

Fleets, Relief Ships and Trade Communications between Manila and Jilong, 1626-1642

JOSÉ EUGENIO BORAO MATEO

The Spanish presence in the northern part of Formosa (Isla Hermosa) lasted only 16 years and therefore did not have sufficient impact on the island. Nevertheless, Taiwan experienced the tension produced by the rivalry of these two potential colonizers, Spain and the Netherlands. The Spaniards arrived in Taiwan laden with over a century of experience in the colonial administration of America's vast empire, which extended to the distant archipelago of San Lázaro (The Philippines). In this context, the remote fort in Jilong was just a strategic bastion of the Philippine colonial system of defense and colonization, like those in Zamboanga or Ternate. The Dutch East India Company (VOC), on the other hand, set foot on Formosa two years earlier with the intention of making the island the pivotal point of their growing maritime power between Batavia and Japan. The Spanish empire, then at its peak was already manifesting telltale signs of decline. This historical crossroads explain the two different approaches of the Dutch and the Spaniards in their colonization of Taiwan, eventually resulting in the expulsion of the Spaniards from Jilong in 1642.

This paper attempts to shed light on the events surrounding the Spanish military conquest of Formosa in 1626, a period when Spanish politics were more interested in maintaining rather than expanding the empire. This was why the naval fleet of 1626 was raised, not amidst the euphoria of conquest, but in secrecy, triggering debates about whether this was an appropriate step or not. Also this study attempts to explore the impact of that naval conquest and the scope of the communication links and trade between Manila and Jilong that followed.

The debate regarding the naval expedition to Jilong

Spain's interest in conquering Isla Hermosa, or at least some strategic points of the island, is shown for the first time in a memorial sent by the city of Manila to King Philip II in 1586. It contained a vague and general statement that "escaped the King's notice" when he signed the document three years later. He routinely included this item within a very long series of instructions addressed to the new governor general of the Philippines, Gomez Dasmariñas. This statement became an oft-cited argument in favor of the conquest that would take place 37 years later.

The idea of sending a military expedition to Formosa emerged for the first time in 1597, during the reign of Toyotomi Hideyoshi and the period of the "Japanese menace" that extended throughout Isla Hermosa and the Philippine

Islands. As the Spaniards braced themselves for an attack, they churned out reports, like those of Luis Dasmariñas, and even drew the first detailed map of the island. The apprehension died down with the passing of Hideyoshi, but things changed when the Dutch ships showed up in Philippine waters in 1600. They were a naval power and Spain's rival in Europe, and therefore well capable of tipping over the balance of power in the area. But, the clash between the Dutch and the Spaniards in Taiwan was yet to come.

Arguments raised in favor of the conquest

In 1619, the Dominican Bartolomé Martínez came up with a memorial regarding the advisability of establishing a port in Formosa. He maintained that such a port was going to safeguard the Spaniards from the Dutch as well as be of strategic benefit. Let us focus on these benefits. Martínez said that Pacan (possibly Beigang) could be compared to Macao because it offered all the advantages of that city (e.g. access to trade with China) and none of the problems that arose from living on Chinese territory. Among these advantages were the low prices of goods and absence of taxes imposed by the mandarins. The Spaniards would spare themselves the trouble of dealing with Chinese intermediaries to the mandarins, and could profit from the fame of Manila silver. Likewise, they would not be hampered by legal or defense concerns. Formosa could serve as a stopover point for the galleons of Acapulco, as well as a good watch post, just in case the Dutch would find their way into China. The possession of such a port would avoid having a fleet around to constantly guard the area. For as soon as the enemy's presence is felt, ships could be sent from the island to warn China. Bartolomé Martínez suggests that the occupy the island as soon as possible; otherwise, either the Japanese would beat them to it, or the Chinese would cut down their trade with the Spaniards owing to pressure exerted by the Dutch or the Chinese pirates. Either way, the Chinese would find an alternative to the Spanish trade.¹

This is the synthesis of Martínez's long report. It was certainly read, disseminated, and analyzed because a copy of a follow-up document regarding the matter or perhaps an official report that was based on this memorial fell into the hands of the Dutch. The Dutch translated the said document into their own language two years later. Much of the data contained in this translation corresponds to the information found in the original Spanish document.² One may speculate that the Dutch speeded up their expedition to China in 1622 because they knew about the existence of such a document.

1 José Eugenio Borao, *Spaniards in Taiwan (Documents)*, SMC, Taipei, vol. 1: 1582-1641 (2001), vol. 2: 1642-1682 (2002) 40-53. Later this book will be referred to as *SIT*.

2 *SIT*, pp. 48-51

Spain continued to toy with the idea of a conquest of Formosa even if no special offensive was actually launched. Plans reemerged in a more urgent manner when the Philippines began to suffer a decline of trade with China as soon as the Dutch established themselves in the Pescadores Islands in 1622 and in Tayouan in 1624. In 1625, Fernando de Silva, interim governor of the Philippines, declared to the King his intention to occupy a port in Formosa in the near future. Until then, the influence of Martínez's arguments predominated even if the idea of a strategic defense seemed to be more important. In February 1626, a series of consultations regarding the moral justification of the conquest of Isla Hermosa was brought to the attention of the theologian Domingo González. This meant that a military campaign was practically afoot, and that the proponents only wanted to make sure that they were not violating any (human) right. It was not a question of trade and commerce alone. The concern was whether it was legal or not to occupy an island inhabited by native aborigines. González said that he approved of the conquest as long as it fulfilled the guarantees stipulated in the terms of the new raising international law, represented by the master Vitoria.³ The invasion took place in May 1626. Succeeding reports already toasted to its victory and foresaw great promise for the colonization that was to follow. Among these reports, we highlight that of the main responsible, Governor Fernando de Silva, who wrote the King to justify the conquest. De Silva said that the Dutch were already entrenched in Tayouan on the West coast and were obstructing the trade between Fujian and the Philippines. He added that in 1626, the enemy in Tayouan obtained 900 *piculs* of silk while that year only 40 reached Manila.⁴

Arguments raised against the conquest

Despite the resounding approval, contrary opinions arose the moment influential people realized what was happening. They said it was a misstep or, at least, that this was going to bring about additional problems, like the need for a naval fleet to escort the merchant ships that went to and from the islands. In a previous letter to the King, Fernando de Silva already mentioned that there were people opposed to the idea including, perhaps, the new governor, Juan Niño de Tavora, who had just arrived. In the said letter, De Silva admitted:

And even if someone has thought that an armed fleet would be necessary to transport goods from the Island to this city, I can confidently say that the [route] can be navigated nine months a year among islands and currents without a port on the eastern strip. And when the northern

³ *SIT*, pp. 58-61

⁴ *SIT*, p. 81

AROUND AND ABOUT FORMOSA

monsoons come, it is impossible for an enemy ship to await us in that area, due to the strong winds.⁵

On the other hand, Niño de Tavora, the new governor general of the Philippines who arrived just when the foothold on Northern Formosa was established, had no alternative but to carry on with the measures of his predecessor and to bear the consequences. Although he was obliged to move in that direction, his first letter to the king held a less favorable opinion:

My Lord: When I arrived in this city, I came across news that ... Fernando de Silva had docked in the port of Isla Hermosa, 30 or 40 leagues from the one, which the Dutch established days [!] ago on the same island. The reasons to justify this move have been many. I, up to this moment, have not understood them all and I think only time will reveal everything.⁶

There is no doubt that the most serious objection came from Juan Cevicos, a man who had experienced the Japan-Manila route. As early as 1609, when the "San Francisco" was shipwrecked, he saw how well the Dutch fared in their first voyage to Japan. Upon returning to Manila in 1610, Cevicos was captured by the Dutch and later released after a Spanish offensive was launched. The result of all this was his decision to become a priest. He worked in the cathedral of Manila until 1622, when he was sent to Madrid to attend to some diocesan concerns. From 1623 to 1630, he was based in Madrid, where he published two important discourses. The discourse of 1628 dealt with, among other things, the little danger that the Dutch posed in the Manila-Japan route.⁷ The discourse of 1627⁸, which might have been also addressed to the Court, is more important because it openly protested the establishment of a port in Formosa, a military move that had just made the news in Madrid. The thesis of Cevicos' long discourse was clear from the start: only the conquest is justified if can drive out the Dutch from their fort.

From this point, he devotes himself to analyzing the situation. First, he considers the reasons behind the Dutch's interest in settling there. Cevicos did not consider Isla Hermosa a strategic base for trade with China because, until

⁵ *SIT*, p. 82

⁶ *SIT*, p. 76

⁷ Cevicos sustained the idea that the Dutch posed less danger because they were expected to approach the Philippines from October to March, and lay in wait for the Chinese junks from April to May. However, this is the period of furious gales that start blowing in June. On the other hand, the ships that were leaving Manila for Japan would leave at the end of June or throughout the month of July. Thus, there was less risk of being attacked by the Dutch. *SIT*, p. 54

⁸ *SIT*, pp. 106-111

then, the pirates were enjoying equal success at the entry point of Manila and at the exit points of the Chinese ports. It seems to him that the Dutch were more interested in setting up a trading post that would make it easier for them to engage in commerce with Japan. A trading post on Formosa offered intrinsic benefits because through it the Dutch could obtain the silver they needed to trade with China. They would be able to buy Chinese silk with the silver and then force the prices down, saying that the silver came from Manila. The consequence of this, according to Cevicos, would be that the Dutch would become more powerful each time and thus be a threat to Manila and Macao. Isla Hermosa might be turned into a springboard to launch an attack against Macao.

In the second part of his discourse, Cevicos emphasizes that Spain had no better reason to hold on to Isla Hermosa than to expel the Dutch. Cevicos added that even this argument was not good enough to justify the establishment of a port there. He gave various reasons: the move was going to trigger new problems. For example, if the Spaniards tried to obstruct the trade between the Dutch and the Chinese, then both nations would wind up enemies of the Spaniards, “for each one is free to trade with whomsoever he wishes.” The situation would become worse when one tries to monopolize influential zones by force. He also presents other reasons that seem to comment on the report of Bartolomé Martínez, whom he might have met. First, Cevicos says, the island lacked natural resources. Second, if the Chinese ships were safer sailing from Formosa to Manila, then the Dutch would wait for the boats at the exit of the ports of the island. Third, Isla Hermosa is in no way a good stopover point for the galleons of Acapulco. Fourth, if anyone should consider Formosa as an entry point for missionaries to China (another of Martínez’ reasons), then even this was not reason enough to set up a port. Spanish occupation of a bay in Formosa would only arouse suspicion among the Chinese, because they had not been informed about it, and the Dutch would act as they did in Japan. They would spread news that the members of the religious orders paved the way for the conquistadors, and this, according to Cevicos, was the reason behind the intense religious persecution in Japan.

These were aspects that were more or less related to the international strategy of the conquest. Those who favored the act before the actual military expedition took place supported and justified it afterwards. Those who opposed it—at least the ones we know of—objected *a posteriori* and therefore had little influence on the decisions that were already made. By that time, it was difficult to turn back. Having established this, let us now analyze how this naval operation took place, and how the dispatches of supplies were sent to maintain the conquered zones. We will also try to examine what the conquest achieved and, to the best possible extent, analyze Cevicos’ and, initially, Niño de Tavora’s concept of consolidation vis-à-vis the expansionist view of Dasmariñas, De Silva, and Martínez, who personally took part in the invasion.

The weapons of the conquest

The term “Spanish Armada” popularly refers to the Spanish military or defense fleet during the era of the Empire, particularly the galleons that crossed the Atlantic bearing gold and silver from Peru and Mexico. In a more specific way, the term also refers to the armada that Philip II sent to conquer England. After its defeat 1588, the English disdainfully referred to it as “The Invincible.”

The Philippines never had a big armada. However, the islands had a stable naval force that was maintained, thanks to the Cavite shipyards, which could accommodate the construction of large-ton vessels. Some naval expeditions were launched from the Philippines, like those that attacked the Moluccas and Mindanao. We situate the armadas of 1626 and 1627 in this setting. The goal was to seize Isla Hermosa and to expel the Dutch, respectively. These were Spain’s last attempts to launch a conquest outside the Philippine archipelago.

The flotilla of May 1626

The naval fleet of 1626 was not made up of ships that bore specific orders to launch an offensive against the aborigines north of Taiwan. The latter was not expected to put up any resistance. The fleet left Cavite on 8 February and spent the winter in Northern Luzon, where it quelled some “native uprisings.” After passing through the province of Nueva Segovia on 4 May, it reached southern Taiwan three days later and reached the north of the island on 10 May. In reality, this was an insignificant fleet because its most formidable war vessels comprised two galleys; small but swift, each armed with five cannons and each with a capacity of 30 infantry soldiers. The rest of the infantry and the other supplies were loaded into sampans and other smaller vessels. Aduarte’s *Historia* offers a detailed description of the voyage, landing, and occupation of the island of San Salvador (present-day Hoping). Aduarte’s account of the composition of this armada slightly differs from what of the Pampangas Alonso de Toulacque and Domingo de Cavadta described years later under grilling by Dutch captors. The following table shows the small discrepancy:

Table 1. Composition of the Spanish Armada assigned to conquer Jilong, 1626

<i>Aduarte’s account</i>	<i>Toulacque’s account</i>
2 galleys	2 galleys
12 junks	1 frigate and 9 junks
3 infantry captains with their companies	100 Spaniards, 200 black men and men from Pampanga

Source: Aduarte (SIT, p. 85) and the Report of Toulacque (SIT, pp. 147-149)

The armada of August 1626

The Dutch documents contain a more or less detailed description of a Spanish armada that might have gone to Formosa in August 1626. The account, dated 10 September 1627, was written in Nagasaki by two Dutchmen who, in turn, claimed to have obtained information from two Spaniards in Cambodia. Curiously, the news about this armada came from an indirect source and the Spanish sources are absolutely silent about it. For instance, Governor Niño de Tavora or Aduarte in *Historia* could have easily mentioned this item. In any case, this armada cannot be the same one those were sent for the conquest of 1626 or the one that was sent one year later. Let us look at the information culled from the Dutch sources.⁹

The armada was composed of three galleons, six frigates, two galleys, and 11 or 12 Chinese junks. The vessels carried 500 Spaniards and over a thousand Filipinos from the province of Pampanga. The commander was a certain Caraans (possibly Juan de Alcarazo) who had orders from the governor general to attack the Dutch fort in Zeelandia. He failed to execute the order because a storm struck and so badly scattered the fleet that only one galleon, six frigates, one galley and four or five junks managed to reach Jilong in August 1626. One of the other two galleons disappeared, while the other reached the Ryukyu archipelago, where most of the crew perished. The other galley and the rest of the junks were either lost or driven to different areas in the Philippines. The vessels that made it carried construction material for the fort but many of the crewmembers died there. In February 1627, the death toll escalated to 250 Spaniards and many more men from Pampanga.¹⁰ General Caraans, too, was gravely ill because he had drunk water with high sulfur content. The area was uninhabitable and one could easily fall sick. According to the informants, the first ones who had visited the place from Manila¹¹ did not send reports about the unhealthy condition of this bay — which was why such problems arose. In addition, the said armada should not have carried that quantity of aid and supplies. Since no new provisions came from Manila, one of the six frigates went to Cambodia to buy rice in February 1627. On board the frigate was an “Italian ambassador” named Juan Bautista who was assigned to do the purchasing but was unable to obtain anything. The

⁹ *SIT*, pp. 89-93

¹⁰ To countercheck the veracity of this account, we refer to the Spanish sources: “Our soldiers have excellently fortified themselves there. However, at the beginning, the land tested them, for many died and suffered great misery and hardships — eating even dogs and rats, also grubs and strange herbs because they soon consumed the provisions that they had brought with them and others had not arrived from Manila.” *SIT*, pp. 87-89. The text clearly refers to the predicament of the soldiers who arrived with Carreño.

¹¹ This might have been the previous expedition, the fleet of Carreño, of May 1626.

Dutch sailors learned about this second armada while they were in Cambodia with the Spaniards.

If we were to give credit to this piece of information, then we would conclude that the armada of May was only an advance party whose mission was to prepare the grounds for the arrival of a larger contingent in August. In this case, the two armadas of 1626 ought to be considered as one. This might explain a little the silence of the written Spanish sources about a second armada.¹²

The armada of August 1627

This armada must have gone to carry out what the bulk of the fleet of 1626 failed to do, which was to expel the Dutch from their still-fragile settlement near Tainan. This new military fleet was equipped like the previous one (even some galleons might have been the same) and was possibly one of the more important armadas to be organized in the Philippines in those twilight years. It figured not only as a military operation but also as a carrier of a large amount of aid and supplies—including food, domestic items, and constructions materials—to those who had gone to Taiwan the year before. They suffered great want because no provisions had been sent. The armada began to make preparations at the beginning of summer in 1627. On 7 July, while the crew was loading tiles into the flagship “Concepción”, they realized that she was in no condition to sail. She had sprung a leak and so the men proceeded to unload the cargo.

The size of the armada was reduced to only three galleons: the “San Ildefonso”, designated the new flagship, which carried the governor (Niño de Tavora) himself; the “Santa Teresa”; and the “Peña de Francia”. All three shared a total cargo weight of 3,500 tons, carrying 125 artillery pieces and over 800 infantry men, Spaniards as well as Filipinos, without counting the artillery men, the sailors, and other crew members. Two small ships, the “Rosario” and the “Atocha”, the patache “San Agustín” and two galleys, the “Santiago” and the “Don Felipe”, accompanied the three galleons. The heavier vessels served as cargo and battle ships, while the two galleys, the *patache* and the two light vessels were meant for reconnoitering purposes and incursions. To reduce the risks, the Rosario, the bigger and the faster of the two ships, was loaded with a portion of the aid. The following table gives us a good picture of the fleet:

¹² There exists a document that probably refers to this armada. In a letter which we suppose was written in 1627, Fr. Melchor Manzano wrote the King, saying, “Last year, Governor Juan Niño de Tavora sent aid from the entire city in the form of men and ammunition.” *SIT*, p. 113. Regarding the fate of the armada of 1627 the best accounts about the disasters they met are found in *SIT*, pp. 129-136.

Table 2. The armada of 1627

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1. Galleon <i>San Ildefonso</i> , royal flagship, which carried the said Governor and Captain General	1	1400	41	7	5	235	86	32	276	2	8	651
2. Galleon <i>Santa Teresa de Jesús</i> , which carried the Admiral Lorenzo de Olasso	1	1150	39	2	2	184	74	23	209	1		495
3. <i>Peña de Francia</i> , mascot galleon, manned by Admiral Antonio Martín Qui-rante	1	1000	34		2	141	76	16	198		4	437
4. <i>Rosario</i> , mascot ship, manned by Captain Lázaro de Torres	1	180	8		1	60	25	5	77	1		169
5. <i>Atocha</i> , mascot ship, manned by Captain Diego de Asqueta Menchaca	1	100	4		2	40	19	2	50			113
6. <i>San Agustín</i> , boat, manned by the Adju-tant Juan de Fovera	1	49				11			21			32
SUB-TOTAL	6	3875	126	9	12	731	280	78	831	4	12	1897
7. <i>Santiago</i> , flagship, a 22-bench galley bearing her admiral, Diego de Alcarazo	1		5			30		2	35			67
8. <i>Don Felipe</i> , a 20-bench galley, manned by her own captain.	1		5			30		1	20			51
TOTAL	8	3875	136	9	12	731	280	81	886	1	12	2015

A. Galleons and ships
 B. Cargo weight (in tons)
 C. Artillery carried
 D. Senior officials of the Army and other personnel
 E. Members of religious orders
 F. Spanish infantry

G. Pampango infantry
 H. Captain of the artillery, comman-dants and artillery men
 I. Officers and sailors
 J. Salaried *entre...es*
 K. Adventurers who receive no wages
 L. Total number of passengers

Source: *SIT*, p. 101

The departure was delayed and the risk of running into bad weather grew. For this reason, the galleys as well as the more fragile vessels sailed ahead, on 26 July, under the command of Juan de Alcarazo. Three weeks later, on 17 August, the rest of the armada left, that is, the three galleons and the three ships or *pataches*. However, as soon as they left Cavite, a furious storm arose, almost sinking the "Santa Teresa". A *patache* sprung a bad leak and had to return to the port. This means that six of the nine boats remained. Considering the duration of the voyage, the weight of the galleons, and the bad weather, it was decided that the light vessel "Rosario" should go ahead to bring provisions directly to the port of Santísima Trinidad. The storms intensified in Cape Bojeador, which was why the captains of the ships agreed to return to Manila. They arrived on 6 September and the expedition was postponed to the following year.

What became of the two galleys and the "Rosario" who continued the voyage, unaware of the decision taken by the rest of the armada? The galleys first went to the Pescadores Islands. Juan Niño de Tavora reports that "the Chinese welcomed them and extended them great friendship, desiring that the armada of His Majesty would reach the port of the Dutch, where they will provide them ammunition and supplies." This was the first direct contact with the Chinese without it being strictly a diplomatic mission. The galleys proceeded to sail past the Dutch fort, which they scrutinized from afar, identifying some fortifications that were still under construction. They traveled north toward Jilong but at a distance of four leagues from the Spanish fort, "a great storm arose, bringing them back to the Philippines. The voyage that they have made to Jilong in 15 days was undone in three days." Once they got to the port of Ilocos, they met up with such a storm that the boats opened up and sank. Twenty penal rowers and three Spaniards drowned; the rest survived by swimming to the coast. This might have happened early in October because the news reached Manila on the 20th of the said month.

The "Rosario" fulfilled its mission to bring aid to the fort of La Santísima Trinidad. This was the first major form of succor that the fort had received since its establishment. Also, the ship helped out in the suppression of the aborigines of Tamsui and finally reached Manila on 12 March 1628. It even brought a letter from a mandarin who had gone to Jilong to inquire into the purpose of the Spaniards and of the presence of the said armada from Cavite. This mandarin feared that their final destination was China but after being reassured that this was not so, he wrote the said letter and promised that the Viceroy of Fuzhou would grant them a permit to trade. Thus ends the story of the first batch of aid that was sent to Isla Hermosa.

Spain never re-launched an attack on the Dutch posts after the failure of the armada of 1627. What seems strange is that there arose repeated orders to attack, rallying even the armed forces of Macao. The reason for the delay in orga-

nizing a renewed military action is unknown. In 1630, Governor Niño de Tavora left the Philippines, leaving the government in an interim period that did not end favorably until the arrival of Hurtado de Corcuera in 1635. The new governor was primarily interested in the problems of Joló, an island south of the Philippines, and he openly declared that it was useless to maintain a fort in Jilong. Thus, from 1627 onwards, official contact between Manila and Jilong was done solely through the delivery of ordinary aid, in the *socorros*, or relief ships.

The relief ships

The *socorro* referred to the carrier ships as well as to the regular shipment of military reinforcements and other goods that Manila sent to the satellite forts in Ternate, Zamboanga and Isla Hermosa. It was also the usual means by which the forts communicated and sent official dispatches to each other. While compiling in 1664 the information for the *Juicio de Residencia* of Governor General Hurtado de Corcuera, the judge gathered a good deal of materials upon the loss of Isla Hermosa. Thanks to him, we have very detailed information about the relief ships that were sent to Jilong from 1634 to 1642. Besides, these documents contain a clear inventory of all the supplies that were sent to troops, including money, food, medicine, clothing, and other “provisions” needed to continue fortifying the spot. There exists no systematic reportage about the aid sent from 1626 to 1634. However, bits and pieces of news from various documents allow a reconstruction of at least the number of dispatches that were sent annually, offering a clear picture of the actual communication between Manila and Jilong.

As an example, a document containing information about the money collected from the *media anata* (i.e., the tax collected by deducting half of the salary one received on his first year of public service) allows us to get a clear profile, for 1635, of the officers who were aboard the relief ship “San Francisco”.

Table 3. Some officers of the relief voyages of 1635 and their salary

Officers	Salary for three months	First relief ship:	Second relief ship:	
		March 1635	July 1635	
		“San Francisco”	“San Francisco”	Junk
<i>Captain and skipper</i>	75 pesos	Pedro Aguirre	Juan Lezcano	Alonso Martín
<i>Helmsman</i>	150 pesos	Pedro González		Pedro Romero
<i>First mate</i>	75 pesos	Juan Rodríguez		
<i>Second helmsman</i>	75 pesos	Fco. Ambrosio		Francisco Perch
<i>Notary</i>	50 pesos	Diego Ximénez		
<i>Supplies officer</i>	50 pesos	Agustín Ferrate		Juan de Torres
<i>Lookout</i>	50 pesos	Pedro Gallardo		Andrés Ríos

Source: SIT, pp. 251-254, 346

In the first place, the list shows that the said ship did not have a permanent crew. It employed a different set each time—a detail that is confirmed in the succeeding relief voyages. The salary that the officers received depended on the duration of the trip. Under normal circumstances, the “departure, stay and return voyage” lasted three months, the period on which the budget for the trip was based. However, under favorable circumstances, a trip might be shortened or, as it usually happened, extended. The latter was the case for the second relief voyage in 1634. Juan Lopez de Andoaín, the skipper of that *socorro*, had to pay more *media anata* because he declared that his salary had increased from the initial 247 pesos to 358, as a result of his longer stay. On the other hand, the sailors, who were recognized for their special skills, received wages that were far higher than those of ordinary soldiers who received only two pesos a month.

We can also see that the *San Francisco* went on two voyages. The first was scheduled for March, which corresponds to the fact that the officers had to pay the *media anata* by the end of February. The second voyage should have left on July because the taxes had already been paid by the end of June. This biannual delivery of the aid served as a model for our attempt to reconstruct the data that we gathered and which we now present. Nevertheless, as the table 4 shows, reality always turns out to be much more complicated.

A list of the aid and supplies sent to Isla Hermosa

1626. The first attempt to send supplies to the newly established garrison in Jilong can be considered the one of the fleet sent by August 1626. As we have mentioned, only half of the ships arrived and, in such a bad state that they did not help much, adding more misery to the garrison. Probably, this first year in Jilong was the one with more scarcity.

1627. The second batch of aid was equipped in the Fleet of August 1627. We have seen that the bad weather prevented this armada from continuing its journey. Only two galleys and the ship Rosario, which was carrying the main cargo of aid, continued separately. On 9 September 1627, Governor Niño de Tavora prepared the “Santísima Trinidad” to go to Jilong, and released orders to Diego de Rueda¹³ about the administration of the storehouses in Isla Hermosa. This move was made, even before having received news from the two galleys and the “Rosario”. Only after 20 October did they knew about the shipwreck of the galleys in North Luzon; and a few months later, in 21 February 1628, they knew the success of the “Rosario” trip when they arrived back to Manila.

1628. We do not know if the relief voyage of the “Santísima Trinidad” really took place. What we do know is that Diego de Rueda abandoned his post, which was why the Governor General sent two of his own servants to act as royal

¹³ *SIT*, pp. 102-105

accountants in Isla Hermosa. These two, Juan de Aréchaga and Bernardino Vilaña, received their orders on 28 March 1628,¹⁴ and probably boarded the “Rosario”, a couple of months later when it set sail again to Jilong to bring the aid for that year. Also the “Rosario” went there with a special mission: to establish commercial relations with China. Certainly, the two galleys had offered in the Pescadores a good image of the Spaniards, that’s why a mandarin went to Jilong to know more about them. There, he was treated cordially and he promised to open trade. Three months after the “Rosario” returned with this good news from China, a Treasury Junta was convened in Manila on 23 June 1628. The resolution of this meeting was to send, by way of Isla Hermosa, a formal diplomatic mission to Fujian led under the command of the governor of Jilong, Carreño, who will be accompanied by someone who knew Chinese, which was the reason why Fr. Bartolomé Martínez returned to Formosa.¹⁵

1629. The first relief voyage took place in spring and set the standard for two relief voyages, one around May and another around August. This *socorro*, a “medium-sized vessel, sailed forth with a large number of passengers and a great amount of money belonging to citizens of Manila and private individuals who wished to do business there.” Regarding the *socorro* of August, Tavora told the King that he was organizing “a ship, a galley and a brigantine” captained by Juan de Alcarazo, who was going to replace Governor Carreño. In the same letter to the King Niño de Tavora declared, “I am preparing a third relief voyage that shall depart as soon as I receive the one sent from Nueva España,” but we don’t have any news on the implementation of this third aid.¹⁶

1630. We do not know if a relief ship was sent in spring but we know that one was sent in August and returned 27 November. The ship went back to Manila with very good news of trade negotiations, and loaded with cloth and wheat from China.¹⁷

1631. In May arrived in Jilong the first relief of this year, but missionary Esquivel refers to it like the “miserable aid of May”, only two sampans of rice that had a disastrous effect on the trade, because many Chinese were waiting for them loaded with their merchandises. Bishop Aduarte in November 1632 confirmed this meager aid, but he added that finally two ships arrived in August.¹⁸

14 *SIT*, pp. 117-125

15 After one storm, Fr. Bartolomé Martínez ended in Taiwan in 1619. As a result of this visit, he wrote a report recommending the conquest of Isla Hermosa. Later, he was a prime mover of the conquest in 1626, and formed part of the expedition itself. He returned soon after because he was the Provincial of the Dominicans. Once his term ended, he again sailed to Taiwan with the relief voyage of 1628. He died there in 1629.

16 *SIT*, 137-138, 146, 148

17 *SIT*, p. 145

18 *SIT*, p. 197

AROUND AND ABOUT FORMOSA

Table 4. List of relief ships from 1627 to 1642

Year	Season	Name of the ship	Captain or skipper	Reference SIT:
1626	May	Fleet-I: 2 galleys, 12 sampans		
	August	Fleet-II: 3 galleons, 2 galleys	Alcarazo	pp. 89-90
1627	August	Fleet-III: - 4 galleons, 3 ships - ship Rosario - 2 galleys	Lázaro de Torres	pp. 129-132 pp. 129-132 pp. 129-132
1628	(Spring)			
1628	Summer	Rosario		pp. 135-136
1629	Spring	Medium ship with merchants		
	August	Ship, galley, brigantine		pp. 138&146
	(August)	(Project)		
1630	(Spring)			
	August			p. 145
1631	Spring	2 sampans with only rice		pp. 176, 197
	August	2 ships		p. 197
1632	Spring	King's sampan		pp. 163, 174
	August	2 ships		p. 160
1633	Spring			p. 211
	August	Ship (passing by Macao)		p. 217
1634	Spring	Ship	López de Andoaín	p. 254, 302, 456
	August	San Francisco	Esteban de Garro	p. 344
1635	Spring	San Francisco	Pedro de Aguirre	pp. 251, 253
	August	San Francisco	Juan Lezcano	p. 346
	August	Junk	Alonso Martín	p. 252, 245-249
1636	(Spring)			
	August	San Francisco	Juan de Aguilar	p. 349
1637	Spring	King's sampan	Mateo Gómez	p. 353, 491
	August	San Nicolás de Tolentino	Nicolás Cortázar	p. 351
1638	(Spring)			
	August	Ntra. Sra. de la Concepción	Nicolás Cobo	p. 354
1639	(Spring)			
	August	King's sampan	Mateo Gómez	p. 305, 316, 356
		King's sampan	Antonio Valeriano	p. 305, 357-358
1640	Spring	King's sampan	Rafael González	p. 359-360
		King's sampan	Diego Pacheco	p. 358
	(August)			
1641	Spring	King's sampan	Felipe de Santiago	pp. 360, 362
		King's sampan	Juan de Saraos	p. 328, 330, 367
	September	King's sampan	Diego Pacheco	p. 362-363
		King's sampan	Manuel Fernández	p. 367
1642	Spring	San Nicolás de Tolentino	Esteban de Tapie	pp. 364, 366
	Summer	Santo Domingo Lojiano	Jerónimo González	p. 363
		King's sampan	Valentín Aréchaga	p. 366

Incoming Governor	Outward journey			Return journey		
	Departure from Manila	Arrival to Jilong	Money (pesos)	Departure from Jilong	Arrival to Manila	Outgoing Governor
Carreño	26-Feb	10-May August		<i>dispersed</i>		
	17-Aug 17-Aug 17-Aug	<i>canceled</i>	4.000	end Sept.	21-Feb+1 <i>wreck</i>	
	May				31-Jul	
Alcarazo						Carreño
	August				25-Nov	
		May August				
	July-August			April	<i>lost</i>	Alcarazo
Alonso García	August	April+1				
Fco. Hernández	March August August		12.000	March	<i>captured</i>	
			15.000			
Palomino	May					Fco. Hernández
			4.000			
Cristóbal Márquez	<i>August</i> August	<i>lost</i>	1.000 5.000			
Gonzalo Portillo	20-May 20-May		6.000 2.000			Cristóbal Márquez
	May May September September	19-May 12-Sep	4.000	October October		
	<i>April</i> June June	<i>lost</i>	3.000 6.000			

AROUND AND ABOUT FORMOSA

1632. One sampan arrived in spring, and two ships in August. As Tavora says in a letter, "I am sending two ships with abundant aid and to recall General Alcarazo."¹⁹

1633. There is a small reference that makes us believe that a relief ship was sent in spring. The ship of August is well documented, and the governor García Romero was aboard on it. It encountered some problems and ended up in Macao, where it remained for several months. The ship finally arrived in Jilong in April 1634.²⁰

1634. We know that Julio López de Andoaín, "an officer of the relief ship of 1634" headed a very successful trade mission in Jilong. Although the data do not say clearly, this *socorro* probably occurred in the spring season. In August there was another relief voyage manned by the skipper Esteban de Garro, who submitted the registry of the "San Francisco" on the 7th of this month. He also handed over 1,500 pesos to buy rice and 10,500 pesos worth of wages.²¹

1635. The data offered in the *media anata* report refer to Pedro de Aguirre as the skipper of the relief ship of March, the ship "San Francisco".²² According to the report of Simon de Toro, accountant of the Royal Treasury, the aid voyage that took place in August was assigned to Juan de Lezcano, who was entrusted 12,000 pesos on 26 July, to bring to Jilong in the "San Francisco"²³ and to Alonso Martín Morán, the skipper of a junk on the same voyage. Most probably this ship was the junk that the Dutch captured while it was on its way back to Manila at the beginning of 1636.²⁴ The Dutch made an inventory of the goods the *socorro* had to trade with, providing us a complete picture of this trading venture, based on hemp fabrics, *cangans*, satin and different kinds of silk.²⁵ It also should be mention that in this junk carried the Franciscan Antonio Caballero. He had left China in order to go to Rome to discuss the problem of the Chinese Rites. Because of this event he did not proceed but returned to Manila the following year, hoping that the Dominican Morales, who had also left China for the same purpose in different ship, will succeed.

1636. The only relief voyage we know of took place in August. This was entrusted to the "San Francisco" under skipper Juan de Aguilar Rebolledo. He drew up a registry of this ship on 4 August, and handed a total of 15,000 pesos to the governor in Isla Hermosa.²⁶

19 *SIT*, p. 160

20 *SIT*, p. 217

21 *SIT*, p. 254, 344

22 *SIT*, pp. 251, 253

23 *SIT*, p. 346

24 *SIT*, pp. 245-246

25 *SIT*, pp. 247-249

26 *SIT*, p. 349

1637. The relief voyage of spring was entrusted to one of His Majesty's sampans. At the helm was the adjutant Mateo Gomez, who drew up the registry on 6 May. In this trip arrived to Jilong the new governor Palomino, with the orders of demolishing some of the fortresses. The second relief voyage took place in August. The carrier ship was the "San Nicolás de Tolentino". Its skipper, Nicolás de Cortázar, drew up its registry on 3 August. He turned in 8,000 pesos.²⁷

1638. The only relief voyage occurred in August, with the ship "Nuestra Sra. de la Concepción" under Nicolás Cobo. He was entrusted with 4,000 pesos on 18 July and declared that he arrived before 8 October 1638.²⁸

1639. On 16 August, two of the King's sampans were registered for the only relief of this year. One was manned by the sailor Mateo Gómez (one document the name of "Manuel González" appears instead; maybe Gómez was a final substitute of González), and the other by Antonio Valeriano. The Dominican brother Pedro Ruiz was entrusted to deliver 1,000 pesos to Isla Hermosa, and 5,000 pesos were entrusted to the new governor of Isla Hermosa, Cristóbal Márquez Valenzuela. The relief voyage passed the port of Cagayan on 4 September. As it approached Jilong, a strong hurricane whisked the boats to the Chinese coast. About the fate of one sampan manned by Mateo Gómez, the governor had this to say: "I believe that the sea swallowed it up." The said the said sum of money was carried in two separate vessels, 1,000 pesos went down with the sampan of Mateo Gómez. On the other hand, Governor Márquez and the Dominican Ruiz managed to reach to Taiwan.²⁹

1640. The only relief voyage was in spring. This was composed of two of the King's sampans. The sailor Rafael Gómez captained the first one, which carried a total of 6,000 pesos. The registry was dated 16 April 1640. The second one, which transported 2,000 pesos, had the sailor Diego Pacheco at the helm. Its registry was dated 25 April. In this relief trip traveled the new governor Gonzalo Portillo, who arrived in Jilong on 20 May.³⁰

1641. The first relief voyage was held in spring. This was composed of two sampans of His Majesty. At the helm was the sailor Felipe de Santiago who drew up the registry of the cargo goods on 27 April and that of the money on 28 April. He made another registry on 30 April for another sampan, which was probably steered by the adjutant Juan de Saraos. The latter reached Isla Hermosa on 19 May "in a pitiful state, without a mast and rudder." The second relief voyage was in September. This was entrusted to a sampan of His Majesty, and steered by the sailor Diego Pacheco. Pacheco submitted the registry on 4 September, receiving the amount of 4,000 pesos. This relief fleet may have included an-

²⁷ *SIT*, pp. 351, 353

²⁸ *SIT*, p. 354

²⁹ *SIT*, pp. 305, 316, 356-358

³⁰ *SIT*, 316, 358-359

AROUND AND ABOUT FORMOSA

other sampan because on 12 September “the sampan with the adjutant Manuel Fernandez at the helm” arrived in Isla Hermosa. We know that the sampans of Saraos and Fernández returned by October. Saraos stayed longer because he engaged in the first battle with the Dutch in 1641.³¹

1642. The first relief voyage occurred in spring. This was entrusted to the King’s *patache*, “San Nicolás de Tolentino”, piloted by Esteban de Tapie. It was registered on 14 March and entrusted with 3,000 pesos. This vessel disappeared in the Ilocos coast and was substituted by two boats. The King’s frigate, “Santo Domingo Lojiano”, with the sailor Jerónimo González at the helm, was registered on 19 May. The other, a King’s sampan, captained by Valentín de Aréchaga, was entrusted with 6,000 pesos that were to be given to the accountant of Isla Hermosa. Valentín Aréchaga stayed in Jilong until the end of the Spanish presence, because he was ordered to defend the fortress La Retirada, and he became the Spanish hero of the August 1642’s battle against the Dutch.³²

This list reflects three different periods in the shipment of aid to Isla Hermosa. The first period was from 1627 until 1630, wherein it was attempted to send two-relief ships a year, but the outcome turned to be very erratic. This period corresponds largely to Juan Niño de Tavora’s term as Governor General of the Philippines. However, starting in 1631 the “twice a year system” was consolidated. Bishop Aduarte already expressed a word of caution about this when he visited Isla Hermosa in 1632. The report that he wrote when he returned to Manila (November 1632) explicitly stated that it was more advisable to send the aid in two batches instead of one. He also drew up an exhaustive list of items that the relief voyage should bring to maintain the forts there. The second period, 1631-1637, was the most regular thanks to the ship “San Francisco”; but later, during the governorship of Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera (1636-1644), there were many problems to meet the “twice a year system”. Besides, the aid was usually sent on two sampans instead of one ship.

What is really surprising in the previous list is that the relief voyages were sent in August when typhoons often occur in the area. No wonder the voyages that were scheduled during this period encountered problems. For example, the second relief voyage of 1633, which had the new governor of Isla Hermosa aboard, was swept by a storm to Macao, where the Portuguese “detained” him for months. The previous years had witnessed many other similar incidents. In 1639, the sampan of Mateo Gómez got lost at sea along with good part of its cargo. This prompted the governor of the fort of San Salvador to tell the governor of Manila: “The aid scheduled for August must leave early and with an experienced helmsman, for this year, I lost a sampan because of the absence of such a

³¹ *SIT*, pp. 328, 330, 360, 362-363, 367

³² *SIT*, pp. 363-366

person or even of someone who is familiar with the port of San Lorenzo.”³³ The inclination to run the said risks under the known weather conditions is quite curious. This refers not only to the monsoon season – that is, the time of intense afternoon rainfalls that usually occur in the island of Luzon from June to October – but also to the onset of the typhoons.

One may justify the voyage in August by considering that if the first relief voyage were to be done in spring, then the second one should be dispatched some months later. But, why not in winter? Another question is why in the four years (1630, 1636, 1638 and 1639) when there was only one relief voyage, this trip was made in August, precisely during the worst sailing season of the year.³⁴ Only in the year 1640 the only one relief voyage was made in spring. This probably had to do with the galleon that arrived from Nueva España in the early summer.³⁵ The galleon brought the colony provisions for distribution to the farther points of the archipelago. Note that the inventory of items sent from 1634 to 1642 included clothing, shoes, notebooks, etc., and that these were sent directly from Castile or Mexico. This seems to confirm that the local routes were known to be the tail end of the Manila galleon route. The dispatches to Isla Hermosa might have been held back a couple of months in the hope for better weather in winter. Still, the precarious situation of the forts demanded that new provisions be sent immediately.³⁶ Let us now take a look at the most common provisions that were sent regularly to Jilong.

³³ *SIT*, p. 307

³⁴ Here follows a personal comment. When I was writing this paper in Taipei in the afternoon of August 15, 2000 a violent storm accompanied by strong winds struck the city. Two days earlier, a similar weather disturbance hit Taiwan. Both storms lasted three to four hours. On July 24 of the same year, the super typhoon Bilis had already wreaked two days of havoc on the island and left 13 people dead. Obviously July and August are not a good time for sailing.

³⁵ A typical voyage would be that of the galleon *Santiago*. It left Acapulco on 22 March 1595 and arrived in Manila on 11 June 1595. William Schurz Lyttle, *The Manila Galleon*, Edition of the Historical Conservation Society, Manila, 1985, 227.

³⁶ We can say that the Dutch got a clear idea of the communication between Manila and Jilong, as reflected in a report dated March 1636: “Last year in August, two galleys from New Spain arrived in Manila with seven companies of white soldiers, a part of which were dispatched here and there. Usually, four small vessels, frigates or galleys arrive from Manila in Jilong every year, two of which arrive in May and two in August. Upon the arrival of those ships, they engage in trade with the Chinese. Goods traded comprise a small quantity of silk, silken material and a large quantity of *cangans* (sic), hemp fabric, *lanckijns* (sic), as well as other goods. After the departure of those ships, the supply is significantly lower because of the lack of money. After having stayed there for about three weeks or a month, the galleys leave together for Manila, without any of those vessels staying behind in Jilong.” *DZ Vol. I*, 237-238.

Table 5. Inventory of some important provisions sent on the relief voyages

	1634	1635	1636	1637	1638	1639	1640	1641	1642
Pesos	12000	12000	15000	8000	4000	6000	8000	7000	9000
cavans of rice	600	600	1000	900	1862	1000	850	1016	1181
almonds in <i>arrobas</i>	2	2	1						
sugar in <i>arrobas</i>	32				10	3			
swords and daggers	80	80	100						
muskets from Macao	20	20							
musket bullets				4000	2000			5000	650
harquebus bullets				9000	2000			5000	3650
artillery bullets			150					155	150
gunpowder in <i>arrobas</i>	100	125	150						
cotton socks	200								
hats with lining	150	150	100					30	
cordovan clogs	367	200	200		200				
cordovan shoes	1000	1100	1500		1200	500		100	
Ilocos blankets	2		101	50		50		25	215

Source: *SIT*, pp. 344-366

This table shows how a total of 81,000 pesos (or close to 10,000 pesos a year) were allocated. About one half was dedicated to wages, while the other half went to foodstuff, maintenance, or construction services. The latter half was spent in Taiwan. However, it is difficult to determine how much of the silver went to the Chinese who came in from Fuzhou and how much to the aborigines of northern Formosa. In any case, it is more likely that silver passed from the hands of the aborigines to those of the Chinese traders who accepted no other form of payment; and this was the silver that they obtained from the Spaniards.

Looking at the total of 5,000 pesos worth of wages, one must first consider that the Spanish soldiers hardly had any savings. They lived in such poverty that practically all of their salaries went to supplement their food and clothing. The officers' salaries comprised about a tenth of the total budget and therefore offered them better prospects of saving. However it is highly probable that on their return to Manila, these officers would use up their savings on silk and load this on the Acapulco galleon.

Finally, clear examples of the instructions to the relief-ships before departure are those given in Manila by Governor General Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera to Captain Valentín de Aréchaga, on 12 March 1642. He was the master of the "San Nicolas", the last relief-ship to Jilong. In the instructions³⁷, which are the

³⁷ *SIT*, pp. 377-378

only fully preserved ones, we can distinguish five particular items. First, how to deal with the transportation of money; second, how to communicate with the soldiers on the seashore near Jilong; third, to take care of a particular assignment of collecting information from a previous Dutch ship sank in a battle in 1641; fourth, to come back to Manila as soon as possible transporting the soldiers that the Governor of Jilong considered necessary to send back; fifth, how to behave if the Dutch enemies appeared in their way. In that case the relief ship have to defend itself, and should enter into battle. In case the Dutch were about to capture the ship, this should be crashed into the land at night.

The trade

One reason for the Spaniards' presence in Taiwan was to protect the Manila-Fujian route because trading activity was on a slump. With the coming of the Dutch, this defensive stance became more pronounced. In 1626 Peter Nuyts, the Dutch governor of Fort Zeelandia, boasted that:

Chinese vessels gradually began to visit us, so very little trade has been carried on in Manila in the last five years ... We must do our utmost to destroy the trade between China and Manila, for as soon as this is done, we are convinced that your Excellencies will see the Spaniards leave the Moluccas and even Manila on their own accord.³⁸

Contrary to Nuyt's predictions, trade between China and Manila slowly started to pick up again. According to Chaunu,³⁹ the Chinese vessels that visited Manila increased in number once more. This is a relative piece of data, but it suffices for the moment. The figures in the graph below cover the years of the Spanish presence in Taiwan. Chaunu, however, does not have data for 1621 and 1626.

Chaunu's calculation of the number of boats was based on the *almojari-fazgo* (tax duties) collections of the Royal Treasuries of Manila and Acapulco. Historical researcher Lourdes Diaz Trechuelo came up with the same results through a different set of sources, the *testimonios de visitas* to which the officers of the Royal Treasury subjected all the vessels that entered Manila or Cavite. The fact that Chaunu and Díaz Trechuelo agree makes their data extremely valuable; nevertheless, they also raise important questions. For example, how was the huge silk cargo—reportedly the biggest in many years—transported on a galleon to Acapulco in 1640 when only seven boats arrived that year? In other words, this graph offers explanations but it also needs some explaining itself. How was the

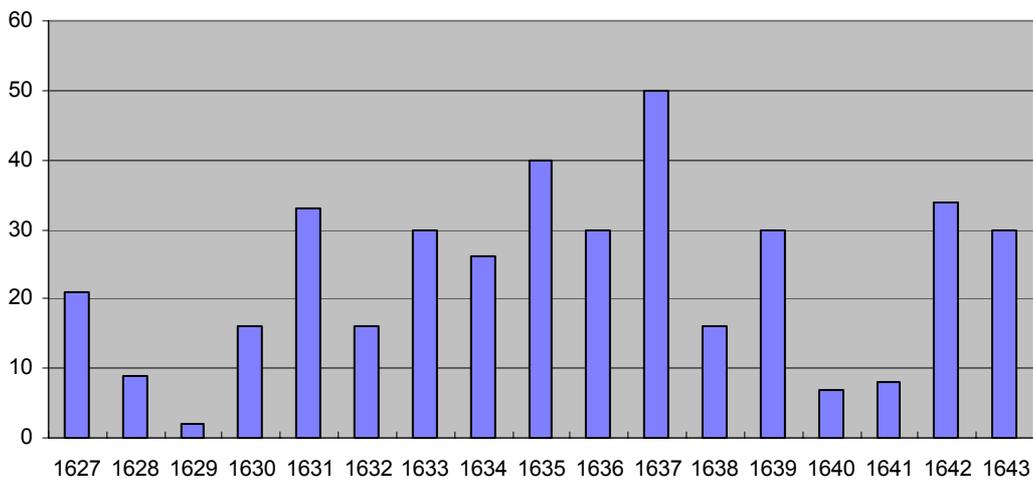
³⁸ Schurz, *Op. cit.*, 283, 286.

³⁹ Pierre Chaunu, *Les Philippines et le Pacifique des Iberiques (XV, XVII, XVIII siècle)*, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, 1960, 148-164.

commerce resumed? Did the Spanish presence in northern Formosa have anything to do with it? The answer remains remote but we can propose some thoughts about Isla Hermosa’s role in the trading activity.

The ship-relief system probably had played an important role in reversing the negative trend of the trade with China adding more respect to the Spanish presence in China waters, not only because its main purpose was to keep the outlying forts operational, but also to engage in trade, diversifying the Manila network.

Figure 1: Chinese ships arriving in Manila according to Chaunu



The armada of 1627 might have failed on the whole, but the crews of the two galleys and the *patache* “Rosario” could boast of some achievements. The former established first contacts with the Chinese in the Pescadores Islands, which is probably why a mandarin left for Jilong to investigate the presence of Spaniards there.⁴⁰ The “Rosario” not only lent a hand in suppressing the natives of Tamsui; she also returned with a letter that stated the mandarin’s favorable dispositions toward trading with the Spaniards. This event triggered the convening of a treasury junta in Manila in June. The junta aimed to formulate policies regarding the new ties with China. It also decided to send a diplomatic mission to inform the Viceroy of Fuzhou about this development. In March 1628, Niño de Tavora released instructions to the administrators of the Royal Treasury in Isla Hermosa, clearly stating the terms for engaging in trade with the Chinese. The instructions stated:

⁴⁰ Details about the mandarin’s visit may be found in *SIT*, pp. 132-133.

For now, as much as the Treasury Council is in agreement, no taxes should be asked from the Chinese ships that come to the said port [of Jilong in Isla Hermosa], no matter what merchandise they bring, so that they be encouraged to come [to Manila] more frequently; thus the desired goal is achieved [that is, to focus the commerce on Manila]. [Those of Isla Hermosa] will not try to inspect the [Chinese] ships, or collect money from them until otherwise commanded by the said Council of the Governor and Captain General, who then will order them to carry out the inspection and the collection of whatever money they have.⁴¹

The news should have been sent immediately by way of the relief voyage of summer. The “Rosario” returned to Taiwan to inform Governor Carreño and to bring back Fr. Bartolomé Martínez, who was to assist in the mission. In a report to the King in August, Niño de Tavora said the mission brought “a fine gift of carved silver, colored mantles, and other valuable items worth up to 30 pesos.” However, the outcome was not successful because China was beset by internal problems, as Niño de Tavora wrote to the King:

Because [the King of China died in 1627] and they violently slew a eunuch (1628), his confidante,⁴² and sent away all the mandarins, viceroys and captain of his faction, namely the Viceroy, Inspector and General of the seas of the Ochiu (Fuzhou) province whom the diplomatic mission was supposed to address itself. Thus the embassy remained in the said port awaiting a new viceroy and other ministers to settle this business.

The news about the unsatisfactory outcome of the trade mission did not dishearten the merchants in Manila. In the first relief voyage of 1629, a number of merchants sailed to Formosa to try their luck in drawing up some kind of informal trade arrangement. They carried a total of 200,000 pesos⁴³ to purchase merchandise and silk from China.

To support this operation, the Chinese again had to be officially notified about the commercial interests of Manila and the favorable economic conditions in Jilong. This required another diplomatic mission, possibly under a new gover-

41 *SIT*, p. 125

42 Note how internal problems at the court affected the trade between Formosa and Fujian. The deceased emperor was Tian Qi (Xi Zong), who ruled from 1620 to 1627. Upon his death followed the suicide of the cruel eunuch Wei Zhongxian (1568-1628)—the “confident” mentioned in this document—who, during his lifetime, had systematically persecuted the *Donglin*, the party of influential scholars at the court.

43 This amounted too much more than the total sum of silver that had been sent as aid to Formosa over a span of 16 years.

nor of Taiwan. Niño de Tavora took advantage of the second relief voyage in 1629 to replace Carreño with Alcarazo. As we have mentioned, the fleet was composed of a ship, a galley, and a brigantine. The brigantine lost its way and ended up in Fuzhou, where the crew was well received by the Chinese and personally attended to by the new Viceroy. Consequently, Alcarazo sent the brigantine out again to deliver the letters from Niño de Tavora, formally requesting the opening of commercial ties through the exchange of trade permits. This second formal trade mission was again welcomed. The Chinese showed interested to trade but no exchange of royal permits took place. They achieved only an informal trade agreement, but nothing special for Niño de Tavora to report to the King. However, a year later, when the relief voyage of August 1630 returned, the governor of Manila expressed high hopes to the King because the ship returned loaded with "a great quantity of clothing and wheat."⁴⁴

We can assume that Jilong's good fortune in 1629 had run out by 1631. The Chinese thought that Jilong offered them a good opportunity and they came loaded with silk to await the relief ship of May 1631, but unfortunately it brought in nothing but rice which, according to Esquivel, damaged the commercial reputation of the port.⁴⁵ However, Esquivel also wrote that he witnessed the birth and development of a small *sanglej parian* [Chinese quarter] at Jilong, which continue to exist until the Spaniards were forced to leave the island. Moved by the confidence of these sangleys, Alcarazo attempted to recover the port's lost prestige by sending a new diplomatic mission, the third one, at the end of 1631. Bartolomé Martínez had already passed away. Alcarazo therefore sought the help of two Italian Dominicans, Angel Cocci of Florence and Tomas Sierra of Sardinia. They

44 All the preceding information matches the contents of a Dutch document about the captured Spanish junk: "The Spaniards do not go to China, not with Chinese junks or with their own vessel. The galley does not leave either, but if it does, it will return the same evening. There are usually 20, 25 or 30 Chinese junks in Jilong with some silk, *cangan* (sic), flour, wheat, and other goods, going there to trade. Last year, a ship arrived from Manila (probably the relief voyage of 1630), carrying 30,000 reals of eight, rice, meat, as well as other provisions and necessities for the garrison. About three months ago the ship returned with a little silk, much *cangan*, wheat, flour and other goods. Usually, not more than one yacht would come from Manila every year, carrying provisions for the garrison, and just a little money for the purchase of *cangan*." *SIT*, p. 148

45 "It all started with that infamous relief ship of May wherein Manila sent only two sampans loaded with rice while the island had silk in huge quantities. The Chinese waited for one year before they sold these to the guarantor, and at so low a price that they were begging to sell at 130 pesos per *picul*. Now since they know that there is only one buyer here, who is the General, and that the *soldiers* who receive no aid from Manila have nothing to pay for four small jars of wine, fruit, meat or fish, and that the sangleys had crowded the bay with their sampans filled with goods, they all went back to China and quickly discredited us. They spread the word that there was no money because there was no market for their goods. Furthermore, they said that they suffered damages with the sale of their goods because having had only one buyer (although they were paid more than what was reasonable), they were forced to sell below cost to anyone, or to bring their merchandise back to China and still lose them because they are sampans without licenses." *SIT*, p. 176

formed a small retinue with diplomatic letters and a gift for the Viceroy. This time, they went on two Chinese vessels instead of a Spanish ship but were assaulted along the way by their Chinese companions. Fr. Tomas Sierra was slain and Fr. Cocci arrived in China half-dead after suffering shipwreck on 1 January 1632. Under these circumstances, the priest carried no proof at all to support his claims to the mandarins and to the Viceroy of Fuzhou himself. After four months of interrogation and the recovery of the gifts, and the punishment of their assailants, Fr. Cocci was sent back to Formosa to get new credentials. However, he cleverly managed to remain in China, for his real interest was to carry on the missionary work.⁴⁶

One advantage of Fr. Cocci's stay in Fuzhou is that he left first-hand information about China's trade situation at that time. What amazed him most was the existence of an exchange post for counterfeit Spanish money. Esquivel had scrutinized samples of this money and complimented the flawless craftsmanship. He also suggested that Governor Alcarazo had to do something about this:

They have a public store that sells imitations of our coins, so well made that they could fool even the most experienced and careful person. They sell the *tortones* [of] eight [for one] real and the peso for two reals.⁴⁷ General Juan de Arcarasso was able to get samples of these coins. Thus the coins should be well registered, because one can very well suspect that they will manipulate in the future the money (as they have done in the past) in Manila, where the *sangleys* buy and sell. For a store as famous as this one was not set up to take advantage of people as naïve as these natives.⁴⁸

Of course, those who were receiving the bogus silver coins—basically the aborigines of Formosa—had no means to distinguish the real money from the counterfeit one. Esquivel narrates how the natives who lived close to the Spaniards were sorely cheated. The *modus operandi* was to exchange the counterfeit money for the genuine currency, which the natives obtained from selling their goods to the Spaniards. Chinese trade with the Spaniards consisted in exchanging silk for silver. The Formosan aborigines, on the other hand, traded a wide range of raw material for silver, colored mantles and beads. They sold sulfur that was used to manufacture fireworks; deerskin that was used to fashion leather items, garments and furniture; liana, which was used to make chairs; and truffle that was used to dye clothes. The local inhabitants of Jilong Bay clearly participated in the local

⁴⁶ Fr. Cocci's eventful passage to China is narrated in *SIT*, pp. 153-158.

⁴⁷ The *torton* was a fake peso, slightly smaller than the real one. This is how they distinguished a *torton* from a "false peso." The authorized value was 10 reals to a peso.

⁴⁸ *SIT*, p. 170.

AROUND AND ABOUT FORMOSA

market. This is reflected not only in the table above, but also, as Esquivel put it, by the fact that the natives received 400 or 600 pesos worth of indemnity for the damages inflicted on them when the Spanish troops entered Jilong. Specifically, the Spaniards promised to pay them 4,000 pesos for the houses that were burnt down.⁴⁹

According to Dutch information gathered from Chinese merchants, the year 1633 also was good for business in Jilong. Two vessels from Manila went to Jilong to buy silk, nevertheless living conditions were not pleasant and numerous Spanish merchants return on these vessels to Manila. According to Alonso García Romero, governor of Jilong from 1634 to 1635, trade was flourishing in his time. When he relinquished his post, he smugly remarked: "I left the trade in a good position, in a way that we could trade 300,000 pesos worth of weaves and silk of all kinds for two years more. And due to the lack of money, an abundance of silk, satin, velvet and other items had to be returned to China."⁵⁰ García Romero's statement definitely referred to the second relief voyage of 1634. On it came Juan López de Andoaín, whose return was delayed a month and a half, perhaps due to business concerns. This voyage enjoyed such immense success that Quirós (who always praised the good performance of García Romero) still looked back to it in 1639, not without a tinge of nostalgia. Quirós cited this voyage as a model:

Moreover, no one can deny that the Chinese and Japanese visit the island with their goods. Those who have been here have seen how some 20 heavily-laden sampans came one day and how Julio López de Andoaín left with a heavy cargo of goods bought from here. If people knew that one could make money on this land, then all the sampans around would not fit into this port. The Chinese are very eager to come because this land is very near their kingdom.⁵¹

Soon after, things started to change dramatically. In 1637, a government junta was convoked by Governor General Hurtado de Corcuera to study the withdrawal of the forts from Formosa and Zamboanga (south of the Philippines). García Romero was the only one opposing the move. He declared – perhaps with some exaggeration referring to the case of López de Andoaín – that maintaining the fort in Isla Hermosa had many advantages. One was that "it is to the great detriment of the Dutch enemy that a large part of their trade and commerce be taken from them. For the said sangleys come to us more willingly."⁵²

49 *SIT*, p. 165

50 *SIT*, p. 258

51 *SIT*, p. 302

52 *SIT*, p. 270

What is certain is that we have found no additional relevant trading figures regarding the commerce from 1636 until 1642, which can lead one to think that the Spaniards held mercantile power over Isla Hermosa only from 1629 to 1635. This was no coincidence because they were observing a new policy during those years. There was a change in the free trade policy that Niño de Tavora decreed in 1628 to attract the Chinese merchants. We know about this indirectly through the said letter from Quirós (1639), who censured the attitude of Pedro Palomino (1638-1639) and Cristóbal Marquez (1639-1640), the governors who came after García Romero (1634-1635). However, these governors were simply following a system imposed by the new governor of the Philippines, Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera (1635), who undoubtedly pursued a more legalist policy. Quirós criticized the situation in retrospect:

It is said that the citizens of Manila have much money but do not make use of it. I say this is because there are bad governors who abuse foreigners and maltreat them to no end. I am a witness to this. And so the sangleys have since avoided them. However, during the time of Sergeant Major Alonso García Romero, the *indios* and sangleys were well treated and the land was prosperous. Also, restricting the free interaction between Spaniard and native has stunted a potential business mine. When a sampan would come, they would confiscate its entire cargo and hoard the goods for a long period in their storerooms, angering the sangleys who end up giving in to the demands of the governors and their cronies. Consequently, the sangleys hardly visit us, denying the people of Manila the advantages of trade relations with them.⁵³

Quirós was right. One can deduce this from reading the letters that Palomino⁵⁴ (1638-1639) and Marquez⁵⁵ (1639-1640) sent to Corcuera. Trade was on the decline, there were few sampans, and conflicts erupted with the merchants of the small parian in San Salvador. The situation was demoralizing.⁵⁶ What was worse,

53 *SIT*, p. 302

54 "The sangleys have been given excellent passage even if very few sampans from China have come this year. When a *patache* bearing aid came, [some sampans] approached with clothes, silk cloth and other goods even if they sold little because there was neither anyone who dealt in (such merchandise) nor the money to make purchases." *SIT*, 289

55 "Regarding the ships from China that came to this land this year, I have been informed that there were none and I do not expect any more to come to the River Tamchui, where they usually go to trade deerskin, liana, sulfur and other goods of the land." *SIT*, p. 307

56 When Márquez made his *Juicio de Residencia* to Palomino, he mentions that the sangleys of the parian had presented to him a complaint about the deferential treatment given to a wealthy sampan of robbers who had stolen from them. But Palomino had obtained some commissions from the said sampan and instead punished the complainants. *Ibid.* If this was not the complaint, then Quirós must have referred to another like it when he said that when the governor did not extend

AROUND AND ABOUT FORMOSA

the sangleys were coerced into going to Jilong instead of Tamsui, the spot from where the Spaniards had withdrawn their fort. Marquez clearly expressed this in the letter that we have cited:

Sergeant Major Palomino has come up with a good solution to burn them and I intend to carry it out, not for now, because of the few men that I have. Still, I had it made known in this parian and through the note that I sent on a small sampan that is leaving for China now, that in no way are they to go down the Tamchuy river to trade, but to this one, where they will be safer and well-treated, on the penalty that [if they go there] I will have to burn and scorch them.

The Chinese only went to Jilong to sell rice to the Spaniards. In 1636, six Chinese ships arrived for this purpose.⁵⁷ Trade with China was becoming paralyzed. When the new governor Gonzalo Portillo (1640-1642) arrived, he reported the situation to the governor general of Manila. He said trade was on the decline,⁵⁸ with only the governor buying rice and wheat and trade going on just among the Chinese and the aborigines. The atmosphere was also getting hostile because of the Dutch and their allies, the inhabitants of the river Tamsui. The Chinese, for their part, sought to position themselves safely because it was assumed that there was going to be a shift in power. In the summer of 1641, not merchandise at all arrived from China. Portillo attributed this to the growing influence of the Dutch and their control over Chinese commerce. Portillo wrote:

No vessel arrived from China this summer because the Dutch have been making things difficult for the Chinese who visit [this island]. The enemy has found an opportunity to provoke us. This summer, they have shown up along the Tamchuy River to "escort" [the Chinese] who trade sulfur, hide, or other goods. They made friends with the natives, ... Even if many will not believe me, I have come to truly know that Icoa [Iquan or Zheng Zhilong], the sangley mandarin and general of the navy, has

him any help to repair his church, he openly defied the governor saying: "God and our lord the King did not send him there to engage in business but to help those poor natives." *SIT*, p. 458

⁵⁷ *SIT*, p. 243

⁵⁸ "When I arrived in these forces, the sangley uprising in that city was already known by way of China. [He refers to the sangley uprising and the sangley massacre in Manila in 1639.] I made them see the evil that those sangleys had done and the mercy that Your Excellency had extended to them. They went to China satisfied and gave me their word to return in excellent spirit, saying that if they had money, they would bring with more reinforcement, merchandise and provisions with which to sustain this city." *SIT*, p. 317

asked the Dutch for assistance to fight us because we have inconvenienced [Chinese] commerce in Tamchuy.⁵⁹

Nevertheless, Portillo continued to follow the footsteps of his predecessors. As soon as he had noted down the said events in his diary, he sent a brigantine and a sampan to detain three sampans that were trading in Tamsui using permits granted by the Dutch.

Conclusions

It is most likely that the relief voyages and the commercial routes that connected the Philippines and Taiwan depended on the Acapulco galleon, the motor of the Philippine colonial economy. Exactly how this came about is something that has yet to be determined. Just as any eventuality could affect the periodic arrival of the galleon and the situation in Philippines, we can conclude that the same eventuality also had an impact on Isla Hermosa, especially on the shipment of aid to the island. To cite an example, in 1638, San Salvador received only half the amount of silver that was usually sent to it. This was probably due to the recession that Manila suffered in 1637 and 1638 as a consequence of Corcuera's policy regarding the galleons. The situation was so bad that even the Chinese merchants returned to China that year in a sad state of bankruptcy.⁶⁰ These links must be studied more closely and over a longer period because even if we know many isolated details about the galleons, we do not have a precise and systematic description of each one.

As regards the Fujian-Manila and Fujian-Jilong trade routes, we may consider that the latter was but an extension or branch of the galleon's global route. Consequently, the Manila-Jilong route strongly depended on the two. For example, we saw that in 1629 an important trade voyage of buyers from Manila arrived in Taiwan. It seems logical that this was organized because that year, hardly any Chinese vessel visited Manila to sell its products. On the other hand, the return of a wealthy group of merchants who seemed bent on permanently settling themselves in Isla Hermosa in 1633 may signify the resumption of the Chinese junks' visits to Manila. The logic behind Chaunu's graph seems to confirm this.

Nevertheless, more than offering answers, Chaunu's graph requires more explanation. For example, how is it that when the junks resumed their Manila visits in 1635, the governor of San Salvador claims that in that year, López de

⁵⁹ *SIT*, p. 331

⁶⁰ This situation arose due to an oversupply of Chinese merchandise in Acapulco. It overburdened the trade with taxes and threatened the Mexican investors. See Benjamin Videira, *A viagem de comércio Macao-Manila nos séculos XVI a XIX*, Maritime Museum of Macao, 1994, 28.

AROUND AND ABOUT FORMOSA

Andoaín loaded a huge quantity of Chinese products in Isla Hermosa and that more boats came after he had left? How is it that in 1640, amidst dwindling commercial activity in Isla Hermosa and in Manila (perhaps due to the sangley massacre of 1639), the Acapulco galleon that transported two million pesos to the Philippines went back to Mexico with a silk cargo worth two and a half million pesos? (A report has it that this was “the most profitable run to date.”⁶¹)

In order to answer these questions more time is required for establishing better sequences of quantitative data. Within this framework at least two factors should be considered in the future: the Dutch in Tayouan, who happened to be “the other client” of the Chinese, and, of course, a better understanding of the Chinese’s capacity to supply the goods.

⁶¹ Schurz, *Op. cit.*, 287.