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“Iberi Imperii finis limes et orbis erit”. China, Spain and the Ocean through propagandist and cartographic representations (16th–18th centuries)**

Introduction and theoretical framework

“The Spanish people is similar to the Hebrew with regard to the fact that both are peoples of God [...]; the Spanish monarchy will continue for many centuries to come and it will be the last” (Salazar 1945, 68). The universalist ambitions of the Iberian monarchies increased rapidly during the 16th century, when Spain and Portugal built their oceanic empires, and so this was reflected on this quotation by the Benedictine friar Juan de Salazar included in his work *Política española*, which dates from 1609. The idea of an expansive frontier, taken to the furthest corner of the continent, would even still remain long after, in 1698. During the final part of the reign of Charles II from the House of Austria, the Augustinian chronicler, Friar Gaspar de San Agustín had his book *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas: la temporal por Don Felipe Segundo el Prudente; y la espiritual, por los Religiosos de la Orden de San Agustín* published in Madrid. In his Chronicle, the friar refers to the same idea in the frontispiece of his work: “Iberi Imperii finis limes et orbis erit”. The Iberian empire will be the last frontier and the end of the world. And went on: “Ultima regna, quibus referatur finibus orbis / Dat Deus arbitrio, magne Monarcha tuo / Subditur Hispanis dum totus mundus, Iberi / Imperii finis limes et orbis erit”, which

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can be translated into: “By God’s wisdom, your great monarchy was given the final reign, which designates the limits of the earth; so that every world is conquered by the Spanish: the Iberian Empire will be the last frontier and the end of the world” (San Agustín 1698, frontispiece). In order to represent this messianic and universalist statement, the frontispiece of *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas* shows Philip II putting on the crown of emperor and leaping on the China Sea together with an army of missionaries and soldiers, accompanied by the prophetic vision of Isaiah, which appears as a motto in the print: “In doctrinis glorificate Deum, in insulis maris nomen Domini Dei Israel: a finibus terrae laudes audivimus gloriam iusti” (“Therefore in the east give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, in the islands of the sea: from the ends of the earth we hear singing: glory to the righteous one”, Isaiah 24: 15-16, New International Version). Philip II was enthroned, in that representation, as the Neptune of the Pacific.

The work analyses the way the Catholic monarchy, specifically during the Luso-Hispanic union after 1580, represented the China Sea and its imperial confines after the Spanish settled in the Philippine archipelago. Not only does it cover the country’s cartography but also the ethnographic and missionary literature created at the expense of the Catholic King, a documental corpus mainly built by the monarch’s religious agents in his Asian dominions.

As will be explained below, the Spanish monarchy from the second half of the 16th century was a sheer knowledge lab on the Chinese empire and its seas. During the reign of Philip II, the Spanish settled in the Philippines and that was the start of the dynastic union between the Spanish Crown and the Kingdom of Portugal, which dominated several parts of Asia: the frontier of Philip’s Iberian Empire adjoined the frontiers of the “Great Kingdom” of China, as some sources entitled the Celestial Empire ruled by the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). In this context, which boosted the creation of news, connections and cultural products, the monarchy presented itself as an emerging power in the Pacific Ocean and the frontiers of the Chinese empire. Ethnographic works, maps and treaties were created in order to report useful information about the sea, the islands and the continent, whilst, at the same time, the Iberian presence in Asia was intended to be glorified. As will be seen below, some of these representations served the idea of a messianic imperialism that depicted the king as a God-sent Lord of the oceans who was capable of dominating China, the most ancient civilisation, through Christianisation, and following the providential view and target sought by some friars who collaborated with the Catholic King. From the last third of the 16th century and continuing well into the 18th century, these depictions in maps and accounts were the windows through which the Spanish monarchy showed its power and dominion of the oceans. The material that recorded a conquest or some influence in a territory was used with apologetic purposes by the “boundaryless” empire.

The here mentioned material is tackled through the perspective of the so-called “culture of expansion” (See Loureiro 2000 and Barreto 2000). In this conceptual framework, a collection of cultural products is described, which comprises printed works, manuscripts,

letters or accounts that were produced as the European monarchies reached and discovered new lands. The encounter with unknown geographical realities offered new categories to represent the presence of the European Empire. Other ways to explain the world – and to represent it both visually and iconographically – were therefore developed, as well as new interpretation frameworks. All this came together within a double context; on the one hand there was a learned public who was fascinated by the New Worlds and was eager for information whilst, on the other hand, it became necessary for the expansion companies to defend their exclusiveness in a moment of evident and boundless competition among monarchies. The available manuscripts, maps and printed works offered multiple views of a world that had “burst open” or “blown up” at its furthest corner (Chaunu 1959), as they offered a “collection of new knowledge and information of any sort and from any origin, and meant the diffusion of objects, goods, beliefs and ideas” (See Gruzinski 2005, 14).

Historical context and precedents

The early modern period brought the European creation of a global view of the world. Europe not only built an image of the American New World but also an image of Asia as a continent of unlimited wealth and a lush paradise.

It should be taken into consideration that by the late Middle Ages Europe had already created an image of China thanks to Marco Polo, the well-known Venetian merchant who lived in the Far East in the 13th century. Polo (c. 1254-1324) was one of the first Europeans to cross and travel the whole length of the Silk Road (See Larner 2001). Thanks to the description Marco Polo gave the amanuensis Rustichello da Pisa in *Devisement du monde* or *Livre des Merveilles du Monde* (c. 1300), the Europeans had already been able to dream about the wealthiest country in the world. However, even though Marco Polo's remarks on Chinese trade and town planning were certain, his travelogue also included some mythological facts as well, which represented a descriptive framework that coincided with the *mirabilia* that would be expected in the literary genre. For instance, Polo spoke about cynocephaly (half-human/half-dog creatures), as well as the existence of cannibal communities that devoured the elderly. Moreover, Polo usually locates Amazon women in the Eastern world. The book about Marco Polo, who resided in the court of Kublai Khan, portrays a China ruled by the first emperor of the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1260-1368), and that image he set up prevailed in the European erudite circles until the successful dissemination of the Jesuit Relations, especially in the 17th century (See Dawson 1970, 32-33). What clearly motivated the warm reception of the book about the Venetian merchant was the exoticism described in it, as it turned the account into a book of wonders at a time when China and the Pacific Ocean were remote horizons where the Europeans still had to arrive and settle in.

During the 16th century, the process of creating an image of China in Europe was totally linked to the companies engaged in exploration and colonization for the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies. The Iberian Crowns were the first to develop their influence

along the Pacific Ocean. The Portuguese, in order to overcome the Ottoman blockade in Western Asia that culminated in the siege of Constantinople in 1453, explored alternative routes to reach the Asian products, particularly the spices. Vasco da Gama (c. 1469-1524), following the African route opened by Bartolomeu Dias (c. 1450-1500), disembarked at Calicut, India, in 1498. After occupying Goa and Malacca in 1511, the Portuguese approached the coasts of the Ming Empire around 1514. Then, they continued to reach the coasts of the China Sea unceasingly from the first decades of the 16th century on and this way they managed to persuade the Chinese emperor to establish a commercial enclave in Macau, near Canton, in the province of Guangdong, in the 1550s. The Portuguese authors were essential for China to be considered a successful topic. Their most remarkable works were *Década da Asia* by João de Barros (the third decade was dedicated to China and was published in Lisbon in 1563) and *Tractado das cousas da China* by the Dominican friar Gaspar da Cruz (published in Évora in 1569). Barros (1496-1570), the great Portuguese historian from the 16th century, had never been to Asia, while Cruz had spent some weeks in the city of Guangzhou.

Gaspar da Cruz (1520-1570), set off for the Portuguese State of India in 1548 and he carried out his missionary work in different places such as Goa, Ceylon or Malacca. It was in this last Portuguese enclave where he founded the Dominican convent where he lived until he moved to the Kingdom of Cambodia (1555) to later head for Canton and its bordering province, city he finally managed to visit for some weeks in the winter of 1556. Despite his perseverance, his efforts to establish a mission in China were as fruitless as they had been in Cambodia. Back in Malacca, he also spent some time in Hormuz Island, where he founded a house of Dominicans in that strategic Portuguese location in the Persian Gulf (see a detailed biography of Cruz at Boxer 1953, lviii-lxii). His treatise came out just two weeks after his death, thus, this friar became the first author to ever write a monograph almost entirely on China and have it published in Europe. Cruz' treatise joined a written corpus that was available for common readers and the royal authorities. It is a travelogue written by a keen observer and "an honest traveller forgiven for prejudice" (Mackerras 1989, 25).

At the same time, the Spanish establishment in the Philippines in 1565, during the expedition headed by Miguel López de Legazpi (1505-1572) and Andrés de Urdaneta (1508-1568), fostered the creation of graphic and literary materials on the Chinese empire, as well as on its geography and seas. In Spain, the post of chronicler of the Indies was a magistracy directly linked to the empire's government. According to Richard L. Kagan, the chroniclers who worked for the King of Spain compiled and ordered "the available geographical and historical material related to the New World", since the king wished to "restrict the circulation of any information about the Indies which could threaten the Crown's interests" (Kagan 2010, 232). These geographical and historical works about the New World also included the Far East, which was the last frontier of the Spanish empire. As María M. Portuondo points out, the work undertaken by the Spanish cosmographers was sheer science joined together with a mission that had been

developed to benefit only the monarchy – and not to benefit its creators intellectually: those works on geography and history were totally utilitarian, thus the personal or intellectual aspiration of their authors were secondary (Portuondo 2009, 3-4).

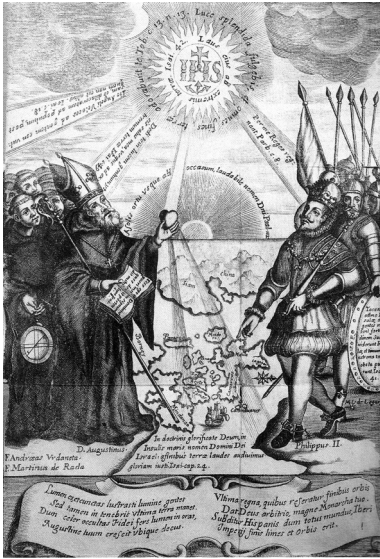
Even though the Crown tried to control confidential information of the Empire’s government, much of it was spread through printed material. Specifically, the propaganda used to glorify the Spanish presence in the Pacific Ocean, the crucial role of missionaries in that part of the world and the world’s atlas aimed at the general public.

Conquest of the Philippine Islands

An evident example of propaganda material containing an expansionist view in the text and the cartography included in it, is the aforementioned 1698 book *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas*. Its author, Gaspar de San Agustín (1650-1724), was one of the best-known chroniclers on the Philippine Islands, where he arrived in one century after the beginning of the colonization. There, the Augustine friar “felt the need to pass on and tell the Christian world about the difficulties of his work, what seemed to him a nearly miraculous task” (Meyer 1964, 121). The book is a chronicle on the presence of Augustinian friars in the Philippines and explains their prominent role in evangelising the islands; this is the reason why it was classified as providentialist. Friar Gaspar reminds the reader which the aim of the Augustinians in the Philippines was: to arrive in China, which was, for the Spanish – as well as for the Europeans from that time and Marco Polo’s age – a paradise of silk and porcelain.

Despite the fact that this work focuses almost entirely on the Philippines, China has an incidental importance that can already be noticed in the frontispiece made under the judgement of Friar Gaspar (**fig. 1**). It is a delicate illustration containing not only cartographic information but also noteworthy historical, political and propaganda content.

As it can be seen, Philip II, the king under whom the Philippines were conquered and Manila was founded (1571), is wearing a crown of emperor. Charles I’s successor in the Spanish dominions did not actually take the Imperial Crown, which had been passed on to his uncle, Ferdinand I and then to his cousin Maximilian II. Nevertheless, his status of Lord of several parts of the world made the engraver ichnographically highlight the sovereign. The monarch is wearing a suit of armour and is holding a sceptre; behind him there are half a dozen soldiers. He is pointing at the Philippine archipelago but right in front of him, his soldiers and missionaries there are the kingdoms of China and Siam, which are conveniently marked on the map with their respective toponyms. Right in front of the sovereign we can see Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo Regius and Church Father during the 4th and 5th centuries. The Saint is leading his missionaries, who receive the heart of God, Jesus Christ, and the mission ordered by the king, who is God’s hand, to evangelise Asia. The Order of Saint Augustine considered itself the first to reach the Far East and due to its influence in evangelising the Philippine archipelago, also the best prepared to Christianise the Kingdom of the Dragon (See González de Mendoza 1585, Dedication to the reader).



1 Gaspar de San Agustín, *Conquistas de las Islas Philipinas: La temporal por las armas del Señor Don Phelipe Segundo el Prudente; y la espiritual por los religiosos del Orden de Nuestro Padre San Agustín – Fundación y progressos de su Provincia del Santísimo Nombre de Jesús* (Madrid, 1698, Imprenta de Manuel Ruiz de Murga).

Url: <http://bibliotecadigital.aecid.es/bibliodig/es/consulta/registro.cmd?id=6730>. Public domain. Source: Biblioteca Digital AECID.

In the inscription we can see the previously mentioned quotation by Isaiah the Prophet: *In doctrinis glorificate Deum, in insulis maris nomen Domini Dei Israel: a finibus terrae laudes audivimus gloriam iusti*. Philip II was a king who ruled his empire over a messianic plan: the Catholic Monarchy had to be truly universal and spread the Christian faith to the furthest corners of the world. As Geoffrey Parker points out, “behind his unyielding declaration on the need for the religious principles to prevail over the political plans there was a particular political philosophy that has been described as *messianic imperialism*. At a basic level it meant that [...] Philip believed that he had been directly ordered to keep the catholic faith alive throughout time and place” (Parker 1998, 71). Thus, within this conceptual framework, the inscription in the frontispiece in *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas* ends with the statement *Iberi Imperii finis limes et orbis erit* (“the Iberian Empire will be the last frontier and the end of the world”). The Sea of China, strictly controlled by Chinese fleets and officers, was the final destination from where to start the intrusion into the greatest, more populated and richest empire in the world: the Ming Empire. Accordingly, the frontispiece composition, despite belonging to the later 17th century, years after the end of the union between the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies (1580-1640), recalls the plan of the Spanish monarchy to build a global and universal catholic monarchy. Therefore, as noted by Pierre-Antoine Fabre, “the Philippines are two ends of the world”, a place where the missionary presence was vital so as to ensure the success of the messianic project built by the Spanish monarchy (Fabre 2008, 86). According to the study by the French hispanist Pierre Chaunu, the Philippines played

an important role in King Philip’s mind map, as they were the key to keep a “continuous structure” of human presence in other territories and became the link between the Far East and the Far West, between the Asian Indies and the American Indies (Chaunu 1960-1966). In other words, the Philippines and the Augustine friars were another piece of the “oceanic strategy” developed by Philip II (Hernández Sánchez-Barba 2004, 99). In this way, the Philippines can also be conceived of as a halfway place which, thanks to its ties with the Southeast of China and Japan – and Luzon with Mexico –, represented an actual centre to establish an economic and cultural meeting point between Europe and Asia, as pointed out by Birgit Tremml-Werne (2015, 15-16).

Origins of the Sino-Spanish geographical and propagandist sources

We must look backwards in time to explain the precedent for these views that combine geographical expansion with political propaganda. The 1570s and 1580s were peak points for the creation of news and material about China and what surrounded it. This turned King Philip II’s court into a prominent producer of these documents. The first monograph on China to be printed in Spain and in Spanish was published in Seville in 1577. The priest Bernardino de Escalante (1537-1605), a very close collaborator of the king (see Casado 1992), published *Discurso de la navegación que los portugueses hacen a los Reinos y Provincias de Oriente, y de la noticia que se tiene de las grandezas del Reino de la China* (discourse of the navigation made by the Portuguese to the kingdoms and provinces of the East, and the existing knowledge of the greatness of the Kingdom of China). Escalante never travelled to China but used Portuguese records for his book, mainly the *Tractado* by the Dominican Friar Gaspar da Cruz. However, as the Augustine Friar Jerónimo Román explains in the review he wrote nearly two decades later (Román 1595, 211), Escalante never hid his sources, among which we could also find João de Barros. Even though this priest spread what he had read in books written by other authors, his work added significant brand new information. An example of it is the first impression of Chinese characters in Europe (Loureiro 2000, 639).

The *Discurso* by Bernardino de Escalante was an authorised and appreciated source in the European erudite circles and it contributed to the creation of a picture of China in the growing cartography at that time. In this way, the Brabantian cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) used passages by Escalante to complete his edition of *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* in 1584, which was the first great atlas of early modern history. One should observe the map of the Far East that is included in Ortelius’s atlas and read the information written at the back of the document. This map was, in fact, created by Ludovico Georgio (aka: Luis Jorge Barbuda), a Portuguese cartographer who provided Europe with the first complete map of China and based this thorough piece of work mainly on what Escalante had recorded in his book in 1577 (**fig. 2**). Barbuda writes: “Bernardino de Escalante wrote a particular book about this region in Spanish language”, and then gives a detailed description that includes an itinerary through its cities and a

brief report about the physical appearance of Chinese people and their customs, enriching the information with records by other authors such as Barros, Antonio Pigaffeta (who took part in Magellan-Elcano circumnavigation), Andrés Corsal and, according to the text, the “Jesuit letters”. In it there is also a reproduction of Chinese characters that had been previously included in Escalante’s book.



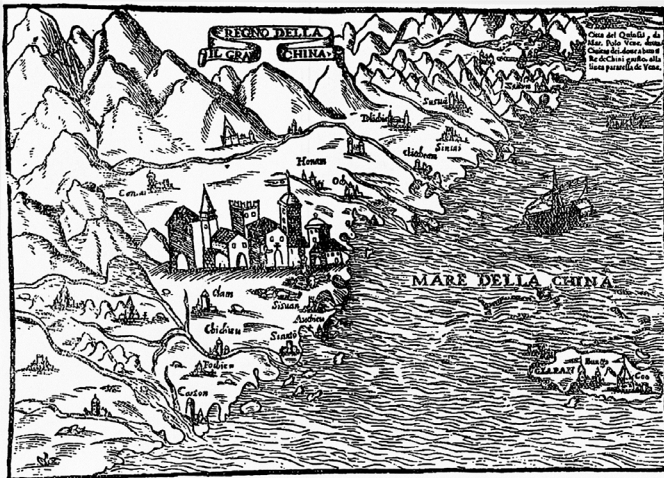
2 Ludovico Georgio (Luis Jorge Barbuda), “Chinae, olim Sinarum regionis nova descriptio”, included in *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* de Abraham Ortelius, published in 1584. (Biblioteca Nacional de España). In Diego Sola García, “La formación de un paradigma de Oriente en la Europa moderna: la Historia del Gran Reino de la China de Juan González de Mendoza” (Ph.D. Thesis, Universitat de Barcelona, 2015), 537.

Nevertheless, the most decisive work for Europe in the 16th century to create a modern image of China, was, undoubtedly, *Historia de las cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del Gran Reino de la China* (*History of the most significant facts, rites and customs in the Great Kingdom of China*), published in Rome in 1585. This work was written by the Augustinian friar, Juan González de Mendoza (1545-1618), who had already participated in an unsuccessful embassy sent by Philip II to the Chinese Emperor Wanli (Sola 2018). In 1584 Mendoza visited Rome in order to work as a theologian and counsellor for the cardinal Filippo Spinola (Medina 1897, 67).

There, according to his own words, Pope Gregory XIII found out that Mendoza had some notes on China as a result of his participation in the unsuccessful embassy, and asked the Augustinian Friar to gather all his documents and notes on China so as to publish a

book (González de Mendoza 1585, 1). In this way, *Historia del Gran Reino de la China* was born, a book that later turned into a best-seller of the 16th century: until 1615, when the record of the Jesuit Matteo Ricci on China was released by the Jesuits (the best skilled ones to plan the evangelisation of Asia), more than thirty editions of *Historia del Gran Reino* by Mendoza had already been published (See Sanz 1958, 386–392). The key to this book’s ideological interpretation is its apologetic nature on the Spanish presence in China’s nearby lands. In order to extol the figure of Philip II and his aim to occupy the Philippines – as a first step before the Spanish and the Gospel could arrive in China –, Mendoza wrote about China as if it had been a Spanish discovery: “This great kingdom of China [...], has been discovered [...] by the Spanish inhabitants in the Philippine Islands”. Nevertheless, it was also acknowledged that by then the Portuguese had already been informed about China through their possessions in India (González de Mendoza 1585, 10r).

The book, which was translated into English and French, among other languages, was widely distributed in the main European cities such as London, Paris, Antwerp, Venice and Bologna. Although Mendoza, just like Barros and Escalante, never crossed the Pacific Ocean, he had studied the existing Portuguese and Spanish sources about China to write it. The book was a considerable success: it worked as a chronicle, a miscellany of topics that introduced the Chinese civilisation to the European readers (landscapes, material culture, morals and religion, urban planning, etc.). The first Rome edition (1585) does not include illustrations and it was not until the Bologna edition in 1589 that the editor added a map of China and Japan (fig. 3).



3 Map of China and Japan in *Dell'istoria della China* (Bologna, 1589). The map was included in this edition by the editor, without the author's collaboration. In Carlos Sanz, *Primitivas relaciones de España con Asia y Oceanía*, 1958.

Despite the fact that Abraham Ortelius had imprecisely added the correct map of the Kingdom of Tungning in Barbuda in his *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* in 1584, the map in the Bologna edition of *History of the great and mighty kingdom of China and the situation thereof* shows a clear cartographic regression, as this map is an undetailed outline based on the geography described in Marco Polo's book from the 13th century. In this map, Formosa Island (Taiwan) does not appear, and, moreover, some coastal cities and provinces in the continent are wrongly located. As one can observe, Japan is clearly placed too southwards and it is impossible to identify the Korean Peninsula. If we compare it to the more precise map by Luis Jorge Barbuda, its poor quality becomes more obvious as it is closer to the mythical Ophir from the Bible and Polo's Cathay than to the China that the Europeans rediscovered in the 16th century.

Despite this, this map of China and its coasts had nothing to do with Juan González de Mendoza, who after publishing an edition of his work, which he considered definitive, in Madrid (1586), he did not take part in any of the later editions and either in its graphic contents. Mendoza's main contribution was conceptual: as a result of his historiographical work, he gave coherence and sense to a great deal of different news, documents and information. In view of the challenge of choosing among very diverse sources which were often contradictory, he opted for the information that best fitted the image of China he wished to transmit, a world based on two pillars: virtue and glory. His chapters are full of references to the vastness of cities, buildings, croplands and the great abundance of all kinds of materials for life. He describes China as a commercial paradise. Regarding virtue, Mendoza writes about a prototype of kingdom and a paradigm of civilised nation in the world. Its leaders were, in his opinion, prudent. A kind of prudence that even surpassed the one of old kingdoms: "undoubtedly, it seems to surpass the prudence of the Greeks, Carthaginians and Romans, about whom so much information has been written. Peoples who, in order to conquer other people's lands, strayed off from their own so much that they did not take an interest in them anymore." (González de Mendoza 1586, 61). However, Mendoza offers his depiction of China within a wider strategy of the stance taken by the Spanish monarchy in the race for the European expansion, and uses his account and the originally sinological description to consolidate the expectations of the Crown and the Augustine missionaries who were at its service (also, he put across a message and an evangelising strategy in the bosom of the Church and the Papacy, as said by Nancy Vogeley (1997, 173)).

Cartographic and ethnographic works produced in Asia

So far, we have described works created in Europe based on information taken from explorers and missionaries who had been directly involved in Asian affairs, or collaborators and chroniclers of the monarchy who compiled diverse sources of information even though they had never travelled to Asia or the imperial dominions. Nevertheless, it is interesting to know about the materials which directly came from China and its

surroundings and therefore contributed to the creation of a modern image of Asia under the patronage of the King of Spain. This is the case of a Chinese map – actually, the first Chinese map – that arrived in Castile in the 16th century. It is called *Ku – Chin hsing – shêng Chih t'u*, what can be translated as *Modern and old topographic map* (fig. 4). It contained information entirely written in Chinese and had been developed directly by Chinese cartographers who then sold the map to the Spanish. The governor of the Philippines, Guido de Lavezaris, sent it to Spain in 1574 through the viceroyalty of Mexico, and the document was secretly guarded by Philip II's Council of the Indies, in the Royal Alcázar of Madrid. The map, created in 1555, was translated from Chinese into Spanish by Chinese interpreters who were supervised by Augustine friars. Nowadays it is kept in the Archive of Indies in Seville and in it we can see a deeply fluvial empire, as its rivers seem to be the main routes for communication. The map's geographical scope is vast and reveals key information such as the representation of the Great Wall (See Smith 2013).



4 Map of China from 1555: *Ku – Chin hsing – shêng Chih t'u* (Archivo
 Url: <http://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas20/catalogo/description/18774>.
 Source: Portal de Archivos Españoles (PARES).

This was not the only document totally produced in Asia that helped to build more in-depth knowledge on that part of the world. The Spanish authorities in the Philippines were interested in offering the King of Spain a luxurious compendium of Philippine and Asian ethnography. The book, actually a codex, had to show, visually and with exhaustive texts, the human and natural reality of an exotic and lush land. This was the aim of the *Boxer Codex*, an indispensable source for the study of the views and conceptualisation about the peoples from the Philippines or from lands close to this country, in the second half of the 16th century. The *Boxer Codex* is an enlightened Philippine manuscript that could be put on a level with *Codex Mendoza* or the *Florentine Codex* of Mexico, works that were conceived as visual and textual compendia on the reality of those peoples for Europe to know about. This document, an ethnographic contribution of great worth and of unbeatable visual richness, was named after Charles R. Boxer (1904-2000), one of the greatest academic authorities of the 20th century for his studies on the Portuguese and Dutch expansion. He purchased the manuscript in 1947 and it can currently be found in Lilly Library at Indiana University (See latest editions and studies by Souza, Turley 2015 and Donoso 2016). According to some research, the codex dates from around 1595 and the illustrations in it were drawn by a Chinese artist who worked with Chinese techniques, paints and paper.

I would like to conclude with a work that symbolically encapsulates the busy creation of news, geographic relations and maps but with an obvious propagandist purpose, lining the oceanic dominions to an imperial Hispanic project of a strong messianic stamp. Among the most comprehensive and useful maps for the sailors from the late modern period who sailed to the Philippines there is the work by the Jesuit Pedro Murillo Velarde (1696-1753), who served as a missionary in the Philippines. Murillo Velarde was a renowned jurist and cartographer who created *Carta Hydrographica and Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas* in 1734. From the geographical map different versions remain and the detail shown here belongs to the edition of 1744 housed in the Archive of Indies (Archivo General de Indias, Mapas y Planos, Filipinas, 299) (**fig. 5**).

This version of Murillo Velarde's *Carta Hydrographica* – then renamed as *Mapa de las Yslas Philipinas hecho por el Padre Pedro Murillo Velarde* – includes a fascinating representation of Saint Francis Xavier (1506-1552), the Navarrese Jesuit saint known as the “Apostle of the Indies”, who evangelised Japan and planned, before he deceased, the Christianisation of China. St. Francis is shown enthroned as Lord of the Seas in the southern Philippine islands, with insignias that could belong to Neptune (**fig. 6**) or with slight variations: the saint is carrying a peculiar trident, similar to Neptune's but with a crucifix on top of it with a banner of the Society of Jesus. This was not a new image and inspiration in Neptune. More precisely, the Sevillian artist Juan de Valdés Leal (1622-1690) elaborated a picture, later engraved, of St. Francis Xavier as “Prince of the Sea” (1681) that would later be included in the hagiography dedicated to the Apostle of the Indies by the Jesuit Lorenzo Ortiz in *El principe del mar San Francisco Xavier* (1682) (See



5 Detail of *Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas* made by Pedro Murillo Velarde in 1734, printed in Manila (Archivo General de Indias, Mapas y planos, Filipinas, 299).
Url: <http://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas20/catalogo/description/7282213>.
Source: Portal de Archivos Españoles (PARES)



6 Representation of Neptune in an engraving by Adriaen Collaert (c. 1600). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Url: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/425882>. Public domain.

Tejera Pinilla 2015, 281-282). If Poseidon-Neptune was the god of the Sea, other waters and earthquakes, Saint Francis Xavier was meant to be the Lord of the Pacific Ocean, who brought missionaries to widely spread the name of God and its dominions, under the patronage of the Iberian monarchies. The saint appears sailing the Pacific on two marine horses, just like the Greek and Roman god. Together with Francis Xavier, there are dolphins, which are portrayed as his faithful travelling companions. Moreover, the allegory in the document leaves no room for doubt: Saint Francis Xavier is the “prince of the sea”, just like Neptune was of the seas of antiquity.

As we have learnt from above, missionaries who were under the king’s protection and carried out a mission both religious and political (evangelising the East was one of the biggest political priorities for the Crown) were especially active in the creation of materials and products that represented Asia and showed it as a part of the world inevitably linked to the West. A place that had to be depicted, recognised and studied so as to be included in the Christian sphere and therefore meet the demands of a messianic imperialism that could make possible what Gaspar de San Agustín wrote in 1698: “the Iberian empire will be the last frontier and the end of the world”. China, the Catholic Monarchy and the Ocean played key roles through cartography and literature that became the expression of the Crown’s geopolitical interests. Moreover, the documents previously mentioned also portray a world view and a cultural crossroads between the East and the West in Neptune’s waters.

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