The Massacre of 1603

Chinese Perception of the Spanish on the Philippines

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From a historiographical point of view, the incident of 1603 has acquired a special significance in the long and tragic history of Chinese massacres on the Philippines. For, when compared to all the rest of the massacres, this is the best chronicled, not only in Spanish, but also in Chinese sources. Moreover, chronicles in both languages include the same facts and are alike in the ordering of events.

When these sources – especially the Chinese – begin their account of the massacre of 1603, they refer to a remote, perhaps unrelated incident that is, nevertheless, significant. Tensions had started in 1593, when two hundred and fifty Chinese were forcibly recruited to row the ships which Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas, then Philippine Governor-General, sent to conquer the Moluccas Islands. Soon after they set sail, the Chinese on the flag ship staged a mutiny, assassinated Dasmariñas, and took over the vessel. Weeks later, the son of the murdered governor, Luís Pérez Dasmariñas, then based in Cebu, sought vengeance. He asked for the assistance of Chinese authorities of Fujian, who welcomed the young Dasmariñas' ambassadors and offered them their help as well.

The second episode happened ten years later, in the spring of 1603, when 'three mandarins' arrived in Manila on a strange mission: to explore a 'mountain of gold' abundant with trees that bore gold. This visit raised the suspicion among the Spanish on the Philippines, already so accustomed to intermittent threats of conquest, particularly from the Japanese. They concluded that this was probably an advance party for a future invasion of Manila. At that time, the Chinese in this city outnumbered the Spanish by almost ten to one.

The third event, the Sangley uprising, happened in autumn of that same year, although the reasons for this uprising remain unclear. The motives range from the desire of the Chinese to dominate Manila, to an attempt to abort the Spaniards' moves that seemed to lead to their elimination. After some initial uncertainty about who would eventually win, the rebellion was put down by the Spanish who, together with Philippine and Japanese troops, massacred some 20,000 Chinese.

Both sources also point to a more or less common epilogue. After the Spaniards' first attempts at reconciliation and China's indignant reactions, both parties reached a compromise and the agitation vanished as though nothing had ever happened. Former trade relations were resumed, allowing the Chinese to again settle in Manila, even if both sides harboured grudges against each other for what had happened earlier.

What I now propose is to try to bring together the reports concerning the massacre from the Spanish as well as the Chinese sources. The comparison may allow us better to understand the causes of the tragedy of 1603.

The Sources

The Spanish manuscript sources that document the massacre can be found in their entirety in the General Archive of the Indies and were published almost completely in Colin and Pastells' *Labor Evangelica*, that is to say, the new edition of the work of Colin, edited by Pastells in 1900.[1] Others were reproduced by Pastells in his joint work with Navas.[2] Some of the documents have been reproduced, immediately translated into English and published in Blair and Robertson's *The Philippine Islands*.[3] These sources may be classified into two groups: those released during the event – which served as 'news updates' – those written shortly after the incident, giving a global view of what had happened; and those that appear in the books that appeared a bit later, placing the incident within the general context of Philippine history, as Morga[4] does in his book of 1609, or as part of the conquest of the Moluccas, as Argensola[5] does in his work of 1612. The letters and reports from the officers of the Royal Audiencia of Manila, and those of the superiors of the various religious orders belong to the first group. These documents give personal viewpoints which, despite the fact that they contest each other, are not contradictory, but rather complimentary. Of course, all deplore the massacre even when they deem it a justified, though extreme measure. At the same time, these sources differ mainly in the analysis of the precautions that could have been taken to avoid the massacre, or of the actions that indirectly provoked it. Argensola tries to consolidate all the information that reached the court during the years immediately after the massacre, including personal reports from the main players of the event. Argensola may have had the Augustinian Diego de Guevara as his principal source, because this priest moved to Madrid to attend to some of his order's concerns shortly after the incident. In comparison to Argensola's account, the work of Dr. Morga, himself an eyewitness to the event, is much briefer and simpler in tackling the topics and conclusions that were formulated in Manila immediately after the uprising (Morga left Manila in 1606).

In contrast, the Chinese sources are official and therefore anonymous. They are shorter than those of the Spanish and seem to be less defensive, even if they also seem to reflect partisan tendencies.[6] They usually

acknowledge provocation on the part of the Chinese expatriates, and yet refuse to be judged by foreigners. These documents sometimes cite specific words or actions of an officer from Fujian, although they are generally presented as part of an official investigation that was also transmitted officially. Also, since the events had taken place outside China, it was difficult for the imperial officers to verify them, which is why they put forward brief and detached explanations. Nevertheless, the massacre of 1603 occurred during a period of stability in the Ming Dynasty; thus, their capacity to inquire into and annotate an event that happened outside their shores was much greater than, for example, the time when the massacres of 1639 or of 1662 took place. Of these, the former occurred on the eve of the fall of the Ming Dynasty, while the latter is more often associated with the Ming resistance – during which Koxinga[7] was dying in his Taiwanese hide out – than with the Manchus, the new power in China, still in the process of establishing themselves in the country.

The Incident of 25 October 1593

Let us now take a brief look at Argensola's account in Chapter 6 of his book.[8] He states that governor Gómez Pérez de Dasmariñas prepared four galleys to attack the Moluccas but experienced difficulty in finding soldiers to man them. When the flagship was the last one left to be filled, 'he ordered that of the Chinese contract workers entering the Philippines, 250 were to be taken to man the flagship. The Royal Treasury was to pay two pesos a month each [...] and, in the best of cases, they were only to row during calm weather.' The governor forced the governor of the Chinese to provide these 250 men, who were to set sail against their will. Finally, on 17 October the naval crew left for Ternate. However, as soon as the flagship moved a short distance offshore and the Chinese oarsmen were put to work – unaccustomed as they were to the task and spurred on by brutal and menacing foremen – the workers decided to stage an uprising, preferring to die in the attempt than to continue rowing for the Spanish. The rebellion took place on the night of 25 October, claiming the lives of the governor himself and a majority of the eighty Spanish crew-members.

Bad weather persisted, which was why the mutineers only went as far as the Ilocos region, where they were assaulted by natives. They left the surviving Spaniards behind, among whom was Juan de Cuéllar, secretary of the governor and the Franciscan Montilla, both of whom managed to reach the coast. Afterwards, the Chinese decided to sail to China, but landed in Vietnam instead, where 'the king of Tunquin seized their cargo [...] and left the galley to sink on the coast. The Chinese were dispersed and they fled to the different provinces.'[9] The Spanish survivors informed Manila of what had happened. The rest of the navy based in Cebu under the command of the governor's son, Luís Pérez Dasmariñas, returned to Manila. There, he was appointed interim governor of the islands.

Then, in 1594, a strange thing happened. In retrospect, this incident seems to have served as a 'rehearsal' for what was to occur later. That year, the Chinese assumed that the Spanish navy had left for the Molucca Islands. As Argensola puts it:

> There appeared in Manila a great number of ships from China, without the customary goods, but rather loaded with men and weapons. On board were seven mandarins, counted among the senior Viceroys or governors of their provinces [...] and they went to visit Don Luís with great pomp and an escort of men [...] saying that they were on the lookout for Chinese who were going about those lands without license.[10]

Dasmariñas welcomed them and gave each one a gold chain. In the end, he concluded that they had come either to conquer or to sack Manila, but had changed their minds when they saw the presence of the Spanish armada. Argensola adds that since the Chinese who killed Dasmariñas' father were from Quan Chou, he sent his cousin, Fernando de Castro, to that province to give an account of the mutiny. However, the trip was postponed due to bad weather. It is noteworthy that neither Argensola nor Morga says that the Dasmariñas took advantage of the situation to take up the matter with the mandarins (although it seems that he did, as deduced from the Chinese sources that we shall see next).

For example, the *Dong Xi Yang Gao* is more exhaustive in this respect. It states that Luís Dasmariñas (called Maulin here), immediately after replacing his father, sent some priests to inform the Chinese authorities in Macao about the uprising. These priests bore a letter, the translation of which is preserved in the Chinese sources. It also adds that the magistrates of Fujian continued to send merchant vessels to bring back the Chinese who had been living in Luzon for too long. According to Argensola, this detail coincides with what the mandarins explained to Dasmariñas. The Chinese chronicles continue: 'The governor of Luzon provided these ships with food and also gave them a letter (addressed to the Chinese government). He verbally aired his complaints about the way the Chinese treated the murdered governor, his father. And he gave them an edict, sealed in a gold box which, together with the above mentioned letter, was wrapped in red silk and sent to China on a merchant vessel.'[11]

The 'Three Mandarins' Arrive in Manila (May 1603)

We have said that the aforementioned incident seems to have nothing to do with the one that took place nine years later. Nonetheless, the parallels are great, as we shall now see. The events arising from the arrival of another group of mandarins are well documented in the Spanish sources. There are three types of information, all of which are complimentary. Those from the royal officials, that is, from the governor, Don Pedro de Acuña, as well

as the listeners of the Audiencia, Jerónimo de Salazar and Tellez de Almazán, who show themselves to be hostile to and suspicious of the governor. Secondly, we have the sources of the ecclesiastics, and thirdly the information that the Chinese themselves give, and which they offer in consideration of the Spanish authorities. In particular, there is a letter that was written four days before while at sea by Chanchian, the head of the Chinese expedition, which was submitted to the governor who sent it immediately for translation. Likewise, there are two other documents corresponding to some 'petitions of Chinese to the Chinese emperor', which ended up in the hands of Archbishop Benavides who then translated them. He sent the king his own letter in which – 'enriched' after his own inquiries – he analysed the situation completely.[12] However, we do not actually know if Benavides made them public or not, and therefore whether they should be considered a part of the information that the Spanish had access to.

Gathering all the reports (Argensola's and those of the two judges of the Audiencia, Jerónimo de Salazar and Tellez de Almazan, both hostile toward the governor, Pedro de Acuña), this series of events might have taken place as follows:

Friday, 23 May. Three mandarins landed in Manila, displaying their *insignias* as judges. With great display and an entourage of fifty, they sought an audience with the governor and gave him a letter written four days earlier on the high seas. In this letter, signed by Chanchian, military chief of Fujian, the mandarins explained the reason for this trip. They wished to verify the existence of a fabulous mountain in Cavite, believed to yield 100,000 *taeles* of gold and 300,000 *taeles* of silver a year. They claimed that everyone could go and dig there and that the Chinese had already taken a great quantity of these metals back to China. Chanchian also indicated that he had with him a fellow named Tio Heng, the man who reported to the emperor of the existence of the said mountain, as well as a eunuch called Cochay, who had received specific orders from the emperor to investigate the matter. Another mandarin was present, besides Cochay and the immediate chief of Chanchian.[13] He added that he did not believe in the existence of such a mountain, and presumed it to be a lie. Nevertheless, the governor had nothing to fear, since it was his duty to look into the matter. Afterwards, the governor had them housed in special lodgings inside the city. The fact that they flaunted their insignias as judges and that the governor allowed them to do so, incurred the ire of the members of the Audiencia.

From 24 May to 26 May (Saturday to Monday), the mandarins begin to mete out justice on their countrymen. Meanwhile, Salazar, the fiscal of the Audiencia, carries out his own investigation. Within this period, the governor allows the mandarins to bring their entourage to Tondo, where the Christian sangleys live.

27 May (Tuesday). Salazar presents a report in a public session of the Audiencia. The report is approved and the governor requested to stop the

operations of the mandarins so that the investigations may continue. The friction between the Audiencia and the governor worsens. Moreover, the judges of the Audiencia complain of being relegated to the sidelines.

The following days, the Audiencia desisted its moves because, finally, the governor published an edict prohibiting the mandarins from administering their justice and from flaunting their *insignia*. On the eve of their departure, they go to Cavite to see the famous mountain. With them went Second Lieutenant Cervantes, as well as the governor of the sangleys, Juan Bautista de Vera,[14] who seems to have been constantly present. There, Tio Heng, unable to satisfactorily clear himself of the deception, had the Spanish bearing down on him with death threats. However, the mandarins intercede for his pardon. The Spanish grew even more suspicious. On the day of their departure, the governor received the mandarins and honoured them with gifts. As he sent them off, they apologised for the confusion they had caused and then sailed back to China.

We can learn much about these mandarins and further clarify the case by examining complimentary data from the Chinese sources. In this attempt to consolidate diverse information, we can conclude that the speaker of the group was the mandarin Gan Yi-chen (Chanchian in the letter), a centurion and probably the military chief of Fujian. The second mandarin (not mentioned in the letter) was Wang Shi-ho, the magistrate of the Hai Cheng district, where many of the Chinese immigrants came from. The third mandarin must logically have been the eunuch Gao Tsai (who appears in the letter as Cochai). Accompanying these three dignitaries were Zhang Yi (Tio Heng) and Yang Ying-long, who had informed the emperor in Beijing of the alleged mountain of gold. Yang Ying-long was another centurion whom the Chinese sources accuse of collaborating with Zhang Yi (who probably used the former's clout to get an audience with the emperor and consequently win his favour). The emperor actually allowed this expedition, despite opposition from various people in his court, who not only thought it a ridiculous project, but feared that it could also be a source of trouble.

According to these sources, one might think that the two magistrates Gan Yi-chen and Wang Shi-ho were also of the same opinion. In fact, the latter was so distraught over the recent expedition that he died soon after they arrived in Fujian. The other magistrates reported Zhang Yi's behaviour to the emperor, demanding that he be punished for trying to deceive the imperial government and for bringing about its humiliation in a foreign land. The role of Gao Tsai, on the other hand, is more difficult to interpret. Some sources depict him as the superintendent of the Beijing expedition, while others show him as Fujian's quartermaster general for taxes, who made a living off the Chinese maritime trade. The *Ming Shi Lu* gives its version of the conduct of these three: 'The diabolical Fujianes Zhang Yi, devised an evil plan to propose the excavation of a gold mine in Luzon. But his real intention was to conspire with the eunuchs and provoke the barbarians. Yang Ying-long was his partner [...] Zhang Yi was beheaded

and [his head] shown to the coastal provinces as a warning to people of his sort.'[15]

Finally, it is worth pointing out that the Chinese sources agree with the Spanish, both indicating that this trip had been the cause of the Spanish suspicions and the subsequent massacre four months later. But, the questions are whether the dispatch had been an advance party or not, whether or not it came to study the possibility of invasion of Manila, and whether it was piratical or in an organised form. At that time the Spanish could not know the answers to these questions, although an excess of suspicions could turn itself into an untenable situation that might end up out of control. This is precisely what happened.

The Massacre of 1603

The Preparation

On 18 December 1603, when the incident had ended, governor Pedro de Acuña wrote the king an account wherein he explained his behaviour during the entire event. He begins by stating that the arrival of the mandarins had made him fear a possible invasion from China. This was why his eventual moves, preventive and defensive in nature, were limited to the following: (1) To create space, he ordered the demolition of the houses in the Parian that was adjacent to the walls of the city and, at the same time, corrected some of the walls' defects. (2) He asked the mayors of the district and the magistrates of the Parian to submit to him a list of immigrants under their jurisdiction and the weapons in their possession. They were also asked to indicate whether these people were to be trusted or not. The order was fulfilled. (3) He carried out regular inspections of the artisans (such as blacksmiths) in particular, and commissioned the manufacture of bows, arrows, pikes, and the like for the royal storehouse. At the same time, he ordered that all of these weapons be collected and transported. (4) In case of need, he had provisions stored. (5) He hired sangleys to build a canal with the goal of creating a moat for the city, should the need ever arise.

Additionally, Acuña makes a distinction, also mentioned in other Spanish sources, between the Chinese merchants who had settled in the Parian for years, and new recent arrivals, who were vagabonds and troublemakers who had nothing to lose and could not return to China due to the crimes they had committed.[16] Acuña blames the subsequent events on these new arrivals, arguing that they were the ones who paved the way for the unrest: 'in order to bring the merchants and the peaceful people to their side, [they convinced them] them that the measures that were being taken were meant to kill the Chinese'.[17]

The Chinese sources, on the other hand, echo some of Acuña's points, but present them under an offensive point of view, offering a different interpretation and relating that which most directly affected them. For

example, the *Huang Ming Xiang Hsu Lu* shows that the Spanish prepared for the massacre ahead of time, since 'they began to buy from the Chinese all the metal objects that they had. The Chinese, on the other hand, sold all the iron they found because they saw that they could profit from it' (point 3 from Acuña).[18] This same idea is found in the *Ming Shi*, which also adds that 'the Chinese were obliged to register their names and to be divided into groups of 300' (point 2 from Acuña).[19]

The Beginning: Sangley Uprising or Anti-Chinese Pogrom?

Another interesting issue to consider is that of responsibility. The Spanish sources (Morga, Argensola, Acuña, etc.) emphatically state that the Chinese staged an uprising. Benavides, the bishop of Manila, noted in a letter to the king that 'the multitude of Chinese was so great, among them, base and vicious men who spread the rumour (which is absolutely false, but not for them) that the Spanish were going to kill every one of them, which was why they provoked a rebellion on the night of the eve of St Francis. They armed themselves and on that day killed several Spaniards who pursued them, among them, Luís Pérez de Dasmariñas'.[20] On 18 December, when everything was over, governor Pedro de Acuña told the king that 'according to the investigations [...] and what some of those involved have declared, it goes without saying that the uprising was instigated from China, and the stage set by all, if not some, of the mandarins who had been here'.[21]

According to the Spanish sources (since the Chinese are silent about it), the Chinese had also been girding themselves for the uprising. The Chinese Juan Bautista de Vera had been constructing a more or less fortified zone a half-league from Tondo (which Argensola calls a 'sugar refinery'), where some provisions and arms were stored.

The Unfolding of Events

Because it is what was most interesting to relate to the Spanish, the uprising is already well known. To summarise the actual struggle that took place, we will loosely follow Morga's account.

The evening of 3 October (Friday). The uprising was scheduled to take place on the last day of November, but realising that they were going to be discovered, the sangleys postponed it to the third of October. On this day, at 11 p.m., some 2000 men (or according to the sangley who was under torture, 'forty captains to one hundred and fifty men'), began to gather in the 'fort' of Tondo. That night, Juan Bautista de Vera visited the governor to inform him of what was happening. Thinking that de Vera was in cahoots with them, the governor threw him into prison. The Chinese, noting de Vera's absence, appointed another Christian sangley, Juan Untae, de Vera's godson, to replace him.[22] That same night, Luís Dasmariñas secured himself in the monastery of Binondo with a small group of soldiers. The Chinese flew into action, burning some houses and then returning to their 'fort'.

The morning of 4 October (Saturday). The sangleys of the Parian (that

is, the peaceful old-timers who identified with the Spanish and include some Christian) were asked to enter the city, but they refuses to do so because of doubts as to who would be the victor in this conflict. They decided to remain on the Parian. Dasmariñas left Binondo for Tondo to fortify himself in the church with one hundred and forty harquebusiers. One thousand and five hundred Chinese rebels showed up. There was a fight to take over the church. Five hundred Chinese died, while the rest retreated to the 'fort'. Dasmariñas pursued them and died in the attempt. The Spanish were thrown into confusion.

5 October (Sunday). Realising that de Vera was not going to return, the rebels killed Untae and coerced the Parian residents into joining forces with them. As they made for Manila, they ravaged everything in their way. The city put up a tough resistance and many men died. In the evening, they retreated to the Parian and Dilao. The Spanish likewise pressed the Parian residents to side with them. Overcome by this psychological stress, some Chinese – among them, a relative of de Vera – hanged themselves. Both sides braced themselves for a second attack.

6 October (Monday) brought another assault and renewed resistance. A Spaniard, with the help of a Japanese corps, launched an unsuccessful offensive. An armada of Pintados suddenly made its way through the river and blasted the Chinese lines with canons. The Chinese then divided themselves into three groups and penetrated the inland. One group made for the Tingues of Pasig, another for Ayonbon [Bayombong] and the third, the most numerous, for Laguna de Bay, the mountains of San Pablo and the province of Batangas.

8 October (Wednesday) and the succeeding days saw the Chinese abandon the city, with the Spanish in hot pursuit. It seems that the first two groups of Chinese were easily annihilated, since they are not mentioned again. The third group, starving and unarmed, left a path of devastation. Luís de Velasco with seventy of his men was at their heels, killed many each day. Finally, Velasco perished at the hands of the Chinese who had set up fort in San Pablo. Argensola added that the native Philippines, instead of siding with the Chinese, lent a hand in the massacre.

20 October, the end of the rebellion. A new detachment of Spaniards, Japanese and 1500 natives of Pampanga and the Tagalog provinces is formed in Manila. They soon killed off all the Chinese who had secured themselves in San Pablo and Batangas.

22 October (Argensola's date), the trial of Juan de Vera. In the succeeding days, other Chinese met the same fate. Only three hundred were pardoned, with the rest being sent to the galleys.

The Chinese sources are less detailed in describing the operations, perhaps because of the small number of sangleys who survived. It is thus more difficult to establish a clear parallel between the two accounts, since they mention actions that are absent from the Spanish sources. Consequently, there are a number of discrepancies. The *Ming Shi* relates that when the

Chinese discovered the Spanish' plot to massacre them, they 'retreated to Tsai Yuen' (which may be translated as 'the plantation' and may refer to Juan Bautista de Vera's strategic 'fort' and to Argensola's 'sugar refinery').[23] The Spanish 'chief' then sent soldiers to go after them (this may well refer to Luís Dasmariñas' move or to the arrival of the army of Pintados). The Chinese were unarmed and many were killed, with the survivors fleeing to the Talun mountain.[24] The Spanish attacked the mountain once more, while the Chinese put up a desperate resistance. The Spanish suffered momentary defeat, which caused their 'chief' (probably the captain of the expedition or the governor himself) to negotiate a truce. The Chinese, thinking that this was some trick, killed the messengers, thus driving the Spanish 'chief' to exasperation. He abandoned his mountain camp and retreated to the neighbouring town, simultaneously setting up ambush parties in the surrounding areas. The Chinese rebels were starving and therefore decided to go down the mountain and plunder the town,[25] only to be ambushed by the Spanish troops. Twenty five thousand Chinese perished in the massacre.[26] The *Dong Xi Yang Kao* offers a different explanation for this final massacre, colouring it with superstitious, even apocalyptic visions. It says that when the Chinese descended the Talun mountain to attack the town, 10,000 of them were killed in an ambush, while others fled to the valleys and died there of starvation. Then it adds:

> There was a strong downpour while they were on the Talun mountain, and as they stood beneath the rain, they saw something shine out in the midnight sky. There was an earthquake. The Chinese panicked and began to kill each other by mistake. The Spanish, taking advantage of the situation, were able to kill many of them. That same month, a flood in Chang Chou took the lives of over 10,000 families.[27]

The Aftermath

After the massacre, the Spanish did three things. First, they attempted to clarify whether the uprising could be connected with the coming of the three mandarins. Various testimonies given by the governor seem to indicate this, but their validity is doubtful since they were obtained through torture. The royal officials insisted on the same idea. In this way, Juan Bautista de Vera would have been more of a scapegoat than the one responsible for a conspiracy (Rizal's theory).

Second, the Spanish made an inventory of the goods of the massacred rebels, which they placed at the disposition of their families. This was made known through a mission to Fujian. Third, an attempt was made to resume the necessary trade relations. With respect to this last point, Argensola (who seems to have occasionally copied Morga in this point), explains that Captain Marco de la Cueva was sent to Macao with the Dominican Luís

Gandullo to inform the Portuguese of what had happened, so that they might be warned of 'rumours of war' from China. At the same time, they brought letters for the '*tutones, aytaos* and *visitadores*' of the provinces of Guangdong and Fujian, explaining the conduct of the Chinese and the Spanish response. What happened was not only known in Macao; news of the Spanish in Macao and the reason for their presence there soon reached Quan Chou, which was why 'the wealthy Captains Guansan, Sinu and Guanchan, who regularly traded in Manila', went to see them. They gave their own interpretation about what had really happened, brought letters to the mandarins, and encouraged the merchants and ships of Quan Chou to go to Manila. Cueva's mission was a success, for soon after his return, in May of 1604, thirteen ships arrived from China, filling up two ships bound for New Spain with their cargo. Thus ends the Spanish account.

The Chinese sources, in addition to being very detailed (in this case, they were interested in formulating a more complete evaluation of the event), also agree with the Spanish references. For example, the inventory of goods is mentioned in the *Dong Xi Yang Kao*:

> The Spanish governor had all the possessions of the Chinese immigrants stored in big warehouses, marked with the names of their owners. Then he wrote the magistrate of Fujian, urging the relatives of the deceased to go to Manila to collect their belongings. But there was a Chinese called Huang, a good friend of the governor, who, pretending to be a relative of one of the massacred, fraudulently went off with some goods.[28]

However, what is even more interesting is the final evaluation made by the emperor and officials of Fujian, who were then deciding whether or not they should resume trade relations with the Spanish. We came across two versions of the official act, the first of which is found in the *Ming Shi*:

> The Magistrate Xu Xue-ju[29] sent a report to the court. The emperor was shaken and began to mourn for the dead. On the 12th month of the year 32 [1604], he called on his official magistrates to investigate the case. These officials presented their conclusions in the court. The emperor said: 'Zhang Yi, etc. have deceived the imperial court and brought about conflict in a foreign land. Twenty thousand people and commoners have been massacred. They have disgraced our Empire. Their execution is not deemed an excess. They must be beheaded and their heads shown to all seas. But the governor of Luzon murdered people without license. We shall leave the officials to decide his punishment and they shall inform us of this.

Xu Xue-ju wrote the authorities of Luzon, accusing the governor of massacre and demanding that the widows and children of the victims be sent back to China. For the moment, China did not launch a punitive attack on

Luzon. Afterwards, the Chinese began to return to Luzon in trickles, and the Spanish, seeing the profitability of commerce with China, did not prevent the Chinese from re-establishing themselves there. The Chinese population began to grow once more.[30]

The second more extensive report is found in the *Ming Jing Shi Wen Pien*, which contains the report made by the said Administrative Commissioner of Fujian, Xu Xue-ju, who explains his move, and the memorandum he sent to the emperor, particularly the so-called 'Report to Emperor Wan-li regarding the recall of Chinese merchants in Luzon', of the *Ming Jing Shi Wen Pien*.[31] Here, Xu Xue-ju speaks for himself, situating the problem, and declaring afterwards that he had sent an edict-letter to Luzon after having reviewed the problem from its early stages. He acknowledges that Zhang Yi's deception caused the massacre, and assumes the responsibility for it. However, he considers the Spanish intervention unacceptable and unlicensed by the Emperor (up to here, the anterior document is repeated almost verbatim). Consequently, the magistrate of Fujian clamours for vengeance, citing that what is most unjust in the Spanish manoeuvre is their non-recognition of the fact that the development of Luzon was in a great part due to the hard work of the Chinese living there. There was no response from the Emperor, and so he was sent another communication bearing the same message. The Emperor ultimately rejected the move, basing his decision on the following five points: (1) Due to their long tradition in trade and commerce, the people of Luzon were practically their subjects. (2) The antagonism, as well as the confrontation, took place outside of China. (3) Merchants are humble folk and, therefore, not worth waging battle for. (4) These merchants, upon going to Luzon, abandoned their families without considering their filial ties. (5) An expedition to Luzon will only drain their armed forces. The matter was certainly discussed in court, creating great tension, and its reverberations were felt for a long time after, even until 1605, when Mateo Ricci commented on it.[32]

Thus, Xu Xue-ju was left with no other recourse than to end this letter with a warning to the Spanish: they should be grateful to the Emperor, they must change their attitude, and they should restore the properties of those who perished in the massacre. Only with this would trade be resumed. On the other hand, if they did not comply with these demands, then the Chinese would send thousands of warships with the families of the deceased aboard, along with mercenaries from the vassal states, to conquer and divide Luzon among themselves.[33] Thus ends the letter sent to the Philippines.

Conclusion

To better understand the general process of the massacre – particularly the role of 'the three mandarins' in Manila who have been considered the main cause of the massacre – we will consider four factors. (Moreover,

these factors were clearly alluded to by Benavides in the letter he sent the King dated 5 July 1603, which was accompanied by two singular documents already cited in the beginning of this paper.) In the first place, it is proper to point out that the time during which these events took place was marked by a rampant increase of piracy in Chinese waters, as well as by the express prohibition on Chinese subjects from engaging in maritime commerce at a time when it was gaining popularity in the international arena. Consequently, it was common practice for Chinese patrons to seek alternative and profitable solutions. Under such circumstances, Manila was considered an important centre for the export of silver in Southeast Asia (thanks to the ships from New Spain), just when the demand for this metal was on the rise in China. Because of this, it is not surprising that Manila's neighbours took interest in this fragile colony, or that new risks arose: principally, the unexpected invasion of Japanese pirates and, from 1600 onwards, the appearance of Dutch pirates (Olivier de Noort).

Taken within this context, Manila was regularly flooded with Chinese determined to establish themselves here. Even if this meant a contribution to the city's progress through their artisan skills, they posed themselves increasingly as a threat to the Spanish populace that made up only ten per cent of the city's total population. The Chinese menace was certainly confirmed in 1593, when two hundred and fifty Chinese contract workers murdered the governor of the Philippines. This also seemed to be the case in 1594 when seven mandarins appeared with great ado and veiled motives at the helm of a fully-equipped armada, and it was indeed alarming when more mandarins appeared in 1603 to mete out justice on their compatriots. Authors like Argensola do not doubt that their intentions were evil. In such accounts, authors add in descriptions of how eight Chinese trade junks arrived in Manila while the mandarins were there, assuring the Spanish of the real purpose of the Chinese conquest. Moreover, Argensola adds, while the mandarins pressured Zhang Yi to explain the existence of the mountain of gold, he would whisper – according to the interpreters or *naguatatos* – that what Zhang Yi had wanted to say was that Luzon had so much gold that it was worth conquering.

The figure of Zhang Yi (a carpenter, according to Benavides) probably brings together the images of a fortune hunter, a pervert (as the Chinese sources put it) and a dreamer who saw in Manila's regular influx of traders from Quan Chou and Chang Chou the possibility of Chinese expansion and personal gain. Here was a man capable of fantasizing about his own utopia – a place where mountains produce gold. He not only ends up believing the tale, but also manages to persuade the Emperor himself to authorise exploration.[34] Nonetheless the Chinese magistrates accused him of 'going out with all this to look for people to steal and to rob and to be a corsair' (Chinese documents of Benavides). The conflict that was bound to take place with the Spanish – men also accustomed to pursuing an *El Dorado* – who had no other alternative but to react.

In the second place, we should consider another fact that made the increasing acceptance of Chinese in Manila possible. The Spanish, in particular, the provincials of the religious orders, admitted that they had gone too far by disobeying the royal ordinances that prohibited the growth of the Chinese population beyond 6000. This norm was obliterated by the profits gained from the granting of each new license. The Bishop of Nueva Segovia, Fr. Diego de Soria, commented thus:

> [...] it was a generally said that the number of Chinese in the uprising reached 23,000-24,000, even if the judges declare that they hardly came up to 8,000, a figure which these same judges further reduced, because they are primarily responsible for the uprising through the liberal granting of licenses to Chinese who wish to remain in Manila. These licenses were sold at five *tostones* each. There was a judge who was able to collect a total of 60,000 *tostones*, or the equivalent 30,000 pesos, out of the said licenses.[35]

In the third place, now looking back to China, it is worth considering Wan Li's style of government, especially his politics of assigning eunuchs as revenue agents and quarter master generals of the mines.[36] The system saw its beginnings in 1596; by 1599, it was already widely practised. This procedure was meant to correct deficient tax legislation which, in turn, caused a lax and corrupt administration. Entrusting this function to eunuchs imposed a certain kind of general auditing system. But as the eunuchs carried out their jobs, they also interfered with the regular government functions. In addition, the posts were usually occupied by fortune hunters and persons of lower moral character, owing to the absence of a precedent and clear-cut process of organising a regular staff. Sometimes tax collection at the mines would be reduced to a form of extortion that could then be sabotaged by rival officers. And more often than not, this created social problems.[37]

Taking into account these circumstances, it is easy to come up with a final, fitting interpretation for the figure of the eunuch Gao Tsai. First, he might have been the one who defended the ambitious projects of fortune hunters like Zhang Yi or the corrupt behaviour of officials like Yang Ying-long, against the courtiers of Beijing and the magistrates of Fujian, like Gan Yi-chen, Wang Shi-ho, and especially Xu Xue-ju. Benavides saw it thus franc the first moment:

> Because the Emperor has 'men of gold and women of silver made' and invited them to drink, so he sent a eunuch to each of their kingdoms; and these eunuchs, to get gold and silver for the Emperor, impose a lot of taxes on the vassals, and the empire of Chine felt so oppressed with all this that publicly the Chines here [the Philippines] tell us that within two years more or less there will be communities and uprisings in China.[38]

The figure of Gao Tzai appears again in the following year (1604), when the Dutch were in the Pescadores islands trying to establish trade with China. He sent a mission to the Dutch in these islands, trying to solicit gifts of high value for himself and for the Emperor. *Dong Xi Yang Kao* and *Ming Shi* notified the governor, Xu Xue-ju, and the officials of Fujien province to oppose the eunuch by sending the *touzy* (Admiral), Shen You-rong, with a battleship to the coast of the province in order to stop the plans of the eunuch, Gao Tzai.[39] It is evident that the happenings in Manila had been the last vindication which Xu Xue-ju encountered in order to oppose the politics of the eunuch, this time with force, as shown in the presence of Shen You-rong.[40]

Finally, so that we may understand why the local magistrates of Fujian could not act on this problem according to their own standards, we will now consider the style of government and the figure of Emperor Wan Li himself, a ruler who was frequently labeled indolent, irresponsible, indecisive and dismissive, both to unpleasant advice as well as to the remonstrations of his officers.[41] His inaction encouraged partisanship, which fostered antagonism between the Emperor and his court. The emperor became more withdrawn and his court dealings increasingly confined to written communication which, more than once, he would refuse to read.

These descriptions of Wan Li help to explain the difficulties encountered by his officers, as culled from the Chinese sources: their inability to put a stop to the exploration of the 'mountain of gold' and their forced collaboration with this expedition out of pure duty, even if they knew that they were indirectly protecting detestable fortune hunters. Consequently, during the reign of Emperor Wan Li, the coastal provinces seemed to be very much cut off from Beijing, which was why the mandarins had to choose between loyalty to the Emperor and petty conflicts of local concern. And when the situation got out of hand, even persons like Xu Xue-ju (an honourable magistrate) sought pragmatic solutions to put an end to a hopeless predicament. This, at least, seems to be confirmed in Chapter forty-seven of *Guo Que*, which makes a general summary of all that had happened in the months after the massacre:

> The barbarians are afraid that China launch a punitive act against Luzon, which is why they sent some spies to Macao. However, the magistrates of Fujian and Guangdong did not want to report this. They only told the emperor half the truth, which is why the emperor only ordered the people of Luzon: stop creating more problems! And thus the things remained as they were.[42]

Notes

1 Francisco S.J. Colin, Pedro Chirino and Pablo Pastells, *Labor evangélica, ministerios apostólicos de los obreros de la Compañía de Jesús, fundación y progresos de su provincia en las Islas Filipinas II* (Barcelona 1900; first edition Madrid 1663) 418-441.
2 Pablo Pastells and Francisco Navas, *Catálogo de los documentos relativos a las Islas Filipinas V* (Barcelona 1929) pp. LXXVI-CVIII.
3 Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson eds, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898: Explorations by Early Navigators, Descriptions of the Islands and their Peoples, their History and Records of the Catholic Missions, as Related in Contemporaneous Books and Manuscripts, Show in the Political, Economic, Commercial and Religious Conditions of those Islands from their Earliest Relations with European Nations to the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century XII* (Mandaluyong and Rizal 1973) 83-97.
4 Antonio Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (Mexico 1609). We used here the version annotated by José Rizal, offset reprinting by the National Commission for the Centenary of José Rizal (Manila 1961).
5 Bartolomé Leonardo Argensola, *Conquista de las Islas Malucas* (Zaragoza 1891).
6 We have used the following references: *Ming Shi* 11 (MS, The History of the Ming Dynasty) (Taipei 1975) pp. 8370-8375; *Ming Shi Lu* 12-13 (MSL, The True History of the Ming Dynasty) (Taipei 1961) pp. 12090, 12330, 12371; *Dong Xi Yang Kao* (DXYK, Studies on the Eastern and Western Oceans) (Taipei 1971) pp. 57-60; *Ming Ching Shi Wen Bien* 6 (Anthology of the Official Documents of the Ming Dynasty) (Beijing 1962) pp. 4727-4728; *Huang Ming Xiang Xu Lu; Guo Que* 8 (National tolls) (Taipei 1978) p. 4917. I wish to thank Professor Zhang Kai for his invaluable help in pointing out these sources, and my research assistant Lin Li-pin for his help in the translation of these materials.
7 As regards this massacre and the problems of interpretation that arise from consulting and comparing Chinese and Spanish sources, see my recent paper 'Consideraciones en torno a la imagen de Koxinga vertida por Victorio Ricci en Occidente', *Encuentros en Catay* 10 (1996).
8 There are discrepancies between Argensola and Morga, although these are more a question of details than of arguments.
9 Argensola, *Conquista de las Islas Malucas*, 210.
10 Idem, 212.
11 The *Dong Xi Yang Kao* contains the Chinese translation of Dasmariñas' letter which he gave to the mandarins. Here, the same facts are given, except that the apparent motive of the uprising was more of greed (the ship was loaded with much gold and silver) than of the cruelty received in the hands of the foremen of the ship, as Argensola would have put it.
12 It does not remain clear how Benavides obtained the two documents, and if he made them known to the governor or not. The first (document) is similar in structure to the letter which the governor received from the mandarins, the translation of which he sent to the King, but much more extensive and detailed. Therefore the said document perhaps may be a different version from the letter, made by memory (since he possibly helped in the verbal translation) and completed a posteriori with his own investigations, since at the end of that letter he said: 'I am a man who knows the language of these Chinese and I know a lot about their things and customs of China by having lived with them for many months and I made it also because I take up this business with suspicion and care as these can be advisors who advise badly on it because of not understanding it'. (Colin, Chirino and Pastells, *Labor evangélica* II, 415). The second document, different from the letter, is a remonstrance of the emperor by one of his officials. The mandarins presented it to the governor with the intention of giving more credibility to his own letter. Given that the Spanish did not seem to take it into account, I will not deal with it now, but I go back to it at the end of this study for its clarificatory value.
13 Note that the spelling of the names correspond to the free style of transcribing that the Spanish translator had of the Fujianese pronunciation of the names (the translation of

the document that appears on Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898* XII, 83-97, points out in the heading which was made by a Dominican). As will be seen later, the correspondence in mandarin is as follows: Chunchian seems to correspond to Gan Yi-chen, Tio Heng to Zhang Yi and Cochay to Gao Tsai.

14 A Chinese who arrived in Manila during the times of the pirate Limahon, whom he had served. At that time, he was appointed governor of the sangleys and was 'respected by the Spanish and loved by the sangleys'. Argensola, *Conquista de las Islas Malucas*, 230. He was also known as 'Eng Kang' (Rizal), 'Encan' (Argensola) and 'Encang' (Tellez de Almazán).

15 *MSL*, Chapter 404 (Vol. XII, p. 12090).

16 To better differentiate the Chinese groups, see Edgar Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898* (1965) 6-11.

17 Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898* XII, 154.

18 *HMXXL*, Chapter 5, Luzon.

19 *MS*, Chapter 323, p. 8372.

20 Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898* XII, 143.

21 Ibid, 155.

22 Sangley general Hontay (Argensola), or Juan Ontal (Tellez de Almazán).

23 Matthew Chen O.P., 'The Ming Records of Luzon' in: Alfonso Felix jr ed., *The Chinese in the Philippines, 1570-1770* (Manila 1966) 250. According to the translator's note, this place is the present-day San Miguel district, although we do not see any further proof to this.

24 Ibid. Matthew Chen, in another note, indicates that this place was close to what is now known as the city of Makati. The rest of the account probably recounts the travails of the first or second group of the three groups of Chinese who fled, since we know nothing more of their fate from the Spanish references. The data does not seem to refer to the third group that went to San Pablo de los Montes and Batangas. Moreover, this reference is unusual, since there are no mountains close to the Makati area.

25 Matthew Chen seems to assume that this town was none other than Manila. But this is not certain.

26 *MS*, Chapter 323 (p. 8373).

27 *DXYK*, Chapter 5, Luzon, p. 59.

28 *DXYK*, Chapter 5, Luzon, p. 60.

29 The figure of Xu Xue-ju is both well known and respected (L. Carrington Goodrich and Chao-Ying Fang, *Dictionary of the Ming Biography, 1368-1644* I (New York 1976) 582-585). In 1591, he was appointed Assistant Commissioner for Surveillance in Hukuang and was soon after named Administrative Commissioner in Fujian, a post which he held until 1607. Consequently, he was able to gather first-hand information on all of the occurrences, from their very beginnings.

30 *MS*, Chapter 323, p. 8373.

31 *MJSWB*, Chapter 433, p. 4728.

32 In the beginning of 1605, Ricci pointed out in a letter: 'It was spoken much in the cort, and we feared that some harm could come from all these [due to the possibility that it might be associated with the Spanish]'. See Jonathan Spence, *The Memory Palace of Mateo Ricci* (1985) 216.

33 This same letter was sent to the Spanish who translated it. Argensola published it shortly afterwards. It is interesting to note that the two versions closely coincide with each other, but of the five points indicated by the emperor, Argensola's translation only gathered numbers 1, 2 and 4.

34 A brief observation: A Frenchman, Rene Jouglet, passing by the Philippines in 1931, hearing about the treasures of the pirate Limahon, published in Paris, in 1936, an imaginative book called *La ville perdue*, where he mentions that the treasures of the pirate, which may have been hidden in Cavite or Pangasinan thirty years before the massacre, had been the cause of various Chinese expeditions, the last of which was in 1603. See Cesar Callanta, *The Limahon Invasion* (Quezon City 1989) 69.

35 For this, see the letter of Fray Bernardo de Santa Catalina, Provincial of the Dominicans and Commissioner of the Holy Office (Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 1493-1898), as well as the adjoining note of the translator who comments on the Royal Decree of 13 June (Barcelona), which restricted the presence of Chinese nationals in Manila.

36 See Ray Huang, 'Lung-ch'ing and Wan-li Reign, 1567-1620' in: Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett eds, *The Cambridge History of China* 7-I (Cambridge 1988) 530-532.

37 We may sight the following examples. In 1599: inspector Ma Tang so provoked the merchants of Linqing (Changdong) that they burned down his house and left him half-dead; Cheng Feng, assigned as tax and mines inspector of Huguang, caused a mutiny among the inhabitants of Wuchuang; textile mill workers of Suzhou staged a demonstration against revenue agent Sun Long. In 1603: Wang Zhao, coal mines inspector of Xishan (Beijing), encountered opposition from among the miners who held a demonstration in Beijing. In 1606: Yang Rong found the revenue office burnt down by the miners of Yunnan. See also Bai Shouyi and others, in: *A Brief History of China* I (Beijing 1984) 348-349; with editions in other languages.

38 Colin, Chirino and Pastells, *Labor evangélica* II, 415. In fact, it is not strange the clarity of the observations of the Dominican Benavides about the eunuchs, since he knew in detail the recent experience of another Dominican, Diego de Aduarte, which preceded the ones cited in the previous note. In effect, Aduarte left Manila for Macao on 6 September 1598, with the aim of paying the ransom for the 'Gentleman Don Luís' in Canton. He arrived there twenty days after, and coincided with the eunuch, Liculifu (sic), who, upon knowing the presence of the foreigner, tortured him and extorted from him most of the money he carried. In the end, Aduarte had no other remedy but to borrow the money. The entire story is related by Aduarte himself in his autobiographical work entitled *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores de Filipinas, Japón y China* (Zaragoza 1693) 214-219. At the same time, Mateo Ricci himself recounts how one of the Catholic servants who acted as a mail carrier, also in 1598-1599, was robbed, murdered and thrown into a river because he denied paying commissions, everything was probably made in connection with the legal pressure, according to Spence, which was provoked by the eunuchs. See Jonathan Spence, *The Memory Palace of Mateo Ricci*, 215.

39 This theme was studied by Leonard Blussé in 'Impo, Chinese Merchant in Pattani: A Study in Early Dutch-Chinese Relations', *Proceedings of the Seventh IAHA Conference* (Bangkok 1979) 294. Blussé mentions (citing the Chinese sources and Gao Tzai) how a strange individual 'with exotic tales such as the eating of live children's brains'; how Shen You-rong, an exemplary Confucian official who wrote a book collecting the panegyrics which his friends dedicated to him.

40 You can read the résumé of this person, cited in Goodrich and Fang, *Dictionary of the Ming Biography* II, 1192-1194. Shen You-rong gained prestige through this action, but Gao Tzai, resenting him, opposed whatever compensation to be given to him, and in the autumn of 1606, obtained that he be sent to a secondary military post in the province of Zhejiang.

41 Ray Huang, 'Lung-ch'ing and Wan-li Reign', 514-517. We have a most valuable testimony corresponding to the second document Benavides translated and sent to the King of Spain, which carried the title, 'Copy of the petition which the supreme magistrate of the province or the reign of Hongkong gave to the King of China in order to persuade him not to listen to some Chinese who, in the year 1603, wanted to come from China to do battle and take the land of Luzon (Philippines) and that the King gave license and consent'. Colin, Chirino and Pastells, *Labor evangélica* II, 416-417.

42 *GQ*, Chapter 79, vol. 8, p. 4917.