

The Fortress of Quelang: Past, Present and Future

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One of the Renaissance techniques exported throughout the world by European powers, and usually neglected by scholars, is the military architecture. The first castle built in the New World was made in Santo Domingo in 1503, latter followed La Real Fuerza (1558) in Cuba, which was a square fortress but very small in size. The trend continued along centuries being one of the most outstanding the castle of San Marcos (1672) in Sant Augustin (Florida). This new architecture had been developed in Europe in the 16th Century and reached the Far East soon later, being brought by the Portuguese (Malacca, Macao, etc.), the Spaniards (The Philippines) and by the Dutch (Indonesia, Taiwan, etc.). After the treaties of Westphalia (1648) some of the castles loosed their strategic value and stated to be ruined. Later, after the breakout of the Opium Wars, new models of fortifications emerged in the coastline of China, outdating totally those Renaissance fortifications. Now I will try to explain the history of the fortress of Quelang in its colonial context, showing that it was a model in its type. Finally I will deal with the present situation of the old foundations.

The European walled cities in South East Asia

The colonial spots usually developed the model of the citadel, which is the small fortress attached to the city that protects. The simplest style for these attached fortifications was the squared one with four bastions. One treatise of year 1700 defines the citadel like: "A fortress of four, five or more bastions, which is attached to a city; so, both names [city and citadel] keep the same relation as the one of the two areas".¹

During the 16th and 17th centuries, the area around present Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Southern China and Taiwan experienced many colonial visitors that got fortified with a common style, the walled cities with bastions in the angles. Usually the cities have an irregular plain-floor conditioned by the topography of the area. This is the case of the first fortifications of cities like Manila, Cavite (1595), Batavia (1619), or Sao Paulo de Monte (Macao, 1620). But, the situation changed in the fortresses built between 1615 and 1640 that followed a very similar pattern: "the square four bastioned compound". Sometimes this square has irregularities, but the perfect square model it seems to be the ideal fortification. We can recognize them in places like Iloilo (1616); Pescadores (1622), Fort Zeelandia (Tayouan, 1624), San Salvador of Quelang (Jilong, 1626), Zamboanga (1635), etc.

Something amazing is to compare the size of the mentioned fortress among them. The one Quelang is the biggest with a strong difference to the next one, thus we can easily understand the comments of the Dutch General Lamotius imagining his subordinate Harouse, when he saw it for the first time, before engaging in her conquest: "The eyes of commander Harouse may had experienced a greater pleasure when seeing for the first time the fortress Santísima Trinidad² from the top of the La Retirada."

¹ Sebastián Fernández de Medrano, *El Architecto perfecto en el Arte Militar*, Brussels, 1700.

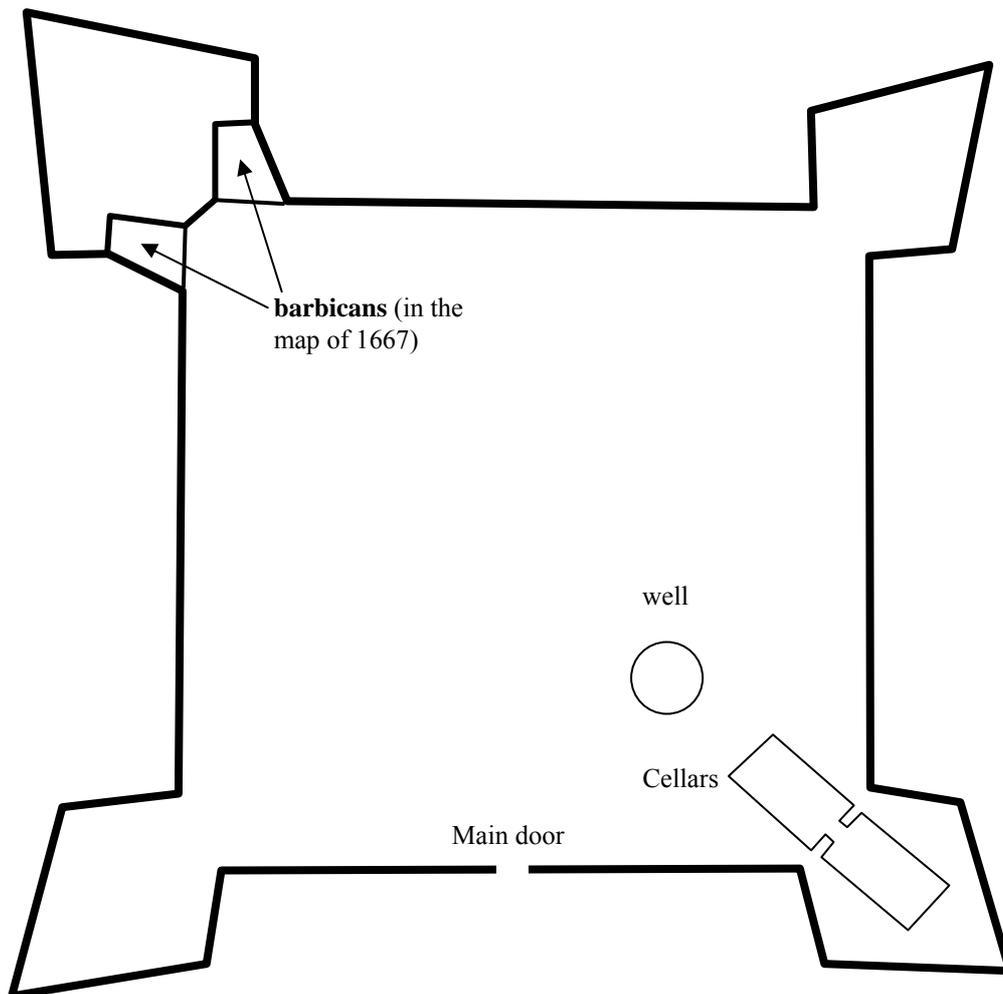
² During the last years of the Spanish control of the fortress, the Dutch called the fort as *La Santísima Trinidad*, because the island was known also as Santísima Trinidad.

The fortress of Quelang: a “synthetic image”.

The fortress started construction in 1626 under the name of San Salvador and later was renamed by the Dutch as Noord Holland. It does not exist a perfect model of the fortress because it was remodeled several times. Nevertheless, considering the bastions as the more permanent features, and taking for granted that all the renovations respected the original foundations, we can render the “synthetic image” portrayed below. Other elements worth to mention were the barbicans, made in the late stage of the fortress, the well, in the center and the vaults inside some of the bastions to make cellars for storage of gunpowder.

Bastion San Antonio el Grande
Noord Holland bastion

Bastión San Antonio el Chico
Zeeburg bastion



Bastion San Juan
Zuijderpunt bastion
Small halve moon bastion

Bastion San Sebastian
Oosterpunt bastion
Bulermberg bastion
First halve moon bastion

Since the barracks inside the castle were the most changeable construction we do not place them. As for the names of the bastions,³ we are sure about the location of San Antonio el Grande, but for the other ones we just presume the correspondence.

³ Most of the documents used in this article come from J. E. Borao, *Spaniards in Taiwan*, MSC, Taipei, (2001-2002), that we cite here as SIT.

Architectonic history of the fortress of Quelang during the Spanish period (1626-1642)

The first news about the fortress comes from the Spanish Period, and during the times of first governor Antonio Carreño de Valdés (1626-1629). The Spaniards started to build the main fortress and a small one, called La Mira, on top of the hill, as soon as they reached the island of Quelang in 1626, as it is stated in the map of Pedro de Vera (1626), because in both places it can be read: "Here fortifications are made".

We know that the planner of the construction was an engineer named Nicolás Bolen, whose surname already belies that he was at least of Flemish or Dutch descent. We know that Bolen arrived to Isla Hermosa at the very beginning with the assignment of making the design and supervision of the construction of the fortress. His job was quite specialized, because his salary in Manila as "artilleryman" was 200 pesos a year.⁴ Besides we know that his job was done with satisfaction of his superiors, that's why in a Royal Treasury Council meeting, held in Manila two years after the conquest, in 1628, the Governor General recognized his real qualification as an engineer, and upgraded his salary to 250 pesos a year (*SIT*, pp. 126-127). We don't have more details of Bolen.

Just the second governor, Juan de Alcarazo (1629-1632), took office the Dutch yacht *Domburch* arrived to Quelang in a spy mission to the north of the island (*SIT*, pp. 139-142). Through the map made by Gerbrantsz Black aboard the *Domburch* we can see clearly the main bastion of San Antonio el Grande drawn from the said ship, where we can count 3 cannons in each side of the angle. Also this map renders a clear picture of the situation of the Spanish garrison: a big house can be identified, probably the one of the Spanish Governor (or the church of Todos los Santos) accompanied by a group of thirty tents for the soldiers. The report aboard the *Domburch* describing the place is very clear:

"The fort lies on a bay that the Chinese call Quelang. It is square and built of stone, consisting of eight points...On the biggest point facing the waterside are six to seven pieces of artillery that guard the entrance of the bay. We saw loopholes in the wall facing the sea. The distance between the fort and the opposite bight on Taiwan is about two musket shots and in between, from our yachts, we could discern two sandbanks. As far as we could see, the bay lying past the fortress measured more than a *goteling* (sic)-shot in width towards the above mentioned bight on Taiwan. Those coming from the open sea could not see their vessels lying in the bay because they lie behind the said mountains and cliffs. But our junk that passed through the entrance of the bay within fire range of the fortress saw two galleys and two ships. Further off from the fortress towards the sea is a small but rather high mountain, with a redoubt or guardhouse on top [called by the Spaniards La Mira]." (*SIT*, p. 141)

Alcarazo ended the construction of Bastion San Antonio el Grande, where 12 cannons were lining up, and La Mira. Besides he constructed the fortress La Retirada (also called San Millan) to defend the entrance of the harbor with six pieces of artillery, and finally he completed the defensive system by building the small tower, El Cubo, in the Boca Chica (or Small Mouth) at the entrance of the small island from the Formosa mainland.⁵

⁴ A soldier earned 48 pesos a year, while the governor of Jilong 516 pesos (See *SIT*, pp. 336-342).

⁵ See the report of Pedro de Jara Quemada in 1644 (*SIT*, p. 494).

During the period of the third governor Bartolomé Díaz Barrera (1632-1634), and the fourth one Alonso García Romero (1634-1635) we don't have special news on the development of the fortress, but back in Manila in 1636, García Romero wrote a very detailed report (see the annex) of the situation of the castle, the number and quality of cannons, etc., in the moment of his departure. Among many other things, he states clearly:

“The principal fortification forms a square that consists of four bastions. Two are of solid stone; only one has the base made of stone, near the moat; the other is made of wood. All four stretches of wall are of solid stone and lack only the parapets” (*SIT*, p. 259).

We can be sure that San Antonio el Grande was one of the two made by stone. The other must be San Antonio el Chico, because is the first facing the entrance of the harbor. The one that only its base was made of stone, must be bastion San Sebastian, because, is the only one left near the moat. In fact, we will see how San Sebastian bastion still was under construction in 1638. And the fourth one, made of wood, must be the southern one, which we identify with the so-called bastion San Juan. The four bastions were “well armed with cannons”, as the Dutch stated in 1636 after interrogating some Spaniards who were rescued in the sea (*SIT*, p. 245).

In 1636, in the middle of the governorship Francisco Hernández (1635-1637), the fifth governor, happened the killing of some Spanish soldiers in Tamsui, and two missionaries. This fact, together with the general situation in the whole Philippines, made Governor General Hurtado de Mendoza to summit a special meeting in 22 January 1637 with all the military commanders in Manila. The main point to be discussed was the advisability of withdrawing the forts of Isla Hermosa and Zamboanga (a fort recently made), which they were located in the most furthers points from Manila, towards the North and the South respectively. The council advice was on withdrawing, but Corcuera decided to do it only in the case of Zamboanga, while for the case of Taiwan he will wait for an answer from the king. For the meantime, only will order the dismantling of some external defenses.

Certainly, at the beginning of 1637 and order from Manila reached governor Hernández, telling him to withdraw from Tamsui all the troops, after burning the wooden fortress of Tamsui and punish the natives for the inflicted massacre to the Spaniards. Also, the cannons of fort Santo Domingo should be transfer to the main fortress of San Salvador in Quelang. Probably, this accelerated indirectly the construction work in Quelang (*SIT*, p. 272). The orders included also the destruction of La Mira, La Retirada y El Cubo. But, in fact he didn't agreed with the one of La Mira because he considered it was the most important defensive post, and he was reluctant to do it. This was the reason he was replaced immediately⁶. We also know that, before he was replaced, he received orders to improve the living conditions inside the castle, because the incoming governor was expected to arrive in August 1637. Also he was ordered to build inside the castle the customary allotment for the captain of the Pampangan soldiers, also the house for a senior chaplain, and the barracks for a total of 125 men, with the additional storehouses needed for their provisions.⁷

⁶ This was the opinion of Jara Quemada (*SIT*, p. 494), and others. But Governor General Corcuera stated in the Judgment he went through for the lost of Isla Hermosa that his orders were to keep save the place (*SIT*, p. 509).

⁷ At that time Corcuera had decided to reduce the number of soldiers in Isla Hermosa. In this document he acknowledge that this number of 125 men is not big, implying that in fact the fortress can lodge more people.

The expected new governor was Pedro Palomino (1637-1639), who reached Quelang in August. He came not only with the orders of fulfilling the withdrawing from Tamsui (if not yet done), but also with the clear assignment of concentrating all the defense in the main fortress, which should be totally completed. This implied additionally the destruction of the three surrounding fortresses: la Mira, la Retirada and el Cubo. We can know with some detail the construction work of the fortress because the Crown accountant, Jerónimo de Herrera, was dispatched by the Governor General to Quelang to check on the performance of governor Palomino. He made the statements from August 1637 to September 1638, which is the first half period of Palomino governorship; he recorded all the expenses and income in the royal coffer, and this material handed down to us tell us, for example, the amount of lime supplied during these 14 months:

Table 1: Supply of lime from August 1637 to September 1638

Date	Provider	Cavans of lime	Lime price per cavan
1637, 25 November	Sangley Benua	850	12 cavans = 1 peso
1637, 23 December	Francisco Hernández	2540	10 cavans = 1 peso
1638, 2 January	Sangley Benua	550	10 cavans = 1 peso
1638, 2 January	Sergeant Andres Narváez	1200	12 cavans = 1 peso
1638, 27 February	7 sangleys	1237	12 cavans = 1 peso
1638, 4 May	5 limeworkers	1300	13 cavans = 1 peso
1638, 3 July	Sergeant Andres Narváez	180	20 cavans = 1 peso

Source: *SIT*, pp. 282-284 (note: 1 cavan = 75 liters aprox.)

This table offers us more ideas on the construction work of the fortress. First of all we can see that sergeants Francisco Hernandez⁸ and Andres Narváez were involved in the production and supply of lime. May be this was an additional job that officers with the help of some soldiers may volunteer to do. But this activity must be open to anyone that can provide this material as states the entry of 27 February 1638, referring to a 5 unspecified lime workers. Regarding the variability of the price, 1 peso for 10 or 12 (even 20) cavans, might be depending of the quality of the lime, because the same person (sangley Benua) got different price in two occasions; and on the same day (January 2nd) two different suppliers got also different price.

On the other hand, we can see how the construction work relied on the Chinese work force. They provide lime, like sangley Benua en two occasions, or the group of 7 sangleys; but also they are in charge on the construction itself. In the same record we can read another entry saying that on 29 April 1638, Sangley Lanco, a mason, was paid 190 pesos for making 97 fathoms of the wall of bastion San Sebastian, being paid 2 pesos and 4 reals for every fathom. This reference to the work done in bastion San Sebastian seems to confirm our previous statement that this bastion was the one with a stoned base, but lacking the correspondent stone walls.

When the Crown accountant Jerónimo de Herrera was going to leave the place made a detailed description of the construction work done (*SIT*, p. 285) pointing that:

1. There is a bastion [probably San Sebastian] that was finished around March after some moths of work and is now in good condition.

⁸ He was the former governor. His situation was different because he was permanently in Jilong, and having the category of Sergeant Major he was appointed governor for two years.

2. In bastion San Juan [probably the southern one] Palomino had made a splendid vault, and it can be very useful to storage gunpowder.
3. Bastion San Antonio, which was too low and not at all fortified with quicklime, was improved.
4. The house of stone, serving as a hospital inside the fort, had fell. And a very good hospital was built for the sick in a spot by the seashore, as a replacement. Also, in this other house lives the Governor.
5. The construction work was carried out at very little cost to the Royal Treasury. For many of the men from Pampanga who came recently turned out to be very good officers because the one who works most gets promoted as a sergeant or bailiff.
6. Also the expenses have been reduced because recently a limestone quarry was finished, yielding 8000 cavans of quicklime.

We think that the construction of the fortress was finished a few years before the final engagement with the Dutch. Thus, in those last years of Spanish presence, the bulk of the work consisted in implementing the orders of demolition of fort Santo Domingo in Tamsui, La Mira, el Cubo and La Retirada. Nevertheless, the last governor of Quelang, Gonzalo Portillo (1641-1642) rebuilt El Cubo and La Retirada, shortly before the final battle, thinking that without these fortresses, the main one will be defenseless. Probably, it was during these last years that the Spaniards added a dry ditch—mentioned in Dutch sources—to isolated the fortress, because, if need it, that ditch could be filled with seawater (*SIT*, p. 670)

We can presume that in the sieges of 1641 and 1642 the fortress was fully operative, but we don't know exactly because the fight between Spaniards and Dutch at the end of August 1642 took place in the hills, without a siege to the fortress. It seems that the Spanish governor Portillo, considering his numerical inferiority, have decided to surrender, but presenting before a limited opposition with the few new arrived soldiers. In this way, while avoiding a massacre, he will not be accused of cowardice. The Dutch conquered almost without resistance La Mira, and few Spaniards during five days put a strong resistance from La Retirada, until it became totally destroyed. Once the Dutch were in La Retirada had the Santísima Trinidad (as they called San Salvador) totally at their merci, although it had prepared provisions to resist a siege of eight months (*SIT*, p. 428), Nevertheless the Spanish governor Portillo made a timid attack shooting to La Retirada from the bastions San Sebastian and San Antonio el Chico. The Dutch answered with two cannon-shoots, enough for Portillo to confirm his defenseless position. Next day he surrendered a totally undamaged fortress (*SIT*, p. 434).

According to the inventory of 1641 the fortress had 33 cannons of different size, and 5 more additional in El Cubo (*SIT*, p. 343). The ones that had been placed in La Retirada and in La Mira before their dismantling now will be either inside the main fortress or back to Manila. This figure matches with the one provided by Dutch sources after they conquered Quelang island and made an inventory of everything; the number of cannons reached the figure of 40 (*SIT*, pp. 396-397). After which the fortress underwent a series of reconstruction and demolition, depending on the strategic requirements of the Island's new masters.

The fortress during the first Dutch period (1642-1661)

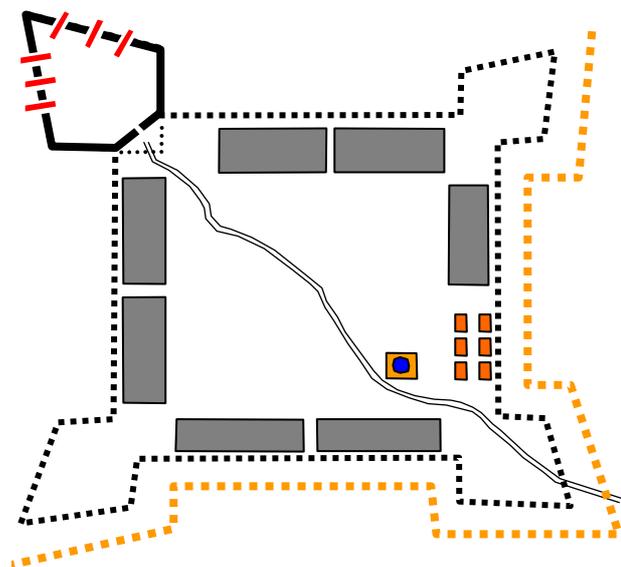
Once the Dutch occupied the Spanish fortress, they started wondering what to do with it. Finally in 15 June 1643, in the VOC Batavia headquarters there was a meeting to decide on the future of the fortress, “to continue as it is now, or to turn down in part or totally, so it can be use in the most suitable way”. After deliberation they came to the conclusion that the buildings in Quelang were of totally no use, and that they can be torn down and destroyed, and the garrison can be use elsewhere. On 11 September 1643, a year after the Dutch seized San Salvador fortress, that the VOC transmitted the order of the destruction of three of the bastions and the walls between them, leaving intact only the bastion San Antonio el Grande to guard the entrance of Quelang Bay. This was the order of Governor Maximiliaen Le Maire to captain Harouse:

“To this end, Your Honor has been given a load of crowbars and other tools. One shall start tearing down the castle La Santísima, then the small fortress and then the church, monastery, and the stone houses. If it takes too much effort to demolish the walls with tools, Your Honor shall resort to gunpowder to blow up the more solid parts. If there is no other way of getting the job done, Your Honor can spend 20 to 25 barrels of gunpowder, but no more.” (*SIT*, p. 463)

The Dutch renamed the bastion San Antonio el Grande as Noord Holland. The discarded stones of San Salvador were used to build fortifications in Tamsui. The new masters lived in this situation for 20 years (1642-1662) because, as they acquired greater control over Taiwan, they no longer saw the need to maintain a fortress that would defend them against external attack. They enjoyed good relations with the English, and had successfully kept the Spaniards in Manila at bay. The Japanese had closed their doors to all foreigners and the Chinese had their own internal problems to solve on account of the Tartar invasion. This is why the map of Simon Keerdekoek, made in 1654, shows the state of the fortress reduced to the main bastion, as well as how it looked during the Spanish period.



The fortress of Quelang according to the map of Simon Keerdekoek (1654)



During these 20 years (1642-1662) the main architectural concern of the Dutch was to keep in good use the Tamsui fort and the redoubt Victoria (formerly La Mira) in Quelang. In 1646 governor Caron in Tayouan, after listening the reports from Tamsui, declared that the fortress can be considered finished.⁹ Also, the way he was distributing his soldiers confirmed the hierarchy between the two forts. Tamsui continue is more important than Quelang, and this was the place where an under-merchant with authority over both places was stationed. We can understand better the balance of both forts comparing the proportion of the soldiers assigned there:

1646	5 February	22 April	18 May	28 May
Tamsui	63	50	48	45
Quelang	48	40	(no data)	20

After the rebuilding of the fort in Tamsui, attention was drawn to Quelang, especially in two points. The *corps du garde* and the old house of the former Spanish Governor. We cannot identify if this *corps du garde* correspond to the house built on top North Holland bastion, of it is situated at the entrance of the island (in the former el Cubo), or else. But its roof is always in continuous need of repair, as the frequent demand of tiles tells us. In year 1651 there are several reports on these problems, stressing that the repair of provisional bamboo dwellings for hospitals, smith-workshop, etc. cause a lot of expenses to the VOC, suggesting to made everything by stone.¹⁰

On the other hand, the house of the Spanish governor is described as a very large, and structurally well preserved, although need many small repairs to make a good use of it. For the meantime it was used for storage of provisions, gunpowder and ammunitions. The barracks of the soldiers were in a good condition, although they don't prevent the continuous sicknesses of the soldiers.

The fortress during the second Dutch period (1664-1668)

In 1662 the VOC tried again a new approach to the Chinese trade appointing Bort as the fleet commander to negotiate with China. Bort made several trips in 1662, 1663 and 1664 establishing posts in Fuzhou and Quelang. On 20 August 1664, the yacht *Niewendam* appeared in Quelang. All the Chinese there, about 30 persons, quickly boarded their vessels to escape to mainland Formosa. The VOC found some abandoned Chinese straw-and-bamboo huts and some iron tiles, rattan, lamp oil, and coal. On 27 August, the rest of the VOC fleet arrived in Quelang.

We have a sea-view-map of Quelang representing the arrival of Bort fleet in 1664. We can consider that the image rendered by Bort artist is fairly similar to the map of Keerdekoe made 10 years earlier.¹¹ This is the period in which the fortress is better documented, because the post will be the only one the Dutch had in Taiwan, and it was expected to have a very strategic value.¹²

⁹ VOC 1160, ff 199v-202

¹⁰ VOC 1183 (ff. 777-790)

¹¹ The situation of this bastion continued during centuries, until 1937, the moment in which the Japanese torn down the whole ruins of the fortress

¹² Until now the most complete study on this matter is the doctoral dissertation of J. L. P. J. Vogels, *Het Nieuwe Tayouan: De Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie op Quelang (1664-1668)*, Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht, July 1988.

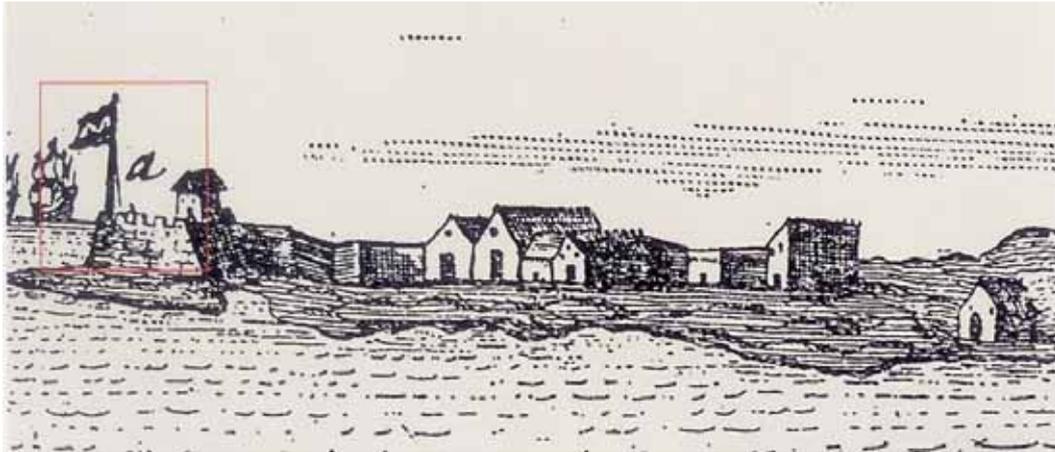


Fig. 4: *Situation of the fortress of Kelang in 1664*. From the *Voyagie of Bort* (1670). Compare the red area, or bastion San Antonio el Grande, with the picture of the angle 1 in the general floor map.

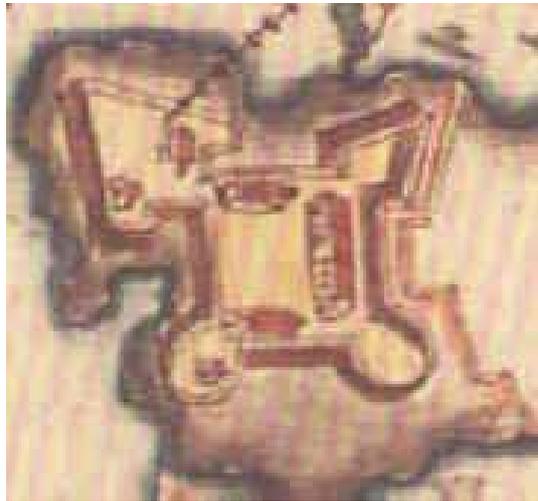
This new factory in Taiwan had to function as a relay station for Chinese sugar, gold, silk, etc. Chinese merchants crossing the Taiwan straits were supposed to furnish these goods in exchange for Japanese silver, and spices from the Indonesian Archipelago or deer meat from Taiwan. The goods were to be stored in warehouses, awaiting the favorable monsoon winds that would take them to far-flung destinations all over Asia. The VOC envisioned a kind of “New Taiwan Factory” to be large-scale enterprise, which was why the company also invested a huge amount on improving the defense facilities in Quelang. But, trade never took off.¹³

Regarding the structure and building of the fortresses, commander Bort started reconstructing the redoubt Victoria. He also reinforced the bastion Noord Holland, and began working on the reconstruction of the other three bastions of the old fortress San Salvador. Of utmost importance was the bastion Oosterpunt, also called the Half Moon Bastion, which was the eastern bastion. It controlled the low land east of the fortress and secured the well in the middle of the fortress’ square. The northern bastion, called Zeeburg, protected the fortress from sea attack. A document of January 1666 states:

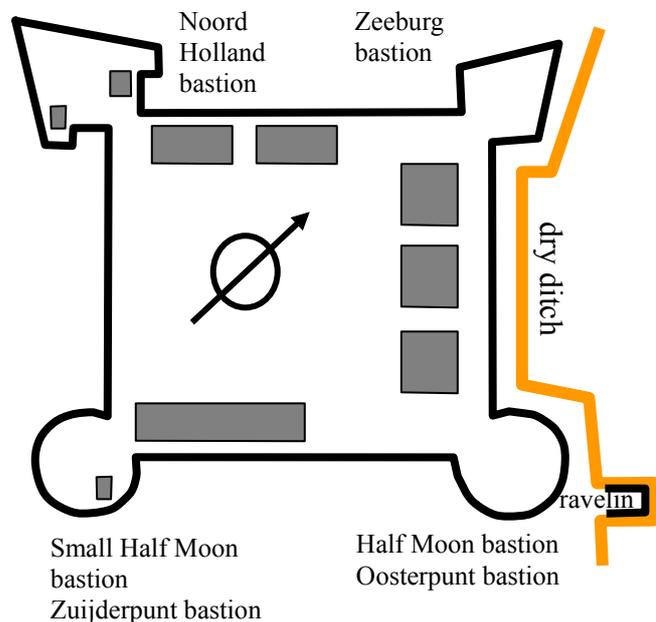
“We currently paid a visit to the army corps of this fortress, the living quarters, the magazine, the hospital and other places worth seeing. The new bastion Zeeburg has been built from its foundations and has reached a reasonable height. The walls between bastion Zeeburg and main bastion Noord-Holland, and on the north side the walls between bastion Zeeburg and bastion Oosterpunt, have been rebuilt in a relatively short period and are rather solid... One weakness is that the walls are too low and should be doubled in height... The commander ordered the construction of a small Half Moon Bastion on the spot where the former southern bastion stood. This small Half Moon Bastion is about to collapse and should be renewed or destroyed, as it cannot offer adequate resistance to enemy attack.” (*SIT*, p. 672).

¹³ VOC 888, ff. 207-208

The bastion *Zuijderpunt*, also called the Small Half Moon Bastion, was the southernmost bastion that controlled all shipping within the bay. By the end of 1665, the bastions were up and in operation, except for the bastion *Zuijderpunt*, which was in a bad condition.



The fortress of Quelang according to Cornelis Vichbee, 1666, ARA, VEL 307



Several defense facilities separated the fortress from the rest of Quelang Island. First, there was a stone bulwark between the bastion *Oosterpunt* and the inner bay beach of Quelang Island. This bulwark contained a gate that was the only passage between the fort and the eastern flat land. Near the bulwark was a ravelin guarded by two pieces of artillery. From the ravelin, a wall stretched to the sea so that nobody could pass through. Furthermore, a dry deep ditch dating from the Spanish era stretched from the bastion *Zeeburg* and beyond the bastion *Oosterpunt*, forming a barrier between the fortress and the flat land. This ditch could be filled with seawater and turn the fortress into an artificial island, completely isolated from Quelang Island. Inside the fortress, living quarters for the soldiers were built, along with a gunpowder house, a magazine, houses for the officers and married couples, a smithy, warehouses, and a house for the commanding officer. The Dutch renamed it fortress *Noord Holland*.¹⁴ It seemed that by the end of 1665, *San Salvador* had regained its old glory and it was ready to embrace an attack from *Zheng's* forces, as it happened in May 1666.

Upon arrival in Quelang, VOC intelligence reported that only a handful of *Koxinga's* soldiers were stationed in *Tamsui*.¹⁵ On 4 February 1666 elders of several aboriginal villages (*Kimaurri*, *St Jago*, *Ritsoeck*, *Kipanas...*) went to Quelang with news of recent troop deployments in *Tamsui*. According to the elders' information, 500 soldiers had reached *Tamsui* from *Anping* by land. They added that about 700 or 800 of *Zheng's* troops were already stationed in *Tamsui*, and that 30 junks with more troop reinforcements were expected to arrive two months later. It was rumored that these soldiers had come to attack Quelang and pillage the aboriginal villages.¹⁶ To deal with this threat, the VOC started to build extra fortifications. On 21 February 1666, the Council of Quelang resolved to start constructing a

¹⁴ VOC 1253, ff. 1294v-2202; VOC 1257, ff. 1297-1299

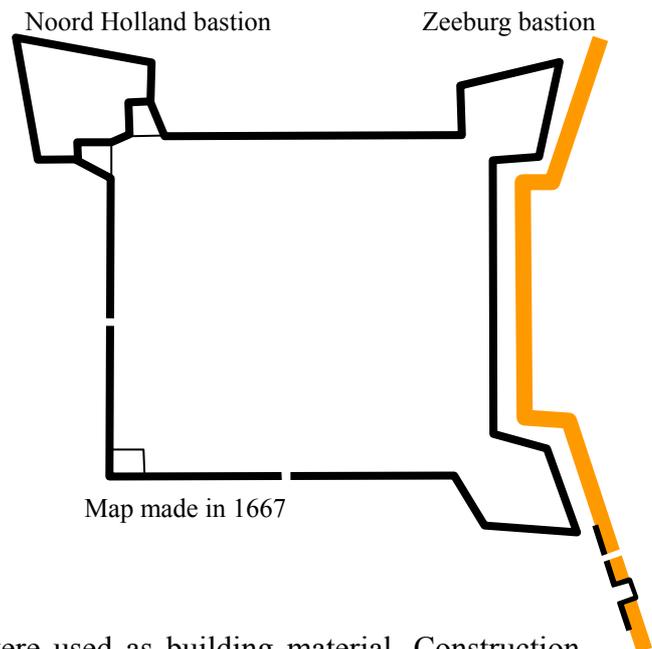
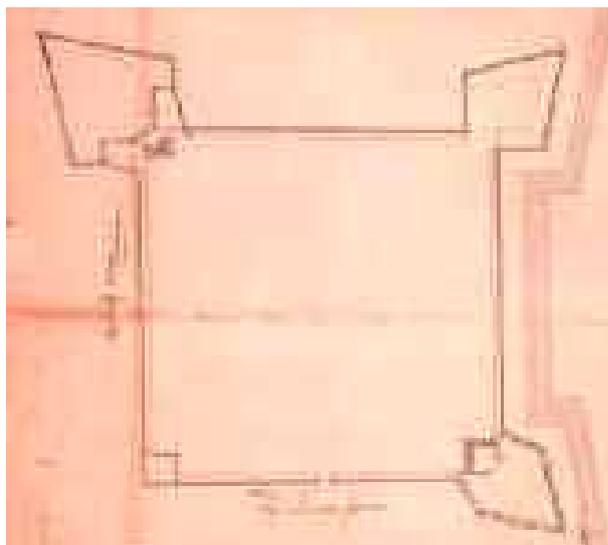
¹⁵ VOC 1257, f. 2196v

¹⁶ VOC 1257, f. 1307

small redoubt on the foundations of the former Spanish fortress El Cubo.¹⁷ The small redoubt was called Nobelenburg, however, Cornelis Vichbee's map mistakenly referred to it as 'Eltenburg'. This redoubt was supposed to prevent anyone from entering the bay through the northeastern channel. As an invasion of Zheng's troops became more and more evident, the Quelang Council resolved on 17 April 1666 to further reinforce its defenses. Orders were issued to finish Nobelenburg as soon as possible, as well as to further raise the walls of Noord Holland, to build extra walls, and to make gabions. Most of the straw roofs of the buildings in the fortress were removed to diminish the risk of being set on fire.

The Zheng army landed on 11 May 1666 and launched a relentless attack on the fortifications for several days. An estimated 6,000 Zheng soldiers partook in the operation, engaging the 300 VOC defenders. After a siege of nine days, the Zheng army, having about 1,000 wounded or dead (according to a Dutch account), withdrew to Tamsui.¹⁸ The reconstructed fortress had passed its first serious test.

Redoubt Victoria was reinforced after the Zheng attack. The ruins of the former Spanish convent were leveled to prevent the enemy from using it as a battery facility against the fortress. The bastion **Oosterpunt** (Half Moon Bastion or Bultenberg bastion) proved to be a weak spot in the entire defense system because it was built on sand and had no solid foundation. The walls of the bastion fell beneath the enemy's artillery and even threatened to collapse when the Dutch fired their own cannons. Bastion Oosterpunt had to be replaced with a new one (with a cellar) on the foundations of the former Spanish bastion, San Sebastian.



Stones from the said Spanish convent were used as building material. Construction began on 13 December 1666 and the bastion was finished on 15 January 1667 (this was the bastion that the Japanese excavated and photographed in detail in 1936). Inside the fortress, a new smithy and a shop that also functioned as a dormitory were added. The cellar under bastion Noord-Holland was also expanded. Outside the fortress, a new hospital, a carpenter's shed and a pigsty were built. But, unexpectedly, on October 1668, the VOC garrison abandoned Quelang after blowing up the buildings leaving a place in ruins.¹⁹

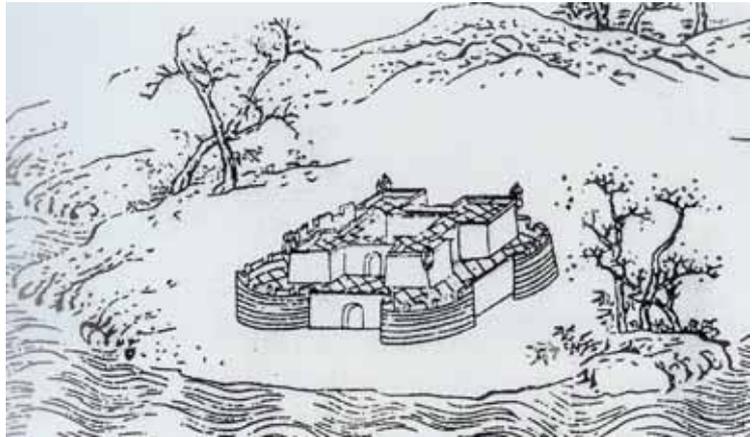
¹⁷ VOC 1257, f. 1028

¹⁸ VOC 1258, ff. 1659-1662. See also Vogels, *Op. cit.*, p. 23-36, 43-44.

¹⁹ Vogels, J.P.L.J., pp. 44-46.

Finally, we know too little on the fortress for the long period from 1700 to 1925, although it appears pictured in Chinese books in an idealistic way, like this one of the end of the 17th century.

*Ideal view of the
castle of Jilong.
According to 高拱乾
《臺灣府志》(1696)*



The attempt of preserving the ruins of the fortress (1924-1937)

The interest for the fortress reappeared strongly in 1924, when it took place the first modern attempt to make an inventory of Taiwan's historical relics earmarked for preservation. At that time, the Japanese colonial government issued to some local governments a list of buildings that were targeted for preservation in their respective districts. This was accompanied by orders to look into their status of conservation of the ruins. The response was scant and unsatisfying, which was why in 1927 the Central Colonial Government issued the orders again, urging the local authorities to wrap up the investigation.

Things moved so slowly that the colonial government gave another push to the implementation of the same orders. First, on 21 September 1930, the Japanese issued the Monuments Conservation Law (史蹟名勝天然紀念物保存法), designating some categories of items worthy of preservation, like historical sites or natural spots.²⁰ Second, they established on the same year an Investigation Committee that took charge of gathering information and which produced a new list of historical monuments, including, for the first time, the Noord Holland Fortress. As a consequence, two members of the Committee, Osaki Hidezane (尾崎秀真)²¹ and Ite Kaoru (井手薫), visited all the remaining ruins of Hoping Tao (at that time, Se Liao Tao). Their extensive report of 1931 included Noord Holland.²²

Scholars began to get involved in the matter. In November 1931, Prof. Murakami Naojirō (村上直次郎) of Taihoku University published a long article on the history of the fortress,²³ based in Dutch sources. At the end of the article he mentioned that the southwestern bastion (San Sebastian, Oosterpunt) was still standing. Soon later, in July 1932, the Bureau for Internal Affairs of the colonial Government published a cyclostyle pamphlet entitled *Report on Designated Historical Sites*.²⁴ In Chapter 2 of this work, Prof. Murakami

²⁰ It is worth mentioning that this law granted the Governor General the right not only to designate but also—given a special condition—to revoke the designation of monuments.

²¹ Osaki (尾崎) was a collector and vendor of local antiquities and aboriginal artifacts. He sold several pieces to the Ethnological Museum of Taihoku Imperial University.

²² Oddly enough, in 1931, when the local authorities finally presented their list of historical monuments to the colonial government, the government of Jilong made no mention of the Noord Holland Castle.

²³ Murakami Naojirō 村上直次郎, 《基隆的紅毛城》, 台灣時報, Nov. 1931.

²⁴ 《史蹟名勝指定物件說明書》(油印), 台灣總督府內務局, 昭和7年5月(May, 1932)。

Naojirō repeated his former ideas, mentioning that even Zheng Jing (鄭經) attempted a reconstruction in 1673 and installed there a garrison of soldiers. Murakami concluded, “Because this construction dates back to the San Salvador castle’s times, it is worth to be preserved for ever”. He ended the article quoting briefly from Osaki and Ite’s 1931 report. The Committee soon concluded its work and the colonial government issued the final list of historical sites on 26 November 1933, including Noord Holland.

Considering a research made by architect Lu Yueh-E (呂月娥) on the development of the Jilong Harbor we can see that the other side of the problem. This a masters dissertation²⁵ where she mentions that the third phase of the development of Jilong harbor took place from 1929 to 1934. The new expansion happened because of the increasing scale of trade and fishery. She Liao Tao was remodeled to accommodate in its southern side the fishing port that was previously located in the inner harbor; this inner harbor was no longer used for simultaneous business and fishing activities. In addition, the Japanese government began to “feather-bed” the fisheries industry by providing equipment and social benefits. At that time, the ruins of the fortress were not threatened by the new reforms and the development of the harbor; in fact, the new legislation expressly provided for the protection of this historical spot.

This trend of coming up with protective measures peaked in 1935 when a second official list of historical sites appeared, with a new addition from the She Liao Tao vicinity: Fort Eltenburgh (el Cubo), located on the south-east side²⁶. A year later, in July 1936, the Bureau for Internal Affairs formulated a second edition of the list, complete with historical explanations.²⁷ In fact, “conservationist fever” seemed to spread throughout the island. For example, Xinzhu County and Taidong County declared historical sites for preservation on 13 March 1936 (Gaoxiong County followed suit on 8 June 1940).

Early in July 1936, the Jilong government invited members of the Institute of Ethnology of Taihoku University (台北帝國大學「土俗人種學研究室」) to conduct an excavation of the castle. Just a month before this happened the Office for the Research of Taiwan Historical Materials (台灣史料調查室) was formed as a section under the Institute of Ethnology.²⁸ As a response to the initiative of the Jilong government, some members of the newly established office visited the Jilong fort on 12 July 1936 and devoted two hours to field research.²⁹ The Institute postponed the excavation because it was working on another project in Taizhong.

Finally, at the beginning of October 1936, the Office started to prepare for the diggings. A chronological account of the project is recorded in the journal of the Institute. Days 9, 12 and 15 of the preparatory phase were presided by Prof. Utsurikawa Nenzo (移川子之藏) and probably by Prof. Murakami Naojirō himself. Actual fieldwork started on day 19, under Professors Iwao Seiichi (岩生成一), Miyamoto Nobuto (宮本延人), Matsumoto Masanaga (松本盛長), and Nakamura Takashi (中村孝志). The team hired the services of famous Japanese photographer Kobayagawa Tokushirou (小早川篤四郎), who produced a comprehensive hundred-photo collection of the excavation preserved in the Archive of the

²⁵ 呂月娥，日治時期基隆港口都市形成歷程之研究，中原大學建築研究所碩士論文，2000。 I wish to thank Ms. Lu for her information on the construction of Jilong Harbor, especially for providing many details and insights related to the implementation of the Monuments Conservation Law.

²⁶ Another list came up in 1941.

²⁷ 史蹟調查報告 (第二輯)，1936。

²⁸ 《南方土俗》(Nanpō Dōzōku)，Vol. II，No. 1 (May 1937)，p. 173。

²⁹ 《南方土俗》(Nanpō Dōzōku)，Vol. IV，No. 2 (August 1936)，p. 120。

Museum of Anthropology of National Taiwan University. The excavation team took some measurements of the castle's remaining walls and they photographed any interesting thing, like some parts of bastion San Antonio el Grande. But their main job was to clean the northeastern bastion, and to unearth its inner cellar, and outer cellar. The only known report of the entire project was a brief account that was published a few months later in the miscellaneous section of the journal of the Institute.³⁰ The pictures were preserved in the Department of Anthropology of National Taiwan University. And in 2002, with the kind assistance of the staff of this department, I published some of the most representative pictures of this collection.³¹ Here we have two photos of bastion San Antonio el Grande (angles 1 & 2 of the general floor map).



Remaining of bastion San Antonio el Grande
(Angle number 1 of the general floor map)
NTU Anthr-SLT 3071



Professor Miyamoto in bastion San Antonio el Grande
(Angle number 2 of the general floor map)
NTU Anthr-SLT 3076

But most of the pictures are related with the bastion Oosterpunt (San Sebastian bastion), offering a clear picture of the state of conservation of this part of the fortress in 1936, particularly its inner cellar (angle 12), and the nearby foundations (angle 4). Also the collections of pictures eyewitness the life in She Liao Island at that time: its wooden houses, the existence of a small factory to produce probably bricks, a house of leisure, etc.



Foundation of the wall near bastion San Sebastian
(Angle 4 of the floor-map of bastion San Sebastian)
NTU Anthr-SLT 3068

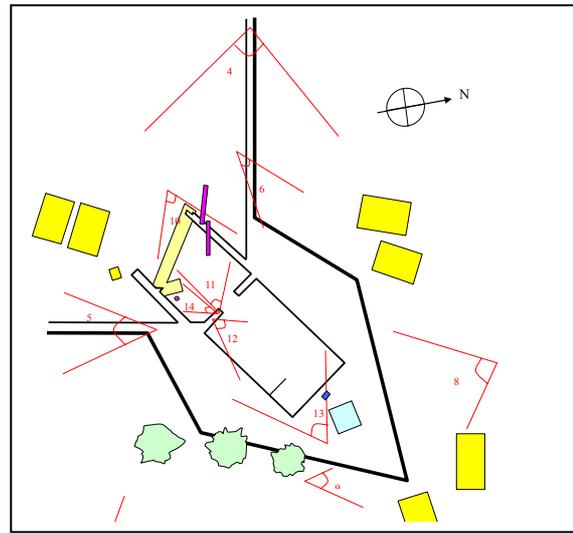
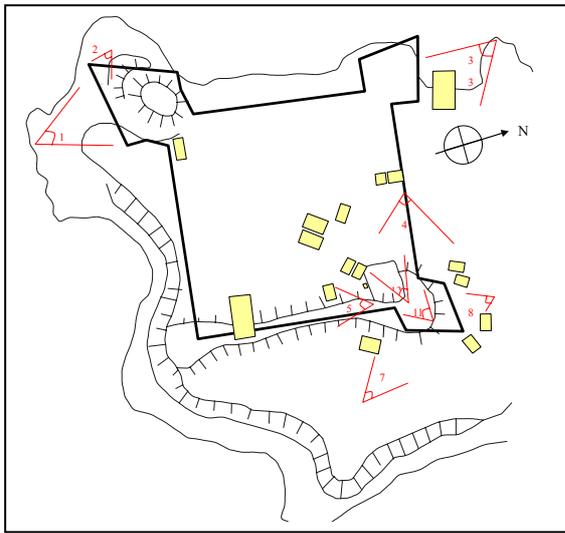


Inner cellar of bastion San Sebastian
(Angle 12 of the floor-map of bastion San Sebastian)
NTU Anthr-SLT 3150

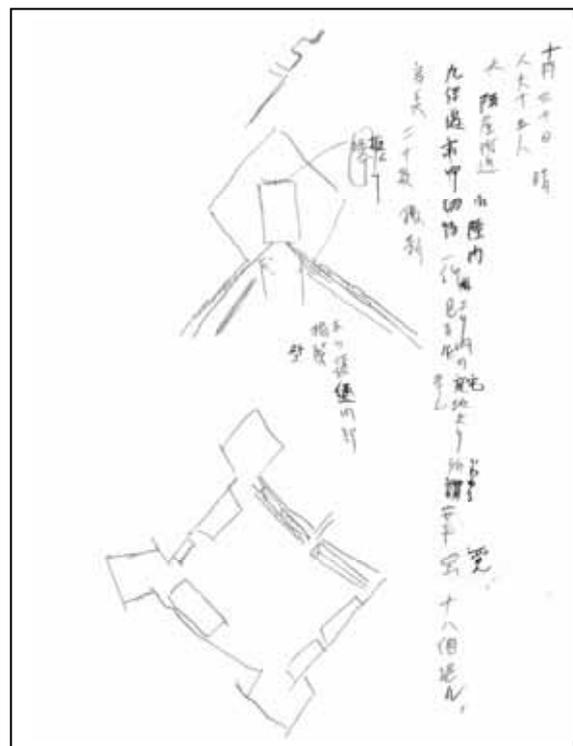
³⁰ 《南方土俗》 (*Nanpō Dôzôku*) , Vol. II , No. 1 (May 1937) , p. 174 .

³¹ See *Spaniards in Taiwan*, 2002, pp. xli-liv.

The absence of the diary of excavations made very difficult to initially understand the pictures in relation with the fortress shape. But finally, it became clear all of them after a comparison with the Dutch map of 1667.



The scholarly report—if any—on the job using the measurements taken from the castle and all their findings remains unedited. Nevertheless, in 2004, and thanks to my assistant Lu Po-hsuan (呂柏萱), I had access to the “diary of excavation” kept in the archives of the Library of Tenri University (Japan)³², where few more details that do not appear in the pictures can be found. Only a few, because the excavation methodology at that time was simpler, but at least it helps to understand the chronology of the work carried out. Nevertheless, considering the discrepancy between the small size of the diary I have checked with the big size of the notebook carried by the archeologists in the pictures, it is possible that the diary I saw was not properly the main diary of the excavation.



Handwritten copy of page 12 of the Japanese diary of the excavation campaign (1636-1637), referring to the activity of 31 October 1936.

The final destruction of the fortress

It seems that the archeological campaign of 1936 was related with the trend of preserving the Taiwan historical heritage, but why suddenly the fortress was totally destroyed in 1937? Part of the answer we can find taking another look to the dissertation of Lu Yueh-E. She explains

³² The diary ended in this library because one of the members of the archeological excavation, Prof. Nakamura, donated all his materials to that university, where he ended his scholarly days.

that the period 1935-1943 saw the need for a new expansion of the harbor, the fourth one. These years comprised the fourth phase of the Jilong Harbor construction. One of these efforts focused She Liao Tao, where the Jilong Harbor Bureau, an office under the Japanese Colonial Government, started to build shipyards next to the fishing port of She Liao Tao. More and more ships were docking at the harbor, thus the demand for new equipment and facilities. The civil engineers were trying to make a harbor large enough to meet the needs of the colony and probably to gear up for the strategic requirements of the impending War with China. The fort was subject to a real threat. In fact, all the ruins were demolished; the terrain leveled and, in 1937, construction began on the first dry dock that overlapped half part of the old fortress.³³

The present situation

As far as I know, after the destruction of the castle few scholars have taken into consideration the possible remaining of the fortress. Only local people still have in mind the former existence of the castle, even some very old men still remember it. During the industrial development years of Taiwan the shipyards of Jilong have played an important role in the harbor and in the international trade of the island, but now the businesses of the shipyard are totally in decline, its activity is much more limited and the whole situation make easy to think again in the existence of the Quelang fortress, and its possible recovery and preservation of the foundations, if something is left.

To locate with precision the old foundations of the castle in the compounds of the present shipyard is not easy using conventional methods of comparing old maps with modern ones, but still is possible. First we can locate the fortress in a Japanese map (fig. 5), later, by observing the location of the first dry dock (fig. 6), we can guess with more accuracy the location³⁴ because this dock still remains.

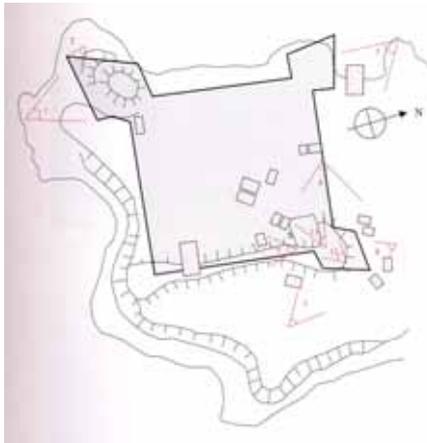


Fig. 5



Fig. 6

³³ According to “Taiwan’s Harbors,” (1938), the dry dock for 20,000 tons of ship started construction in 1937. The Japanese government scheduled its completion in 1939. However, according to posterior data published in 1957 by the Jilong government, construction was completed in 1941. This source also mentions that the second dry dock for 10,000 tons of ship was scheduled for construction from 1942 to 1945. It was not completely finished owing to the onset of the War (From Lu Yueh-E).

³⁴ I have to say that, when I published for the first time my guess for the location of the said fortress in the second volume of *Spaniards in Taiwan* (SMC, 2002), I got a fair approximate location, but not a precise one, because at that time I didn’t know the existence of the map in figure 6. In any case, I don’t think that the figure 6 is a perfect drawing, because this figure is a very small part of a big map representing the whole harbor. The line I added may represent better the location of the coastline.

Recently, the Ground Penetrating Radar Technique³⁵ has been useful for archeological purposes, and in the Dutch fortress of Tayouan has been applied successfully, in identifying the existence of the remaining foundations of the fortress. That's why I applied this technique at the end of 2002, after knowing that a team conducted by Prof. Lee, from the Engineering Department of Cheng-kung University had made at that time a reconstruction of the foundations of Anping castle.

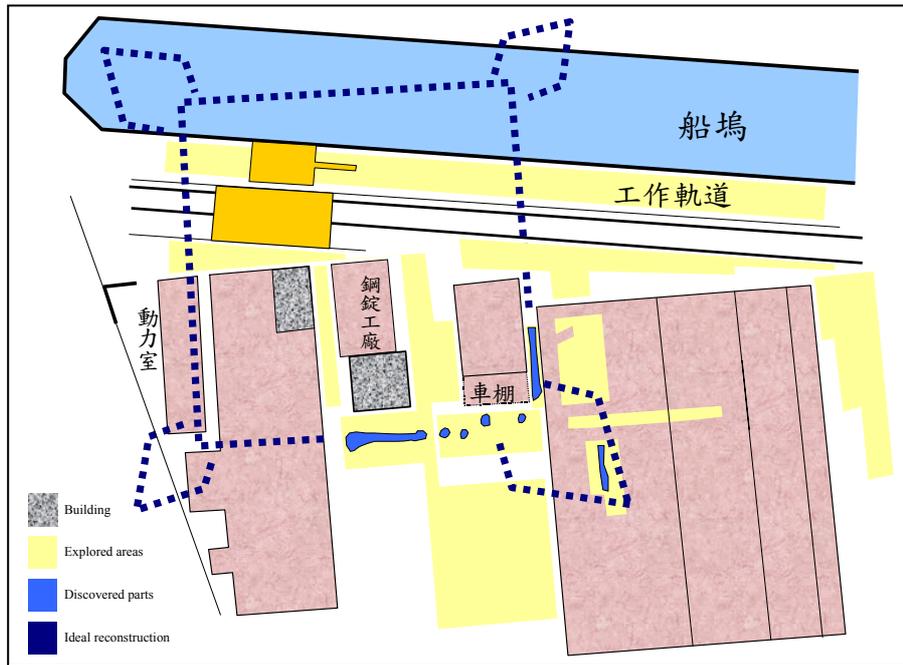
I contacted Prof. Lee to make the same research in Jilong as we did under the auspices of the National Bureau of Culture. The case on Anping fortress and the one in Jilong are quite different, because some remaining of Anping are still visible, and it is easy to foresee the location of the rest of the foundations with the help of old maps. In Jilong everything was destroyed or put underneath. Even before the research we cannot be sure if the foundations still are there or were reutilized to build the shipyard.



During the GPR exploration

In November of 2002 we started the exploration with the Ground Penetrating Radar technique. The work was easy to conduct because the area is quite empty, and the shipbuilding Company helped us moving the cars from the area. Nevertheless some areas covered by iron pans, or machines, etc. were impossible to be explored. The results we got at that time were very promising because showed to lines of stones, located 1,5 ms underneath, forming one angle of 90 degrees. We measured the area and we transferred these results to a general map; and assuming that, first, the square angle formed by the irregular lines and points that appear in the map correspond to the angle of the walls near Bastion San Antonio el Grande, or North Holland (something that is it is totally in accordance with the comparisons of the old maps and Japanese ones); and, second, that the size of the fortress is 99 m (as stated by Kees Zadvliet), we come with the following picture as the ideal reconstruction of the location of the fortress, in a floor map and on an aerial photograph:

³⁵ Ground penetrating radar (GPR) is an electromagnetic geophysical method that involves transmitting radar energy into the subsurface and receiving radar reflections off of subsurface interfaces. The method is analogous to the seismic reflection method.



The future of the fortress

We have talked about the “conservationist fever” for historical relics that spread through Taiwan led by the Japanese colonial government and the failure in achieving some goals, like the preservation of San Salvador fortress. Moving towards the present, in the last decades, we have also experienced in Taiwan how many Japanese buildings in the center of Taipei, or Chinese *sanheyuan* (三合院) houses have been torn down because they were too old, destroyed and located in very expensive areas. Fortunately, things have changed dramatically in the past years and a new sensibility has taken root. Nowadays in Taiwan there is an “museographic fever” that leads the government cultural agencies to recover and display the artifacts of the history of Taiwan. But, usually these agencies have to face the fact that there is too little left to be displayed, although there are enough budgets for building museums.

I think that the southern corner of Heping Island—where the old fortress was located and is now occupied by a shipbuilding factory—should be declared under special protection as soon as possible. But, even if we manage to find some foundations of the old San Salvador fortress, is it worth to preserve them? Is it not just another archeological displaced European rarity in Asia? I do not think so, because most probably it is on top of a very rich archeological area. Since the old times, it was one of the main gates to Taiwan, and its grounds and submarine environs must have great relics that can make us to understand better the history of Taiwan.

In developed countries the shipbuilding industry is not sustainable and the government usually remodels their deserted space for the usage of the citizens, after improving their ecological conditions, as it had happened in Bilbao (Spain). Certainly, the existence of the shipbuilding industry of Heping Island had helped indirectly to preserve the place from construction and ownership division. In that sense, it offers technical facilities to be converted in a kind of cultural or archeological theme park. Still we are on time. Besides, the government is the main stockholder of that company and this can facilitate the transformation in a new usage. But, if nothing is done, that magnificent place, the southern cape of Heping Island facing the inner part of the Jilong Bay, one of the most beautiful coastal sceneries of northern Taiwan, can be easily converted in another glamorous residential area. If this is the case, the city of Jilong could lose their last opportunity to increase the cultural status of Taiwan.

Since the end of 2002 I have tried to call the attention of the importance of this fortress among local and national authorities in Taiwan to preserve the area in the most suitable way, but my efforts were so humble that achieved nothing. I think that more work should be done with the GPR system to see if we still can discover new parts opposite to the walls that we know already. But, of course, only a final excavation will tell us the reality of the possible remaining foundations. If successful this will give more incentive to design a kind of virtual reconstruction.

The place has many other possibilities because it is located in a very wonderful natural area. The future of the shipyard is not sure, since these businesses are not competitive in developing countries. Before the area is converted into a luxurious residential area, it is urgent for the authorities concerned in this matter to start archeological excavations to prevent a possible cultural depredation of the place. For example, in one of my attempts to engage in a joint venture with an archeologist for the excavation of the supposedly remaining foundations of the fortress, we saw how an old Japanese workshop, with old tools and a huge forge, still

was there. But, exactly on that day the workers started to demolish it; we managed to stop the work for a while, but some time later the place was totally flattened. To offer some ideas for the preservation of the place I had a general concept that can be explained through this map, drawn by the architect Lin Hao (林豪) on 15 August 2004. I hope it can inspire the people of Jilong in preserving their own history.



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Annex: Memorial describing of the forts in San Salvador in 1636 (SIT, pp. 258-261)

Letter of Alonso García Romero, written in Manila, on the 12th of July 1636. García Romero, after finishing his appointment as governor of Isla Hermosa, reported to the Viceroy of New Spain about the situation of the island. He includes a memorial of the situation of the forces.

“Most excellent lord: I served as Governor of Isla Hermosa for two years and subjected the natives in the vicinity to our power, an accomplishment that my predecessors had not achieved in eight years. Over a thousand converted to Christianity; the other towns asked for priests because the scarcity has caused that they receive nothing more than the waters of Baptism. And the commerce, my lord, I established in a way that over 300 Vp worth of cloth and silk of all types were put to use in two years. A quantity of silks, satin, velvet and other goods went back to China due to the lack of money... I enclose a description of the armed forces of Isla Hermosa and the state in which I left them:

a) The principal fortification forms a square that consists of four elevated walled fortresses: two are of solid stone; one is only of stone (and surrounded by) a moat; the other is of wood. All four stretches of wall are of solid stone and lack only the parapets.

Within sight of this fort are another three. The farthest is *la retirada*, which, following a straight line should be 600 paces away. The other two are 500 paces away. All are completely of solid stone. *la retirada* is triangular in shape with passages on in each side. It is invulnerable. The others a ... enough to defend an inlet that protects the other fortress... All assist the main fort with the following artillery supply:

In the fortress of San Salvador, which is the principal fort:

- four bronze cannons, each one an 18-pounder
- two fourth-grade cannons of bronze, made like a culverin; each one a 12-pounder
- one cannon-type bronze artillery piece; an eight-pounder
- one sacre of alloyed bronze; an eight-pounder
- one sacre of alloyed bronze; an eight-pounder
- three bronze sacres ... ; each a five-pounder
- three falcons, one of cast iron; each one a four-pounder
- two artillery pieces of cast iron; cannon-type; each one a four-pounder

The San Millán fort has the following artillery (*la mira*):

- one fourth-grade cannon in bronze; a 12-pounder
- two sacres of bronze; each one an eight-pounder
- a bronze falcon; a four-pounder

The artillery in *la retirada* (Fort San Antón):

- a medium-sized low-grade bronze culverin; a 12-pounder
- two bronze sacres; each one an eight-pounder
- a cast-iron blunderbuss; a 20-pounder

The artillery in the turret of Fort San Luis (*el cubo*):

- a low-grade sacre in bronze; a seven-pounder
- two bronze falcons; each one a four-pounder

b) The artillery and the condition of the fort called Santo Domingo in Tamchuy. By land, the distance from the main fortress is 15 leagues; 10 leagues when following a straight line. Its site and dimensions consist of three elevated wooden fortresses and a watchtower with a continuing

wall that forms an irregular square, as the area is big and the three elevated forts do not form a triangle. I would have wanted to remedy this if I had held that post for a year more.

It has the following artillery:

- a third-grade bronze cannon, each one a 15-pounder
- two bronze sacres, each one an eight-pounder
- a bronze artillery piece, cannon-type; an eight-pounder
- a second-grade ... of bronze; a five-pounder
- a cast-iron falcon; a three-pounder
- two cast-iron blunderbusses; each one a 12-pounder

The following comprise the gunpowder and ammunition in all the fortresses:

- Over 200 quintales of gunpowder in porcelain
and clay jars that best conserve them V200
- Over 300 artillery pieces V300
- 18-pound cannon balls V649
- 15-pound cannon balls V433
- 12-pound cannon balls V633
- Nine-pound cannon balls V132
- Eight-pound cannon balls V309
- Seven-pound cannon balls V163
- Five-pound cannon balls V414
- Four-pound cannon balls V804
- Three-pound cannon balls V663
- Two-pound cannon balls V236
- Diamond-tipped bullets in cartridge belts V290

These forts are defended by three companies of the Spanish infantry, each with 80 soldiers, or a total of 240:

- 15 breast-plated pages who are standard bearers, play drums and fifes
- a sergeant major, who is one of the good and strong captains
- two adjutants of the sergeant major
- 8 posts for an accountant, paymaster and supplies keeper of the Royal house and other minor officers
- 11 artillery men with their constable
- 10 sailors and six cabin boys who go about in the brigantines
- one company (40 men) of soldiers from Pampanga
- another company of 60 spirited natives from Cagayan
- 12 carpenters for the artillery wagons
- 95 Negroes from ... who serve as construction laborers.