

Flaunting It

How the Galleon Trade Made Manila, circa 1571–1800

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ABSTRACT Manila was designated by Spain as the colonial capital of the Philippine archipelago in 1571. From being a small Muslim settlement, the city was swiftly transformed by the trans-Pacific galleon trade to Acapulco. Manila emerged as one of the greatest and wealthiest entrepôts in Southeast Asia, rivaling the Dutch city of Batavia in Indonesia and dominating commerce with America and Europe in both silk and spices. Manila became a magnet to trading ships from China, Japan, Maluku, Malacca, Siam, Cambodia, and Borneo, which arrived laden with an astonishing abundance of luxurious goods. The trade flows of silver and precious Asian merchandise—the bales of Chinese silks, the porcelain, Indian textiles, spices, local wax, honey, and forest products—and the shifting and hybrid populations that supplied labor and diverse expertise lent the city its own special character and texture.

Drawing on a range of primary sources—from secular and missionary accounts to architecture and artistic works, including paintings and objects, this essay explores the much less well-studied social and cultural effects of global trade on local contexts, and considers whether Manila was any different from other early modern port cities in the Atlantic and Asian worlds. I discuss a variety of fundamental areas—sartorial fashions and bodily scents, culinary tastes, and architectural innovations—in which imported goods and their consumption affected everyday sensibilities in Manila and beyond.

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INTRODUCTION

When the Spanish navigator Miguel López de Legazpi (1502–72) and his party of conquistadors arrived in the lowlands of Luzon in 1571, they found a sheltered natural harbor on the eastern side of a bay and at the mouth of the Pasig River. They encountered a population composed of natives, settlers and merchants, and Muslim missionaries, about two thousand souls all told, who lived in sparse clusters of hamlets and villages. They learned how these communities were loosely organized in small sociopolitical and spatial units called *barangay*, which had only just begun to submit to the leadership of a foremost *datu*. These Muslims and native converts of the settlement known as Maynilad, Spanish chroniclers noted, were strikingly proud, self-confident, and aggressive in nature, materially prosperous and cultivated in manners. They were bound by blood, trade, and friendship to the sultan of Brunei, and they nurtured connections of commerce and culture with neighboring Muslim centers spanning the Jolo archipelago in southern Philippines; Borneo; Aceh, at the northern tip of Sumatra; the Moluccas, within the Indonesian archipelago; Malacca, in the Malay Peninsula; and Pattani, in the southern region of Thailand. At various times of the year, Chinese merchants, the majority of whom came from the Fujian province and were southern Min speakers, arrived in trading junks laden with wares to do business with the coastal Malays, who favored their jars and dishes. Chinese merchandise in turn would be used to barter for valuable forest products—plant medicines, honey, and beeswax—that Negrito upland peoples supplied. With its safe harbor, strategic position that allowed for intraregional trade, and established Sino-Filipino-Muslim trade networks, Manila presented an ideal location.

Legazpi liked what he saw. As he had done a few years earlier in the Visayas, in the central Philippines, he expended great effort in putting down local resistance and set about establishing a permanent colonial settlement. He deposed Rajah Sulayman, the key native *datu* of Manila, negotiated a series of pacts and alliances, and instituted Manila as the capital of the Philippine archipelago, which the Spaniards would rule for more than three hundred years, until 1898.

Legazpi died in 1572, by which time Spanish domination of the country was virtually complete. Moreover, seven years earlier, a fast and efficient return route across the Pacific to Mexico, a critical factor to Spain's venture in the East Indies, had already been secured by the circumnavigator and Augustinian friar Andrés de Urdaneta (1498–1568). Carrying a small cargo of cinnamon from Mindanao, Urdaneta sailed northeasterly from the

Visayan island of Cebu and, climbing between thirty-seven and thirty-nine degrees, his ship caught the prevailing westerlies across the Pacific, skirted the California coast, and reached Acapulco after a total journey time of four months. Upon the ship's arrival, the spices were sold for a tidy profit.¹ Legazpi's successors ensured that within fifty years of the city's founding, Manila was transformed into the colony's preeminent political, religious, multiracial trading hub, and one of the wealthiest and greatest entrepôts in Asia, through the lucrative galleon trade.

Since the publication of William Lytle Schurz's pioneering study on the Manila galleons and trans-Pacific commerce in 1939, a rich corpus of scholarly work has emerged that has closely examined diverse aspects of the trade's global reach: the origins of the galleon trade in relation to Spanish expansion, the profitability of trans-Pacific commerce, the demand-and-supply factors that gave impetus to the trade, and, more recently, the emergence of a trans-Pacific slave trade and the political complexities that enmeshed the economies of China, Japan, and Spain in the Philippines.² These new revisionist histories make clear that the galleon trade, while sponsored and maintained by the royal treasury, was both costly and immense; yet, at its zenith, it was capable of financially bolstering the Spanish Empire, and its economic success continued well after the initial spectacular commercial boom of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.³

What marked the "birth of world trade" also ushered in profound changes at a microlevel.⁴ Manila became a contact point for the meeting of peoples, ideas, and goods, and galleon-related business fostered a plethora of environmental changes and social and cultural innovations in perception, aesthetics, and representations. To an extent, economic historians, in exploring

1. Dennis O. Flynn, Arturo Giráldez, and James Sobredo, eds., *European Entry into the Pacific: Spain and the Acapulco-Manila Galleons* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2001), xvii; O. H. K. Spate, *The Spanish Lake* (London: Croom Helm, 1979).

2. Most recent works are Tatiana Seijas, *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico: From Chinos to Indians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Birgit Tremml-Werner, *Spain, China and Japan in Manila, 1571-1644: Local Comparisons and Global Connections* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015); Arturo Giráldez, *The Age of Trade: The Manila Galleons and the Dawn of the Global Economy* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015). See also selected essays in *A Primeira Viagem Histórica da Globalização* (Macau: Instituto Cultural de Macao, 2006).

3. Dennis O. Flynn, Lionel Frost, and A. J. H. Latham, eds., *Pacific Centuries: Pacific and Pacific Rim History since the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 1999), xxxiii.

4. *Ibid.*, 2.

Chinese entrepreneurial and mercantile activities of early modern Manila, have shed much light on local-level cross-cultural interactions and exchanges.⁵ But putting contextual flesh and muscle on the bones of economically driven cross-cultural interactions has, arguably, been and continues to be undertaken by art historians interested in the manufacture and trade of religious images. They have drawn important connections among the material objects themselves (their innate qualities and symbolism, and the influence of eclectic styles and artistic traditions), Manila's resident Chinese and Filipino sculptors, painters, and artisans who were involved in their production and trade, and the global commerce in which the objects became vitally enmeshed. Further, art historians have given importance to the tactile and visual elements in historical analyses.⁶ Their investigations reveal the involvement of many different cultures and geographic regions—Europe, Asia, and the Americas; the various producers of the objects, Chinese and Filipinos, with influence or intervention from Europeans in terms of design, motif, and function; and the roles of intermediaries, transporting, distributing, and circulating art objects around the globe. In other words, colonial

5. For several recent works see, for instance, selected essays in Ma. Dolores Elizalde, Josep Fradera, and Luis Alonso, eds., *Imperios y naciones en el Pacífico: La formación de una colonia, Filipinas*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2001), 1:181–299; Edgardo J. Angara, José Ma. A. Cariño, Sonia Pinto Ner, eds., *El Galeón de Manila: Cruzando el Atlántico* (Manila: Read Foundation, 2014).

6. Lourdes Diaz-Trechuelo, "The role of the Chinese in the Philippine Domestic Economy (1570–1770)," in Alfonso Felix Jr., ed., *The Chinese in the Philippines*, vol. 1, 1570–1770 (Manila: Solidaridad, 1966), 175–210. On the work of art historians, see, for instance, Marjorie Trusted, "Survivors of a Shipwreck: Ivories from a Manila Galleon of 1601," *Hispanic Research Journal* 14, no. 5 (2013): 446–62; Regalado Trota Jose, *Images of Faith: Religious Ivory Carvings from the Philippines* (Pasadena: Pacific Asia Museum, 1990); Regalado Trota Jose and Ramon N. Villegas, *Power + Faith + Image: Philippine Art in Ivory from the 16th to the 19th Century* (Makati: Ayala Foundation, 2004); Margareta Mercedes and Estella Marcos, *Ivories from the Far Eastern Provinces of Spain and Portugal* (Monterrey: Espejo de Obsidiana Ediciones, 1997); Gauvin Alexander Bailey, "Translation and Metamorphosis in the Catholic Ivories of China, Japan, and the Philippines, 1561–1800," in Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Michel Massing, and Nuno Vassallo e Silva, eds., *Ivories of the Portuguese Empire* (Lisbon: Scribe, 2013); Cristina Cruz-Gonzalez, "Landscapes of Conversion: Franciscan Politics and Sacred Objects in Late Colonial Mexico" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2009), esp. 213; Donna Pierce and Ronald Otsuka, eds., *Asia & Spanish America: Trans-Pacific Artistic and Cultural Exchange, 1500–1850* (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2009).

religious art played a significant and far-reaching role in global trade, making money, and religious conversion.

Was Manila any different from other early modern port cities in the Atlantic and Asian worlds? Philip D. Curtin, along with other contributors to the volume *Atlantic Port Cities*, identified certain elemental features that defined port cities, which could readily be applied to Manila. For Curtin, “hierarchies of multifunctionality” determined how cities networked in accordance with political and economic relations of dominance and dependence. Singapore, for instance, was under the command of the colonial office in London and had government officials in the straits settlements. Similarly, Manila was administratively under Mexico and deferred to Madrid.

Referring to British colonial port towns, Jacob Price observed an “interrelatedness of economic function, occupational structure, and long-term growth.” For Price, whether they were the great port towns of Europe or the many American and Atlantic ports between Montreal and Buenos Aires, port towns functioned not only in terms of attracting goods for their own consumption but also, importantly, for “storage, exchange, and transshipment,” in the process linking the “economies of riverine and ocean transport.”⁷ Frank Broeze’s exploration of Asian port cities likewise emphasized a geographic area where “goods and/or passengers are physically transferred between two modes of transport, of which at least one is maritime.” The land-sea exchange is here the fundamental key to the port city’s essential character. “This process,” writes the geographer Rhoads Murphy, “has been and remains a major source of livelihood, and a major force for culture mixing or cosmopolitanisation.”⁸

Historians studying port cities in Asia have, at best, glossed over the life of Manila’s constituent parts or, at worst, tended to exclude or sideline Manila altogether. Yet their findings would find resonance in apprehending

7. Philip D. Curtin, “Port Cities in the Atlantic World,” and Jacob M. Price, “Summation: The American Panorama of Atlantic Port Cities,” both in Peggy K. Liss and Franklin W. Knight, eds., *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650–1850* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991) xi–xvii and 262–77, respectively.

8. Frank Broeze, ed., *Brides of the Sea: Port Cities of Asia from the 16th–20th Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 11, and Rhoads Murphy, “On the Evolution of the Port City,” *ibid.*, 225. See also, Gerrit Knaap and Heather Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders: Ships, Skippers, and Commodities in Eighteenth-Century Makassar* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004).

Manila's entrepôt.⁹ In his conference comment on this paper, Christian J. Koot echoes many of the salient points made by some of these earlier works on Asian port cities. He has urged us to think about port cities in the early modern world as “zones of contact.” Not only, Koot says, were people brought in touch with the wider world and wider circuits of trade and information, but also local and hinterland communities were integrated into multiregional networks of exchange. Port cities also looked “inward, reprocessing and disseminating goods and information to their own hinterlands.” The effect of global trade can be seen as both deep and far-reaching, “reshaping cultures of consumption not only at the sites of oceanic trade but also in the city's hinterlands” and transforming “marginal or subaltern economic actors [into] active consumers.”¹⁰

While port cities share defining commonalities in their natures and evolutions, their particularities—the ways in which they were shaped by their unique circumstances—should not be lost from view. Like other port cities, Manila was networked to other trading cities, hierarchical, multifunctional, and cosmopolitan. The trade flows of American silver and precious Asian merchandise—the bales of Chinese silks, the porcelain, Indian textiles, spices, local wax, honey, and forest products—and the shifting and hybrid populations that supplied labor and diverse expertise lent the city its own special character and texture. This essay delves into some of those elements that made the port city of Manila typical and representative in some ways, as well as unique in others. How did a sensory appreciation of certain trade goods shape the material tastes and consumption habits of Manila's residents? What sorts of goods came to be understood as measures of power and markers of status? By focusing on the much less well studied quotidian diffusion of trade goods and objects and their influence on local communities, I explore the social and cultural effects of global trade on local contexts and will consider a variety of fundamental areas—sartorial fashions and bodily scents, culinary tastes and architectural innovations—in which imported goods and their consumption affected everyday sensibilities in Manila and beyond.

MANILA'S GOLDEN AGE, CIRCA 1570s–1630s

When Don Antonio de Morga (1559–1636) arrived in Manila around 1595, he was duly impressed by the city. In less than two and a half decades,

9. For instance, Manila does not figure at all in the recent volume by Haneda Masashi, ed., *Asian Port Cities, 1600–1800* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009), or in Broeze, *Brides of the Sea*.

10. Christian J. Koot, e-mail to the author, November 7, 2015.

it had become a commercial mecca, with a Hispanicized walled center (known as *Intramuros*) and native and Chinese communities in the immediate extramural environs. The streets were uniformly laid out and featured plazas around which stood lofty state and administrative buildings, some with graceful courtyards and upper and lower galleries, all stoutly built from hewn stone. Finely built houses with tiled roofs, spacious interiors, many windows, and balconies with ornamental iron latticework grilles flanked the streets. The arsenal was well stocked, and a fort held cellars of food and munitions and lodging quarters for soldiers. The archbishop resided in an apartment within the stately cathedral, which was ornately decorated with three naves. There were a number of chapels, convents, and friaries. Several hospitals and apothecaries run by the principal religious orders ministered to the city's various ethnicities and social classes, and a Jesuit college educated students in Latin, humanities, and moral theology. Wide spaces served as parade grounds, and there were two shorefront *paseos* for evening strolls and recreation. Finally, the city was encircled by an impressive turreted stone wall secured by three main city gates that closed at dusk and were guarded by night watchmen.¹¹

Even allowing for the hyperbole that afflicted the accounts of so many Spanish colonial observers, Morga was generally inclined to plain speaking. He was certainly not a starry-eyed Spanish provincial. He was thirty-seven years old, well educated, having qualified in canon and civil law, and married to a highborn woman in the first of what would be three marriages, and he had worked with distinction as a government lawyer in Salamanca. Philip II, in recognition of his abilities, personally endorsed his appointment to the post of lieutenant of the governor of the Philippines, or *Oidor* of the Royal Audiencia, a rank just below that of governor general, which in effect made Morga second in command in the colony. The post not only boosted his career, but set him on the overseas bureaucratic path from which he would never diverge. He remained in colonial service and served in Mexico, Peru, and finally Ecuador, where he died in 1636. His stint in the Philippines lasted for eight years. It was a period marked by controversy and spectacular failure as well as success, but, by his own admission, he considered those years “the best of [my] life.”¹²

Morga noted the considerable revenue Manila raised from various

11. Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (1605), trans. J. S. Cummins (Cambridge, U.K.: Hakluyt Society, 1971), 280–84.

12. *Ibid.*, 47.

sources—through the collection of rents on businesses owned by the Chinese in the *Parian* (an area specially designated for the burgeoning immigrant Chinese community, located outside the city walls), the regulatory dues on the “playing-card monopoly,” charges on merchandise, and court fines imposed by the judiciary. But the amount was negligible compared to the fabulous money being made from the galleon trade and the opportunities that could be had from the abundance of goods arriving in Manila from all over Asia.

Between late October and late April each year, ships from Japan brought cargoes of finely woven silks, decorated screens rendered in gilt, folding fans and lacquerware, finely wrought armor, lances and swords, delicately worked boxes and trinkets, teakettles and wooden bathtubs, skylarks, quality wheat flour, salted meats, tuna, and fresh pears. From Malacca, Bengal, and Cochin, Portuguese ships arrived laden with treasures—spices, precious jewels and gemstones, a diversity of textiles from thin cotton muslins and gauzes to soft wools, Turkish and Persian tapestries and carpets, and a rich assortment of fruit preserves, almonds, and wines. Filipinos sought out the boats from Siam, Cambodia, and Borneo, which carried benzoin, camphor, rhinoceros products (horn, hide, hoof, and teeth), intricately woven palm mats, sago, black-glazed jars, and slaves. The majority of ships, of course, were from China. Usually making two visits each year that were timed to take advantage of the monsoon winds, Chinese ships arrived in squadrons of thirty to forty, packed with exquisite things and rarities: luxurious fabrics—in addition to the softest silks were brocades, taffeta, damasks, satins, and velvets; musk and ivory; pearls, rubies, and sapphires; fresh and preserved oranges, peaches, pears, and chestnuts; copper and cast-iron utensils; cargoes of live animals, including different types of fowl, horses, mules, donkeys, buffaloes, and birds with the ability to talk and perform tricks.

Vessels owned by New Christians, or the *cristãos-novos* (descendants of Iberian Jews from Portugal and Spain who were compelled to convert to Christianity in the late fifteenth century), Armenians, Moslems, Hindus, and Parsis also traded in Manila from the mid-seventeenth century. The New Christians were enthusiastic commercial opportunists, possessing substantial amounts of capital and a formidable reputation for skillful bargaining. They participated actively in any lucrative overseas trade, and many annually invested hundreds of thousands of cruzados in the galleon trade.¹³

Armenian merchants, principally from New Julfa, took advantage of the

13. James C. Boyajian, *Portuguese Trade in Asia under the Habsburgs, 1580–1640* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 30.

maritime trade route from India to Manila, bringing with them Iranian and Indian silk varieties, Bengali textiles, Chinese goods from Malacca and Canton, and cinnamon from Ceylon to exchange for silver.¹⁴ Armenian traders played a role in the highly profitable and illicit so-called country trade, in which Dutch, English, and French entrepreneurs covertly participated. Spanish prohibitions on other Europeans trading in Manila were put in place from the outset; they were intended to protect the Spanish commercial monopoly with Asia from their more powerful European rivals. But these rules were circumvented in various ways. Spanish officials were easily bribed to turn a blind eye. English- and Dutch-owned ships sailed under assumed Asian flags (the Armenian colors was favored, for instance, as they were honored in Spanish Philippines and Portuguese ports in the Indian Ocean) and were skippered by Portuguese or Armenian captains who acted as go-betweens, dummies, or front men in possession of passes obtained from Makassar or Siam. These ships arrived in Manila loaded with English-, Dutch-, and French-owned commodities.¹⁵ They often took circuitous routes, departing from Madras, Bengal, Coromandel, and Malacca. Behind these operations were English and Dutch merchants, individual entrepreneurs who might be either rivals or collaborators, and who sometimes were connected with the East India Company or the Dutch East India Company (VOC).¹⁶ The ships carried cotton piece goods, chintz, diamonds and pearls, spices and black pepper, Dutch iron and lead to exchange for silver specie.¹⁷

Over three months in the year, from March to June, Manila's inhabitants and merchants engaged in feverish commercial activity. Unloading the cargo was an uproarious, jostling, greed-fueled, haggling affair. "Ah, woe to you, Manila! When will you ever set your affairs in order! Ay, false deceivers, schemers, fabricators of bribes, outbidders by the ton!" despaired one

14. Sebouh David Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 58–65.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Jan Christiaan Nierstrasz, "In the Shadow of the Company: The VOC (Dutch East India Company) and Its Servants in the Period of Its Decline (1740–1796)" (Ph.D. diss., Leiden University, 2008), 135–39.

17. On covert English trading with Spanish Manila, see Serafin D. Quiason, *English "Country Trade" with the Philippines, 1644–1765* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1966); on illicit Dutch trading, see Ruurdje Laarhoven and Elizabeth Pino Wittermans, "From Blockade to Trade: Early Dutch Relations with Manila, 1600–1750," *Philippine Studies* 33, no. 4 (1985): 485–504.

Filipino caught up in the *mêlée*.¹⁸ The trade required little effort and minimal business acumen, while the profits that could be reaped were, as Morga put it, “quite simply splendid.”¹⁹ Morga also calculated that what flowed into the city’s Royal Exchequer was not unsubstantial. Dues of three percent were levied on merchandise from China, and dues of two percent that were payable by Spaniards for the export of goods to Acapulco brought in around 150,000 pesos to the Philippine treasury annually. In addition, a ten percent tax on goods arriving in Acapulco was paid over to Manila in the form of a subsidy.²⁰

By June and July, Japanese ships would set off with the southwest winds on their return journey loaded with the goods they had exchanged: Chinese silks, deer hides, gold, honey, wax, civets, palm liquor and Spanish wine, mirrors, and jars for tea. The Portuguese ships departed with the northeast monsoon winds in January, taking with them rice, gold, and wines. A few ships from Siam and Cambodia made turnaround visits in the months of April, May, and June, arriving and departing in the interlude between the northeasterlies and the southwesterlies. Thus, by the end of June, the great Manila galleon had been loaded with goods and was ready to sail for Acapulco with the first southwest winds.

COSMOPOLITAN MANILA

Unsurprisingly, the galleon trade irresistibly drew settlers and transient merchants alike to the colonial capital. From a population as small as 2,000 in 1571, the city’s population grew by 1620 to 41,400, of whom 2,400 were Spaniards, 3,000 Japanese, 20,000 Filipinos and 16,000 Chinese.²¹ Natives and other Asians were compelled to reside in extramural communities. Filipinos clustered along the Pasig River and the shore of Manila Bay in suburbs called *arrabales*. Working as market gardeners, domestic servants, and

18. William Henry Scott, *Looking for the Prehispanic Filipino* (Quezon City: New Day, 1992), 67.

19. Morga, *Sucesos*, 304.

20. *Ibid.*, 313.

21. Robert R. Reed, *Colonial Manila: The Context of Hispanic Urbanism and Process of Morphogenesis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 33. Other scholars have given a higher number for the Chinese. Edgar Wickberg claims there were 20,000 to 30,000 Chinese living in Manila at the end of the sixteenth century. See Edgar Wickberg, “Anti-Sinicism and Chinese Identity Options in the Philippines,” in Daniel Chirot and Anthony Reid, eds., *Essential Outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 155.

soldiers, or as wage laborers, skilled craftsmen, and petty traders, Filipinos served the Spanish community, including the members of the Catholic religious orders—the Augustinians, Jesuits, Franciscans, Augustinian Recollects, and Dominicans.

The Japanese who chose to remain in Manila, traders and professed Christian pilgrims, were assigned a small area in Dilao and were ministered to by the Discalced (unshod) Franciscans. For a time the Spaniards had been especially hospitable to Japanese settlers, an ingratiating gesture made with the hope that their bid to gain entry into Japan for trade might be looked on more favorably. Described by the governor as an “energetic race, skilled in the use of our weaponry,” the Japanese created their own distinct enclave, “a great number” finding employment as domestic servants in Spanish homes.²²

The Chinese were known by the term *sangleyes*, or “those who come to trade,” and were by far the largest of the Asian ethnic settlers. They were kept segregated from Spaniards and natives and located in a swamp outside the city walls, where they were confined to the Parian. In the suburban environs, along the banks of the Pasig, the Chinese worked as gardeners and farmers tending to the orchards, rice fields, and sprawling estates of wealthy Spaniards. The Parian grew into a crowded, dirty warren of shops, markets, and cheap taverns frequently razed by fire. Spiritually ministered to by the Dominicans, the Parian had an entirely self-sufficient economy thanks to its industrious and enterprising residents, who engaged in, and reputedly excelled at, every imaginable occupation, from bakers, tailors, shoemakers, and carpenters to silversmiths, weavers, painters, sculptors, bookbinders and printers, doctors and apothecaries.²³ Spaniards came to depend on their services, but the rapid growth of their population, their relative political autonomy, their monopolistic business practices, and the exorbitant prices they sometimes charged for goods brought daily conflict, as one Filipino observed on his daily trips to the Parian: “I found Spaniards

22. James K. Irikura, “Trade and Diplomacy between the Philippines and Japan, 1585–1623” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1958), 153.

23. On the Chinese in early modern Manila, see Felix , *The Chinese in the Philippines*; Edgar Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850–1898* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965); Eugenio Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars: Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center for the Harvard-Yenching Institute, 2009); Timothy Brook, *Vermeer’s Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2008); Charles C. Mann, *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created* (New York: Knopf, 2011).

quarreling with the Chinese every day, and because they did not give them their goods for what they wanted, they would threaten them with violence, and kick and slap them and grab them by the neck, and call them queers, cuckolds, thieves, traitors, dogs, Moros . . . and us they called carabaos.”²⁴

The Chinese came to be regarded as a threat to Spanish sovereignty and a barbarous people of low morals with sodomitic predilections.²⁵ Forced to bear onerous taxes that were collected with cruelty and extortion, the Chinese, on the other hand, labored under an atmosphere of oppression. A string of Chinese-led insurrections gave vent to their grievances and dissatisfaction but were harshly suppressed and achieved little.

The lethal mixture of mutual distrust, fear, prejudice, and paranoia was felt on both sides but culminated in mass expulsions and massacres of the Chinese in 1603, 1639, 1662, 1686, and 1762. The massacre in 1603 claimed up to 25,000 Chinese lives and was enthusiastically aided and abetted by disgruntled Filipinos who felt their livelihoods undermined. A severe shortage of Chinese artisans and retailers predictably resulted, depriving the city of much-needed services. “Since there were no *sangleeyes*,” Morga lamented, “there was nothing to eat and no shoes to wear.”²⁶ Yet the Chinese continued to arrive undeterred, and after each massacre their numbers rebounded. Between 22,000 and 24,000 Chinese perished in the 1639 massacre. Ten years later their number had bounced back to 15,000 in Manila. Another identifiable demographic trend was the increase in Sino-Filipino births. By the 1620s it was estimated there were over 1,000 Chinese mestizos in the colonial metropolis, their Filipino mothers raising them to be good Catholics while their Chinese fathers taught their mixed-blood sons to be astute merchants.²⁷

In addition to the settlers, Manila’s population swelled during the trading season. Transient peddlers, hucksters and hawkers, traders and merchants, crewmen and seamen converged on the Hispanic colonial emporium in droves. Observers noted men “from all kingdoms and nations,” listing,

24. Quoted in Scott, *Looking for the Prehispanic Filipino*, 70.

25. On Spanish anti-Chinese racism and prejudice and the earliest documented instance of an intra-Asian male-male sexual relationship, see Raquel A. G. Reyes, “Sodomy in Seventeenth-Century Manila: The Luck of a Mandarin from Taiwan,” in Raquel A. G. Reyes and William G. Clarence-Smith eds., *Sexual Diversity in Asia, c. 600–1950* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 127–40; David E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999).

26. Morga, *Sucesos*, 225.

27. Reed, *Colonial Manila*, 35.

among others, France, England, Italy, Flanders, Denmark, Russia, Greece, Persia, Africa, and Turkey.²⁸ A small minority of black people, slaves of Portuguese merchants from Goa and Malacca or of Spaniards from Spanish America, as well as freemen of African descent, held jobs as common laborers or offered their services on the galleons. Natives and mestizos from the Americas made their way to the city by boarding at Acapulco. Some were imperial soldiers taking up a military posting in the Philippines, others served as crewmen who joined the ranks of other sailors, including Indian Muslim Lascars manning the westward-bound Acapulco-to-Manila galleons known as the *naos de Manila*, which were often piloted by Westerners—English, Irish, French, and Germans. Chinese mariners and merchant adventurers, many from South China, mingled with the Chinese Manileños.

The Manila galleons turned transients and locals alike into risk-taking gamblers. Fortunes could be made from a treasure ship's successful run, or *carrera*. But the ships themselves were death traps. Passengers and crew perished by the tens and hundreds because of the insalubrious conditions on board.²⁹ Further, the months-long two-way crossing was exceedingly perilous. Reliant only on wind and rowing power, the galleon traversed the roughest seas, storms, and treacherous currents. Financial losses could be so steep when a ship was wrecked that many an investor could be reduced to destitution.³⁰

Those who were made to work in ship construction and timbering experienced the sharp end of the galleon trade and the city's growth. Building the ships required a massive amount of human labor, timber, and other resources.³¹ Labor drafts, known as the *polo*, compelled natives to work in the shipyards at the Cavite peninsula constructing the galleon ships, felling trees, and cutting wood both for shipbuilding and for the repair and maintenance of Manila's walls and buildings. Conscripts fled to the hinterlands in

28. *Ibid.*, 33.

29. Shirley Fish, *The Manila-Acapulco Galleons: The Treasure Ships of the Pacific, with an Annotated List of the Transpacific Galleons, 1565–1815* (Milton Keynes, U.K.: AuthorHouse, 2011); Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri, *A Voyage to the Philippines* (1708) (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1963).

30. Michael J. McCarthy, "Gambling on Empire: The Economic Role of Shipwreck in the Age of Discovery," *International Journal of Maritime History* 23, no. 2 (2011): 69–84.

31. Andrew Christian Peterson, "Making the First Global Trade Route: The Southeast Asian Foundations of the Acapulco-Manila Galleon Trade, 1519–1650" (Ph.D. diss., University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 2014).

a desperate bid to escape shipbuilding work, infamously known to be “the total ruin and death of the natives” because of the difficult conditions, abuse, and lack of food the laborers suffered.³² Finding laborers to keep the city looking splendid was a difficulty infinitely compounded by the frequency of natural disasters and hazards. Earthquakes and fires periodically reduced Manila’s stately buildings to ash and rubble.³³

Despite being a city of dreams, Manila was unhealthy, unsanitary, and periodically disease-ridden. The poor, who had little access to clean water, suffered the most, but, as Linda Newson has shown, no one was spared from “malignant and contagious fevers,” the major smallpox epidemics that affected the city in 1656 and 1705, the virulent but undiagnosed epidemic that struck in 1668, the deadly outbreak of measles, and “fever with vomiting and a cough” that caused high mortality in the mid-eighteenth century.³⁴ Writing in the late 1500s, the Jesuit priest Father Pedro Chirino recorded how in 1591 smallpox “spread around Manila and the surrounding region [and] spared neither young nor old.”³⁵ Later, it seems, a terrible sickness, “widespread and contagious,” struck many native converts again in Manila even as they worshiped in church, which caused them to turn away from Catholicism and return to their former idols.³⁶

Yet not even the hardships of forced labor or the hazards of living in a filthy, overcrowded, disease-ridden city could tarnish the glitter of Manila’s Golden Age. Commercial prosperity lent a brilliant sheen to a city that the Spaniards had essentially turned into “an urban warehouse linking Nueva España to China.”³⁷ Chirino, who became the rector of the Jesuit church in Manila in 1599 and was later promoted to vice provincial, was far from impressed: “In grandeur [Manila] may not equal Rome, Nineveh, Alexandria, Paris, Venice, Lisbon, Toledo, Seville, but for barbarians attracted to the mountains like beasts of the field, it is not nothing.”³⁸ But few shared

32. Linda Newson, *Conquest and Pestilence in the Early Spanish Philippines* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2009), 128.

33. Fernando N. Zialcita and Martin I. Tinio Jr., *Philippine Ancestral Houses (1810–1930)* (Quezon City: GCF Books, 1980), 28.

34. Newson, *Conquest and Pestilence*, 127.

35. Pedro Chirino, *History of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus* (1602), trans. José S. Arcilla, 2 vols. (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2009–10), 1:264.

36. *Ibid.*, 2:178.

37. Robert K. Reed, “The Colonial Origins of Manila and Batavia: Desultory Note on Nascent Metropolitan Primacy and Urban Systems in Southeast Asia,” *Asian Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 557.

38. Chirino, *History*, 2:251.

Chirino's disdainful opinion. For sojourner and resident alike, the city evoked glamour, the promise of riches and prestige, a place where life-changing fortunes could be made. People's keen sense of awareness of that idea found expression in ostentatious display. Being shown off was not only the newly acquired wealth, but also the confident knowledge of living in the greatest emporium in all Asia: "The streets, squares and churches, are ordinarily filled with people of all classes, especially with Spaniards, all of them, men and women alike, carefully dressed and adorned in silks. They wear many ornaments and all sorts of fine clothes, because of the ease with which these are obtained: so that this is one of the settlements most highly praised by all strangers who visit here from all over the world."³⁹

HOW TO SPEND IT

Thorstein Veblen's notion of conspicuous consumption as the relentless acquisition of goods motivated primarily by competition and status seeking would seem to fit Manila's *nouveaux riches*.⁴⁰ But magnificence, Peter Burke suggests, was just one mode of self-presentation. In the colonial Philippines, material consumption and its effects were not confined to ostentation or to the flamboyant elites. The desire for goods—fine, expensive, exotic—rippled outward, touching the lives of different people and communities, having differing consequences and effects that could not have been predicted.⁴¹

Manileños liked to display their wealth but also pursued expensive material things that satisfied private sensuous desires. According to Morga's description, rich residents reveled in everyday conspicuous consumption, announcing their wealth and status, first and foremost, by the things they put on their bodies. Raiment and jewelry were the most eye-catching, of course, and as he recounts, people luxuriated in ornaments, as well as rich and expensive fabrics, which for the first time were readily within their reach. The galleon trade introduced a host of new goods that took dressing up to a new level. Spanish missionary chroniclers had already observed the native inclination to bathe frequently and pamper the body with exquisite fragrances. Morga was frankly surprised by the way young and old liked to

39. Morga, *Sucesos*, 286.

40. Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1970).

41. Peter Burke, "Res et Verba: Conspicuous Consumption in the Early Modern World," in John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 148–62.

submerge their “whole bodies in rivers and streams without reflecting that it could at any time be harmful to them.” Women of all classes took particular pride in their lustrous tresses. They washed their hair using the boiled bark of a vine called *gogo* (*Entada phaseoloides*), which made it gleam. Fragrant herbs, aromatic flowers, and sesame oil scented the hair of most women, and it is probable that the perfumes and oils included the endemic ylang-ylang (*Canangium odoratum*), whose blossoms exuded a powerfully sweet scent and which women were fond of tucking into their hair. Affluent women anointed their heads with animal-derived scents—musk, ambergris, and civet.⁴²

Aromatic tree resins joined the arsenal of perfumes already in use. There was so-called true Manila Elemi that yielded a distinct spicy, herbal fragrance. Derived from the tree *Canarium luzonicum*, Manila Elemi is a highly aromatic honeylike resin with a smell suggestive of fennel and mace.⁴³ Camphor and benzoin had been staples in the Southeast Asia–Sino trade since at least the Sui Dynasty (589–618 C.E.). In the mid-thirteenth century the Chinese particularly sought out Barus camphor from Sumatra, Patani, and Ligor for its pungency and potent medicinal qualities, whereas benzoin from Siam (*Styrax tonkinensis*), Malacca, and Sumatra was considered to have the most powerful scent.⁴⁴ The olfactory choices enlarged with the galleon trade. Fine camphor arrived from Borneo, and Cambodian ships brought benzoin of the *Styrax tonkinensis* variety. But an even more luxurious and exotic perfume was introduced. Still more indulgently, well-to-do women had begun to moisten and perfume their hair with oils mixed with a brand-new substance—mastic.⁴⁵ Sometimes known as Arabic gum, mastic is an aromatic resin derived from the small Mediterranean evergreen tree *Pistacia lentiscus*. Prized in Asia Minor since ancient times, mastic was worth its weight in gold. Ancient Egyptians used mastic in embalming; Turks, Greeks, Moroccans, and Lebanese used it as frankincense and produced incense from it; soaps and cosmetics were scented with mastic; it

42. T. H. Breen, “The Meaning of Things: Interpreting the Consumer Economy in the Eighteenth Century,” in Brewer and Porter, *Consumption and the World of Goods*, 249.

43. I. H. Burkill, *A Dictionary of the Economic Products of the Malay Peninsula*, 2 vols. (London: Crown Agents for the Colonies, 1935), 1:422, 431.

44. Raquel A. G. Reyes, “Glimpsing Southeast Asian *Naturalia* in Global Trade, c. 300 BCE–1600 CE,” in David Henley and Henk Schulte Nordholt, eds., *Environment, Trade and Society in Southeast Asia: A Longue Durée Perspective* (Boston: Brill, 2015), 115.

45. Chirino, *History*, 1:267.

perfumed sweetmeats and desserts; and pieces of it were chewed for both its scent and its antibacterial properties.⁴⁶ It smells much like cedar, pine, and olibanum—woody and spicy with a hint of citrus; mastic-perfumed hair must have surely been the height of refined grooming.

As new scents subtly changed the smell of bodies, sartorial innovations began to insinuate themselves. Women wound ribbons into their hair knots; pleated skirts started to be worn, the edges of their *saya*, or skirt, and *tapis*, or overskirt, embroidered and trimmed with gold and silk. Women's stockings appeared, as did mantillas, lavishly embroidered shawls or wraps that came to be known as *mantones de Manila* or *pañuelos Filipinos de tapar*. "On going out," Chirino observed, "they cover themselves with cotton and or taffeta shawls, their entire dress perfumed and fragrant." Japanese-inspired, Chinese-made hand-held fans—*los abanicos chinos*—of silk, paper, and lacquer, with intricately carved folding blades of bone, ivory, and mother-of-pearl, were exported to Acapulco along with so many other knickknacks, but they appealed to the city's women, who found them indispensable not only on warm days but in conversation, when they were used to make emphatic gestures.⁴⁷

Tagalog men folded and tucked striped cotton cloths around their legs and waists to form a garment that was an attempt at breeches. Another wide cloth would be wound around the body and—a first—fastened with solid gold buttons, "each one bigger than a dove's egg." Pockets appeared: a small one to keep "pieces of gold or silver to pay for what they had bought," and a larger pocket sewn on a belt below the chest, which also carried a dagger; some were made of gold and had an ivory hilt and a scabbard of carabao horn. The ensemble was completed with three more remarkable additions: a hat, stylish stockings, and shoes.⁴⁸

The city presented a number of opportunities when its well-heeled population could show off publicly: there were the daily rituals—the late afternoon *paseo* and the church Mass; beatifications and canonizations, seasonal and votive festivities, and the regular feasts that marked the liturgical calendar, which ranged from Christmas and Holy Week to the feast days of the

46. A. F. Hill, *Economic Botany: A Textbook of Useful Plants and Plant Products*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1952); Maud Grieve, *A Modern Herbal*, 3rd ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980); Christos Belles, *Mastiba Island* (Chios: Aegeas, 2007). I thank William G. Clarence-Smith for these references.

47. Blas Sierra de la Calle, *Vientos de Acapulco: Relaciones entre America y Oriente* (Valladolid: Museo Oriental de Valladolid, 1991), 125; Chirino, *History*, 1:264–68.

48. Chirino, *History*, 1:267.

city's patron saints, those that protected against disasters and those associated with Spanish military and naval victories.⁴⁹ The best occasions, however, were the sumptuous fiestas that celebrated the departure of the galleons to Acapulco, when images of the Blessed Virgin Mary and saints were petitioned to ensure the success of the voyage. A novena, a daily Mass held for nine consecutive days, honored the patron saint Nuestra Señora de Guía, whose image resided in the extramural parish church of Ermita. The novena culminated in a procession in which the saint was carried from her chapel to the cathedral. In 1642 a city ordinance was passed stipulating that a procession be held to celebrate the completed construction of every new galleon ship.⁵⁰ The image of Nuestra Señora de Antipolo, renamed Nuestra Señora de la Paz y del Buen Viaje, was the tutelary patroness of the Manila galleons.

Brought by Governor Tabora from Acapulco in 1626 on the galleon ship *El Almirante*, the small statue carved from dark wood undertook eight galleon crossings from 1641 to 1746.⁵¹ It was believed that her presence safeguarded the ship and her crew from the perilous journey and ensured their return. Each safe return was a joyous occasion that began with a procession on the Pasig River in her honor. Flags, banners, and cheering crowds lined the shores. She would be carried back to her shrine in Antipolo, southeast of Manila, at the foothills of the Sierra Madre. Lasting two days, the celebrations included artillery salvos, singing, fireworks, music, litanies, and Masses to mark her triumphant return.⁵²

Fiestas to commemorate the feast days of saints and the Virgin were numerous and expensive.⁵³ Available data suggest that the city was truly blessed—at least fourteen saints manifested themselves in some form or other in the city. The date of the fiesta would be set in conjunction with the saint's first *aparición*. The sums spent were considerable. The Spanish scholar Inmaculada Alva Rodríguez has shown that the expenses for each fiesta during the period from 1592 to 1613 ranged from a few hundred

49. For the full calendar of celebrations, see Nick Joaquín, *Almanac for Manileños* (Manila: Mr & Ms Publications, 1979).

50. Inmaculada Alva Rodríguez, *Vida municipal en Manila, Siglos XVI–XVII* (Córdoba: University of Córdoba, 1997), 106.

51. Horacio de la Costa, S.J., *The Jesuits in the Philippines* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 369.

52. D. R. M. Irving, *Colonial Counterpoint: Music in Early Modern Manila* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 220.

53. Reinhard Wendt, *Fiesta Filipina: Koloniale Kultur zwischen Imperialismus und neuer Identität* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 1997).



Figure 1. Nuestra Señora de la Paz y del Buen Viaje, Antipolo.

pesos to several thousand. The feast day of San Andrés, the patron saint of Manila, was one of the most lavish celebrations.⁵⁴ The spectacle was amazing: horses were richly dressed, and people from neighboring towns came wearing their most excellent finery, competing with one another. The celebrations ran for two days and went on late into the night; a splendid banquet was prepared, possibly cooked by the Chinese, and there was music and dancing.⁵⁵ Priests spared no expense in ensuring their churches put on grand musical performances. The archbishop in charge of Nuestra Señora de Guía spent five hundred pesos on a new bell and the choir. The richly ornamented *capilla real*, or royal chapel, possessed an organ and a choir of skilled singers; Augustinian parishes around Manila had ensembles comprising harps, various stringed instruments, organs, and singers.⁵⁶ The performances were lively and spirited. Writing in the mid-eighteenth

54. Rodríguez, *Vida municipal*, 107.

55. *Ibid.*, 113.

56. Irving, *Colonial Counterpoint*, 183.

century, the French traveler Le Gentil de la Galaisière, however, was ungenerous and said he heard nothing but caterwauling: “something so wild and so barbarous. . . . I heard confused shouts that were out of time and out of tune, while the ensemble that accompanied had the skill of making it yet more horrible. Such is the state of music at Manila, and this is pretty much what one hears in all the churches on the days of great feasts.”⁵⁷

The galleon trade stimulated the growth of a new artisanal cottage industry devoted to the manufacture of religious statuary for export and for local use. Invariably the artists were Chinese who lived in the Parian. Reputed to have great skill in painting and carving, Chinese artists, it was observed, could make exquisite reproductions of religious icons and paintings that were technically equal to those found in Europe. Domingo Salazar, the first bishop of Manila, observed that, thanks to the skillful Chinese, “with the Sangleys’ ability to replicate those images from Spain, it should not be long when even those made in Flanders will not be missed.”⁵⁸

Carved from bone, ivory, and wood, Marian images and those depicting the infant Christ were shipped to New Spain and beyond. Others were made to order for local consumption. The Nuestra Señora del Santísimo Rosario de La Naval, popularly known as La Naval, for example, was commissioned from a Chinese artisan by Governor Don Luis Perez Dasmariñas in 1593. Thought to be the oldest dated Philippine-made ivory carving, La Naval measured 152 centimeters (5 feet) and found special fame in 1646 when Spanish victories over the Dutch and the safety of Manila were attributed to her divine intercession. She was bewigged and bedecked in sumptuous finery that reimagined late sixteenth-century Spanish courtly dress: she wore a hooped underskirt over which was layered a dress, a blouse with fitted cuffs, a long coat, a gilded silver crown, and jeweled headdress, or *rostrillo*.⁵⁹ La Naval’s ostentatiousness was far from uncommon. First displayed at the founding of the Augustinian church in Manila in 1604, the image of Nuestra Señora de Consolación acquired an elaborately worked silver full-body armor composed of a tunic inlaid with white sapphires, a full skirt made from a thick sheet of silver decorated with baroque floral

57. Quoted *ibid.*

58. Salazar is quoted in Regalado Trota Jose, “Imaging Our Lady in Sixteenth-Century Manila: *Nuestra Señora del Rosario de la Naval*,” www.cilam.ucr.edu/diagonal/issues/2008/TrotaJose2.pdf; accessed August 15, 2015.

59. *Ibid.*

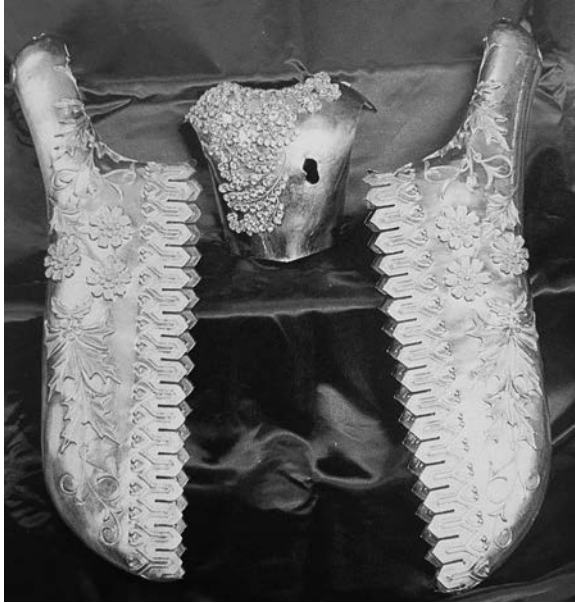


Figure 2. Silver full body armor of Nuestra Señora de Consolación. Photo courtesy of San Agustín Church, Manila.

motifs, embossed, chased, and riveted, and a silver stomacher with almost two hundred rock crystals of different sizes and cuts.⁶⁰

The galleon trade made financing such religious flamboyance possible. Although considered unseemly among the more high-minded members of the clergy and officially frowned upon, clerical participation in galleon commerce was as enthusiastic as those of other traders. Since the establishment of the galleon trade, religious and secular priests enjoyed the same advantages and privileges as other Spanish traders. The Ecclesiastical Cabildo of Manila, composed of priests, was a trading bloc ostensibly formed to augment clerical incomes, but, in practice, there seems to be no way of telling whether it was real financial need or the amassing capital in the name of profit that lay behind clerical motivations.⁶¹ The economic interests of the

60. Pedro G. Galende, OSA, and Clifford T. Chua, *The Gold and Silver Collection, San Agustin Museum, Intramuros, Manila* (Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2003), 92–93.

61. Nicolas Cushner, “Merchants and Missionaries: A Theologian’s View of Clerical Involvement in the Galleon Trade,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 47 (1967): 360–69; Barbara Andaya, “Between Empires and Emporia: The Economics

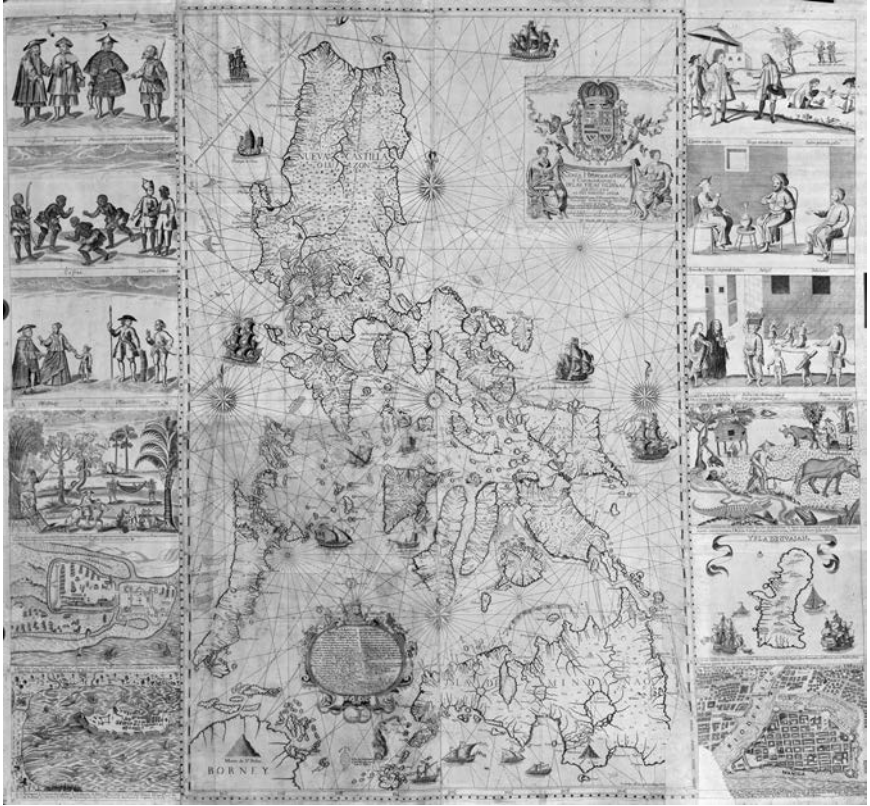


Figure 3. Map of the Philippine Islands by Pedro Murillo Velarde, 1734. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid.

Jesuits found graphic expression in a map by Pedro Murillo Velarde dated 1734. Engraved by Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay and decorated by Francisco Suarez, both of whom were Filipinos, the map is strewn with galleon trading ships and Chinese junks. The cartouche enumerates the islands' alleged natural resources, including gold, pearls, cinnamon, indigo, medicinal herbs, and the New World plants cacao and tobacco. Around the map are vivid depictions of the cosmopolitan trading communities in the islands and agricultural practices and cultivation of useful plants, including bamboo, betel, coconuts, and the New World fruits papaya and jackfruit (nanca).

of Christianization in Early Modern Southeast Asia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 53, nos. 1–2 (2009): 357–92.



Figure 4. Embellished pulpit with an inverted pineapple, San Agustín Church, Manila. Photo by the author.

Clerics did not shy from hoarding earthly riches and had an eye for precious decorations, *alajas*, and sacred vessels, *vasos sagrados*. They spent extravagantly. Religious purchases for San Agustín church in the early seventeenth century were solid gold chalices from Mexico studded with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and amethysts, gold cruet sets and reliquaries heavily embellished with precious jewels, also from Mexico, and gold bells from China.⁶² The interior of the vaulted church, built in 1604, boasted an ornate choir stall, gilded retables, and a magnificently carved and embellished pulpit with an inverted pineapple. Used as a decorative motif, did the pineapple, a New World import, reformulate the pinecone, a well-known Euro-Christian symbol for eternal life, for local use?⁶³

Religious imagery was venerated, and precious New World church treasures doubtlessly dazzled, but native peoples set their sights on acquiring a

62. Galende and Chua, *The Gold and Silver Collection*, 5.

63. Lucia Impelluso, *Nature and Its Symbols: A Guide to Imagery* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004).

rather different class of trade object—ceramics. Foreign high-fired ceramic trade wares have a long history in the archipelago.⁶⁴ The extensive recovery of Thai, Vietnamese, and ninth-century Middle Eastern objects, and most predominately Chinese trade ceramics, the oldest being Yue and Yue-type wares dating from the Five Dynasties period (907–960), and most abundantly Guangdong and Fujian Song ware, prove the pervasiveness, robustness, and long tradition of a trade in ceramics. Ceramic shards excavated in northeast Mindanao indicate a Philippine-Borneo-Celebes network and, more broadly, its place in Song-era Chinese, Southeast Asian, and Middle Eastern trade patterns.⁶⁵ Moreover, evidence of mortuary activities and the presence of porcelain items as grave goods found in burial sites dated to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries show that trade ceramics were an integral part of indigenous society beyond the status of valued commodity.⁶⁶

By the seventeenth century the sheer scale and variety of trade ceramics entering Manila through the galleon trade was unparalleled. In 1600 the ill-fated galleon *San Diego*, under the command of Antonio de Morga, went down in a miscalculated skirmish against a Dutch ship led by the commander Oliver van Noort. Its sunken cargo consisted of Thai earthenwares; black- and brown-glazed Martaban stonewares from Pegu; massive so-called dragon jars from South China, weighing up to twenty kilograms (forty-four pounds); Vietnamese blue-and-white porcelains as well as the blue-and-white porcelains from the Jingdezhen kilns, which famously applied imported cobalt on kaolin clay; celadons, finely made bowls and plates the vast majority of which were decorated with fallow deer motifs; and pouring vessels, including animal-shaped kendi from China.⁶⁷ Aside

64. William Henry Scott, *Prehispanic Source Materials for the Study of Philippine History* (Quezon City: New Day, 1984); and Scott, *Looking for the Prehispanic Filipino*.

65. Roxanna M. Brown, ed., *Guangdong Ceramics from Butuan and Other Philippine Sites* (Manila: Oriental Ceramic Society of the Philippines, 1989), 79.

66. Elisabeth A. Bacus, "The Archaeology of the Philippine Archipelago," in Ian Glover and Peter Bellwood, eds., *Southeast Asia: From Prehistory to History* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 267. On the Vietnamese trade, see Kerry Nguyen Long, "Vietnamese Ceramic Trade to the Philippines in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 30, no. 1 (1999): 1–21.

67. These are on permanent display at the National Museum, the Philippines, visited in August 2015. Martaban (also Martabani, Martabana, Montaban, Matakavann) identifies massive, lead-glazed, narrow-based water or storage jars that were produced in Burma by the eleventh century and commonly traded between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries, from the Gulf of Martaban, near Moulmein in lower Burma. Pamela Gutman, "The Martaban Trade: An Examination of the Literature from the Seventh Century until the Eighteenth Century," *Asian Per-*



Figure 5. Sunken cargo of earthenware jars recovered from the galleon *San Diego*, commanded by Antonio de Morga in 1600, on display at the National Museum, Manila. Photo by the author.

from these, recently discovered seventeenth-century Hizen porcelains from Japan, characterized by motifs of rocks and leaves, seem to have also made their way to Manila from Nagasaki on Dutch VOC vessels and Chinese junks.⁶⁸

The cultural influence of trade ceramics on local societies was profound. Both lowland and upland communities in Luzon acquired Chinese porcelain jars, which, along with rice fields, livestock, copper gongs, precious beads, and gold ornaments, were a key component of ceremonial wealth

spectives 40, no. 1 (2011): 108–18; Don Thein, “Ceramic Production in Myanmar—Further Evidence on Old Traditions,” in *Traditions in Current Perspective: Proceedings of the Conference on Myanmar and Southeast Asian Studies, November 15–17, 1995, Yangon* (Yangon: Universities Historical Research Center, 1996). *Kendi*, a Malay word from the Sanskrit *kunda*, is a spouted vessel for drinking and pouring that has been used in rituals and daily life in Southeast Asia since ancient times. In the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, glazed kendi produced in China, Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam was an important item of trade for the Southeast Asian market. Roxanne M. Brown, *The Ceramics of Southeast Asia: Their Dating and Identification* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988), and http://rooneyarchive.net/articles/kendi/kendi_album/kendi.htm; accessed May 8, 2017.

68. Takenori Nogami, “On Hizen Porcelain and the Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade,” *Indo-Pacific Pre-History Association Bulletin* 26 (2006): 124–30, <http://journals.lib.washington.edu/index.php/BIPPA/article/viewFile/12001/10626>; accessed August 25, 2015.

and prestige. In the nineteenth century it was reported that mountain groups from as far away as the Cagayan and northern Ilocos areas had grown wealthy by trading in wax, cacao, and tobacco, decorating their homes with vases and jars from China.⁶⁹ The Isneg of northwest Cagayan obtained Chinese jars and ceramics from coastal traders, treating ceramic ware as precious heirlooms and burying them alongside important dead.⁷⁰ The early twentieth-century North American ethnographer Fay Cooper-Cole observed how porcelain jars, probably Ming dated, were passed down from generation to generation among the Tinguians—they were offered as bride-price payment; accepted in lieu of a head in head-taking raids; and used to serve liquor at important ceremonies and rituals.⁷¹ Tinguian folktales are replete with stories of the magical abilities, adventures, and supernatural ancestry of porcelain jars. In these tales Chinese jars could speak and mate with other jars to produce offspring, and a very special few had not even originated in China but belonged to spirits and had to be captured as they roamed in forests.⁷² These accounts afford us a rare glimpse of the multiplicity of cultural meanings and uses that became attached to imported objects.

FLORAL AND FAUNAL INTRODUCTIONS

It is well known how the Columbian Exchange (the term coined by Alfred Crosby to describe the global movement of plants and animals after 1492) brought about profound environmental changes.⁷³ Equally, agriculture and everyday diets were immeasurably enriched by the migration of crops and animals: wheat, cattle, and horses traveled from the Old World to the New, while New World potatoes, tomatoes, and paprika went to Europe, maize and cassava to Africa, and maize, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes to Asia. In maritime Southeast Asia, maize and sweet potatoes spread rapidly and widely to become prominent staples, even supplanting, in certain areas especially vulnerable to unseasonable weather, the traditional staples of indigenous millet and roots and tubers, specifically aroids and yams, the most

69. Felix M. Keesing, *The Ethnohistory of Northern Luzon* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), 163.

70. *Ibid.*, 188.

71. Fay Cooper-Cole, *Chinese Pottery in the Philippines* (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1912), 14.

72. *Ibid.*, 13.

73. Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1972).

important being taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) and ube (*Dioscorea alata*), respectively.⁷⁴

In the Philippines, the arrival of galleon shipments of New World cattle was accommodated on arable lands that were given over to ranches and raising livestock, which were also used for the provisioning of the galleons, “an instance of geographical influence stemming from the needs of the trans-Pacific trade.”⁷⁵ Horses were brought first from Mexico and quickly flourished. By the late seventeenth century foreigners noted their plentiful presence in Luzon and Mindanao, where feral herds roamed.⁷⁶ New World botanical introductions were numerous and various: cereals and beans, fruiting trees, vanilla, peppers, peanuts and pineapple, medicinals, ornamentals, and textile plants.⁷⁷

Much has been written about the influences of Hispanic gastronomy and its penetration of indigenous culinary life, particularly within elite society, as well as the indigenization of Hispanic foods. Rafael Bernal has highlighted linguistic assimilations, pointing to the names of foods of Mexican origin that were successfully adopted into the local lexicon. Examples are legion: *atsute* from *achute*; annatto from achiote (*Bixa orellana*), the seeds from which red food coloring is obtained; *panocha* from *penuche*, the brown, unrefined, coarse-grained sugar; papaya; casaba from cassava; *abokado* from *aguacate* or avocado, to name a few.⁷⁸

Tobacco and cacao, once introduced, joined an existing repertoire of indigenous stimulants and relaxants that included betel and locally produced alcoholic drinks. Tobacco made its first appearance in 1575 and rapidly took

74. Peter Boomgaard and Marjolein ‘t Hart, “Globalization, Environmental Change and Social History: An Introduction,” *International Review of Social History* 55, supp. 18 (2010): 1–26; Peter Boomgaard, “Maize and Tobacco in Upland Indonesia, 1600–1940,” in Tania Murray Li, ed., *Transforming the Indonesian Uplands: Marginality, Power, and Production* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999), 45–79; Peter Boomgaard, “In the Shadow of Rice: Roots and Tubers in Indonesian history, 1500–1950,” *Agricultural History* 77, no. 4 (2003): 582–610.

75. Pablo Guzman-Rivas, “Reciprocal Geographic Influences of the Trans-Pacific Galleon Trade” (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, Austin, 1960), 175.

76. Greg Bankoff, “Horsing Around: The Life and Times of the Horse in the Philippines at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” in Peter Boomgaard and David Henley, eds., *Smallholders and Stockbreeders: Histories of Foodcrop and Livestock Farming in Southeast Asia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004), 233.

77. Corazon S. Alvina and Domingo A. Madulid, *Flora Filipina: From Acapulco to Manila* (Manila: Art Post Asia, National Museum of the Philippines, 2009), 11.

78. Rafael Bernal, *México en Filipinas: Estudio de una transculturación* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1965).

hold among the populace. Added to the betel quid and chewed, rolled into cigars and smoked, or inhaled as powdered snuff, tobacco, and the nicotine it contained, contributed a new sensory dimension to the consumption of addictive substances and established social rituals. Cultivated from the mid-seventeenth century, cacao was a favorite of the Spanish Catholic clergy, who introduced and popularized its consumption as a hot beverage among all classes of Philippine society.⁷⁹

Hispanic food came to be associated with wealthy, urbanized, lifestyles—luxurious, classy, and expensive food of the rich. The use of certain ingredients that were heavy on the stomach and rich in taste, such as beef and cured pork, contrasted sharply with the native fare of fish and braised vegetables and demanded new cooking methods—sautéing (called *guisando* locally) and frying in oils, *prito*. Sourness, the pronounced and defining flavor of lowland, Christianized Filipino cuisine, came to be enhanced when combined with the new additions of garlic, onions, and chili peppers.⁸⁰ Chinese chronicles from the Fujian and Zhejiang provinces indicate that chili became known to the Chinese in about 1671, in all probability through trade with the Philippines, where five different species were collectively known by the vernacular term *buyobuyo*.⁸¹ In the Visayas, in central Philippines, betel chew is also known by the same term, which perhaps suggests that chili was not only used for culinary purposes, but may also have been incorporated in the betel quid or consumed in the same way, as a stimulant.

Filipinos developed a sweet tooth, a taste for sweet, sugary, buttery, egg-based foods, particularly in the form of desserts and pastries—a liking that has been attributed to the Hispanic culinary legacy. In contrast to native rice-based puddings, or *panghimagas*, “our repertoire of sweetness,” write Doreen Fernandez and Edilberto Alegre, “seem[s] to have come from the Spanish kitchen and the elite lifestyle: *flan de leche* . . . *mamonones con mantequilla* . . . *borrachuelos* . . . *buñuelos o suspiros de monja*.”⁸² The terms

79. William G. Clarence-Smith, “Betel, Tobacco and Beverages in Southeast Asia,” in Raquel A. G. Reyes, ed., *Art, Trade, and Cultural Mediation in Asia, 1500–1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming).

80. Fernando N. Zialcita, “Why Insist on Asian Flavor?” in Elizalde et al., *Imperios y naciones en el Pacífico*, 2:3–21.

81. Stefan Halikowski Smith, “In the Shadow of a Pepper-Centric Historiography: Understanding the Global Diffusion of Capsicums in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 167 (2015): 64–77.

82. Doreen D. Fernandez and Edilberto N. Alegre, *Sarap: Essays on Philippine Food* (Manila: Mr & Ms Publishing, 1988), 150. For an indication of the enduring Hispanic culinary legacy, see Enriqueta David-Pérez, *Recipes of the Philippines* (1953; repr., Mandaluyog: Cacho Hermanos, 1973).

enculturation and *transculturation* are variously used to describe the processes by which foreign foods are integrated into local food cultures. Hispanic gastronomy dug deeply into native culinary sensibilities, informing Filipino “days ordinary and special; it flavors our family fare and our feasts. Transformed and transmuted through time, by native ingredients, and by the native taste, it has been indigenized, adapted and adopted. . . . It is now Filipino.”⁸³

The influence of New World flora and fauna was not confined to culinary landscapes but also found striking expression in architecture. Built over a ten-year period, 1787–97, in the Baroque-Romanesque style, the church in Miag-ao, on the island of Panay in the Visayas, features a stunning pediment decorated with a bas-relief sculpture of Saint Christopher, native in garb and appearance, carrying the Christ Child and planting a fully grown coconut palm. Flanking him are papaya and guava trees, the latter planted in vessels, perhaps stylized porcelain vases, their branches drooping under the weight of their luscious fruit.⁸⁴ How were these symbols interpreted or understood by different viewers? Did the symbols resonate with established cultural practices? Miag-ao’s striking pediment and ornate facade must have been awe-inspiring, but evidence of its indigenous reception is scant, and architectural historians have had little choice but to speculate.⁸⁵

CONCLUSION

The first of the Manila galleons sailed for Acapulco in 1572, and the last in 1815.⁸⁶ Luxuries and precious merchandise from the East—cargoes of spices, and silks and porcelain from China, demanded by New Spain and Europe, were traded in New Spain in exchange for American silver desired by China. Neither demand outweighed the other. The significance of this demand-and-supply commerce, and the route taken to facilitate it, was far-reaching. Through the direct exchange of goods, Asia and the Americas came into contact with one another for the first time. But, arguably, the

83. Fernandez and Alegre, *Sarap*, 152.

84. This observation is elaborated on in Raquel A. G. Reyes, “Representations of New World Plants and Animals on Philippine Colonial Churches,” in Reyes, *Art, Trade, and Cultural Mediation in Asia*.

85. See, for instance, brief remarks by Alicia M. L. Coseteng, *Spanish Churches in the Philippines* (Manila: UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines, 1972), 101–8.

86. Benito J. Legarda Jr., *After the Galleons: Foreign Trade, Economic Change and Entrepreneurship in the Nineteenth-Century Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999).



Figure 6. Ornamented pediment of the Augustinian Church at Miag-Ao, Panay Island, Philippines. Photo by the author.

trans-Pacific trade also influenced the histories of Europe, Africa, and the Levant—the commercial corridor linking Asia.

On a quotidian level, the effect of the galleon trade on Manila was just as profoundly transformative. During its Golden Age, Manila was a teeming cosmopolitan city, where many languages could be heard and where people from all walks of life converged to try their luck at getting rich. The city was elegant and stately, but also conflict-ridden, corrupt, dirty, and disease-filled. It was a city of dreams, where no expense was spared on fiestas and feasts. Filled with music, pomp, and revelry, these occasions celebrated the safe arrival of ships and were divinely blessed by the resplendent earthly images of the Virgin and the Christ Child.

The influx of worldly goods took consumption habits to new heights. Prosperous inhabitants delighted in ostentatious displays of wealth and adored the luxurious and sensuous. Bodies were clothed in fine, costly fabrics—silks, damasks, taffeta—new imports that brought about sartorial innovations: new folds and pockets, embellishments and trimmings, and accessories, from hats and fans to stockings and shawls. New fragrances introduced olfactory experiences and an air of worldly glamour. With the introduction of New World plant crops and animals, culinary as well as geographic landscapes were irrevocably altered. A taste for rich and sweet

foods was engendered. Plant motifs found their way to church decoration, thereby bringing about new visual aesthetics that reached beyond Manila. Communities far removed from the urban milieu of the galleon trade responded to a manifold increase in the range and variety of Chinese trade ceramics and porcelains, age-old objects of desire about which new stories could be spun.

Peter Burke has pondered why and how there was an apparent rise of a “more conspicuous kind of consumption” in different parts of the world; he cites Europe and Asia, at much the same time, that is, between the late sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries. Though focused mainly on Europe and the Renaissance and taking a different tack, Lisa Jardine found how mercantile rivalries and collaborative commercial enterprises expanded horizons, which in turn fostered acquisitiveness and an appreciation of finery and luxuries, but also in the process enacted an intellectual and cultural sea change.⁸⁷

Could Manila’s Golden Age of conspicuous consumption claim an intellectual and creative flowering that profoundly defined an era and beyond? In terms of scale, and if a Eurocentric compass were to be our guide, the answer would have to be a rather undramatic No. But similar ingredients were present. The period was not devoid of creative energy, enthusiasm, and swashbuckling bravura, whose effects were felt throughout the archipelago. The Manila galleon trade offered a quick route to riches but could plunge a man into penury just as fast. It fueled conspicuous consumption and encouraged venality, vanity, and acquisitiveness on a massive scale. But flaunting it had other consequences. Cultures of consumption were formulated and reshaped in and beyond the port city. As hinterland communities reprocessed and disseminated goods, they too became economic actors as well as active consumers. Objects and their materiality took on a multiplicity of meanings and cultural uses for the different peoples that received, consumed, and cherished imported goods. Thus, for a brief period, the port city of Manila was one of the world’s most spectacular emporia with cosmopolitan sensibilities and a genuinely global outlook that reached out to a truly diverse consumer market.

87. Burke, “*Res et Verba*”; Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (London: Macmillan, 1993).