

THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY

SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE
CONFLICT IN THE SPICE ISLANDS:
THE LOAYSA EXPEDITION
TO THE MOLUCCAS 1525–1535

FROM BOOK XX
OF
THE GENERAL AND NATURAL HISTORY OF THE INDIES
BY GONZALO FERNÁNDEZ DE OVIEDO Y VALDÉS

Edited

by

GLEN F. DILLE



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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume has been brought to publication in unusual circumstances. Professor Glen Dille submitted a proposal to the Hakluyt Society in 2018 for an English translation and edition of Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés's account of Garciá Jofre de Loaisa's expedition to the Moluccas, 1525–35. This went through the regular process of assessment and consideration, which involves the submission of specimen sections and consultation with specialist readers. The process can be fairly prolonged, as we await reports from busy scholars, responses from the intending editor, and discussions at meetings of the Society's Council. The outcome was that Council agreed that Professor Dille's proposal should be accepted and several communications were sent to him to that effect, which elicited no reply. On further inquiries I discovered the sad news that Professor Dille had passed away in March 2019.

At this stage Professor Dille had been asked to submit only specimens of the work, as well as the usual requirements of an outline of the whole and an account of the significance of the primary text. The reports had been favourable and the Society wanted to proceed. There was no doubt that Professor Dille's ambition had been to publish his translation with the Society, which in turn was keen to move forward but did not have a full manuscript, and nothing had been confirmed by contract.

With help from Professor Dille's former department at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, we were able to make contact with his family. Professor Dille's daughter, Margaret Mazzullo, was pleased to hear from us and gratified by the thought that her father's work might yet be published as a fitting memorial. She has been exceptionally helpful in searching his papers and computer files. She was able to provide us with the complete manuscript that her father had produced. We received the Introduction to and translation of Oviedo's text, with references and a bibliography. She also generously answered all our enquiries, and deserves our warmest thanks. Thanks are due also to Professor Dille's executor for granting the Society the publication rights and transfer of copyright that has allowed us to proceed. Every effort has been made to trace and contact any other copyright holders prior to publication. If notified, all reasonable efforts will be made to rectify any errors or omissions.

We placed all the material in the hands of one of our Series Editors, Professor Joyce Lorimer, who herself works with Spanish and Portuguese materials of that period. Professor Dille had modestly acknowledged in his proposal that his experience had been more that of a linguist than a historian, and that his footnotes could be expanded. Professor Lorimer has edited and in places augmented the historical information in the Introduction and footnotes and Bibliography to update them in line with recent historical and anthropological studies, and produced draft maps for production by the Hakluyt Society's usual cartographer. This kind of task is customary for Hakluyt Society Series Editors, but it is a more demanding one when the volume editor cannot be

consulted for an opinion or asked to augment or extend the work as needed. We owe Professor Lorimer a debt of gratitude for a volume that sits comfortably in the editorial traditions of the Hakluyt Society.

It is a source of satisfaction to everyone involved to have helped bring to publication a distinguished scholarly translation and edition that could easily have been lost, and to have brought to fruition a worthy ambition of the late Glen Dille.

This volume is published with the assistance of the American Friends of the Hakluyt Society.

JIM BENNETT

ABBREVIATIONS

AGI	Archivo General de las Indias, Sevilla
<i>BAE</i>	<i>Biblioteca de Autores Españoles</i>
F.	Folio
L.	<i>Legajo</i>
lib.	<i>libro</i>
N.	<i>Número</i>
<i>NOED</i>	<i>New Oxford English Dictionary</i>
R.	<i>Ramo</i>

NOTE ON SHIPS AND SHIPPING, MEASURES, WEIGHTS, AND CAPACITY

Ships and Shipping

Naturally, in Oviedo's narrative there is a good deal of vocabulary concerning various types of ships in use in European explorations and those found in South East Asian waters. The ships' characteristics varied widely from time to time and from country to country. 'Spanish Shipbuilding and the Contract of Martín de Arana', in Carla Rahn Phillips's *Six Galleons for the King of Spain*, is an indispensable source as is the bibliography.¹ Phillips's translation also makes available Pablo E. Pérez-Mallaina's important study, *Spain's Men of the Sea: Daily Life on the Indies Fleets in the Sixteenth Century*. In the several appendices to his work, Tim Joyner's *Magellan* provides important details on ships of the time with useful illustrations, shipboard routines, details about participants, and other information. Two other useful reference works are *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea* and Julián Amich's *Diccionario Marítimo*. Although available only in Spanish, see the exhaustively researched work on ships and shipping of the time, *Sevilla y las flotas de Indias: La Gran Armada de Castilla del Oro (1513–1514)*, by María del Carmen Mena García.

batel A skiff, longboat or ship's boat propelled by oars. The skiff was either stored aboard a larger ship or else frequently towed. For the Loaysa armada, the loss of their skiffs during the stormy passage through the Strait and in the Pacific was cause for considerable concern as they were vital to ferry men and goods back and forth from a ship at anchor to the shore.

carabela A caravel. A ship with a lower forecastle than the aftcastle, described as being 'generally a long, narrow, and agile ship, useful for coastal exploration and liaison duty'.² Early versions were rather small but later designs were full-rigged with an increased capacity. Columbus preferred the caravel which, though smaller than the *nao*, was easier to handle.

fusta A quarter galley and an armed vessel similar to the pinnace and the caravel ships used by the Spanish and the Portuguese in the narrative of the Loaysa expedition with sail and oars.³ Morison calls these ships triremes or galiots.⁴ This is one of the most frequently mentioned types of vessel used by the Spanish and the Portuguese in the narrative of the Loaysa expedition.

¹ Phillips, *Six Galleons*, pp. 19–46.

² Ibid., p. 36.

³ Amich, *Diccionario Marítimo*, p. 216.

⁴ Morison, *European Discovery of America: Southern Voyages*, p. 488 (hereafter *Southern Voyages*).

galeón A galleon. Phillips notes that the Spanish galleon of the earlier sixteenth century was a smaller ship, averaging 90 to 120 tons, and often carried oars as well as sails. By the time it had become 'the characteristic vessel of the Indies route' in the late sixteenth century, a typical galleon was 550 tons.¹ Confusingly, at the beginning of his history, Oviedo describes the *Santiago* as a galleon of fifty tons, but throughout the rest of the text, he refers to it as a 'pinnacle'. Later, in at least one passage, he refers to the *Santiago* as a caravel.

junko A junk. In the Celebes and Moluccas at the time of the Portuguese-Spanish presence the native islanders did not build large merchant vessels. The commerce in spices and other goods was carried by Chinese or Javanese junks to Malacca or to India. These junks could be very large indeed, dwarfing the European ships. During the period of the Chinese imperial treasure fleets (1405–33) under Admiral Zheng He, the largest junks reached about 400 feet long and 160 feet wide with ten masts. 'There were grand cabins for the imperial envoys and the windowed halls and ante-chambers were festooned with balconies and railings.'² By way of contrast Columbus's *Santa María* was 85 feet long. Later, by the time the Portuguese appeared on the scene the commercial junks were considerably smaller and no match for the European warships.

kora-kora (*cora-cora*) A traditional Moluccan canoe, adapted by the Portuguese and Spanish and referred to as *coracora*. Low and narrow and usually about 10 metres long, it was flanked by bamboo outriggers which supported an upper bamboo platform which extended above the entire length.³

nao Ship. Sometimes translated as cog or carrack, but also applied to other types of ocean-going vessels. As Jose Luis Casaban notes,⁴ the term is often 'generically' applied to all the ocean-going vessels which were used in the two expeditions. This is a full-rigged (having both square and lateen sails), three-masted vessel with a high protruding forecastle, a high aft castle and a large cargo capacity. According to Oviedo, the *naos* of the Loaysa fleet were the *Santa María de la Victoria*, *Sancti Spiritus*, *Anunciada*, *San Gabriel*, *Santa María del Parral*, and the *San Lesmes*. However, Morison⁵ classifies the *Parral* and the *Lesmes* as caravels, probably because they were both only rated at 80 tons.

nave Ship. A generic name for ship, no longer in general use.

navío A warship. Originally a general term applied to any vessel, but from the sixteenth to nineteenth century the term designated warships of 500 tons or more.

parao, prao, prau, proa A local Moluccan boat, adapted by the Portuguese and Spanish and referred to as *paroles*. These were lateen-rigged canoes with outriggers. Oviedo describes them as light and fast vessels noting that the largest could be propelled by up to one hundred oarsmen with fighting men on a platform above them, and were also capable of carrying light armament.⁶

pataje, patax, pataxe A pinnacle or tender. Defined in *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea*⁷ as a small two-masted vessel of limited tonnage, normally square-rigged,

¹ Phillips, *Six Galleons*, pp. 19–46.

² Levathes, *When China Ruled the Seas*, pp. 77–81.

³ Haddon, 'Outriggers of Indonesian Canoes', p. 117.

⁴ Casaban, 'Outfitting and Sailing', p. 2.

⁵ Morison, *Southern Voyages*, p. 478.

⁶ Haddon, 'Outriggers of Indonesian canoes', p. 117; Casaban, 'Outfitting and Sailing', p. 3; see below, p. 3.

⁷ *Oxford Companion to Ships*, p. 428.

carrying oars and sails. They were frequently used to carry messages between ships of the fleet, and often used to accompany early voyages of exploration because of their ability to navigate in shallow waters.

Measures

The measures of distance, weight and capacity found in Oviedo's text vary according to different sources. Not all have English equivalents.

<i>legua</i>	League. This is the term Oviedo generally employs for distance and is generally understood as the equivalent of 3.5 miles. On a few occasions Oviedo uses the term <i>legua grande</i> (long or great league) which may be a <i>legua marítima</i> or sea league which the <i>Oxford Companion</i> reckons as 3.18 nautical miles of 6,080 feet, or 1,825 metres. ¹
<i>braza</i>	Fathom. Slightly smaller than the English measure of 6 feet, the Spanish fathom is approximately 5.5 feet or 1.67 metres.
<i>estadoa</i>	Measure based on a man's height; taken as about 7 feet.
<i>vara</i>	Yard. About 33 inches. According to Phillips, the vara of 835 millimetres was equivalent to 3 <i>pies</i> or 4 <i>palmas</i> or 48 <i>dedos</i> or 40 <i>pulgadas</i> . ²
<i>codo</i>	Cubit. 22 inches or 565 millimetres, equivalent to 33 <i>dedos</i> or 27.5 <i>pulgadas</i> . ³
<i>pie</i>	Foot. 11 inches or 278 millimetres; divisible into 16 <i>dedos</i> or 12 <i>pulgadas</i> . ⁴
<i>palmo</i>	Palm span or hand. 8.2 inches or 209 millimetres; $\frac{1}{4}$ of a <i>vara</i> . equal to 9 <i>pulgadas</i> . ⁵
<i>pulgada</i>	0.8 inches or 20.4 millimetres. ⁶
<i>dedo</i>	Finger's breadth. $\frac{1}{6}$ of a <i>pie</i> , 0.67 inches or 17 millimetres. ⁷

Weights and Capacity

<i>arroba</i>	A weight of approximately 25 pounds or 11.5 kilograms. As a liquid measure, the <i>arroba</i> varied from place to place but Phillips has it as the equivalent of 8 <i>azumbres</i> . ⁸
<i>azumbre</i>	2.016 litres, approximately 4 pints.
<i>bahar</i>	Oviedo has it at 203 <i>catiles</i> ; Crofton at 200 <i>catties</i> or 662 pounds 8 ounces avoirdupois. Navarrete has it equal to 4 quintals or 400 pounds. ⁹ Villiers states that the <i>bahar</i> varied – in Banda 550 pounds, in the Moluccas 600 pounds, and in Malacca 530–40 pounds – and reports that the Portuguese generally

¹ Ibid., p. 313.

² Phillips, *Six Galleons*, p. 228.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Crofton, *Pageant*, p. 64; Navarrete, *Colección de los Viajes*, vol. V, p. 474.

	used 32 pounds of 16 ounces to the <i>arroba</i> , 4 <i>arrobas</i> to the <i>quintal</i> and 4 <i>quintales</i> to the <i>bahar</i>
<i>cántara</i>	16.33 litres, 8 <i>azumbres</i> . ¹
<i>fanega</i>	A dry measure of 55.5 litres, equivalent to about 1.5 bushels.
<i>libra</i>	Pound. 16 ounces, approximately 460.1 grams.
<i>pipa</i>	Pipe, cask, hogshead. A liquid measure of 27.5–30 <i>arrobas</i> .
<i>quintal</i>	100 pounds, 1 hundredweight.
<i>tonel</i>	Tun or ton, A measure of a ship's capacity. According to Phillips, the <i>tonel</i> was a measure more in use in Vizcaya, the space occupied by two containers of 30 <i>cántaras</i> each or 15 large quintals of 150 pounds. ² The <i>tonel</i> was 1.2 times larger than the <i>tonelada</i> . Oviedo generally uses <i>tonel</i> to describe capacity in the Loaysa fleet, which was Vizcayan in origin.
<i>tonelada</i>	Tun or ton. Also a measure indicating ship's capacity more in use in Andalusia and the Indies trade; the space occupied by 2 <i>pipas</i> of 27.5 <i>arrobas</i> each. ³ Joyner holds that the proper capacity measure was the <i>tonelada</i> and was about 1 cubic metre. ⁴

¹ Phillips, *Six Galleons*, p. 228.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Joyner, Magellan, p. 319.



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INTRODUCTION

Now part of the Republic of Indonesia, the Moluccas¹ form an island group in the Malay Archipelago north-east of Indonesia, lying between New Guinea and the Celebes. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the name Moluccas, or Maluco (as Oviedo referred to them), Spice Islands or Spicelands was generally applied by the Portuguese and Spaniards to Ternate, Tidore, Moti, Makian, Bachan and larger Gilolo.² D. F. Lach and E. J. Van Kley note that in order to ‘avoid doing violence either to geography or history’ it is important to recognize that other islands were ‘intimately related economically, geographically, politically, or strategically to the trade and related ... [in] an interdependent economic complex’ which included the Banda and Celebes groups and larger Sunda islands.³ Clove (*Syzygium aromaticum*), was a commodity worth more than gold. The Banda Islands, were the sole source of mace and nutmeg (*Myristica fragrans*), spices even more valuable than clove. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the enormous profits to be made from these spices – together with pepper from Sumatra and the Malabar Coast of India, sandalwood and camphor from Borneo, cinnamon from India and Sri Lanka, and numerous other luxury products – lured the Portuguese and then the Spanish to hazard perilously long voyages.

1. The Spice Trade

a. Overview

The history of the spice trade is very long and complex. Spices imported from the Far East are well documented in the Old Testament, in Greek and Roman times, and in medieval texts. They were valued for enhancing flavour and preserving food, for cosmetic use, and particularly for their curative properties. The first authenticated reference to clove appears in Chinese Han dynasty records in the second half of the first millennium BC, where it is described as a spice obtained from the Philippines much prized for its aromatic and medicinal usages and as a condiment. In its westward journey, clove apparently came to Ceylon and India through the Malay Peninsula and is mentioned in the *Ramayana* (c.200 BCE). In Europe, the first description of clove is probably that of

¹ Now Maluku.

² Variants, Djailolo, Gilolo, Jilolo, and also called Batochino de Moro; now Halmahera. Spelled Gilolo by Oviedo which has been adopted here. Oviedo also noted that the indigenous name for the island was Aliora; see below, p. 131.

³ Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the Making*, III, p. 1300; Andaya, ‘Los primeros contactos’, pp. 63–6.