

## Chapter 4

### MAGELLAN'S SUCCESSORS: LOAYSA TO URDANETA

... aqueles ilhas ... são um viveiro de todo mal, e não teem outro bem senão cravo; e por ser cousa que Deus criou, lhe podemos chamar boa; mas quanto a ser matéria do que os nossos por êle teem passado, é um pomo de tôda a discordia. E por êle se podem dizer mais pragas que sobre o ouro....

#### *Malacca and the Moluccas*

Between Antonio de Abreu's return from Amboyna to the newly acquired Portuguese base at Malacca, in December 1512, and Del Cano's to Seville in September 1522, the Portuguese had acquired a knowledge of the Indonesian seas more extensive and far firmer than Polo's, even if for the most part coastal.<sup>1</sup> The world in which Lusitanians and Castilians were here involved was far different from that of the Americas: a congeries of petty but civil kingdoms, in the shadow of huge and mysterious empires, and linked by an active and diversified thalassic commerce, which was run by men with little to learn in the arts of trade. Violence by sea and land was not lacking, but the entrada was to be replaced by the embassy; despite forays in Cambodia and pipe-dreams of over-running China, there was to be only one conquista, that of the Philippines.

Dominating the entire region, commercially, was Malacca, a good harbour in either monsoon, and in the hands of its Muslim rulers controlling both sides of the strait through which the traffic between the Indian and the Chinese seas was funnelled.<sup>2</sup> Born of piracy, like many another Indies Sultanate, Malacca's rise was fostered by its use as a forward base for Cheng Ho's voyages to and across the Indian Ocean<sup>3</sup>—the name first appears in a Chinese record of 1403. By the early sixteenth century its harbour saw the arrival of about a hundred big ships a year, and of course a multitude of small craft. Its direct contacts extended from Gujarat to Japan, or at any rate to the 'Gores' of the Lequeos or Ryukyu Islands.<sup>4</sup> The Gujaratis were intermediaries for the Venetian trade via the Red Sea—arms, cloth, quicksilver, glassware—while from the farther East the main

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João de Barros, *Asia*, III.5.v (Lisbon ed. 1945–6, III.261–2): 'these islands ... are a warren of all evil, and have no one good thing but the clove; and since it is a thing that God has made, we can call it good; but in so far as it is the material cause of our people going there, it is an apple of all discord. And one could curse it more than gold itself. ...'

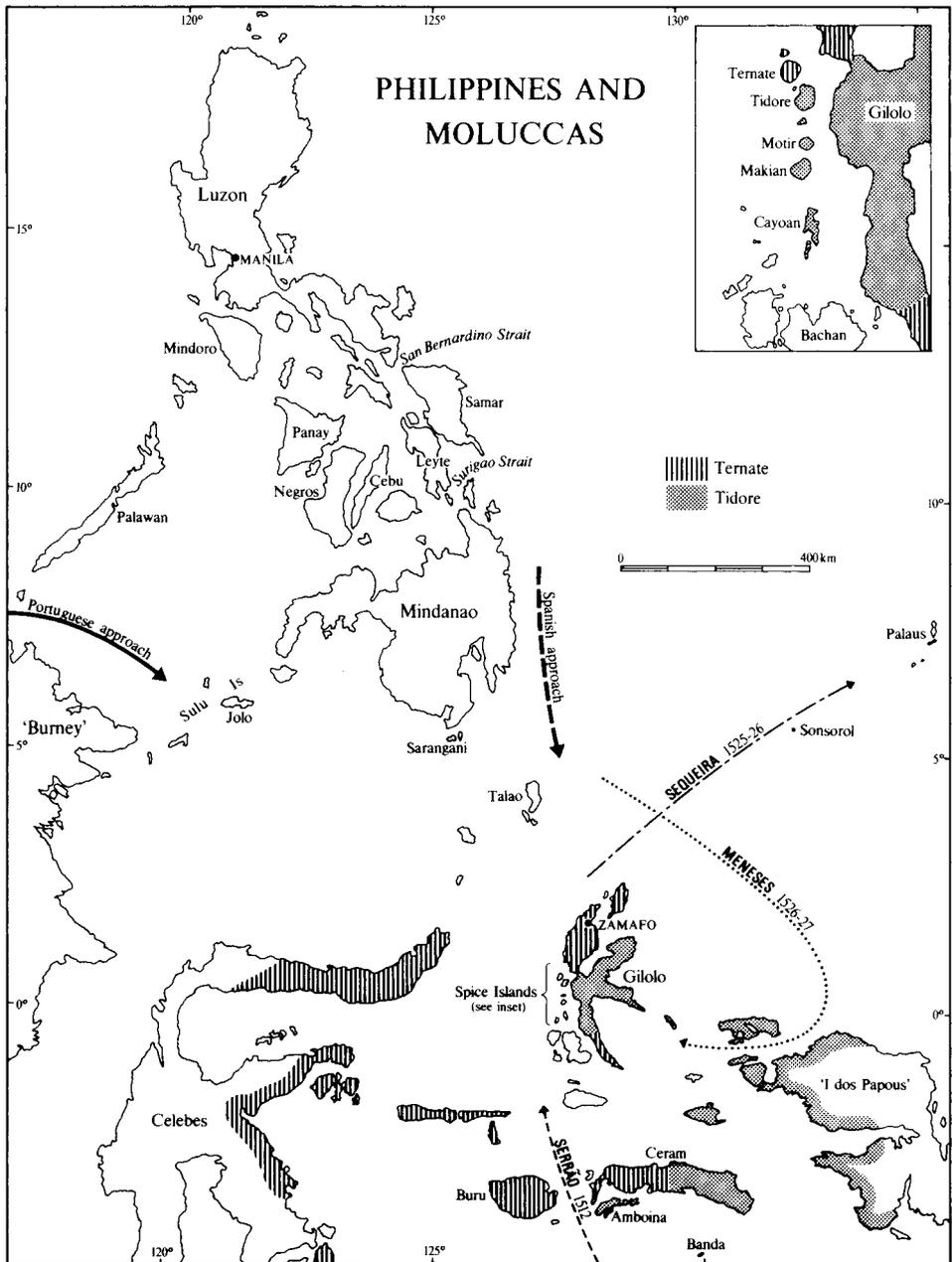


Figure 11. PHILIPPINES AND MOLUCCAS. Inset: The Spice Islands. The Portuguese approach shown was used mainly after 1545.

commodities were of course spices, sandalwood, 'birds from Banda for plumes for the *Rumes*'—Camoës' 'aureas aves', the Birds of Paradise—from the islands; from China, silks, porcelain, and the more mundane salt and saltpetre. The great return trade to China was pepper, up to ten large junk-loads a year.<sup>5</sup>

The seizure of this great emporium by Afonso de Albuquerque in 1511 dislocated but was far from demolishing the commerce of the local trading powers, such as Atjeh (Achin) and Patani in Siam, both between themselves and with the farther East, and even to some extent with the Red Sea and Venice. Although, as Tomé Pires said, 'Whoever is lord of Malacca has his hand on the throat of Venice', the grasp was not always effective—there was a marked revival of European spice imports through Alexandria about 1560, and full control had to wait on the bureaucratically much more efficient Dutch monopoly, when the grip of Malacca was replaced by that of Batavia.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, though the new base would have to be supplemented by points farther east, its possession gave the Portuguese a position of strength, and of opportunity, and they lost no time in exploiting it. Albuquerque took Malacca in August; in November he sent de Abreu on his voyage along the north coasts of Java and the islands eastwards as far as Ceram.

By 1517 Tomé Pires could claim that the navigation from Malacca to the Moluccas, by-passing Java, was safe and easy, though the Portuguese authorities took good care that an opposite view was widely circulated.<sup>7</sup> Pires himself was sent in that year as ambassador to China, with which the first contacts had been made in 1513–15; he was imprisoned and died there, and for some thirty years from 1521 Portuguese trade with China was illicit and hazardous. The Moluccas were first reached by an official Portuguese fleet (as distinct from Francisco Serrão's free-lancing venture) in 1515; they were more tractable in themselves—five small islands; more obviously rewarding as the Spiceries *par excellence*; and, in view of Magellan's thrust in the service of Castile, a much more urgent objective. On 24 June 1522, between the *Trinidad's* departure for Darien and her dejected return, Antonio de Brito set the foundation stone of the fort of São João at Ternate, on the best harbour of the group.

The Spice Islands proper—those of the clove—were Ternate, Tidore, Motir, Makian, and Bachan (Fig. 11), all volcanic with deep but thirsty lava soils; sago was an important article of diet, but their people depended for much of their food on the nearby large island of Gilolo (now Halmahera, then often Batachina), so that Magellan's stated reason for not making directly for them may have been genuine. Although all the Moluccan rulers were Muslims, there was precious little Islamic brotherhood: political life revolved around the rivalries of the Rajahs of Ternate and Tidore, with interventions from Gilolo; and since the rulers depended 'entirely on the revenues derived from trade, imports, and middleman profits',<sup>8</sup> the arrival of Portuguese and Spaniards presented fine openings for quadripartite manipulations in both war and trade. The first round, the seizure of the tiny factory on Tidore and of the *Trinidad's* crew, went to the Portuguese.

*The Spanish riposte: Loaysa*

Charles V was elected Holy Roman Emperor just before Magellan sailed, and for much of the duration of the voyage he was engaged in a successful struggle to assert his challenged authority in Spain itself. Del Cano's return was thus psychologically most timely; new horizons of empire were opened, and in the last four months of 1522 thirty-three 'privileges' were issued for Spanish subjects willing to equip a Moluccan voyage.<sup>9</sup> But matters hung fire pending the procrastinatory Badajoz discussions, and it was not until the end of July 1525 that seven ships, under the command of Garcia Jofre de Loaysa, with del Cano as the obvious choice for Chief Pilot, sailed from Corunna, where a (short-lived) Casa de Contratacion, specifically for the Spiceries, was set up.<sup>10</sup> Amongst the company, as an accountant, was Andrés de Urdaneta, destined to make a great name in the annals of the Pacific. Three of the four Malays brought to Spain by del Cano were aboard for repatriation, though they seem not to have survived the voyage out; the fourth was kept in Spain, having shown himself all too inquisitive about the spice trade, and all too shrewd in appreciating the price differential between Europe and the Indies.<sup>11</sup>

Materially, the voyage was a succession of disasters. The *Sancti Spiritus*, with del Cano, was wrecked at the Cape of the Eleven Thousand Virgins, though all but nine men were saved; two ships deserted; the caravel *San Lesmes* was driven to 55°S and saw what 'appeared to be the end of the land', presumably the first sighting of Staten Land, so named by Schouten and Le Maire in 1616. The *San Lesmes* rejoined, and four ships entered the Pacific, to be scattered within a few days by a great tempest. The pinnacle *Santiago* made its way to New Spain; the *San Lesmes* disappeared, and its wreck on Amanu in the Tuomotus may be taken as proven by the discovery there of four cannon.<sup>12</sup> Another caravel, *Santa Maria del Parrel*, reached Mindanao on its own; the few survivors of wreck and mutiny became captives of the islanders, and of the three picked up by Saavedra one was hanged for mutiny and one went bush.

The flagship *Santa Maria de la Victoria* sailed on alone; although by leaving in July rather than September Loaysa avoided wintering before passing the Straits, the Pacific crossing took almost as long as Magellan's, and only one island was seen, Taongi, the northmost outlier of the Marshalls; this, named San Bartolomé, came to bulk large in Urdaneta's thinking. The same ills as had afflicted Magellan's crews prevailed; Loaysa died on 30 July 1526 and del Cano took command, to die himself only five days later, a victim to his own courage in daring that terrible crossing for a second time. His successor Alonso de Salazar tried to make for Cipangu (Japan) before changing course directly for the Moluccas; eight days after their arrival at Guam (4 September), Salazar died in his turn, to be succeeded by Martin Iniguez de Carquisano. At Guam they were hailed in good Spanish by a naked 'Indian'; he was a surviving cabin boy from Magellan's *Trinidad*. It was now the Southwest Monsoon season, the wrong time for sailing from the Ladrões to the Moluccas, and progress was

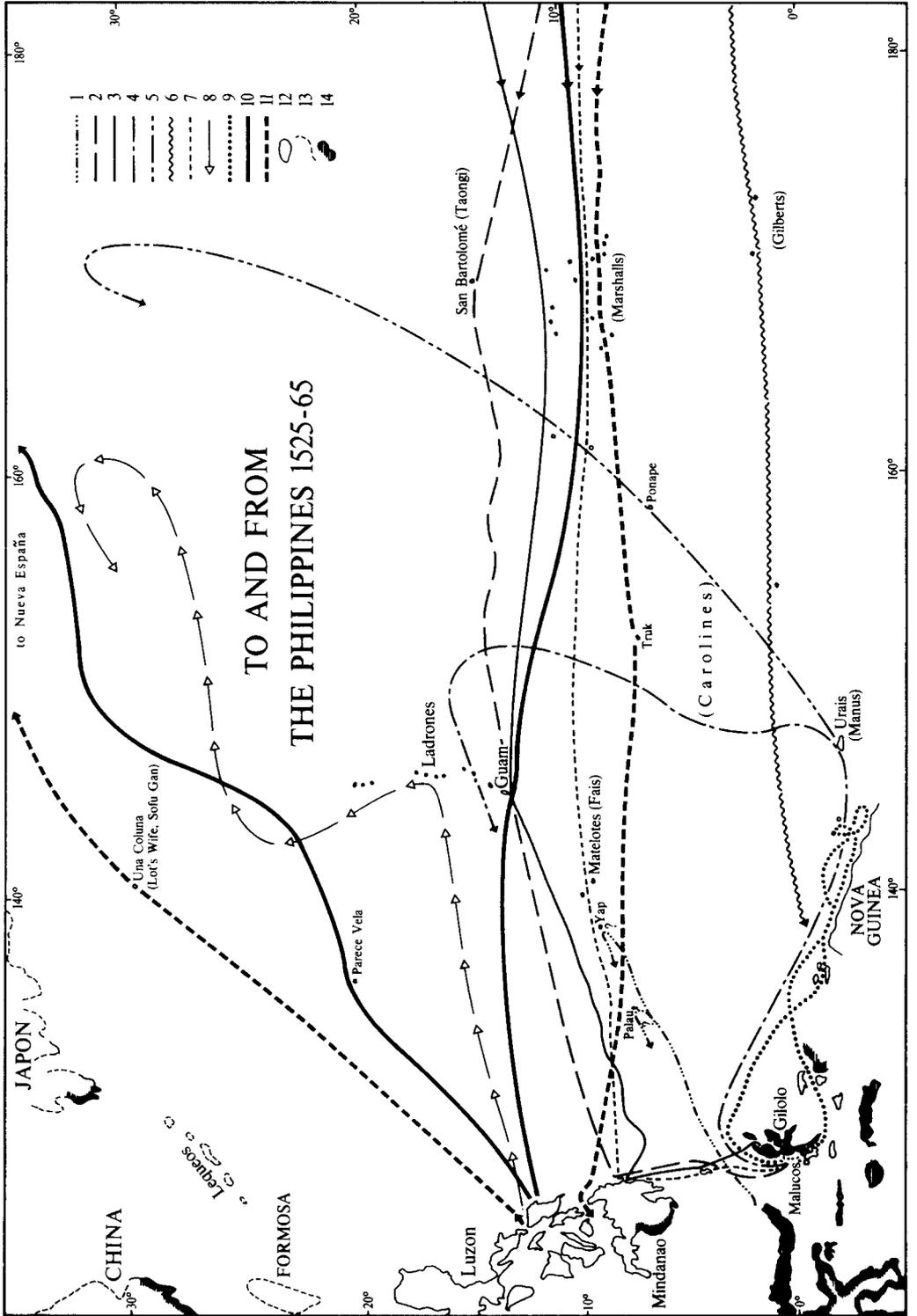
slow; but after touching at Mindanao and Talao to the south of it, at the end of October they reached Zamafo on the east of Gilolo: of the total 450 men who left Corunna, 145 had been on the *Victoria* when they passed the Straits, only 105 reached Zamafo. The people here were vassals of Tidore, and the Rajah of that island retained Spanish sympathies from the time of del Cano and Espinosa, so that the Spaniards were among friends. Contact with Tidore was soon made; but after outfacing the terrors and horrors of the Ocean Sea, they had now to meet the intense hostility of their fellow-Christians.

Tidore town had just been taken and sacked by the Portuguese; its Rajah was in the mountains, and eager for assistance in his revenge. The expedition's instructions were ambivalent: Article I, in the standard form, forbade touching at any land 'within the limits of the king of Portugal'; XVIII recommended avoiding contact, but a Portuguese presence should not inhibit a Moluccan landing; XXII directed that if the Portuguese had arrived, if they had ill-treated Magellan's survivors, and if they could be overcome without risking the fleet, then overcome they should be—but if they were too strong, the fleet should go elsewhere.<sup>13</sup> The Portuguese were not ambivalent: their commander, Garcia Henriques, sent to say that if the Spaniards came in to him at Ternate, they would be honourably received; if not they would be compelled by force of arms, or sunk with all hands. The Spaniards did come, but to Tidore, where they anchored on 1 January 1527.

The Portuguese attacked twelve days later, but were beaten off, though the *Victoria* was so badly strained by the firing of her own guns that she had to be burnt.<sup>14</sup> Rather desultory petty warfare followed, full of treasons and stratagems—Urdaneta accuses a new Portuguese commander, Jorge de Meneses, of a wholesale poison plot,<sup>15</sup> and, on a lighter note (though it was very serious to good Catholics facing death unshriven), the Spanish chaplain, visiting Ternate to be confessed by his Lusian counterpart, was unsportingly kidnapped and had to be exchanged (unequally) since there was no other confessor available, but plenty of sins to confess. For the time being the local rulers found their account in these hostilities: with Spanish competition, the price of cloves rocketed. Ternate stood stoutly by the Portuguese, Tidore by the Spaniards, who also had a base and powerful support on Gilolo. For some fifteen months, with lulls due to Portuguese dissensions, these handfuls of men, Lusians and Castilians, raided and slew each other at the end of the earth from their homelands. The Spaniards clung desperately to the hope of succours from Spain; when help came at last, it was from an unexpected quarter: not Spain but New Spain.

#### *America to the rescue: Saavedra*

Cortes's original plans for discovery in the Mar del Sur, coasting north, were modified by a royal missive of June 1526: the Emperor-King was anxious to know of the success of Loaysa as soon as possible, but his recent marriage to a Princess of Portugal had made an expedition direct from Old Spain less



than tactful. New Spain was the answer: Cortes had boasted of his ships, and details could be left to him. He therefore instructed his kinsman Alvaro de Saavedra Ceron to sail for the Moluccas, via Cebu where he was to look for any Magellanic survivors. 'Cortes hoped to make the Moluccas an outpost of New Spain'—as the Philippines were to become—and Saavedra was told to bring back, surreptitiously, various spice plants, with directions for their cultivation.<sup>16</sup>

After a three weeks' shake-down cruise north from Zacatula, two caravels and a bergantin left Zihuatanejo on 31 October 1527; the total tonnage was at most 120, with 110 men, fifty of them in the flagship *Florida*. The pilot was a Portuguese from the *Santiago*, Loaysa's pinnace which had reached Tehuantepec; but he died before the Ladrones were reached. After a week the *Florida* was leaking badly, and his officers urged Saavedra to transfer to another ship; but he replied in the spirit of Sir Humphrey Gilbert that he would be lost or saved on his own ship: ironically, the other two ships disappeared for ever in high winds in mid-December. Around the New Year Saavedra found four small islands in the Marshalls;<sup>17</sup> repeating Loaysa's mistake of trying the eastern or weather coast, he failed to find an anchorage at Guam, and on 1 February 1528 reached the east coast of Mindanao. He had sailed at the right time to catch the *brisas* or Trade Winds—by accident, as very little was yet known about the wind systems<sup>18</sup>—and made fairly good time to Guam. His course (Fig. 12) had several advantages: it was in the right latitudes (10 to 13°N) to pick up the Trades (if the timing was right) but avoided the dangerous concentration of atolls in the main Marshalls, so easily unseen until a ship was almost upon them; and it had a virtually assured landfall in the high island of Guam, stretching for nearly 50 km athwart the track and rising to 390 metres.<sup>19</sup>

At the end of March 1528 they reached the Moluccas, five months out from New Spain. The Portuguese whom they met pretended that there were no Spaniards in the islands, but by mere chance Saavedra had already made contact with his countrymen on Gilolo: 'From that time the war proceeded with much greater heat.' Once the first almost incredulous joy was over, counsel had to be taken. The obvious course was to send the spices already collected—seventy quintals—to New Spain, and to draw new succours thence.

While Saavedra's outward course was to prove the correct one, 'it was a route of no return. Few who ventured on it between 1527 and 1564 saw New Spain

◀ *Figure 12.* TO AND FROM THE PHILIPPINES, 1525–65. 1, Sequeira (Portuguese), 1525–6; 2, Loaysa, 1526; 3, Saavedra, 1527; 4, Saavedra's first return, 1528; 5, Saavedra's second return, 1529; 6, Grijalva's mutineers, 1536–7; 7, Villalobos, 1542–3; 8, de la Torre, 1543; 9, de Retes, 1545; 10, Legazpi, 1564, and Urdaneta's return, 1565; 11, Arellano's return, 1564–5; 12, reasonably known coasts, c. 1550 (c. 1575 in Philippines); 13, vaguely known coasts; 14, Portuguese contacts by c. 1545. Compiled from maps and texts in H. Friis (ed.), *The Pacific Basin* (New York 1967); A. Sharp, *The Discovery of the Pacific Islands* (Oxford 1960); G. Souter, *The Last Unknown* (Sydney 1963); H. Wallis, *The Exploration of the South Sea, 1519 to 1644* (unpublished Oxford D.Phil. thesis 1953–4).

again'.<sup>20</sup> Early in June the *Florida* left Tidore and rounded Gilolo northabout, then taking a southeasterly course which brought her to Manus north of New Guinea (the first European visit to the Admiralty Islands) and thence into the Carolines; adverse winds compelled a return through the Ladrones, reaching Tidore late in the year. Hernando de la Torre, in command since Carquisano's death, suggested going to Spain by the Cape of Good Hope: at least del Cano had succeeded. But Saavedra insisted on trying again his earlier route; he sailed on 3 May 1529, was becalmed round the Admiralties, and then made his way northeast through the Carolines and skirting west of the Marshalls, probably discovering Ponape, Ujelang, and Eniwetok. Whatever the exact course, the *Florida* reached 31°N before being again forced back; Saavedra died before the turn was made. Twenty-two men reached Zamafu on 8 December 1529—to find that the gallant game was over.

Portuguese pressure had increased, especially in October 1529 when de la Torre injudiciously committed about half his scanty force to eastern Gilolo. It was now the Spaniards' turn to suffer dissension: there seemed little chance of a new fleet arriving, and it was apparent that the enemy could draw on Malacca. Perhaps more decisive was the discovery that both rivals had overstayed their welcome, and that there was a serious risk of a general rising against both sets of intruders; a *rapprochement* was clearly indicated. The little fort on Tidore capitulated five weeks before the *Florida's* return; the Spanish had still considerable strength in the Gilolo alliance, and a truce was patched up. The Spaniards raised provisions from Gilolo for the Portuguese, now besieged by a revolt on Ternate, and Urdaneta claims that they mediated peace on that island. But once the Portuguese were again secure on Ternate, they pressed on for Gilolo, the Spanish maintaining a dangerous neutrality, despite pleas from the allies who had served them so well. It is hard to blame them: when Gilolo fell, there were only seventeen Spaniards surviving.

After the truce, an embassy to Goa confirmed that the Moluccan question had been settled not by force of arms in the Indies but by a cash transaction in Spain. There was now no point in staying, and in February 1534 the little remnant took Portuguese shipping for India. Urdaneta and another stayed on as factors for cloves already under contract; the Portuguese naturally soon put a stop to this. A tiny handful of survivors reached Lisbon in mid-1536; they included Urdaneta and Vicente de Napoles, who petitioned 'for help in his work, and they ordered him to receive 14 ducats. These were the mercies of the Council'.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Zaragoza 1529: the Moluccas and the Straits*

The Treaty of Zaragoza (5 April 1529) confirmed D. João III of Portugal in the gains of D. João II at Tordesillas: the interests of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor of the German Nation, outweighed those of D. Carlos I, Rey de

Castilla. Charles, deeply involved in European wars and politics and, as ever, deeply in need of hard cash, was wise to cut his losses; and in view of French piracies and menaces against Brazil and Guinea, D. João also was ready to come to terms. The major provision of the Treaty was that a line of demarcation should be adopted from Pole to Pole, defined by laying off  $19^\circ$  on a bearing NE by E from the Moluccas; beyond this line (which in real terms, then of course not known, gave Portugal about  $187^\circ$  of longitude against Spain's  $173^\circ$ ) the King of Castile should not claim, trade, or sail. There was an escape clause, which can hardly have been meant as anything but a face-saving *pro forma*: should future investigation establish accurately that the Moluccas lay east of the true antimeridian of the Tordesillas line, the agreement would be void. In return, João III would immediately pay over 350,000 ducats: an advance on his starting offer of 200,000, but a substantial shortfall from the original Castilian demand of 1,000,000. Technically this was not, as it is sometimes called, a sale of rights, rather a mortgaging. Probably nobody was deceived by this aspect; in Spain the transaction was seen as an almost shameful surrender.<sup>22</sup> Incidentally, this was the first European treaty on claims in the Pacific.

Spanish sell-out or no, it was commonsense: as Nowell points out, in ten years fifteen ships had sailed for the Spice Islands from the Spains, Old and New; one only, del Cano's *Victoria*, had come home—and that only by illicitly and perilously running the Portuguese gauntlet round the Cape.<sup>23</sup> The costs in blood and treasure of maintaining a foothold were too great. Although, Tomé Pires notwithstanding, the voyage from Malacca (and *a fortiori* from Goa) could be long and hazardous, the logistic advantages were on Portugal's side, and were enhanced by a much more detailed and comprehensive knowledge of the lands and seas surrounding the Moluccas, and (not less important) of the pre-existing network of trade and political relations. That the Spaniards were able to put up so bold a front for so long, despite the extreme fragility of their lines of communication, was due as much as anything else to the extraordinary indiscipline and self-seeking of the Portuguese leaders, who except for Antonio Galvão paid scant heed to the general interest of their king and country, being more intent on personal booty.<sup>24</sup>

Yet in the end, despite the daring and endurance of so many men, 'For all practical purposes, the status of the two countries in the Moluccas was again what it had been before Magellan appeared at the Spanish court. . . .'<sup>25</sup> Spain was indeed to trespass successfully over the new line, in the Philippines; but that had to wait for over thirty years, when the base in New Spain had become stronger. Even then, the Spanish presence was tenuous until the problem of the return route had been solved, and that in turn was only after two disastrous failures, those of Grijalva and Villalobos.

The real significance of the voyages of Loaysa and Saavedra lies in their dearly-bought experience. On the positive side, Saavedra did find the correct outward

course from New Spain; on the negative, his ill-starred attempts to return should have shown the folly of trying to beat back in low latitudes, where currents and winds (when there were winds) were adverse. The lesson was not immediately learnt, but even these failures doubtless contributed to the deductions of Urdaneta and others, by which the true return route, north into the Westerlies, was found.

Loaysa's was the second Spanish trans-Pacific voyage to use the Straits of Magellan—and the last for over two centuries. The navigation was too long and difficult, compared with that from New Spain, to be worthwhile. Only two more Spanish attempts at a westwards traverse of the Straits were made in the sixteenth century, and both had more limited objectives than the Moluccas. In 1535 Simon de Alcazaba penetrated the Straits with a commission for an entrada into Patagonia: of the forty-one named members of his company, nineteen (including himself) were drowned, murdered, hanged or headed, starved or marooned. Four years later the Bishop of Plasencia sent out Alonso de Camargo to open a route to Peru, judging that the longer navigation would be offset by avoiding the double break-of-bulk at the Isthmus. Of Camargo's three ships, only his own reached Valparaiso (the first ship to anchor there) and Callao, possibly sighting Juan Fernandez; one was wrecked, one returned to Spain, though it seems to have penetrated the Strait of Le Maire and wintered in the south of Tierra del Fuego.<sup>26</sup> But this promising if limited success was not followed up, doubtless because it would have interfered with the system of Seville and the vested interests built up at Panama. Into such disrepute did Magellan's great discovery fall that it was rumoured that his Straits had been blocked by some natural disaster.<sup>27</sup>

With the settlement of Zaragoza, the Moluccas, hitherto so significant as a magnet for trans-Pacific voyaging, begin to fade out of Pacific history proper, to revert as it were to a Southeast Asian allegiance. The Portuguese remained deeply suspicious of anything suggesting a new Spanish approach; but until the Union of the Crowns in 1580, such Spaniards as reached the Moluccas were strays, as were Grijalva's mutineers, or enforced by real distress, like Villalobos. With the advent of the Dutch in 1599, the Spice Islands were drawn more and more into the ambit of the Indian Ocean rather than that of the Pacific. With few exceptions, of which Drake's visit was most notable, not the Moluccas but the Philippines and the Marianas (especially Guam) became the main objective of trans-Pacific voyaging, until in the eighteenth century the role was taken over by Batavia, but with a differing function: refitting, not plunderage. Nevertheless, until 1662 the Moluccas remained indirectly involved in Pacific affairs, largely as an outreach of the Spanish presence in the Philippines.

### *Two failures: Grijalva and Villalobos*

The first crossing from Peru to the East Indies was unofficial in its origin, inconsequential and mutinous in its progress, and miserable in its ending. It was in fact a by-blow of the great Inca revolt of 1536: Hernando de Grijalva, sent by Cortes with succours to Pizarro, decided to try his luck in searching for rich

islands rumoured to lie west from Peru—perhaps seduced by the legends of Tupac Inca which were later to inspire Sarmiento and Heyerdahl, perhaps under secret instructions. Antonio Galvão thought that Cortes, anxious to forestall the first Viceroy of New Spain, Antonio de Mendoza, had instructed Grijalva to sail 'to Maluco to discover that way a long vnder the equinoctial line';<sup>28</sup> but then as Governor of the Moluccas Galvão was properly suspicious of stray Spanish ships.

Grijalva left Paita in April 1537, and after sailing apparently a long way to the southwest attempted to make New Spain or California, but was defeated by winds from east and northeast, the Trades being still strong as far west as Hawaii in this season. According to the Portuguese historian Diogo do Couto (with Galvão one of the two main sources), the crew then demanded that they should make for the Moluccas, the winds seeming favourable, and on Grijalva's prudent refusal to trespass into Portuguese waters they killed him. They sailed on westwards close to the Equator—the first crossing in so low a latitude—sighting two islands over a thousand leagues from Peru.<sup>29</sup> Most of the mutineers died in the dragging traverse along the belt of equatorial calms; the ship simply broke up somewhere on the north coast of New Guinea, and three survivors were rescued from the 'Papuan' by Galvão. The voyage was a failure from first to last.

Much more serious, though in its end almost as disastrous, was the voyage of Ruy Lopez de Villalobos in 1542. Charles V and his subjects were still convinced that the Moluccas were properly theirs, and though their claim had been hypothecated at Zaragoza, there were other islands where the Portuguese were not yet active—the *Islas de Poniente*, 'Islands towards the West', Magellan's San Lazaro. Pedro de Alvarado, the conquistador of Guatemala, was in Spain when the remnants of Loaysa's and Saavedra's people arrived from Lisbon, including Urdaneta, who presented a full and euphoric report on the possibilities not only of the Moluccas but of these islands to the north. Alvarado seized his chance, obtained a commission, and built eleven ships at Iztapa and Acajutla. His first cruise—to the north, lured by tales of the golden cities of Cibola—alarmed the Viceroy Mendoza, who succeeded in claiming first a third and then a half of the putative profits. Alvarado's death in a minor Indian war gave the Viceroy a free hand to appoint Villalobos, a relative by marriage, to seek for a base in the *Islas de Poniente*, presumptively on Cebu, for trade with China and the *Lequeos*; to spread the Faith; and not least to ascertain a return route to New Spain.<sup>30</sup>

Villalobos sailed with six ships from Navidad on 1 November 1542, passing through the Revillagigedo Islands and the Marshalls. On 23 January 1543 they passed an island which they called *Los Matelotes*, since natives from canoes hailed them with 'Buenos dias, matelotes'; this was Fais in the Carolines, and João de Barros and do Couto were convinced that the greeting was in Portuguese, not Castilian, an echo from the furthest reach of Galvão's missionary efforts—as he himself claimed, and as indeed seems most likely.<sup>31</sup> Villalobos now committed an error by declining his pilot's advice to make for the north

point of Mindanao, which would have brought him to Cebu by the Surigao Strait; instead he found himself stuck on the weather side of Mindanao, with no trading prospects—although porcelain was found in a hut on the little island of Sarangani, Chinese and Malays did not come to the east of Mindanao. The Portuguese had been there already, and the people were generally hostile. A base was made on Sarangani, which had been visited by both Magellan's and Loaysa's *Victoria*; here they were brought to eat 'horrid grubs and unknown plants', land crabs which sent people mad for a day, and a 'grey lizard, which emits a considerable glow; very few who ate them are living'.<sup>32</sup>

In August 1543 Villalobos sent the *San Juan de Letran* under Bernardo de la Torre to take news to Mendoza. This fourth attempt to find a return route reached 30°N but then, like its predecessors, was forced back by storms; however, de la Torre touched at Samar and Leyte, and in all probability discovered some islands in the northern Marianas as well as the volcanoes of the Bonins, and possibly Marcus Island. He was also the first European to circumnavigate Mindanao.<sup>33</sup> Before he got back to Sarangani, hunger had forced Villalobos to leave, after an unsuccessful attempt to reach Cebu; he was in the Portuguese zone (though he may well not have thought so) and the people around Sarangani refused supplies, whether through loyalty to Portugal (according to Galvão) or through Portuguese intrigues (according to the Spaniards).

Villalobos sought refuge on Gilolo, where there was still some support for Spain, though an appeal to the old alliance with Tidore failed. The Portuguese warned them off, but did not press too hard, and for the sake of peace the Castilians abandoned their old Gilolo friends. It was agreed to refer their position to the Viceroy of Portuguese India and of New Spain, and in the meantime the *San Juan* was to be refitted for yet another return attempt, under Ortiz de Retes. He sailed from Tidore on 16 May 1545 and coasted along New Guinea (which he so named) until 12 August, reaching somewhere near the mouth of the Sepik; but once more Saavedra's southern route proved an impasse. In October de Retes reached Tidore again, but so did a fresh Portuguese fleet, and Villalobos accepted repatriation. He himself died a few weeks after they set out (January 1546) in Amboyna, on Good Friday, receiving the last rites from St Francis Xavier: a good end for a man of his time and country. But this was also the end of any Spanish activity in the Spice Islands; henceforth such adventures were forbidden to the Viceroy.

Failure, but not the completely sterile failure of Grijalva's men. A great deal had been added, mostly by de la Torre, to knowledge of the *Islas de Poniente*; Villalobos, who had a taste for toponymy, named Mindanao 'Caesarea Karoli' for the Emperor, because of its greatness; the smaller islands to the north he called the 'Felipinas', for the prince who became Philip II.<sup>34</sup> These northern islands were free of Portuguese influences—they had no spices, except some poor cinnamon; but they had ample supplies of food and good timber, so a base



Plate IX. THE PACIFIC BY MID-CENTURY: FORLANI 1565. This is from Forlani's *Universale Descrittione* (Venice 1565) and its representation of the Mar del Sur is as in Gastaldi's map of 1546, on which the sea is too messily hatched to allow of a good reproduction. The map shows increasing recognition of the true outlines of the Pacific, though the width of the Ocean is still much too small and there is no Strait of Anian, and Cipangu is erratic in a new way. Reproduced in F. Muller, *Remarkable Maps* (Amsterdam 1595). NLA.

was possible; and this was vital, since

Villalobos's disastrous voyage had shown more clearly than any the reason for the Spaniards' difficulty in finding the return route; it was that their ships started from the Archipelago in a condition unfit for a long and perilous voyage of exploration. The Spaniards could not discover the return route until they had a good base at which to equip their ships; they could not establish a base until they had discovered a return route; here was their dilemma.<sup>35</sup>

Small wonder, then, that St Francis Xavier thought it lamentable that new voyages should be projected, and asked a correspondent in Lisbon to beseech the King of Portugal to tell his fellow-monarch of Castile to send no more ships to be cast away in the Mar del Sur;<sup>36</sup> not that D. João would need much urging to send such a message.

Villalobos's underestimate of 1500 leagues for the distance from Navidad to the Philippines made the potential base seem easier of access than it was; and despite Legazpi's careful logging of 1900 leagues in 1564–5, the earlier figure had a strong influence on Spanish thinking; the much improved outlines of Gastaldi and Forlani (1546–65; Plate IX) still grossly understate the distance, and as late as 1574–80 Juan Lopez de Velasco could show this distance as 63° of longitude instead of over 130°.<sup>37</sup> On the more tangible and immediate point of managing the trans-Pacific crossing, the results were negative. It was borne in upon navigators and projectors—not Urdaneta alone—that the return must be looked for to the north, not by Saavedra's well-worn but dead-end track. But while Villalobos's outward course passed more hospitable islands than did his predecessors', those so far known were mostly dangerous low-lying atoll reefs, difficult to recover and identify, and his route missed the surer landfall of Guam. It also came to the Philippines on a lee shore, well south of the (later all-important) Surigao and San Bernardino passages leading to what was to be the centre of Spanish power, on Luzon. Outwards, Saavedra's track was better.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, it was not on the relatively quick and easy westbound passage that places of rest and refreshment were most needed, but on the long return in colder latitudes; and here they were absent.

But at least the boundaries of the problem were now far more firmly set; and, line or no line, the very name 'las Felipinas' asserted a claim.<sup>39</sup> The next attempt was to gain a new province for Christendom, and a giant extension for the Spanish mercantile system, which would span a continent and two oceans.

#### *Finding and founding a base: Legazpi and Urdaneta*

Felipe II, the Prudent (and slow), succeeded to the Spanish Crowns on the abdication of his father the Emperor Charles V, in January 1556. The death of his unhappy wife Mary Tudor in November 1558 and the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis with France in the following April freed him, for the time, from his more burdensome European preoccupations. Spice prices were rising sharply. It is, then, perhaps significant that less than six months after Cateau-Cambrésis the King wrote to Luis de Velasco, Viceroy of New Spain, definitely ordering 'the discovery of the western islands towards the Malucos';<sup>40</sup> and this was to be a directly royal expedition, not just an authorised entrada.

There had been previous correspondence, and Philip enclosed 'the letter that you think I should write to Fray Andrés de Urdaneta', the companion of Loaysa, now an Augustinian monk. There are modern doubts as to Urdaneta's real standing as a navigator, and he sailed simply as a missionary; but by contemporaries

he was highly regarded as an expert on Pacific affairs, and was much deferred to by Legazpi, a personal friend, and by Velasco. The Viceroy replied to his master in May 1560, saying that he was preparing ships—ostensibly for Peru and coast defence—but raising the question of the demarcation: Urdaneta and others believed that the Philippines lay west of the Moluccas (as they do) and hence in the pawned and prohibited region. But Urdaneta himself hit upon the solution: 'some legitimate or pious reason is needed', and this can be the redemption of Spanish captives from earlier voyages, or their children, whose souls would be in obvious danger. Once the position and value of the Philippines were ascertained, the pawn might be redeemed. The academic geographers and lawyers in Spain, however, still clung to the belief that the Philippines were a legitimate target.<sup>41</sup>

At this point the objectives of the expedition were not at all clear. In a long memorandum (early 1561) Urdaneta lays stress on occupying 'San Bartolomé' (Taongi, discovered by Salazar in 1526) as an intermediate base; if a start could not be made before December 1561, New Guinea should be sought; if not before January 1562, then they should wait until March and sail northwest, along the coast which Cabrillo had found, and then strike west, perhaps from about 40°N, to somewhere near Japan. These alternatives depended of course on the seasonal winds, and the last was obviously a bad shot. The return track seems to have been left studiously vague, though the Ladrones were mentioned; but it is possible that Urdaneta was keeping a northern route in reserve. There were other experts in the field; Juan Pablo de Carrion, who had been with Villalobos and de Retes, attacked the idea of going to New Guinea (and especially of settling there) from personal knowledge of the island, and urged a direct course for the Philippines, where the Spaniards had contacts and whence the return should be easier to find; eight years later he claimed to have planned both the out and home tracks. Although an obvious choice for *almirante* or second-in-command,<sup>42</sup> and in fact so chosen, he did not go with Legazpi, being unwilling to work with Urdaneta.

Although Velasco had hoped that the expedition might leave early in 1562, there were as always delays; it was not until 21 November 1564 that four ships under Miguel Lopez de Legazpi sailed from Acapulco; the choice of that port was due to Urdaneta, who argued at some length its superiority over Navidad, and his insistence on by-passing Navidad on the return voyage may be said to have fixed Acapulco as the Mexican terminal of the Galleon route.<sup>43</sup>

Velasco had died four months earlier, and the final orders were issued by the Audiencia of Mexico. They were sealed; security was much to the fore, and Velasco may have spread the idea that the destination was China, both as cover story and to aid recruiting.<sup>44</sup> When the orders were opened, 100 leagues out, they proved to opt firmly for the Philippines: Carrion's plan, and on Villalobos's course. Urdaneta (apparently still hankering after New Guinea) and his friars protested, but acquiesced. The orders stressed trade (there was still some hope of spices), settlement if practicable, and conversion to the Faith; exploration could extend to the Japanese islands, believed to be in the Spanish zone but contacted

by the Portuguese. Above all, the return route was to be found as quickly as possible, and Urdaneta was to come back with the first ship. While there was the usual licence for all to write to the King and the Audiencia, letters would not be forwarded until the Audiencia had received a full report, and precautions were to be taken against leakage. From all this it is clear that the prime objective was a serious attempt at colonisation, and probably also that Spanish officialdom, at least in New Spain, was by no means as sure of the international legal standing of the venture as it would have liked.

The four ships carried a total complement of 380, of whom 200 were soldiers for the settlement. The ships were soon reduced to three: on the morning of 30 November the patache *San Lucas*, which should have been ahead, was missing; a serious loss, as she was intended for close coastal work in the islands.<sup>45</sup> Between 9 and 12 January 1565, in about 10°N, they sighted five small islands in the Marshalls; on the 17th the pilots thought that they were already west of Villalobos's Los Matelotes (Fais) and hence might soon find themselves up against Mindanao on their lee. Urdaneta differed, and they agreed to go up to 13°N so as 'to avoid entering [the Philippines] at the hunger-point of Villalobos'.<sup>46</sup> Five days later Urdaneta was proved right, when what the pilots thought the Philippines turned out to be Guam: he had a clearer idea of the width of the Ocean than his fellows. On 26 January Legazpi made a formal Act of Possession of the Ladrones, and their arrival in the Philippines on 13 February was followed by a flurry of similar acts: six in all, on Samar, Bohol, and Cebu.

A Moro (Muslim) trading prau from Borneo was taken after a sharp fight; Legazpi returned its cargo and received the useful information that the indigenous avoidance of the newcomers was due to devastating raids by Portuguese posing as Castilians. Reconnaissance showed that Cebu was populous and well provisioned; and in Spanish eyes the Cebuans were already vassals since Magellan's day. On 27 April 1565 the fleet anchored off Cebu; an attempt to negotiate peacefully failed. Women and children were fleeing to the hills, fighting men and praus were assembling: the Cebuans were obviously in apostasy and rebellion. A brief bombardment left most of the little town in smouldering ruins; but in a hut they found 'a marvellous thing, a child Jesus like those of Flanders, in its little pine cradle and its little loose shirt. . . .' Truly, a marvellous thing: forty-four years before Pigafetta, or possibly Magellan himself, had given it to the Queen of Cebu, and there could be no more moving omen, a holy joy, for Catholic men. On 8 May Legazpi broke ground for the fort and town of San Miguel, and proclaimed a possession that was to last for 333 years; the Niño Jesus was to endure longer yet, and still looks down on the faithful of Cebu in the Church of the Holy Child.<sup>47</sup>

Legazpi, more of a Cortes than a Pizarro, soon came to reasonable terms with the Cebuans; as ever, long-standing local rivalries provided the Spaniards with auxiliaries, and gradually Spanish lordship was extended over, or at least among,

the islands between Mindanao and Luzon. Mindanao itself was to prove a tougher nut to crack, and the Moros of Jolo, in the Sulu archipelago to the south, tougher still: it would be wearisome to count, let alone to recount, the raids and counterraids, the piracies and punishments, the pacifications and the treaties of short-lived eternal amity; and indeed as these words are written (1977) 'pacification' still pursues its weary and bloody way. To the north, however, 'The Hispanization of the Philippines'<sup>48</sup> was powerfully influenced by the Augustinians, later by Franciscans and other Orders; and if the friars too often became themselves exploiters, the excesses of the *entrada* and the *encomienda* were at least attenuated in the Philippines.

There was an ever-present danger, and sometimes the actuality, of famine; the local subsistence agriculture could hardly cope with the injection of so many new and unproductive mouths, and the general disruption and hunger led to dissensions and plots. Apart from this, there was also a threat not from pagans or Muslims but from fellow Christians. The first contacts with the Portuguese were made in November 1566, wary and shiftily evasive on both sides. Two ships arrived from New Spain in August 1567 with 200 men and badly needed supplies, though not on the scale asked for in urgent messages to Mexico.<sup>49</sup> The *San Juan* was sent off in July 1568 with over 400 quintals of cinnamon; she was wrecked off Guam, and although her company was saved, the loss of the spice cargo, relied upon to attract more support, was a serious blow. It was followed by a solid Portuguese threat: on 2 October 1568 four galleons, two galliots, and two smaller vessels under Gonçalo Pereira arrived from the Moluccas. There followed four months of sporadic skirmishing and lengthy diplomatic exchanges; at his last summons Pereira announced that he was 'weary of so many papers containing so many irrelevancies' (he had himself supplied the longest and most irrelevant of them). Velvety insults were traded; Legazpi protested that he would like nothing better than to depart, had he the ships to do so; perhaps Pereira might lend him some . . . ? In the end the Portuguese departed first, on 1 January 1569; and soon after Legazpi left, not for New Spain but for Panay, better-found than Cebu (whose resources were now badly strained) and farther from the Portuguese, who also were about at the end of their tether.

In June 1569 Juan de la Isla brought reinforcements (including fifty married couples), permission to grant *encomiendas*, and Legazpi's promotion to Governor and Captain-General; the couples were sent to a new town on Cebu. Reconnaissance brought information of the region around Manila Bay, central to the largest island, densely populated and with a good harbour; there was plenty of food, and reportedly gold; the people were civil enough to have artillery of a sort and even a foundry. Trade with the Moluccas and their spices was obviously barred, but the situation of Luzon gave promise of trade with China, always a background element in the project and soon to come to the fore. In May 1571 Legazpi landed at Manila and enforced a treaty of vassalage; in June he set up a *cabildo* for the new Spanish city. Within a year the populous areas of

coastal Luzon had been visited and some inland excursions made, and—a most significant development—a small colony of Chinese traders was establishing itself at Manila.<sup>50</sup>

When Legazpi died on 20 August 1572, he had laid foundations for one of the strangest of colonies. Itself a colony of colonial Nueva España,<sup>51</sup> it existed, apart from an intense missionary effort, by and for its one great emporium, Manila. The islands themselves produced little (wax, ginger, poor cinnamon, a little gold), and the military and administrative establishment had to be permanently subsidised by Mexico. Manila was an arsenal for the military and the Church Militant, but its supreme function was to be the pumping-station in a channel through which the silver of New Spain drew the luxuries of the Orient, above all Chinese silks, to America and to Seville. Well might Legazpi report ‘We are at the gate and in the vicinity of the most fortunate countries of the world, and the most remote. . . great China, Burnei. . . Siam, Lequois, Japan, and other rich and large provinces’.<sup>52</sup> But Spain was not alone at the gate: after so much valour and suffering, Portugal still held the Spiceries, and since 1557 had been established at another emporium, Macao.

#### *The return achieved: Arellano and Urdaneta*

No time had been lost in seeking the return route; Urdaneta indeed had been anxious to settle at Guam and find the way back thence.<sup>53</sup> Only three weeks after the founding of San Miguel, he sailed (1 June 1565) on the fastest ship, the *San Pedro*, initially on much the same course as de la Torre’s in the *San Juan*; the latter’s ‘Abrejos’ is probably the island still called by Urdaneta’s name for it, *Parece Vela*.<sup>54</sup> By 3 August the *San Pedro* was in 39–40°N, then dropping to 30° northwest of Hawaii; early in September they were again in 39°30’N, and then sailed east and by south until, on 18 September, they sighted La Deseada, ‘the desired’, probably San Miguel where Cabrillo had died. Although short-handed (sixteen of forty-four men had died) they pressed on past Navidad for the better port of Acapulco, arriving on 8 October: nearly 20,000 km in 130 days. But the triumph was dulled: the lost *San Lucas* had reached Navidad just two months earlier, on 9 August.

There had been no stress of weather to account for Alonso de Arellano and Lope Martin, captain and pilot of the *San Lucas*, parting company: it seems simple desertion. Arellano had pressed on for the Philippines—this was after all a known route—picking up eight islands in the Marshalls and Carolines, his most notable discovery being Truk. By his own account he was in Philippine waters for nearly three months, wandering around the inland seas from 29 January to 22 April 1565. This overlaps with Legazpi’s stay by nearly nine weeks, and if as Arellano claimed he was really looking for the fleet, it seems strange that no news filtered through either way; on the other hand, his account of his wanderings among the islands is detailed and verifiable. On the return he claimed to have reached 43°N, and this part of his account is filled with strange stories, which

have cast doubt on his general veracity: porpoises as big as cows present no difficulty, but it is unlikely that cooking oil would freeze in mid-summer.

After enquiry by the Audiencia, Arellano was neither punished for desertion nor rewarded for success, and there is little doubt that Lope Martin was the villain of the piece: a most shady character, who played a leading part in a maze of mutiny on the *San Geronimo*, sent to aid Legazpi in 1566, and who ended his days marooned in the Marshalls.<sup>55</sup> As Chaunu says, Arellano's exploit is anecdotal, a 'first' less significant in itself than as showing that the solution was in the air; but intrinsically the voyage, in a 40-ton pinnace with twenty men, was a great one.<sup>56</sup>

With these two voyages, the problem of the return was solved (Fig. 12)—on the lines tried forty-four years earlier by Espinosa's *Trinidad*. Quite apart from Arellano's narrow priority in time, it is a mistake to attach a single name to the achievement; as Wallis, a supporter of Urdaneta's claims, remarks, 'Every pilot of Legazpi's fleet probably thought that he knew the route', and Carrion had stated firmly that the Philippines 'have the best situation for the return voyage, because they are in north latitude'—Saavedra's lesson had at last been taken to heart.<sup>57</sup> There is no doubt that Urdaneta had the right contacts—Legazpi, the Viceroy, the Augustinian publicists—and, whatever his formal training, he clearly had a good seaman's intuition, as shown by his justified disagreement with the pilots. He stressed the importance of timing in relation to seasonal winds, though one may suspect that others who had been with, or in touch with, the series from Loaysa to Villalobos had begun to grasp the general trends of the wind circulation; perhaps by a subconscious analogy with the Atlantic. Urdaneta left Cebu at the right time—nearly June, with a westerly monsoon—and took the shortest track through the Trades to pick up the Westerlies. On the whole, despite his penchant for New Guinea and his vacillations, Urdaneta does seem to have had a clearer, or at least more clearly formulated, idea of the problem than did the others, and he alone seems to have appreciated fully the immense width of the Ocean: 'On all accounts, the intellectual discoverer is Urdaneta'.<sup>58</sup>

In a remarkably short time 'Urdaneta's route' became almost sacrosanct for the Manila-Acapulco run, and his chart was still considered standard, by the Spanish, into the eighteenth century. Late in the seventeenth, however, there was an unfortunate modification—a supposedly safer route, between 32 and 37°N, avoiding the colder and stormier higher latitudes. But here the Westerlies are less reliable, so that the passage was often prolonged, and no small part of the privations and disease of the voyage may be attributed to this change. At either end of the route, however, adherence to tradition had deleterious effects. The excessive risk of wreck in the maze of islands between Manila and the Embocadero, or debouchment of San Bernardino Strait into the Ocean, did not suffice to have this hazardous navigation replaced by the simpler and quicker, and on the whole safer, course up the west coast of Luzon, despite serious efforts, especially in the eighteenth century, to have this route adopted. On the

opposite shores, even after the colonisation of Alta California from 1770 on, its ports were not used to refresh the weary and scurvy-ridden crews before they went on to Acapulco; this could also have stimulated Californian development, but mercantile interests in New Spain would not brook the short delay. Spanish bureaucracy and dockyards being what they were, it was more difficult to adhere to sailing-dates than to courses: sailings from Manila should have been between mid-June and mid-July, and usually were; but in practice they might be at any time between early May and late September. In any case, the voyage east usually took five to six months, that from New Spain only three.<sup>59</sup>

Establishment of the Galleon route meant enhanced importance and self-esteem for New Spain, now an essential link in a maritime system extending from Seville to China. The back-parts of Mexico no longer led nowhere in particular, though the increased value of the Pacific coast was narrowly concentrated in the single port of Acapulco. A contemporary letter from Seville says that 'those of Mexico are mighty proud of their discovery, which gives them to believe that they will be the heart of the world'; and it is notable that this letter, printed in 1566, contains the first use of 'Mexican' to mean non-Indian inhabitants of New Spain.<sup>60</sup>

#### *Rica de Oro y de Plata; Hawaii?*

The Galleon route had two by-products of interest: first the search for mysterious (and of course rich) islands in the Northwest Pacific; second—at a far remove—claims of a European discovery of Hawaii, long before Cook's visit in 1778.

Of all mythical isles of gold and silver, perhaps none has had a longer paper existence than Rica de Oro and Rica de Plata, supposedly lying between 25° and 40°N and at an indefinite distance east of Japan. Pedro de Unamuno searched for them in 1587 and, so early, expressed disbelief in their existence; but the Dutch looked for them in the 1640s, the Spaniards did not officially write them off until 1741—and one or the other of them appeared in atlases of repute as late as 1927.<sup>61</sup> Findlay in 1870 listed at least eleven highly dubious reports of islands in this general area, and his irritated comments recall those of the more level-headed Spanish officials.<sup>62</sup>

The origin of the fiction is in the report of a Portuguese ship—no name, no date—blown east from Japan to rich islands, with white and civil people; they were known, from a merchant on board, as the Armenian's Islands, later as Rica de Oro and de Plata. What core of experience there may be in the fable is not of vast import, but the story seems to stem from Francisco Gali's voyage of 1584, more important as really bringing home the vast width of the North Pacific. He took over a Manila Galleon which had put into Macao, obviously to take on cargo for New Spain—illicitly, for though the Crowns were now united, their colonies and commerce were by law as exclusive as ever. Gali probably heard the tale in Macao; at all events, he looked unsuccessfully for 'Armenicão'. His

report inspired Fray Andrés de Aguirre, who had been with Urdaneta in the *San Pedro*, to recall an old but seductive document he had seen long ago.

Dahlgren suggests that this account of Aguirre's is a recollection of a Portuguese letter of 1548 read by him with Urdaneta in 1565—two decades earlier!—and that the islands were in the Ryukyus (Lequeos), which in the earlier decades of European penetration in these regions were important and wealthy intermediaries between China and Japan, while both Chinese and Japanese were certainly civil people and commonly described by the Portuguese as white. Mere lapse of memory, with the lapse of time, would account for Aguirre's placing of them east and not south of Japan. Chassigneux finds this reasoning 'very ingenious . . . [but] very difficult to accept', and invokes a double typhoon, which could give the impression that a ship was blown far to the east when in fact it was brought south. His own reasoning is even more intricately ingenious than Dahlgren's: he opts for Okinawa, pointing out that its raised coral soil supports a temperate-looking vegetation, so that it might seem to be more northerly than it is, and that the trade of the Ryukyus had been so cut out by the Iberians that by 1573 they were virtually unknown. However, as Okinawa is the main island of the Ryukyus, all these distinctions end up in no difference at all.<sup>63</sup>

There were other factors in the quest for these islands than the sufficient one of gold and silver. The Bonin and Volcano groups, which lay athwart of the track of Galleons making their northing, offered no satisfactory way-station; they were rather hazards. Yet it was in this section that ships were most liable to hurricane damage and, as we shall see in Chapter 6, refuge in Japan carried other perils. It would, then, be most valuable to have a place for refitment *before* entering 'the great gulf of Nueva España', that is the vast North Pacific embayment. This was the main motivation in the early seventeenth century, and again in the 1730s, when efforts were made to re-awaken official Spanish interest in the search.<sup>64</sup> Another, though officially very minor, element was the desire to see whether the 'Straits of Anian' (below, Ch. 9), joining the Mar del Sur and the Mar del Norte or Atlantic, really existed, and if so to forestall other nations in their control.<sup>65</sup> Legendary and elusive, indeed totally fictitious, as Rica de Oro and its sister-isle were, they thus played a considerable role in the exploration of North Pacific waters.

Gali was commissioned to make a further search, but died before he could start, to be replaced by the obscure and possibly shady Pedro de Unamuno. He sailed from Manila in a small ship in July 1587; he found two small islands 'of no value for any purpose', but as for Rica de Oro, Rica de Plata, and the Armenian's Island or Islands—they did not exist. Despite this simple and negative report, the quest was not abandoned; instead of following up Sebastian Vizcaino's strong advocacy of a way-station at Monterey (below, Ch. 5), it was decided to resume the search for these western islands, and in 1611 Vizcaino was sent from Acapulco to Japan to look for them once again.<sup>66</sup> Schurz declares roundly that this diversion of energy 'was responsible for delaying the Spanish

settlement of California for a century and a half, but this is going much too far: the Spaniards had good reason to be wary of spreading small and isolated settlements, and despite Vizcaino and his advocate Fray Antonio de la Ascension, that country had really very little to offer. The renewed interest in it after 1770 took place in greatly altered geostrategic conditions, and was a response to fears of encroachment by other powers, especially the Russians in the north. Nevertheless, the two issues were clearly linked, and the choice was conscious. Vizcaino spent some time cruising east of Japan, and in his turn concluded firmly that 'there were no such islands in the whole world', though as late as 1620 Hernando de los Rios Coronel thought that in these seas 'God has placed an island . . . that serves us as an inn'.<sup>67</sup>

Another element was imported into these unknowns by João da Gama, who in 1589 or 1590 sailed direct from Macao to Acapulco, to the natural anger of the Governor of the Philippines. In the mid-seventeenth century his name was attached, originally on Portuguese maps, to a vague land he sighted northeast of Japan. By 1753, despite a vain search for it by Vitus Bering in 1741, 'Gamaland' was on some charts an archipelago stretching over some 13° of longitude.<sup>68</sup> Possibly it was Yezo itself, or one of the Kuriles, seen and named 'Compagnies Land' by de Vries in 1643.

This Dutch effort by de Vries was the last serious attempt at finding the shadowy Armenian's evasive islands. The first Dutch search was by Mathijs Quast and Abel Tasman in 1639, sailing far into the Pacific between 37° 30' and 40°N and as far as 175°E; naturally they found nothing, but on the way out they examined the Volcano and Bonin Islands more systematically than had the Spaniards. Four years later Maarten de Vries again failed to find Rica de Oro and its fellow, but he penetrated the Kuriles, finding Iturup and Urup; the latter he mistook for a mainland, taking possession and naming it for the Oost-Indische Compagnie.<sup>69</sup>

From time to time Galleon captains saw, or thought they saw, land or signs of land on the northern passage: Gemelli Careri, for instance, in his famous account of 1696–7, tells of a little wind-blown bird, like a canary, which the captain tried to keep alive, 'but being quite spent, with hunger and weariness, it dy'd the same day, and there was sand found in its belly.' All agreed that it could only have come from Rica de Plata, some thirty leagues to the south.<sup>70</sup> We may leave these isles of gold and silver to the oblivion to which they were consigned by Philip V of Spain in his reply (1741) to the demand of the Governor of the Philippines for a new search: the Galleons have got along without them since 1606; nobody has any idea of their position, size, resources, or the nature of their people if any: 'From all the information received, there appears no reasonable encouragement to attempt the aforesaid discovery . . .'.<sup>71</sup> An understatement.

On the maps of today the Hawaiian Islands lie so blatantly between the east- and west-bound tracks of the Galleons that it seems almost mandatory that some stray must have found them. The inference was first drawn by La Pérouse, who

deduced from Spanish charts that islands named 'la Mesa', 'los Majos', and 'la Disgraciada', in the right latitude but much too far to the east, were in fact the Hawaiian group, la Mesa ('the Table') in particular being the main island with the great table-massif of Mauna Loa; the error in longitude was put down to Spanish failure to allow for currents. On one such chart is a note saying that Juan Gaetan, who was with Villalobos in 1542, discovered the group, and named it *Islas de Mesa*, in 1555; unluckily this chart also gives Cook's name, the Sandwich Islands. One must admit that if a non-Polynesian name were to be used, la Mesa would be much preferable to Sandwich.<sup>72</sup>

The argument from maps and documents has been fairly demolished by Dahlgren; it is yet another case of what the great geographer Elisée Reclus called 'the disorderly fluctuation of oceanic isles'.<sup>73</sup> One may, however, enter a caveat against Sharp's objection that to describe Mauna Loa 'as a table is fanciful, since it is a typical rugged volcanic mountain. La Pérouse himself did not see Maunaloa.' Rugged in detail, yes; but it is a shield-type volcano, and seen from the sea, with cloud hanging on the plateau, it would certainly look table-like.

There are also other than written or cartographical evidences: oral traditions, artefacts. Inferences from these have been severely criticised in a competent demolition job by J. F. G. Stokes, but new material has come to light since he wrote. R. A. Langdon makes out a convincing case for regarding the question of one-way Spanish contacts as much more open than it was left by Dahlgren and Stokes, who have received almost complete academic acceptance. Some elements adduced to indicate contact may be discarded, for instance the alleged Spanish style of helmets noted by Cook's officer James King: they are much more like Graeco-Roman or even Etruscan types than the standard Spanish morion or steel-cap, and one may reasonably suppose that King got his notion of armour from romanticised engravings or the stage costuming of his day. But the suggestive oral traditions may well deserve more respectful treatment than they have usually received from academics in reaction against nineteenth century romanticism; there are some intriguing linguistic clues.<sup>74</sup> While iron drifted in pieces of timber has certainly been a factor in the Pacific, the amount and nature of iron in Hawaiian possession in Cook's day may not be so facilely explained; but nor can the possibility of drifted junks from Japan be ruled out.<sup>75</sup> There is also a piece of woven fabric, very like sail-cloth, in an indubitably pre-Cook burial.<sup>76</sup>

It has been suggested that the oral tradition of seven castaways arriving at Kealakekua Bay long before Cook might be not Spaniards but Dutchmen, deserters from Mahu's ship *Liefde* in 1600; a nice ironic twist, but the decor of the tale and the latitude of the desertion rule this out.<sup>77</sup> But it would seem that Dahlgren's concession that 'It is not incredible' that Spanish castaways reached Hawaii and survived should be amended to 'It is very likely' that they did so. However, this is not 'discovery' in the reasonable sense that the event is put on record and the knowledge made available to others. The one clear thing is that there was no 'discovery' by Juan Gaetan in 1542 or 1555.