

(In)Visible Identities. Diogo Lopes Lobo and the Portuguese presence in Manila in the mid-seventeenth century^{1 2}

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Abstract

What did it mean to be Portuguese in Manila in the first half of the 17th century? Setting out from an exploratory research in the documentation of the Archivo General de Indias, this paper seeks to problematise the circumstances in which the Portuguese identity emerged as a relevant category in the discourse of that time. Accordingly, a group of documents concerning the career of Diogo Lopes Lobo, a Portuguese officer who served in Manila during the 1620's, constitutes the basis of this inquiry, as his identity is recurrently mentioned in the archival registers, granting us access to some of the debates which were manifest in the political culture of the 1600's.

Resumo

O que significava ser português em Manila na primeira metade do século XVII? Partindo de uma pesquisa exploratória na documentação do Archivo General de Indias, este artigo procura problematizar as circunstâncias em que a identidade portuguesa emergia como uma categoria relevante nos discursos coevos. Neste sentido, um conjunto de documentos relativos ao percurso de Diogo Lopes Lobo, oficial português que serviu em Manila durante a década de 1620, constitui a base deste inquérito, uma vez que a sua identidade é recorrentemente mencionada nos registos arquivísticos, permitindo-nos aceder a alguns dos debates que marcavam a cultura política seiscentista.

1 Article translated by Miguel Abrantes.

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要旨

17世紀前半期、マニラでポルトガル人であることの意味は何か。インド総合古文書館 (Archivo General de Indias) の文書の探索的な研究に始まり、本稿では、同年代を論じるの論説内で、主題に関連あるカテゴリーとして、ポルトガル人としてのアイデンティティが浮上する状況の問題化を試みる。この意味において、1620年代、マニラに駐在したポルトガル役人、ディオゴ・ロペス・ロボの足跡に関する一連の文書が、起筆を動機づける問いかけの基礎となった。というのも彼のアイデンティティはその一連の公文書記録に反復的に言及されるからである。同公文書記録により、我々は1600年代の政治文化を左右する議論の一部を知り得ることになる。五部からなるこの書物であるが、仏教の宗教崇拜の地（四大教団）についての言及と回想がふくまれるのは、全五部のうち一部のみである。私たちが手にすることができるこの著書はフロイスとルイス・デ・アルメイダが書き綴ったものである。本稿では、近代ヨーロッパに伝えられた仏教礼拝の場についての省察において、この二人の宣教師が関心を寄せた特徴について調査する。

Keywords:

Philippines; Identities; Hispanic Monarchy; Political Culture.

Filipinas; Identidades; Monarquía Hispánica; Cultura Política.

フィリピン人; アイデンティティ; スペイン君主制; 政治文化。

Introduction

In early August of 1630, the governor-general of the Philippines, Juan Niño de Tavora (1626-1632), addressed a letter to Philip IV in which he bitterly complained of the opposition marshaled against him by the *oidores* of the *Real Audiencia* [royal court] of Manila. Explaining that they had broken all protocol by writing directly to Madrid, letting him neither see nor sign the missive, Niño de Tavora sought to counter, one by one, the accusations drawn against his government. In one of the letter's final points, the governor accounted for his decision of nominating the captain Diogo Lopes Lobo⁴ for admiral of the fleet that would head out that year for New Spain. The nomination had been contested by the *oidores*, who claimed that the captain did not gather the necessary conditions to be appointed to such an office. More specifically, what made it impossible for Diogo Lopes to occupy the post of fleet admiral was the fact that he was Portuguese.

4 In this article the name "Diogo Lopes Lobo" is presented in the Portuguese spelling, although the Spanish sources refer to him as "Diego Lopez Lobo."

This controversy, registered in the documentation of the Archivo General de Indias, in Seville, seems to me to be a good starting point for a reflection seeking to question the meaning of being Portuguese in Manila during the years of the Union of the Iberian Crowns (1580-1640). In a Hispanic Monarchy which, as Serge Gruzinski suggested,⁵ constituted itself as a true planetary mosaic marked by the circulation of people, merchandises, beliefs, and ideas, references to the presence of a Portuguese soldier in the Philippines are far from being surprising. However, the disputes that arose around Diogo Lopes Lobo's place of birth invite us to explore the processes of identification in the early modern period, and their role in the coeval political culture.⁶ How did the Manila authorities face the presence of officers and merchants of Portuguese origin in the city? Would a Portuguese soldier be seen as a foreigner or as a faithful vassal of the Monarchy? In what way could being identified as Portuguese, or claiming that identity, turn into a relevant issue in the local contends?

The following pages seek to answer some of those questions, interpreting the arguments deployed by this debate's different intervening parts, and considering them in the light of their discursive strategies. The paper is thus organised after three vectors of analysis. In a first moment, I seek to present a brief historiographical reflection, characterising the Portuguese presence in the Philippines during the first half of the 17th century. Next, the contours of the dispute involving Diogo Lopes Lobo's nomination are examined, inspecting the role played by the city's different political actors. Finally, the last part of this paper intends to place the figure of that Portuguese captain within a wider panorama, showing how, in an apparently innocuous dispute, debates, tensions, and political projects which interconnected the different spaces of the Hispanic Monarchy can be perused.

1. The Portuguese and the Philippines

In the first decades of the 17th century, as the studies of authors such as Manel Ollé and Juan Gil have highlighted, Manila was a cosmopolitan and multicultural trading post. Center of the Spanish presence in Eastern Asia since Miguel López de Legazpi's expedition in 1571, the city occupied a strategic position at the confluence of several regional and global trading routes, the most important of which was, undoubtedly, the one connecting the Philippines to the port of Acapulco, in New Spain. With this access to Mexican silver and its location close to China and Japan, Manila soon began to attract merchants of different origins. In consequence, by the 1600's, besides its Spanish and Filipino residents, the city

5 Serge Gruzinski, *Les Quatre Parties du Monde. Histoire d'une Mondialisation* (Paris: Éditions de La Martinière, 2004).

6 For an analysis of the uses of the concept of "identity" in contemporary social sciences, see Frederick Cooper and Rogers Brubaker, "Identity," in *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 59-90.

was home to a large number of Chinese from Fujian (the *sangleyes*), who dwelled in a neighbourhood beyond walls called the *parián*, and to smaller but still important communities of Japanese, Malays, Javanese, Italians, Armenians and, naturally Portuguese merchants and soldiers.⁷

Some of these Portuguese would have got to the Philippines through the official route, embarking in Seville for New Spain and venturing, subsequently, on the difficult crossing of the Pacific aboard the galleon out of Acapulco for Manila.⁸ However, in its vast majority, the Portuguese community that was settled in the archipelago of the Philippines was made up of merchants, soldiers and sailors that came from the different outposts of the *Estado da Índia* and, especially, from the city of Macau, located on the Chinese coast at a little more than two weeks travel from Manila. This evidence alerts us right away to the necessity of recovering, even if in quite general lines, the contours of the complex relation between the Iberian empires in Asia.⁹ In any case, as a recent study by Manuel Lobato suggests, it is likely that the merchants of Macau had begun settling in Manila still during the 1560's, when this port already held an important place in the commercial traffic of Southeast Asia, ending up by playing a relevant role in the Castilian establishment in the region.¹⁰

It would, however, be Portugal's aggregation to the Hispanic Monarchy what would lead to the establishment of a strange form of coexistence between Portuguese and Castilian trading posts in the Far East. As the Cortes de Tomar (1581) had consecrated the integrity of both imperial systems, the Crown's policy strongly discouraged trade or transferences of population between the two spaces. This policy had the double objective of trying to stem

7 Juan Gil, *Los Chinos en Manila. Siglos XVI y XVII* (Lisboa: Centro Científico e Cultural de Macau, 2011); Manel Ollé, "A Inserção das Filipinas na Ásia Oriental (1565-1593)," *Review of Culture* 7 (2003): 7-22; Manel Ollé, "Portugueses y Castellanos en Asia Oriental," in *Portugal na Monarquia Hispânica. Dinâmicas de Integração e Conflito*, orgs. Pedro Cardim, Leonor Freire Costa and Mafalda Soares da Cunha (Lisbon: CHAM, CIDEHUS, GHES and Red Columnaria, 2013), 253-275; Brigit Tremml, "The Global and the Local: Problematic Dynamics of the Triangular Trade in Early Modern Manila," *Journal of World History* 23, no. 3 (2012): 555-586; Alberto Zapatero and Xabier Lamikiz, "Presencia de una diáspora global: comerciantes armenios y comercio intercultural en Manila, c. 1660-1800," *Revista de Indias* LXXIV, no. 262 (2014): 693-722.

8 Antonio Garcia-Abásolo, "Population Movement in the Spanish Pacific during the 17th Century. Travelers from Spain to the Philippines," *Revista Española del Pacífico*, 19-20 (2006/2007): 147-148. Counted among them was the sea captain Pedro Fernández de Soto who, in 1596, had requested to be allowed to set out to the Philippines, arguing that, although he was Portuguese, he had served the Hispanic Monarchy for more than thirty years, Cf. Archivo General de Indias, Indiferente, 2068, nº 97.

9 For a general approach of Portuguese-Castilian relations in the East, see Rafael Valladares, *Castilla y Portugal en Asia (1580-1680). Declive Imperial y Adaptación* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001); Kevin Sheehan, "Iberian Asia: The Strategies of Spanish and Portuguese Empire Building, 1540-1700" (PhD dissertation in History, University of California, Berkeley, 2008) and Paulo Pinto, "No Extremo da Redonda Esfera: Relações Luso-Castelhanas na Ásia, 1565-1640. Um Ensaio Sobre os Impérios Ibéricos" (PhD dissertation in Historical Sciences, Faculdade de Ciências Humanas - Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 2010).

10 Manuel Lobato, "As Filipinas e o Estado da Índia no Tempo dos Áustrias. Tensão, Convergência e Acomodação entre os Impérios Ibéricos na Ásia do Sueste," in *Portugal na Monarquia Hispânica. Dinâmicas de Integração e Conflito*, orgs. Pedro Cardim, Leonor Freire Costa and Mafalda Soares da Cunha (Lisbon: CHAM, CIDEHUS, GHES and Red Columnaria, 2013), 285-286.

the massive flow of Mexican silver into China through Manila and Macau, hurting the interests of Seville's tradesmen, and of protecting the revenues of the *Carreira da Índia*.¹¹ However, in spite of the official prohibitions, an intense relation between Macau and Manila soon developed, due to the efforts of merchants such as Bartolomeu Vaz Landeiro who, since the mid-1580, committed themselves to making the commercial connection between the two cities lucrative.¹²

This traffic led a variable number of ships to depart annually from Macau loaded with silks, porcelains and other merchandises, which were exchanged in Manila for the silver from New Spain. Throughout the first half of the 17th century, this connection would grow in importance, being temporarily sanctioned by the Crown between 1629 and 1632, and in definite after the year of 1635.¹³ Besides this commercial interchange, there were also some experiences of military cooperation between Portuguese and Castilian authorities, including the joint expeditions to the archipelago of the Moluccas that enabled the recapture of the forts of Tidore and Ternate from the Dutch, in 1606. Some years later, a combined operation in the Melaka and Singapore Straits, under the command of governor Juan de Silva (1609-1616), failed to conclusively defeat the Dutch and their allies in Johor and Aceh, and was forced to retreat to Manila after the death of the governor. Although the success of this cooperation had been uneven, new attempts of conjugating efforts against the threat represented by the Dutch would be seen in the following decades.¹⁴

However, in spite of the interest which the historiography has dedicated to the Macau-Manila axis, and some of its major figures, like the aforementioned Bartolomeu Vaz Landeiro or António Fialho Ferreira, the truth is that many of the dynamics of the Portuguese presence in the Philippines remain unexplored. This situation contrasts strongly with that of the studies about the Atlantic, where Portuguese emigration to Spanish America – particularly during the years of the Union of the Crowns – has been a subject privileged by historians over the course of the last decades. In this sense, works such as those by Maria da Graça Ventura or Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert have analysed the establishment of networks of Portuguese merchants (many of them New Christians) in the West Indies, and the reactions they elicited among their rivals. Questioning the dichoto-

11 Ollé, "Portugueses y Castellanos," 255.

12 Lúcio de Sousa, *The Early European Presence in China, Japan, the Philippines and Southeast Asia (1555-1590)*. *The Life of Bartolomeu Landeiro* (Macau: Fundação Macau, 2010), 93-108.

13 Benjamin Videira Pires, *A Viagem de Comercio Macau-Manila nos Séculos XVI a XVII* (Macau: Centro de Estudos Marítimos, 1987); George Bryan de Souza, *The Survival of Empire. Portuguese Trade and Society in China and the South China Sea, 1630-1754* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 63-86 and Manel Ollé, "Macao-Manila Interactions in Ming Dynasty," in *Macau During the Ming Dynasty*, ed. Luís Filipe Barreto (Lisbon: Centro Científico e Cultural de Macau, 2009), 163-170.

14 Domingo Centenero de Arce and Antonio Terrasa Lozano, "El Sudeste Asiático en las Políticas de la Monarquía Católica. Conflictos Luso-Castellanos entre 1580-1621," *Anais de História de Além-Mar* IX (2008): 297-314; Manuel Lobato, "As Filipinas e o Estado da Índia no Tempo dos Áustrias", 295-300; Pinto, *No Extremo da Redonda Esfera*, 295-308 and Peter Borschberg, *The Singapore and Melaka Straits. Violence, Security and Diplomacy in the 17th Century* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2010), 137-156.

my between the legal restrictions imposed by the Castilian authorities and the increasing number of migrants during the first half of the 16th century, those researchers have also alerted to the necessity of analysing the debates that surged at the time, in which arguments were exchanged about the statute of the Portuguese as *vecinos* (citizens), *naturales* (natives), or *extrangeros* (foreigners), in the territories under Castilian jurisdiction.¹⁵

Those studies invite us as well to reconsider the centrality of categories of belonging like “Portuguese” or “native of the kingdoms of Portugal” in the political lexicon of the early modern period. As several authors have insisted, in a universe marked by multiple solidarities, belongingness to a nation was far from assuming the monolithic and exclusivist nature which it has acquired in the contemporary world. In these circumstances, the recognition of an individual as catholic – asserting his or her belonging to the *Respublica Christiana* –, as vassal of the Hispanic Monarchy, or as native of a city, could be more decisive than their identification as Portuguese, depending on the context in which it was evoked. Even apparently familiar expressions, such as *patria* (homeland) or *nación* (nation), might assume ambiguous meanings, referring to realities quite distinct from the Nation-State of the 19th and 20th centuries, and demonstrating the shiftiness of the political culture of the time.¹⁶

For the rest, a simple exploratory research in the funds of the Archivo General de Indias, relative to the Captaincy-General of the Philippines, allows us to verify that, in considerable part of the sources, references to the birthplace of many of the mentioned subjects rarely appear. The number of those who are explicitly identified as Portuguese seems to be considerably smaller than that of those who we may suppose to be originally from the kingdom of Portugal or its conquests overseas. The analysis of this reality involves, in large measure, overcoming that difficulty by crossing different sources which may allow us to draw a clearer picture of the Portuguese presence in the archipelago of the Philippines. Nevertheless, it is still relevant to inquire upon the circumstances and the moments in which identifying oneself or being identified as Portuguese became sufficiently important to leave visible marks in the archival registers.

The invisibility/visibility metaphors that give title to this paper may at once be observed in the case of Diogo Lopes Lobo. In the year of 1628, this Portuguese officer had captained a *patache* which, within the scope of a punitive expedition sent to Cochinchina under the command of Don Juan Alcaraso, had seized a junk belonging to the king of Siam,

15 Maria da Graça Ventura, *Portugueses no Peru ao Tempo da União Ibérica. Mobilidade, Cumplicidades e Vivências* (Lisbon: Imprensa-Nacional/Casa da Moeda, 2005); Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocean Sea. Portugal's Atlantic Diaspora and the Crisis of the Spanish Empire, 1492-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) and Pedro Cardim, “«Todos los que no son de Castilla son yguales». El Estatuto de Portugal en la Monarquía Española en el Tiempo de Olivares,” *Pedralbes* 28 (2008): 521-552.

16 António Manuel Hespanha and Ana Cristina Nogueira da Silva, “A Identidade Portuguesa,” in *História de Portugal*, dir. José Mattoso, vol. IV, coord. António Hespanha (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 1993), 19-37; Tamar Herzog, *Defining Nations. Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) and Xavier Gil Pujol, “Un Rey, una Fe, muchas Naciones,” in *La Monarquía de las Naciones. Patria, Nación y Naturaleza en la Monarquía de España*, ed. Antonio Álvarez-Ossorio Alvariano and Bernardo J. García García (Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2004), 39-76.

escorting it to the port of Manila. It is nonetheless curious that not one of the documents that mention the capture of that boat, inventorying the merchandises that were carried aboard, makes any allusion – explicit or implicit – to Diogo Lopes’ native country.¹⁷ And yet, only two years later his Portuguese identity would suddenly become visible, generating an exchange of correspondence which involved the *oidores* of Manila, the governor-general of the Philippines, and Philip IV himself. Paraphrasing Tamar Herzog, in one of the studies she dedicated to the categories of belonging to the community in the Ibero-American world, the approach advanced below requires analysing the reasons that might have led to the questioning of an individual’s statute, surveying the political language and the arguments deployed in those moments of competition for resources and privileges.¹⁸

2. To be Portuguese in Manila

Following that rather long preamble, I would now like to get back to the controversy surrounding Diogo Lopes Lobo’s nomination for admiral of the fleet which, in the year of 1630, would leave for New Spain. But who was Diogo Lopes? Unfortunately, similarly to what occurs in relation to so many other officers and soldiers who circulated over the Iberian outposts in Asia, the scarcity of documents does not allow us to draw with certainty his biographical profile. Christened in 1595, at the Igreja da Graça in Setúbal, Diogo Lopes was most likely the son of Luís Lopes Lobo, a *fidalg*o of the Royal House whose family had served for long years the House of Braganza, occupying the post of *alcaldes-mores* of Monsaraz, and of his wife Inês de Carvalho.¹⁹ Little is known about the first years of his life, but it is likely that he left for India in the mid-1610’s, in the company of his older brother Martim Lopes Lobo.²⁰ However, shortly after his brother’s return to the kingdom, in 1625,²¹ Diogo Lopes presumably left the *Estado da Índia*, setting out to the archipelago of the Philippines, where he begun service as captain of an infantry company.²²

17 Archivo General de Indias, Filipinas, 8, R 1, N 6. The expedition had the purpose to retaliate for the capture of a Castilian ship, and it comprised two galleons, under the command of Don Juan de Alcaraso, and Diogo Lopes Lobo’s *patache*, acquired in Macau some time before, Cf. Souza, *The Survival of Empire*, 59-60.

18 Herzog, *Defining Nations*, 4-6.

19 Felgueiras Gaio, *Nobiliário de Famílias de Portugal*, t. XVII (Braga: Oficinas Gráficas da «Pax», 1939), 158-159.

20 Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Livros das Monções, lv. 10, fls. 353-354. According to the orders sent from the kingdom in 1617, during his stay in India, Martim Lopes should be graced with an annual pension of 300 *xerafins*, in attention “to his quality and good parts.”

21 In 1625, the viceroy count of Vidigueira (1622-1628) informed that he had given Martim Lopes leave to go back to the kingdom, since he had not applied himself to any service in the years he had remained in India and because he was the “oldest son and heir to his father’s majorat,” Cf. Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Livros das Monções, lv. 22, fl. 46. As it were, the only reference to a Diogo Lopes Lobo, who we can assume to be the same person, presents him as captain of one of the ships sent to escort the mercantile caravan to the gulf of Cambay, in the year of 1624, Cf. Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Livros das Monções, lv. 19, fls. 45-45v.

22 Archivo General de Indias, Contaduria, 1211, fl. 24

As we saw earlier, during the first years of his stay in Manila, being Portuguese apparently did not hamper Diogo Lopes' career. It would only be with his being chosen for the post of admiral, in 1630, that his native country would become a point of discord between the governor Juan Niño de Tavora and the city's *oidores*. At the genesis of this controversy was a petition presented by "nine *vecinos* of the city," complaining that the nomination of the captain Diogo Lopes was contrary to the royal edicts, which envisaged the exercise of that post only by the *vecinos* of Manila, representing therefore an aggravation to the rights and privileges of the city's residents. Among the signatories of that petition appeared some of the leading officers and *encomenderos*²³ of the archipelago, many having long years of services rendered in the campaigns of the Philippines and in the expeditions to the Moluccas.

Of the nine, Cristobál de Lugo y Montalvo was the one who had been in the Philippines for the shortest time, having served as soldier and *alferes* in the *tercio* of Lombardy before having set forth to Manila in 1623, where he would come to occupy the posts of admiral and military commander in the province of Pintados. By his turn, Francisco García de Rebolledo had arrived to the archipelago in 1597, taking part in Governor Luis Pérez Dasmariñas' expedition to the kingdom of Cambodia and in the defense of Manila during the *sangleyes'* revolt, in 1603. Juan García Peláez, Francisco López Montenegro, Jeronimo Enríquez Sotelo, Hernando del Castillo and Juan Claudio de Verastegui had resided in the Philippines since the first years of the 17th century, carrying out military offices and distinguishing themselves in the campaigns of Ternate and Mindanao. As for Juan de Arceo Covarrubias and Matheo de Ávila, they were both natives of Manila, the sons of Castilian officers who had performed military and judicial functions there. With their petition, these signatories put forth several arguments by which they sought to demonstrate the inconveniences that Diogo Lopes' nomination might carry.²⁴

Right at the beginning of their missive, the "nine *vecinos*" pointedly remarked that – with the choice he had made – governor Niño de Tavora had put in question the reputation of the residents of Manila, by implying that "there are no worthwhile people among the *vecinos* to occupy said function, since he graces said captain Diogo Lopes Lobo with it, who is not *vecino*, but rather *extrangero*."²⁵ They regretted still that he had been occupying, for the past five years, the command of an infantry company, a post to which he should never have been nominated. Their discursive strategy was thus centered on the identification of Diogo Lopes as foreigner, denying him the necessary conditions of belonging to the

23 The model of the *encomienda*, previously applied in the colonisation of the New World, involved the attribution, as kingly grace, of a group of rights and powers over a given indigenous population. In the case of the Philippines, the focus of this relation was in the tributes paid by the local population to the *encomendero*. Cf. Pinto, *No Extremo da Redonda Esfera*, 219-223.

24 Archivo General de Indias, Filipinas, 47, N. 37, N. 40, N. 52 and N. 58; 48, N. 61 and 63; 61, N. 14.

25 Archivo General de Indias, Filipinas, 8, R. 1, N. 11.

city (*vecinidad*) and to the kingdom (*naturaleza*).²⁶ Since belonging to the community was a fundamental issue at the moment of deciding who could enjoy rights and perform duties, this line of argument sought to prevent the Portuguese captain from accessing privileges and offices which were considered to be exclusive to the *vecinos* of Manila.

However, more than his condition of foreigner, it was the fact that Diogo Lopes was Portuguese that seemed to alarm the petitioners. They claimed, then, that his nomination for admiral of the fleet heading for Acapulco might be ruinous to the interests of the traders of the city because “not being its *vecino*, other than adventitious and Portuguese of nation,” Diogo Lopes would ship preferably the merchandises that the Portuguese of Macau gave him to sell in New Spain at reduced prices, thus hurting the trade of the residents of Manila, who would see themselves forced to acquire them at much higher values.²⁷ To support their fears, they brought up the example of the general Rui Gonçalves de Sequeira, who had got to the Philippines in 1614 as commander of the rescue fleet sent via the Cape of Good Hope.²⁸ Three years later, in 1617, that same general had been chosen to command one of the ships which set forth to New Spain, but he had disobeyed his orders, taking refuge in Malacca with the fabrics of the merchants of Manila, who would only later get part of them back in Malacca and Cochin. His example would thus offer a warning that the command of the galleons should not be trusted to Portuguese officers.

The petitioners’ denouncements would be taken up by the *oidores* who, as mentioned above, wrote to Philip IV on that very year complaining of the conduct of governor-general Niño de Tavora and demanding that the nominations for the posts of general and admiral be previously communicated to them, as those were among the most important offices bestowed in the Philippines. The complaints of the *oidores* were part of a long history of conflict between the *Real Audiencia* of Manila and the successive governors-general, concerning not only the appointment of the public offices, but the jurisdictional limits of their powers as well. According to Ostwald Sales Colín, this rivalry had seen a peaceful phase during Niño de Tavora’s first years of government, but it had been revived with the accusations drawn up against the governor-general, among which his favouring of Diogo Lopes in detriment of the city’s residents was singled out.²⁹

It was to these arguments that Niño de Tavora sought to answer when, in his missive of August of 1630, he strove to explain the bestowal of the post of admiral upon Diogo Lopes Lobo. In the first place, the governor praised the services rendered by the captain at the time of the taking of the junk of Siam, setting aside any suggestions that he had per-

26 On the concepts of “*vecinidad*” and “*naturaleza*,” and their significance in the political culture of the time, see Herzog, *Defining Nations*, 6-9.

27 Archivo General de Indias, Filipinas, 8, R. 1, N. 11.

28 On Rui Gonçalves de Sequeira’s expedition, see Centenero de Arce and Terrasa Lozano, “El Sudeste Asiático,” 314-317.

29 Ostwald Sales Colín, “La Real Audiencia de Manila contra el Gobernador General de Filipinas. Dos Intereses Irreconciliables durante la Primera Mitad del Diecisietesco,” *Alegatos* 61 (2005): 419-450.

sonally profited with the seizure of the ship. Secondly, he responded to the scandal caused by the fact that Diogo Lopes was Portuguese, stating:

And regarding said Diogo Lopes Lobo not being Castilian, but rather Portuguese (...) I do not understand being Portuguese to be a crime, nor a demerit. Diogo Lopes, son of Luís Lopes Lobo, *fidalgo* of the quality which might easily be known in that council, moved to East India at Your Majesty's service where he assisted for ten years and thence came to these islands, where I found him in charge of an infantry company that Don Fernando da Silva had given to him, in the year in which he governed here.³⁰

In order to dispel any doubts concerning the captain's loyalty, he added still that "throughout that whole year and in the four of my government he has had his house and dwelling in Manila (which, it seems, might be enough to be considered *vecino*)."³¹ Alluding to the years of Diogo Lopes' residence in Manila, then, Juan Niño de Tavora made use of one of the elements that defined belonging in the doctrinarian vocabulary of the time, arguing that during that period the captain had given sufficient proofs of fidelity and love to the community and, as such, should be seen as *vecino*.³² In parallel, the governor sustained that the fact of being Portuguese should not cast any shadow of suspicion over Diogo Lopes, since the kingdom of Portugal was part of the Monarchy and the Portuguese were "natural vassals" of the Catholic King, and could not, therefore, be considered mere foreigners.

3. The Union of Arms in the Far East

For the governor-general of the Philippines, being Portuguese did not appear, then, to constitute any obstacle to the exercise of the post of fleet admiral, as the kingdom of Portugal had become integral part of the Hispanic Monarchy. In any case, as he explained in his letter, the fact that Diogo Lopes was a man experienced in the matters of the East – where he had remained for almost two decades at the service of both Crowns – had been precisely what had motivated his nomination, since it made him the ideal envoy to represent near the king the need to "take care of the business of the union of strongholds and arms in the South seas."³³ Being Portuguese, then, not only did not constitute an impediment, but was in fact one of the reasons that made Diogo Lopes the ideal candidate for the post in that conjuncture. The controversy was thus framed within a wider panorama, marked by Juan Niño de Tavora's attempts to establish an effective collaboration between Portuguese and Castilian military forces in the Far East.³⁴

30 Archivo General de Indias, Filipinas, 8, R. 1, N. 11.

31 Archivo General de Indias, Filipinas, 8, R. 1, N. 11.

32 Herzog, *Defining Nations*, 9-12.

33 Archivo General de Indias, Filipinas, 8, R. 1, N. 11.

34 Valladares, *Castilla y Portugal en Asia*, 37-64.

In fact, throughout the previous years, the conflicts with the Dutch East India Company (V.O.C.) in the Strait of Malacca, in the archipelago of the Philippines, and in the Moluccas had grown in intensity, representing a rising threat as much for the *Estado da Índia* as for the Philippines. The end of the Twelve Years Truce (1609-1621) had rekindled a rivalry which had never, on the Asian stage at least, truly ceased. The siege of Macau, in 1622, the successive attempts of blockade of the ports of Goa and Manila, or the beginning of the construction of Fort Zeelandia on the Western coast of the island of Formosa (Taiwan), in 1624, were just a few of this dispute's many instances.³⁵ The Dutch presence in the Formosa seemed particularly threatening, putting in question the Iberian hegemony in the China seas and the trade between Manila and the Chinese province of Fujian. Consequently, in 1626, the governor Fernando de Silva would send an expedition to the North of the island, installing a Castilian fort on the bay of Keelung. A few months later, in the summer of 1627, the new governor Juan Niño de Tavora would personally command a powerful reinforcement fleet which, however, would be forced to return to Manila in haste, defeated by a storm.³⁶

In face of this adverse scenario, Niño de Tavora insisted on the necessity of coordinating Portuguese and Castilian forces as the only means of guaranteeing the defence of the Iberian outposts in the East. This reflection was in agreement with the ideas of Philip IV's favourite, the count-duke of Olivares, who in 1625 had presented his vision of a common defence program. His project of *Unión de Armas* (union of arms) involved a strengthening of the ties between the different peoples and territories that made up the Monarchy, each kingdom having the duty to contribute to the constitution and maintenance of an army which ensured the defence of every province.³⁷ As mentioned earlier, there had already been some episodes of collaboration in Asia, especially during the fighting against the Dutch in the Moluccas. These efforts would pick up pace in the second half of the 1620's, with successive appeals for cooperation between the Iberian fleets and armies, focusing not only in the Far East but also in the projects of recovering the fortress of Ormuz, in the Persian Gulf, which had been lost in 1622 to an Anglo-Persian alliance.³⁸

35 Peter Emmer, "The First Global War: The Dutch versus Iberia in Asia, Africa and New World, 1590-1609," *E-Journal of Portuguese History* 1, no. 1 (2003); Ernst Van Veen, "VOC Strategies in the Far East (1605-1640)," *Bulletin of Portuguese/Japanese Studies* 3 (2001): 85-105 and André Murteira, "Os Primeiros Bloqueios Neerlandeses de Goa. Expedições da VOC contra a Carreira da Índia no Índico Ocidental, 1604-1623," *Review of Culture* 36 (2010): 125-144.

36 José Eugenio Borao, "Fleets, Relief Ships and Trade. Communications between Manila and Jilong, 1626-1642," *Around and About Formosa*, ed. Leonard Blussé (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 2003), 307-336 and Tonio Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese. Dutch, Spanish and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 80-114.

37 John Elliott, *El Conde-Duque de Olivares* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2004), 282-317.

38 Valladares, *Castilla y Portugal en Asia*, 42-54 and José Eugenio Borao, "Intelligence-Gathering Episodes in the Manila-Macao-Taiwan Triangle during the Dutch Wars," in *Macao-Philippines, Historical Relations* (Macao: University of Macao and CEPASA, 2005), 226-247. According to Kevin Sheehan, these episodes of cooperation owed more to the initiative of administrators in the imperial periphery (like Niño de Tavora) than to an official effort to implement a formal union of arms, as advocated by Olivares, cf. Sheehan, *Iberian Asia*, 442-444.

Encouraged by these projects – and by the written orders he had received from Madrid to recover the initiative of the combats in the Formosa, with the help of Portuguese forces³⁹ – the governor of the Philippines renewed the efforts to collaborate with the *Estado da Índia*'s authorities in the fight against the Dutch. In November of 1630, a few months after having reported to Philip IV of the controversy that had surrounded Diogo Lopes Lobo's nomination, Niño de Tavora announced having sent a galleon to Goa, under the command of general Andrés Pérez Franco, to store up the supplies necessary to the royal warehouses of Manila and to negotiate with the viceroy of India the outlines of an eventual union of arms.⁴⁰ Some months later, the viceroy, count of Linhares (1629-1635), would by his turn write to the king relating the conversations with the envoy from Manila and giving his opinion that "everything that Dom João [Niño de Tavora] proposes could be done, and will be of great importance if it can be achieved, however the straits in which we are at present in India do not consent that the few forces that there are for other seas be divided," reason why the possibilities of cooperation would be limited.⁴¹

In those circumstances, governor Niño de Tavora regretted that the authors of the petition had acted in function of their own interests, by feeding rumours and suspicions that questioned the "loyalty and fidelity of the Portuguese nation," at a moment in which it was necessary to conciliate efforts, negotiating the "union of strongholds and arms of Portuguese and Castilians in this South sea, which is the only means of defeating the enemy, at a time in which many Castilian soldiers came to India and in the fields of Maluku and Manila are more than 200 Portuguese, soldiers, *alferes* and captains."⁴² He added, lastly, that he had only nominated Diogo Lopes Lobo for admiral of the voyage so that he would arrive with greater honour to the eyes of Phillip IV, in order to take care of a matter as important as the union of Castilian and Portuguese arms, having appointed to the posts of general and admiral of the return voyage – the most lucrative – residents of the city of Manila.

In spite of the opposition of *vecinos* and *oidores*, Diogo Lopes would eventually head for New Spain as fleet admiral, in the company of general Don Juan Alcaraso, with whom he had taken part in the expedition to Cochinchina. He was not, however, destined to reach the court of Madrid. During the crossing of the Atlantic, the flagship *Nuestra Señora del Juncal* was wrecked, and the Portuguese captain, whose nomination had caused such polemic, would end up drowning in the Gulf of Mexico.⁴³ Two years later, the governor

39 Borao, "Intelligence-Gathering Episodes," 236-237.

40 Archivo General de Indias, Filipinas, 8, R. 1, N. 12.

41 Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Livros das Monções, livro 29, fl. 19. In spite of this opinion, the king would insist again the following year, appealing to the count of Linhares to attempt by all means to help the governor of the Philippines drive away the Dutch from the island of Formosa. Cf. Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Livros das Monções, lv. 30, fls. 25-25v.

42 Archivo General de Indias, Filipinas, 8, R. 1, N. 11.

43 Fernando Serrano Mangas, *Los Tres Credos de Don Andrés de Aristizábal. Ensayo sobre los enigmas de los naufragios de la Capitana y la Almiranta de la Flota de Nueva España de 1631* (Xalapa, Ver: Universidad Veracruzana, 2012), 21-54.

Niño de Tavora would insist once more upon his project of union of arms, declaring that “joining these strongholds under one single hand shall not be difficult, even if they are of two Crowns, because if they do not unite they will not have strength.”⁴⁴ In his understanding, no “great expenses, or great *armadas*” would be necessary for the gathered forces of Portugal and Castile to be able to face the Dutch enemies, reason why he regretted that the death of Diogo Lopes had prevented him from representing that need before the king and his Council.⁴⁵

The governor himself would, however, die shortly after, without a true union of arms having been established between the Captaincy-General of the Philippines and the *Estado da Índia*. In fact, the cooperation between Portuguese and Castilian forces in the Far East would never be successfully implemented in the long term, ending definitively with the breaking of the Monarchy after the Portuguese Restoration of 1640. Soon after the death of Niño de Tavora, Manila’s *Cabildo Secular* [municipal government] would bring up once again the displeasure with which the nomination of Diogo Lopes Lobo had been received by the city’s *vecinos*, writing to Phillip IV so that he bore in mind the harm that such nominations caused to the natural and meritorious vassals. They requested further that a royal edict was pronounced so that no foreigner – category which, in their understanding, included the Portuguese – could be appointed to posts, offices or *encomiendas* of the Captaincy-General of the Philippines.⁴⁶

Conclusions

In face of these considerations, captain Diogo Lopes Lobo’s progress seems to me a particularly interesting example of the contingency of the processes of identification in the early modern world. In the letters we analysed, the recurring allusions to his native country were much more than a simple statement of fact, or mere allusion to an immanent category with fixed meaning and stable frontiers. This sudden visibility demonstrates instead that, as Tamar Herzog argued, the fact that an individual was foreign (or, in this particular case, Portuguese) might be irrelevant at a given moment and become decisive at another.⁴⁷ If this realisation still seems obvious today, it would seem even more so in a period in which belonging to a given nation was merely one of multiple categories of belonging and means of identification, and not always the most relevant of them.

In this sense, the comparison with what was taking place in Spanish America becomes essential to contextualise the action of the Portuguese communities in territories under Castilian jurisdiction. In the first place, it is important to look into the diversity of settling strategies

44 Archivo General de Indias, Filipinas, 8, R. 1, N. 16.

45 Archivo General de Indias, Filipinas, 8, R. 1, N. 16.

46 Archivo General de Indias, Filipinas, 27, N. 154.

47 Herzog, *Defining Nation*, 5.

and into the ties of solidarity that the different groups which identified themselves or were identified as Portuguese established (or not) among them, taking equally into account the relations they kept with the neighbouring Portuguese territories. In the second place, it is necessary to interpret the manners of exclusion that were adopted by their rivals – and in which the construction of a narrative of the Portuguese as New Christians and as judaising seems to have played a central role –, questioning the distinct usages of one same lexicon on identity. Finally, this last point invites us equally to consider the contacts between these debates and the literature on the constitutional statute of the Portuguese while members of the Monarchy, which, in line with what authors such as Pedro Cardim have demonstrated, had a great development throughout the first decades of the 17th century.⁴⁸

For the rest, over the previous pages, it has been possible to observe the similarities between the political language that characterises these debates, and the arguments advanced by Juan Niño de Tavora as much as by the *oidores* of the *Real Audiencia* of Manila. As in the Iberian Peninsula, in Mexico, or in Peru, part of the matter was finding out whether, in the territories of the Crown of Castile, the Portuguese should be considered foreigners, or if, to that identity, an idea more or less vague of “spanishness” should be over imposed.⁴⁹ Not merely theoretical at all, this debate had quite concrete practical implications on the definition of who should be entitled to rights, graces and public offices.

The issue of Diogo Lopes Lobo’s identity emerges, moreover, within a very specific context, in which the governor-general of the Philippines was attempting to promote a union of arms with the Portuguese forces in the region, and in which certain groups of residents sought to ensure exclusive access to a number of graces and privileges. It alerts us, then, to the obstacles, the misgivings and the distrust that frame these attempts at military collaboration. Far from being innocuous, the identification of Diogo Lopes as Portuguese grants us access to some of the tensions and disputes with which the different actors of Manila’s political arena were confronted in the early 1630’s, relating them with debates that were transversal to the different spaces of the Hispanic Monarchy.

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48 Cardim, “«Todos los que no son de Castilla son yguales,»” 521-555.

49 *Ibid.*, 548-550.

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