was the trade language of Southeast Asian ports at the time. It was understood by Rajah Kolambu of Limasawa (who was actually from Butuan) and his boatmen, as well as Rajah Sarripada Humabon of Cebu. Expeditionary ethnographer Antonio Pigafetta commented of their ability to understand Enrique, "In these parts, kings know more languages than the others."⁵

THE MEDITERRANEAN CONNECTION

After seizing the people from the Luzon ship, the Spaniards continued on to the Spice Islands, and there they encountered Uzman of Tidore who also knew Spanish.⁶ These evidences of the language of Cervantes in the farthest corner of the world from Spain must come as a considerable surprise to the modern history student. The grandeur of the circumnavigation of the world and the drama of Magellan's appearance in the Philippines predispose us to think of Spanish as a kind of transpacific import, and the romance and reality of the Manila galleon trade makes us forget that the spice trade which attracted Columbus into the Atlantic and Magellan into the Pacific began just south of the Philippines, and had been reaching Europe for centuries across the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. The profits of this trade was naturally highest at its western end, where they were being enjoyed during the sixteenth century by Turkish, Egyptian, Tunisian and Italian middlemen—to say nothing of expatriate Spanish Muslims. The phenomenon of the Spanish-speaking slave may therefore be best understood by a consideration of this Mediterranean connection.

4. Obregón, *La primera vuelta*, pp. 318, 321.

5. Antonio Pigafetta, *Primo Viaggio intorno al Mondo*, text in Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 33, p. 114.

6. Obregón, *La primera vuelta*, p. 309.

A modern inclination to exaggerate the problem of language barriers no doubt adds to our surprise. The mere fact that Henry of Malacca was understood by Visayan Filipinos has suggested to some Philippine historians that he must have been a Visayan himself, while there are others who have tried to explain initial Filipino hostility to Spanish aggression as a simple communications failure. Great medieval travelers like Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta, however, left accounts of crossing half the countries of Eurasia without finding the problem worthy of comment. Indeed, true love of profit would seem to surmount any cultural barriers. Nicolo de Conti left Venice on business in 1419, crossed Syria, Iraq, Persia, India and Ceylon and got as far east as Sumatra, twenty-five years later he returned through the Red Sea and Egypt with an Indian wife and family, and sought the Pope's absolution for having abjured his faith in Jiddah.⁷ And in 1505, Ludovico de Varthema of Bologna also reached Sumatra, having become a Muslim and picked up a Persian partner and two Chinese Christian companions on the way: one would wonder what language they used to hire ships complete with captain and crews in Malacca, Atjeh and Borneo.⁸

Another stumbling block to understanding the Mediterranean connection is the false dichotomy between the terms "Spanish" and "Muslim" (or "Moro") which has been engendered by three centuries of colonial history. The former term, after all, pertains to a nationality or language, while the latter pertains to a religion; they are therefore not alternates to one another. When Columbus was born, part of Spain was still ruled by Muslims (he himself was present at their final defeat in the siege of Granada), but Spain's indigenous population was "Spanish" no matter who ruled them or whatever faith they professed. Traditional histories, whether written in Spanish or Arabic, do not distinguish Moros from Spaniards, but from Christians.

This indigenous Spanish population did not, of course, disappear with the Arab and Berber invasions of the eighth century; rather, they became Muslims, learned Arabic, and constituted the major population of the caliphates and Muslim kingdoms which ruled most of the Peninsula for 800 years. Their epic hero, El Cid, was known by an Arabic title (*sayyid*), and presumably used that language when he

7. Rodrigo Fernández de Santa ella, *Cosmographia breve introductoria en el Libro de Marco Paulo . . . con otro tratado de Micer Poggio florentino que trata delas mesmas tierras & yslas* (Seville, 1503).

8. "Itinerario de Ludovico Bartheima Bolognese," in Gian Bautista Ramusio, *Delle Navigazioni et Viaggi*, vol. 1 (Venice, 1554), pp. 160-90.

swore allegiance to Emir Moktadir of Zaragoza. But the Spanish language—or, better said, the language which would become Spanish—survived in Andalusian market places, and its advantages produced *moros latinados* (Latinized Moors⁹) whose business acumen has given the modern word *ladino* a connotation of sly or cunning.

Eventually, the reconquest of Muslim territory by revitalized Christian kingdoms gave a new incentive for changing language and faith. Arabic-speaking Spaniards were baptized, and the sort of pidgin Spanish they spoke—and wrote in the Arabic alphabet—was called *aljamía* (from an Arabic word meaning “non-Arabic”). The language scene at the end of the sixteenth century may be illustrated by a contemporary reference to some Spaniards who “grew up in little hamlets where *aljamía* was never spoken, nor was there anybody who understood it except the parish priest or curate or sacristan: and these always spoke in Arabic.”⁹

During the long Muslim occupation, tens of thousands of Spanish Muslims migrated to the Mediterranean coast of Africa, mainly to escape persecution following political reversals. Whole populations fled to Morocco and Egypt following an unsuccessful Cordoban uprising in 814, and to Tunis following the fall of Seville in 1248 in such numbers that the city was said to be largely populated by Sevillians. These Spanish Tunisians constituted an educated and skilled elite that was credited with the two or three centuries of prosperity which Tunis enjoyed off a trade which extended from Portugal to India and included Italian maritime republics like Pisa and Genoa in between.¹⁰ The final Spanish exodus was touched off by the fall of Granada and the capture of Melilla in Morocco in 1492, which opened a century of Muslim expulsions or enforced conversions to Christianity. It was this diaspora, no doubt, which accounts for the Spanish speech which the Portuguese heard in the Indian Ocean, not from the lips of slave interpreters but from men of considerable social stature. When they bombarded Hormuz at the entrance to the Persian Gulf to cut one of the Arab links in the Mediterranean connection, one of

9. Luis de Marmol, *Historia de la rebelión y castigo de los moriscos de Granada* (Málaga, 1600), lib. 2, fol. 40; cited in *Diccionario de la Lengua castellana* (Madrid, 1726), under *aljamía*. See also Pedro Agudo Bleye, *Manual de Historia de España*, vol. 1 (Madrid 1975), pp. 409-10; Charles E. Chapman, *A History of Spain* (London, 1918), pp. 43-45; Robert K. Spaulding, *How Spanish Grew* (Berkeley, 1943), pp. 53-56; and Américo Castro, *España en su historia, Cristianos, moros y judíos* (Buenos Aires, 1948), pp. 12, 51-54, 59.

10. John D. Latham, “Towards a study of Andalusian immigration and its place in Tunisian history,” *Les Cahiers de Tunisie*, vol. 5 (1957), pp. 203-49; and Newille Barbour, *A Survey of North West Africa (the Maghreb)* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 18-19.

the emissaries who came to sue for peace was a Spanish Muslim—"a native of the Kingdom of Granada by the name of Abadala, who spoke good Castillian."¹¹

As a matter of fact, the first person Vasco de Gama met on his arrival in India in 1498 addressed him in Spanish. As official chronicler Damião de Góis describes the contact:

On boarding the ship, he said in Castillian in a loud voice, 'Welcome to you all: give thanks to God that he has brought you to the richest land in the world, in which you will find every kind of merchandise you could desire or imagine!' Vasco de Gama embraced him, asking him most joyfully where he was from; Monzaide told him from Tunis, and that since the time when King Don Juan II used to send ships to Oran to get things he needed for his naval stores, he was familiar with the Portuguese and was always very friendly with them, and so in every way he could serve King Don Manuel in that land, he would do it if they wished to employ him for it, to which Vasco de Gama gave him thanks with the promise of paying him well for his troubles.¹²

THE ECONOMIC CONNECTION

History texts are usually written in terms of wars and crusades fought by specific nations, and empires, and so little prepare us to recognize those driving economic forces which know no nationality, language or religion. Nonetheless, there will be modern Filipino students who understand the readiness with which the men who constituted the Mediterranean connection sold their services to the highest bidders. Vasco de Gama had actually been guided to India by the leading authority on Indian Ocean navigation of his day, the Arab pilot Ahmad ibn Majid, whom he hired in Malindi over his ruler's protests, and when he went home, the effusive Monzaide went with him, becoming a Christian to do so. So did the well-traveled Gaspar das Indias seized in Calicut, whom the king of Portugal described on his arrival as "a Jew turned Christian, a man of great discretion and energy, born in Alexandria, a great merchant and lapidary who has been trading in India for thirty years."¹³ When Vasco de Gama returned to Calicut four years later with fourteen heavily armed men-o-war, that globe-trotting Muslim convert and itinerant merchant, Haji

11. Damião de Góis, *Crónica do felicíssimo rei de Manuel* (Lisboa, 1566), part 2, p. 113.

12. *Ibid.*, part 1, p. 89.

13. Letter dated 25 August 1499, in Antonio da Silva Rego, *Documentação para a Historia das Misões de Padroado Portugues do Oriente: India*, vol. 1 (Lisboa, 1947), p. 9.

Ludovico Varthema, quickly reverted to his former faith and fought on the Portuguese side in the battle of Cananor in 1506. Ferdinand Magellan was wounded during this battle but saved the life of his good friend (or cousin?) Francisco Serrão, who later went to serve Sultan Cachil Boleife of Ternate—and left thirty-five tons of cloves and two mestizo children when he died.¹⁴ Spaniards coasting down Mindanao in 1521 met a native vessel whose captain had been in his house in the Moluccas.

The European end of this commerce was in the hands of Venetians. It was their galleys which fetched the Oriental goods from Egypt and Syria, giving them a virtual monopoly on the sale of spices into European markets. Thanks to this strange ecumenism, Jesuit founder Ignatius Loyola was able to communicate with his missionaries in India through Venetian ambassadors to Muslim states—monthly from Cairo and every three months from Aleppo.¹⁵ The extent and speed of information passing from one end of this network to the other is noteworthy. Scarcely a decade after the Portuguese first set foot on the coast of Brazil, they acquired a Javanese map in Malacca which showed that American landfall.¹⁶ Conversely, Portuguese cartographers were quickly able to indicate Asian points which Portuguese explorers had not yet seen. An unsigned chart presumably by Pedro Reinel (who supplied Magellan with maps and a globe before he left Seville), drawn before Borneo and the Philippines were reached, shows, in addition to known ports along the Indonesian archipelago from Sumatra to the Moluccas, the sketchy outlines of the Chinese coast and, to the east, a group of islands south of the Tropic of Cancer and a larger one just north of it.¹⁷ The Tropic of Cancer actually passes through the large island of Taiwan, and the Philippines, of course, lie to the south of it.

Missionary complaints reveal the extent of this cooperation between people who appear in standard histories as sworn enemies. Writing from Malacca in 1556, Jesuit Baltazar Díaz labels the passage of Muslim teachers “under the pretense of their being merchants” in Portuguese

14. Manuel Teixeira, *The Portuguese Missions in Malacca and Singapore (1511-1958)* (Lisboa, 1961), vol. 1, pp. 57-59.

15. Letter from Antonio de Heredia dated 20 October 1554, in Joseph Wicki, *Monumenta historica Societatis Iesu*, vol. 74 (*Documenta Indica III*) (Rome, 1954), p. 105.

16. Letter from Alfonso de Albuquerque to the King dated 1 April 1512, *Collecção de Monumentos ineditos para a Historia das Conquistas dos Portuguezes em Africa, Asia e America*, vol. 10 (Lisboa, 1884), pp. 64-65.

17. Armando Cortesão e Avelina Teixeira de Mota, *Portugaliae Monumenta Cartographica*, vol. 1 (Lisboa, 1960), plate 10: “Anonymous-Pedro Reinel chart of c. 1517.”

ships "one of the gravest offenses that could be offered God our Lord," and recounts a personal experience. In the ship in which he came from India, one of his fellow passengers was a Moro, "proclaiming himself a relative of Muhammad," who was on his way to Borneo to join a companion who "has already made Moros of the major part of that paganism."¹⁸ His confrere Nicolás Lancelot is so exercised about the "contracting and mixed commerce with all kinds of infidels, enemies of the Cross and the law of all truth," that he frets about what penance he should assign confessing Christians who participate in it. "They sell horses from Arabia and Persia," he writes in an especially revealing passage, "which are sold in such numbers every year that the custom duties from horses alone produce 40,000 crowns for the King of Portugal, and the dealers of these horses are Portuguese and Moros."¹⁹ Ten years earlier, Father Miguel Vaz complained to the king about the Portuguese slave trade in India: he didn't want Christian dealers to sell their merchandise to Muslims or Hindus.²⁰

Without such cooperation, however, the Portuguese would never have been able to capture, hold or exploit the great Southeast Asian emporium of Malacca. The popular image of their blasting their way into that port with heavy-caliber naval artillery to introduce the novelty of European capitalism is rather a caricature of the facts. Magellan was wounded again during Alfonso Albuquerque's unsuccessful first attack in July of 1511, but a week later, local merchants eager to get on with business provided two men to breach the fortifications, and then outfitted a large junk to fetch the Indonesian spices that Chinese traders were waiting for. Even before the battle, a Javanese businessman by the name of Utimaraja presented a fine gift of sandalwood to signify his support, and Burmese tycoon Nina Chatu turned over a vessel he had constructed for defeated Sultan Mahmud, complete with a mixed Burmese-Malay crew and a pilot whose son spoke Portuguese.²¹ Albuquerque immediately started exploring the local rivalry between Hindu Tamils from Coromandel and Muslim Gujaratis from Cambay, and when he returned to India in December with worm-eaten fleet (the *Flor de Mar* broke up on the Sumatran coast), he appointed Nina Chatu *bendahara* (prime minister) of the city and

18. Wicki, *Momenta historica*, p. 537.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 454.

20. Silva Rego, *Documentação para a História das Missões*, vol. 3, p. 211.

21. Utimaraja's sandalwood gift is accounted for in John Villiers, "As Derradeiras do Mundo: the Dominican missions and the sandalwood trade in the Lesser Sunda Islands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," *II Seminário Internacional de História Indo-Portuguesa: Actas* (Lisboa, 1985), p. 578.

wealthy Filipino businessman Regimo Diraja *temenggong* (governor) of the Muslim communities. The next year Nina Chatu and the Portuguese Crown put up the capital, fifty-fifty, to send a heavy-laden merchantman to Pasai and Pegu, with a Muslim captain named Saif ud-Din and two Portuguese inspectors whose detailed logs and cargo registers still exist.²²

As soon as Albuquerque learned the real source of the spices, he dispatched three vessels to buy some and to advertise the presence of new customers, and Malacca captain Nehoda Ismael to Java for the same purpose. Guided by two Malay pilots, they reached Banda and headed back loaded to capacity after purchasing a local junk to replace the unseaworthy Cambay ship Francisco Serrão was commanding. Serrão then proceeded to run her onto reefs in the Penju Islands off Sulawesi, but as soon as rival sultans Boleife of Ternate and Almansor of Tidore learned of the presence of these new masters of Malacca, they rushed fleets to rescue them. Nine Ternatan *caracoa* got there first and took Serrão back to become commanding general of Boleife's forces, where, once established, he wrote Magellan about the wealth and location of the Moluccas.²³ Magellan finally replied from Lisbon that, God willing, he would soon join him there, if not by the Portuguese route, then by the Spanish—that is, by sailing west across the Atlantic.²⁴

Unlike Temenggong Regimo Diraja, some Filipino traders took the wrong side. A colony of 500 at Minjam on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula (where the Chinese had noted Mindoro cotton in the fourteenth century) lost their Malacca trading rights by joining the losing sultan's party.²⁵ Luzon mercenaries also participated in an unsuccessful attempt to retake Malacca in 1525 with the help of Portuguese renegade Martin Avelar. The "captain of the Luções" sailed in the flagship with warriors João de Barros considered "the most warlike and valiant of these parts."²⁶ In 1539 Filipinos formed part of

22. Geneviève Bouchton, "Les premiers voyages portugais a Pasai et a Pegou (1512-1520)," *archipel* 18 (Paris, 1979), pp. 131-36.

23. Teixeira, *The Portuguese Missions*; and Ronald Bishop Smith, *The first age of the Portuguese embassies, navigations and peregrinations to the kingdoms and islands of Southeast Asia (1509-1521)* (Bethesda, 1968), pp. 40-42.

24. João de Barros, *Decada terceira da Asia de loão de Barros dos Feitos que os Portugueses fezerão no Descobrimto & Conquista dos Mares & Terras de Oriente* (Lisboa, 1628), book 5, fol. 139.

25. Armando Cortesão, *A Suma Oriental de Tomé Pires e o Livro de Francisco Rodriguez* (Coimbra, 1978), p. 377.

26. Translated in Teixeira, *The Portuguese Missions*, p. 166.

a Batak-Menangkabau army which besieged Atjeh, as well as of the Atjenese fleet which raised the siege under command of Turkish Heredim Mafamede sent out from Suez by his Uncle Suleiman, Baxaviceroy of Cairo. When this fleet later took Aru on the Strait of Malacca, it contained 4,000 Muslims from Turkey, Abyssinia, Malabar, Gujarat and Luzon, and following his victory, Heredim left a hand-picked garrison there under the command of a Filipino by the name of Sapetu Diraja.²⁷ All these Filipinos were so closely associated with Borneo that many Portuguese thought they came from there: even that Luzon prince captured in 1521 had just come from a victorious raid as Brunei Raja Sarripada's captain general. And this Luzon mercenary tradition seems to have survived into fairly modern times: the Dutch had a company of Pampanga Christians in Batavia as late as 1721.²⁸

Pigafetta noted a Luzon vessel loading sandalwood in Timor in 1522, and Fernão Mendes Pinto mentions Mindanao merchants in the Burmese emporium of Martaban in 1547.²⁹ Magellan's and Albuquerque's contemporary, druggist Tomé Pires, left a book-length manuscript known as the *Suma Oriental* when he accompanied the first Portuguese embassy to China in 1517, in which he says the Luzones trade for the same goods in Malaca as the Borneans and that they are "almost one people." Luzon itself he describes as a source of food-stuffs, wax, honey and gold, but, unlike cartographer Francisco Rodriguez, who locates *Llouçam* on the north coast of Borneo, he knows from native informants that it is another ten days' sail. Significantly, too, he comments when describing the Chinese port of Canton before any Portuguese had seen it, "This the Luções say who have been there."³⁰

The fortunes of the Malacca Filipinos, however, were not based on such petty commerce as the Philippine trade: rather, they came from shipowning and the underwriting of large-scale export ventures in the China market, even letting out small shares which illiterate Portuguese sailors could afford. The head of this community was Regimo Diraja, who had attracted his fellows from Luzon in the first place, a genuine tycoon who sent junks to Brunei, China, Pasai, Siam and Sunda, and whose widow and father-in-law continued his business following his death in 1513. Another Filipino magnate was Surya Diraja

27. Fernão Mendes Pinto, *Peregrinação* (Lisboa, 1725), pp. 20, 35.

28. F. De Haan, *Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, OUD BATAVIA (Batavia, 1922), vol. 1, p. 480.

29. Mendes Pinto, *Peregrinação*, p. 232.

30. Cortesão, *Suma*, pp. 376-77, and 362.

who paid the Portuguese 9,000 *cruzados*' worth of gold to retain his plantation and country estate, and annually sent 175 tons of pepper to China. One of his junks sailed in the first Portuguese fleet to pay an official visit to the Chinese Empire.³¹ Considering the high visibility of this Filipino community, one wonders if a sharp-minded adventurer like Magellan could have been unaware of the existence and location of the Philippines. Perhaps the "discovery of the Philippines" was made in Malacca.

Magellan left the Far East in 1513 after lending 110 *cruzados* to a Portuguese merchant in Goa, to be repaid in pepper in Lisbon at 82 percent interest.³² Back in Portugal, he had a falling out with his king, but until he renounced his citizenship in 1517 and left for Spain—João de Barros says—"he was always hanging around pilots and sea charts."³³ In Seville, he married the sister of the author of the latest travel book on Indian Asia, and signed a contract with the Spanish king for 15 percent of the profits to be realized from what turned out to be an unsuccessful attempt to sabotage the Portuguese spice trade.³⁴ He left Spain with instructions to find a new route to the Spice Islands, discovered the strait which bears his name, and headed across the Pacific on a course of northwest by west. When he came to the equator, he strangely did not veer west in search of the Moluccas he knew to be on that line: rather, he continued on and only changed course when he reached the latitude of Luzon, and then headed direct for the Philippines.³⁵ There, instead of carrying out his orders, he spent seven weeks merchandising, baptizing and politicking in Cebu, and died trying to force a beachhead in Mactan. Crewman Ginés de Mafra speculated that this unauthorized behavior was motivated by Magellan's desire to have Cebu as one of two islands to be granted him in perpetuity, "because he had said so many times."³⁶ Perhaps the

31. Luis Filipe F.R. Thomas, "Malacca's society on the eve of the Portuguese conquest," unpublished paper presented at the International Conference on Malay civilization (Kuala Lumpur, 11-13 November 1986), pp. 12, 16-17, 20, 25-26.

32. Jean Denucé, *Magellan, la question des Moluques et la première circumnavigation du Globe* (Académie Royal de Belgique: Mémoires deuxième série Tome IV (1908-11), pp. 111-12.

33. João de Barros, *Decada terceira da Asia*, fol. 140.

34. The travel book is Duarte Barbosa's 1516 *Livro em que se dá relação do que viu no Oriente* Duarte Barbosa.

35. Samuel Eliot Morrison, *The European discovery of America: the southern voyages, A.D. 1492-1616* (New York, 1974), pp. 406-09.

36. Antonio Blazquez y Delgado Aguilera; *Libro que trata del Descubrimiento y Principio del Estrecho que se Llama de Magallanes por Ginés de Mafra* (Madrid, 1922), p. 200.

easiest way to explain this whole scenario is to assume that Magellan knew where he was going and wanted to get there.

The drugs and aromatics which made up the spice trade were mainly carried from their islands of origin by Javanese traders or Buginese from Makassar, to the fiercely competing entrepôts of Malacca and Atjeh, where they joined with the commerce of all Asia. From there they were delivered largely in Atjenese, Arab and Indian bottoms—or occasionally Turkish from Egypt—to the coasts of Africa, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, where they were transshipped by camel train to Mediterranean ports like Alexandria, Beirut, Cairo and Damascus, all under the control of the Egyptian ruler the Portuguese called the Sultan of Babylonia. This is the monopoly the Portuguese broke by sailing from India to Europe around the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa. The first spices to reach the European market in Flanders completely by sea—and bring almost their weight in gold—were delivered by two Portuguese carracks in 1499. Five years later the Venetian Senate was shocked to have its galleys return from Alexandria empty, no spices having reached that port that year across the Mediterranean connection.³⁷

Establishing a new monopoly to replace the old one, however, required a certain amount of shoot-on-sight contacts at sea, and of destabilizing or overthrowing local governments ashore. These actions were all defended by the Portuguese Crown as a kind of Christian crusade—though not one, evidently, which applied to infidels who did not threaten Portuguese profits, like those Muslim pilots, proprietors, underwriters and business partners in Goa, Malacca and Ternate. Mediterranean investors faced with bankruptcy responded in kind. The Venetians sent four cannon-makers to Calicut in 1505, and in 1508 contributed carpenters, caulkers, artillery and two whole galleys to a fleet sent out by the sultan of Egypt under command of his Mameluke governor of Jiddah, which also included Christian mariners from Italy and the Levant, as well as forty Calicut vessels manned by Hindus from Malabar. A similarly ecumenical armada in 1515 was manned by 700 Egyptians Mamelukes, 300 Turkish Janissaries, 1000 Moors from Granada and Tunis, and 70 Levantine Christians.³⁸

37. K.S. Mathew, "The first mercantile battle in the Indian Ocean: The Afro-Asian front against the Portuguese (1508-1509)," *Il Seminário Internacional de História Indo-Portuguesa: Actas* (Lisboa, 1985), pp. 182-83.

38. Jeronymo Osorio, *De Rebus Emanuelis Regis Lusitaniae invictissimi virtute et auspicio* (Coloniae Agrippinae, 1574), p. 134; Mathew, "The first mercantile battle," *Il Seminário Internacional*; and Gois, *Cronica*, part 2, pp. 85-86. part 4 (1567), pp. 33-34.

Ottoman Emperor Suleiman the Magnificent conquered Egypt in 1517, so Portugal's Far Eastern competitors started sending embassies direct to Constantinople to solicit military aid. Among these, those from Atjeh had an especially persuasive case: Atjeh, at the northeastern corner of Sumatra, was in a position to cut off Malacca's west-bound traffic: indeed, the wars which involved Filipino mercenaries from Luzon were fought for control of the Sumatran shore of the Strait of Malacca. The Portuguese once intercepted a 50-gun Atjenesese ship carrying their ambassador with 200,000 crowns' worth of gold and jewelry for the Emperor. It also carried 500 Atjenesese, Arab, Abyssinian and Turkish warriors. Chance references in diplomatic correspondence reveal that Turkish troops and gun-founders left for Atjeh in 1539, and a dozen gunners and military advisers in 1564, while the Portuguese took an Atjenesese merchantman in a naval action off Hadramaut in 1562 with 400 "white men" on board. And in the year of Suleiman's death, two Turkish ships arrived with 500 men who included gunners, gun-founders and military engineers. When the Dutch invaded Atjeh four centuries later, they found antiquated cannons of Turkish design in the royal compound.³⁹

But the last hopes for any revival of the Mediterranean connection faded in the face of spreading Mediterranean wars during the second half of the century. In 1568, a rebellion in Granada resulted in the deportation of more than 50,000 persons—most of them first- and second-generation Christians—and the Spanish occupation of Tunis in 1570. The next year, Don Juan of Austria, son of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, defeated the Turkish fleet in the battle of Lepanto, following which Turkey got increasingly embroiled in wars on two fronts in the Balkans and Persia. Perhaps it was these unsettled conditions which sent more Mediterranean Muslims to Southeast Asia, where Manila Oidor Melchor Dávalos could report in 1585 that Turks were coming to Sumatra, Borneo and Ternate every year, including defeated veterans from Lepanto.⁴⁰

Finally, we may consider the view from Manila. Following the union of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns in 1581, the Portuguese in the Moluccas requested aid to put down a rebellion which had seized their fort in Ternate. Governor Santiago de Vera mounted an expedition which, on arrival in the Moluccas, found not only Ternatans but

39. B. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies Part Two* (The Hague, 1957), pp. 244-46; and C.R. Boxer, "A note on Portuguese reactions to the revival of the Red Sea spice trade and the rise of Atjeh 1540-1600," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 10 (1969):415-28.

40. See note 42 below.

2,500 Arabs, Javanese and lascars (East Indian seamen), and a Portuguese commander who wasn't interested in any military action that would interfere with business. Nonetheless, following unsuccessful negotiations conducted through a Muslim "bishop" from Mecca, the fort was besieged and surrendered. But the Ternatan, Javanese, Chinese and Malay merchants inside would not vacate until they were guaranteed the value of their goods, so in the end half the fort's cannons were turned over to the Javanese. The Spaniards returned to Manila in disgust, and Dominican chaplain Cristóbal de Salvatierra wrote in his official report, "Many of them are married to *indias* of Ternate and others are mestizo children of Ternate women and Portuguese men, so they tell their relatives so much that nothing is said in the Spanish camp without their learning it."⁴¹

After the expedition returned, Oidor Dávalos wrote a long letter to the King, worrying about the continuing or increasing Muslim presence. He gave the following details as historical background:

Persians and Arabs and Egyptians and Turks brought [Muhammad's] veneration and evil sect here, and even Moors from Tunis and Granada came here, sometimes in the armadas of Campson [Kait Bey], former Sultan of Cairo and King of Egypt . . . Thus it seems to me that these Moros of the Philippine Islands [are] mainly those who, as has been said, come from Egypt and Arabia and Mecca, and are their relatives, disciples and members, and every year they say that Turks come to Sumatra and Borneo, and to Ternate, where there are now some of those defeated in the famous battle which Señor Don Juan de Austria won.⁴²

CONCLUSION

There are two points worthy of special note in this survey of the Mediterranean connection. The first is that all these data have survived by mere chance outside the texts of standard histories. Nicolo de Conti's travels are known only because Eugenius IV required him to dictate them to papal secretary Poggio Bracciolini as an act of penance for his apostasy. The fortunes of those two Filipino tycoons with

41. "Relación de algunas cosas sucedidas en el Maluco en el prosecución de la jornada que este año de mill e quiniento e ochenta y cinco mand. hacer el

Illmo señor doctor santiago de vera . . . por el Padre frai X^obal de salvatierra" (AGI Patronato 46, ramo 20). I am indebted to Father Lucio Gutiérrez, O.P., for a copy of this document.

42. Melchor Dávalos to the King, Manila 20 June 1585, in Lewis Hanke, *Cuerpo de Documentos del Siglo XVI sobre los derechos de España en las Indias y las Filipinas* (México 1977), pp. 72, 75.

honorable Malay titles like *diraja* are known only because of the scrupulous accounts royal bookkeepers kept in Portuguese outposts like Malacca. And Spanish-speaking Pazeculan appears in none of the four eye-witness accounts brought back from the first voyage around the world. He is known to us only because of his services as translator for Spanish peace treaties in Palawan and the Moluccas. Spanish law required these formalities to include such details as how the parties swore their oaths and who did the translating, and the particular *libro de pazes* in this case turned up by accident in the Archives of the Indies only a few years ago.

The second point is the Law of Chance itself. When Monzaide took Vasco de Gama's comrades ashore in India, he introduced them to another interpreter. Is it likely that these were the only two men in Calicut who could speak European languages—just waiting, so to speak, to be discovered? When the Spaniards hailed that *parao* in Basilan Strait, what were the chances that its captain should be the only indio to have been in the house of Magellan's good friend Francisco Serrão? And when Sebastian de Elcano met Pazeculan in Borneo by sheer happenstance and then Uzman four months later, 2,000 kilometers away in Tidore, what were the odds against their being the only two persons in Southeast Asia who knew Spanish? These questions suggest that the presence of the Spanish-speaking slave on the Luzon caracoa may not have been an isolated phenomenon. Perhaps further research on the Mediterranean connection will provide the final explanation by exploring the question of just how many Spanish-speaking slaves there were between Granada and Manila in 1521.