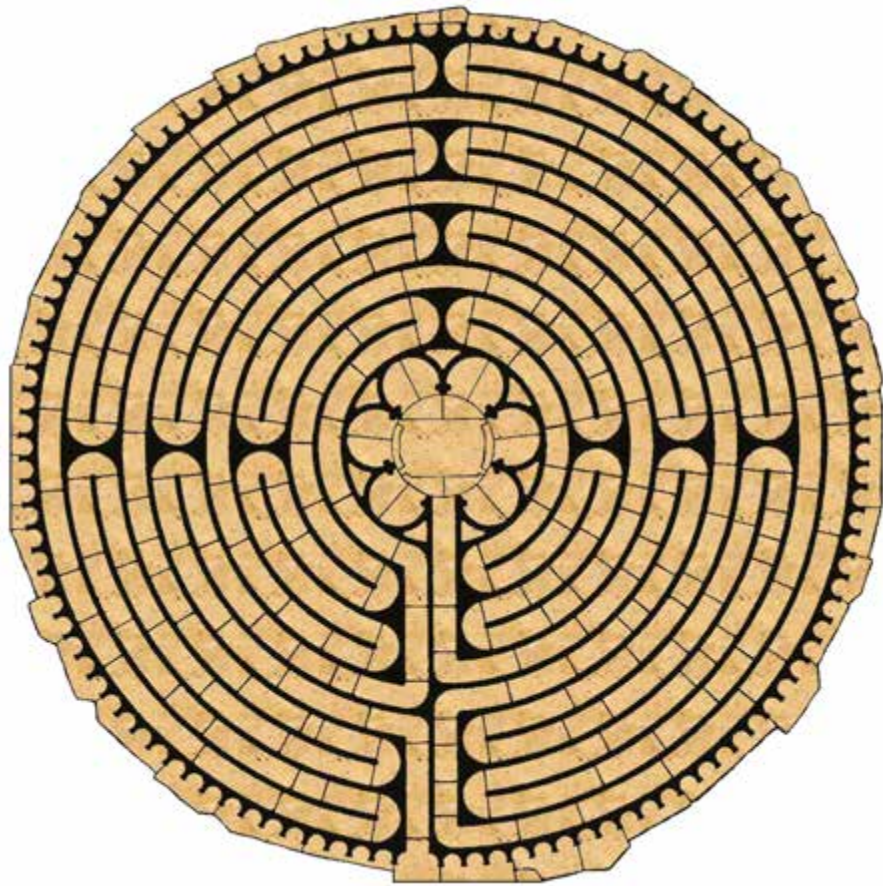


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Christina H. Lee and Ricardo Padrón. *The Spanish Pacific, 1521-1815: A Reader of Primary Sources*. Amsterdam University Press, 2020. 249 pp.
ISBN: 978-94-6372-064-9.

In *The Spanish Pacific, 1521-1815: A Reader of Primary Sources*, editors Christina H. Lee and Ricardo Padrón assemble an extraordinary collection of documents from the Spanish colonial period that focus primarily on the Philippines and its pivotal position in a circuit of commercial and cultural interchange that linked the Americas, the Pacific Islands, and East and Southeast Asia. The book grew out of a workshop of scholars that met at Princeton University in 2018 with the aim of clarifying the parameters of the emerging field of Spanish Pacific Studies. As the editors explain, the Spanish Pacific comprised not only the regions of the Pacific Basin ruled directly by Spain, but also regions of East and Southeast Asia, including parts of China and Japan, with which Spain had trading relations and at times even sought to Christianize. The fifteen documents showcased in the book are ordered chronologically, from 1536 to 1813, and are introduced by fifteen different scholars and archivists with backgrounds in literature, history, and art. Given the broad geographic and temporal scope of the collection, it is certain to attract a wide range of scholars and to become essential reading for those seeking to enrich and nuance their knowledge of Asia, Latin America, and the South Pacific.

The fifteen documents of *The Spanish Pacific* are presented in English translation, with information identifying the bibliographical details and location of the original texts. Most of them were initially written in Spanish, with occasional sections in Tagalog, Visayan, Chinese, and Latin, and most have never before been translated. The first English-language compendium of Spanish-Philippine writings from the colonial period was the multi-volume opus of Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, published soon after the acquisition of the Philippines by the United States. As Lee and Padrón indicate in their comprehensive introduction, this work, which has been a mainstay of English-speaking students and scholars for generations, is severely limited, given that Blair and Robertson not only failed to include subaltern voices but often selected Spanish-authored texts that put Spanish colonialism in a negative light and thereby implicitly justified the ascendancy of the United States in the region. In contrast, Lee and Padrón present texts representing individuals

from a wide-range of backgrounds, and choose strategically to omit the most canonical Spanish chronicles of the Philippines, including those of Antonio de Morga, Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola, and Gaspar de San Agustín, precisely because they are already easily available to English-speaking readers. What is more, the collection highlights a variety of genres, such as travel narratives, histories, poems, and correspondences, and even a court case, a will, and a map. The documents are all equally fascinating, and together with the commentaries and notes make this volume a model of erudition and scholarship. What follows is a brief summary of the fifteen chapters of *The Spanish Pacific*.

1. “An Early Transpacific Account of the Spice Islands by Andrés de Urdaneta (1536),” edited by Jorge Mojarro Romero. The document in this section forms part of the journal of Andrés de Urdaneta, one of the members of the expedition of Miguel López de Legazpi, which culminated in the foundation of the Spanish colony in the Philippines. In the text cited Urdaneta recounts an earlier, failed expedition of Jofre García de Loaysa to wrest the Moluccas from Portugal and secure them for the Spanish Crown. In so doing, he reveals the shifting alliances and conflicts between the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the Moluccans for control of the islands and the larger imperial rivalry between Spain and Portugal for dominance in the western Pacific.

2. “Domingo de Salazar’s Letter to the King of Spain in Defense of the Indians and the Chinese of the Philippine Islands (1582),” edited by Christina H. Lee. The document in this section is a letter written by Domingo de Salazar, the first Catholic bishop of the Philippines, to King Philip II of Spain. In the tradition of Francisco de Vitoria and Bartolomé de las Casas, Salazar denounces Spain’s egregious abuse of its colonial subjects. He criticizes the system of *encomiendas*, or land grants, to which Philippine natives were entailed, and condemns the *encomenderos* for using cruel and unjust means to collect tribute from them. He further accuses the Spanish of mistreating Chinese immigrants in Manila and of failing to uphold the prohibition against the Spanish ownership of slaves throughout the colony. Although a staunch defender of the subjects of colonial rule, Salazar did not challenge Spanish sovereignty in the Philippines, which he saw as essential to the project of evangelization.

3. “Juan Cobo’s Map of the Pacific World (1593),” edited by Ricardo Padrón, with translation by Timothy Brook. The document in this

section is a European-style map of the world made by Juan Cobo for Chinese readers. In the tradition of Macrobian maps, it depicts the globe in profile and divides each hemisphere into climatic zones. It also situates China, Japan, and Mexico (and by extension the Hispanic world) on the same level within the temperate zone, and uses the same Chinese character to identify them as countries. In so doing, it affirms the ancient Greek theory of the effects of climate on humans, according to which the inhabitants of the temperate zone are the ones most capable of developing civilized societies. But the map also uses a slightly modified character to designate China and Japan, as if they were different from and superior to the other cultures of the world. The privileging of Confucian-based cultures, revealed through the Chinese inscriptions on the map, might have been made by Cobo's Chinese collaborators, who were not yet ready to reconfigure the central position of China and Chinese civilization in their representations of the world despite the new and ever-changing perspectives made possible by European cartography.

4. "A Royal Decree of Philip III Regulating Trade between the Philippines and New Spain (1604)," edited by Natalie Cobo and Tatiana Seijas. This document is a decree intended to regulate the trading activities carried out by the Manila Galleon fleet, which operated from the late sixteenth century to the early nineteenth century and linked Acapulco and Manila, the primary entrepôts of Spanish America and Spanish East Asia. The text, which was promulgated in response to complaints from various sectors of the trading community, reveals the reactive nature of Spanish legislation during the colonial period as well as the fundamental dynamics of Spanish mercantilism.

5. "Manila's Sangleys and a Chinese Wedding (1625)," edited by Miguel Martínez. The document in this section is an excerpt from a text written by Diego de Rueda y Mendoza on the occasion of the death of King Philip III of Spain. In it, Rueda describes a Catholic Chinese wedding in early seventeenth-century Manila in which he and his wife participated as godparents. He comments on numerous aspects of the ceremony and the feast that followed, including the food and the entertainment. The document is significant for the insights that it provides into the social, cultural, and religious life of the Sangleys (the Chinese inhabitants of the colonial Philippines) and for the nuanced depiction of the interactions between them and Spaniards during the early colonial period.

6. “Don Luis Castilla Offers to Sell Land in Manila (1629),” edited by Regalado Trota José. This section presents documents that chronicle the efforts of Luis Castilla, a Tagalog-speaking member of the *principalía*, the native Philippine aristocracy, to sell several tracts of land. The documents are significant not only because they reveal the challenges that the *principalía* faced when making land transactions but also because they combine several languages present in the colonial Philippines, including Spanish, Chinese, and Tagalog (written in both the Roman alphabet and the native *baybayin* script).

7. “Idolatry and Apostasy in the 1633 Jesuit Annual Letter,” edited by John Blanco. The document in this section is an excerpt from one of the annual letters in which the Jesuits in the Philippines recorded the state of their order and missionary activities. In it, Fr. Juan de Bueras describes the efforts of his fellow Jesuits to convert the Magayanes people of the mountain regions of Mindoro. Their plan was to integrate them into the already Christianized communities of Tagalogs along the coast. However, these communities often practiced pre-Hispanic religious traditions, and according to Bueras required further indoctrination into Christianity. The document is significant because it shows how slow and uneven the Spanish project of Christianizing and Hispanicizing the Philippines actually was.

8. “The Will of an Indian Oriental and her *Chinos* in Peru (1644),” edited by Leo J. Garofalo. The document in this section is the will of an Asian-born woman, Leonor Álvarez of India, who had been married to a Chinese-born man and who at the time of her death freed her four slaves and their children, all persons of Asian or African background. It is significant insofar as it provides insight into the shifting fortunes and lives of Asians in the multi-racial society of colonial Lima.

9. “Francisco de Combés’s *History of Mindanao and Jolo* (1667),” edited by Ana M. Rodríguez-Rodríguez, with translation assisted by Cortney Benjamin. This section contains several chapters of the *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, written by the Jesuit clergyman Francisco de Combés. In these pages Combés depicts the inhabitants of the southern Philippines as atheists and their Muslim rulers, whom he calls *moros* [Moors], as sorcerers. He describes the efforts of his fellow Jesuits in the Spanish settlement of Zamboanga to advance Christianity in the Muslim-dominated south, and he decries the decision of the Spanish authorities to abandon the site, due to

conflicts in Manila, and thereby indefinitely forestall the incorporation of the region into Hispanic Christendom.

10. “Between Fiction and History in the Spanish Pacific: *The Misfortunes of Alonso Ramírez* (1690),” edited by Nicole D. Legnani. This section reproduces the third chapter of the *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez*, written by Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, a Jesuit of Nueva España, and based on the experiences of Ramírez, a creole born in Puerto Rico. The *Infortunios* is considered a foundational text of Latin American literature, and according to some scholars it is the first Latin American novel. In chapter 3, Sigüenza y Góngora narrates an episode in which Ramírez was captured by English pirates and tortured for information that they hoped would help them in their raids on Spanish outposts in the Philippines.

11. “A Moluccan Crypto-Muslim before the Transpacific Inquisition (1623-1645),” edited by Ryan Dominic Crewe. The documents in this section include excerpts from the prosecution of Alexo de Castro, a *mestizo* of Portuguese and Southeast Asian descent and one of the few colonial subjects transferred from the Philippines to Mexico City for trial by the Inquisition. Castro was accused both of heresy, for allegedly practicing Islam, and of sexual abuse, for assaulting several women in his household. The documents contain testimonies of the women and graphic depictions of their ordeals. They also reveal the anxieties of the Spanish colonial authorities over the presence of Islam in the southern part of the Philippine archipelago.

12. “Constitutions and Rules of the Beatas Indias (1726),” edited by Kathryn Santner. This document is the charter of the first Philippine *beaterio*, a religious house of Catholic laywomen, founded in Manila by a Chinese *mestiza* named Ignacia del Espíritu Santo and inhabited by women of Tagalog, Sangley, and *mestizo* origins. It is significant insofar as it provides insight into the lives of Philippine women from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, with particular emphasis on their religious practices and education.

13. “The Poetics of Praise and the Demands of Confession in the Early Spanish Philippines.” In this section Vicente L. Rafael presents two types of documents: devotional poems (in the verse form known as *dalits*) composed by Tagalog natives in honor of the missionary work of the Catholic clergy, and manuals designed to guide priests in the process of hearing confession and administering the sacrament of penance to local

converts. Together, these documents reveal the tensions inherent in the process of colonial conversion, which provided converts with the promise of salvation, while subordinating them within the power structures of Spanish rule.

14. “The Pacific Theater of the Seven Years’ War in a Latin Poem by an Indigenous Priest, Bartolomé Saguinsín (1766),” edited by Stuart M. McManus. The documents in this section are epigrams written in Latin by the Tagalog priest, Bartolomé Saguinsín. They focus on the British occupation of Manila during the Seven Years’ War and the Spanish recovery of the city. Saguinsín praises the Hispanized Tagalogs for their support of the Spanish, while leveling vitriol against the less Hispanized inhabitants of the provinces outside the sphere of Manila and especially against the Sangleys, whom he regards as disloyal to the Spanish cause.

15. “A Prohibition on Digging Up the Bones of the Dead (1813),” edited by Ino Manalo. The document in this section is an edict written by Joaquín Encabo de la Virgen de Sopetrán, the Bishop of Cebu, that prohibits the inhabitants of the diocese from exhuming the remains of the dead and reburying them according to non-Christian practices. It shows that traditional beliefs and customs persisted in the Philippines long after the initial Christianization of the archipelago.

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