

The Spanish Lake

The Pacific since Magellan, Volume I

The Spanish Lake

O. H. K. Spate

*‘Let Observation with extensive View,
Survey Mankind, from China to Peru . . .’*



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In memoriam

ARMANDO CORTESÃO

homem da Renascença renascido

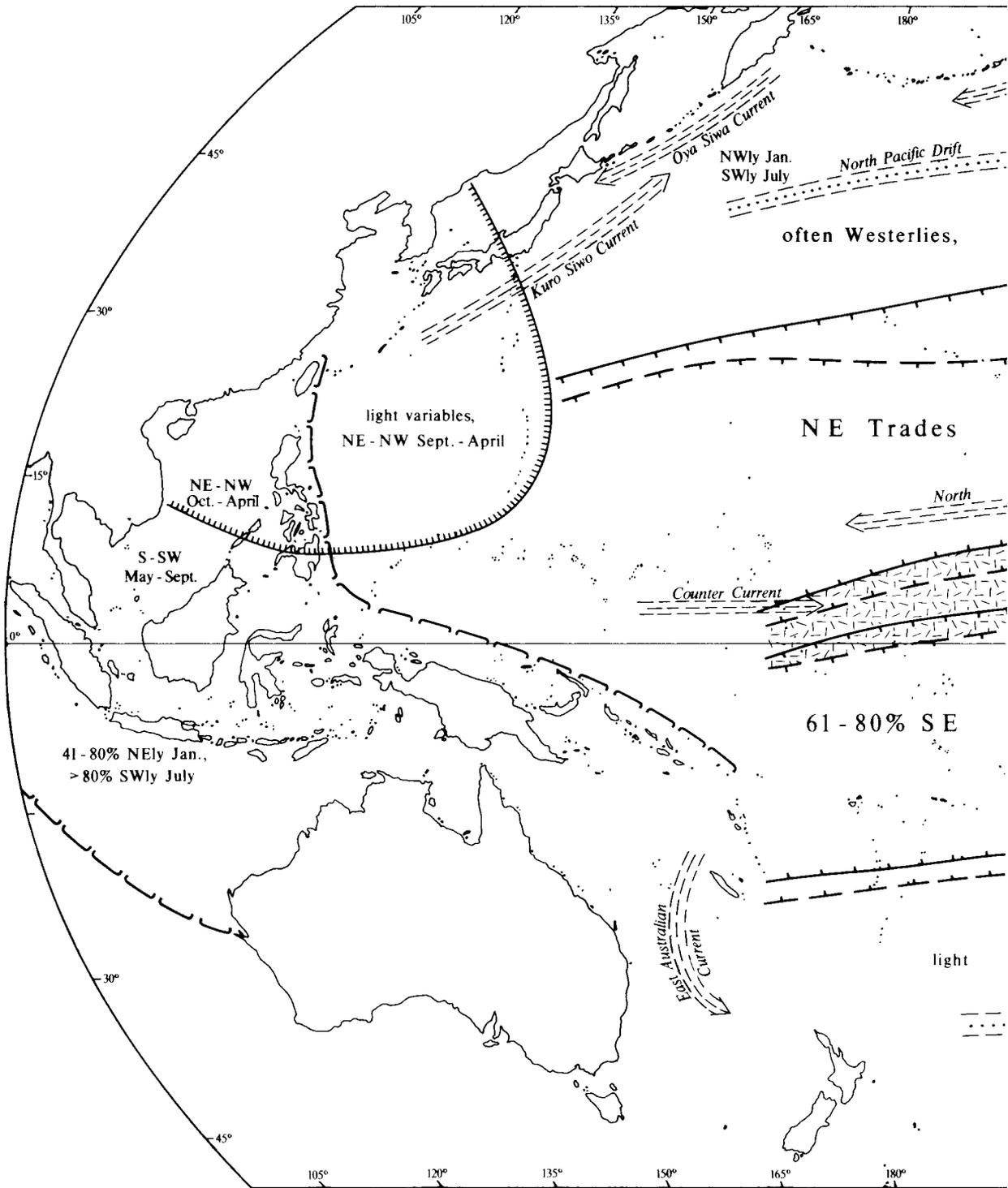
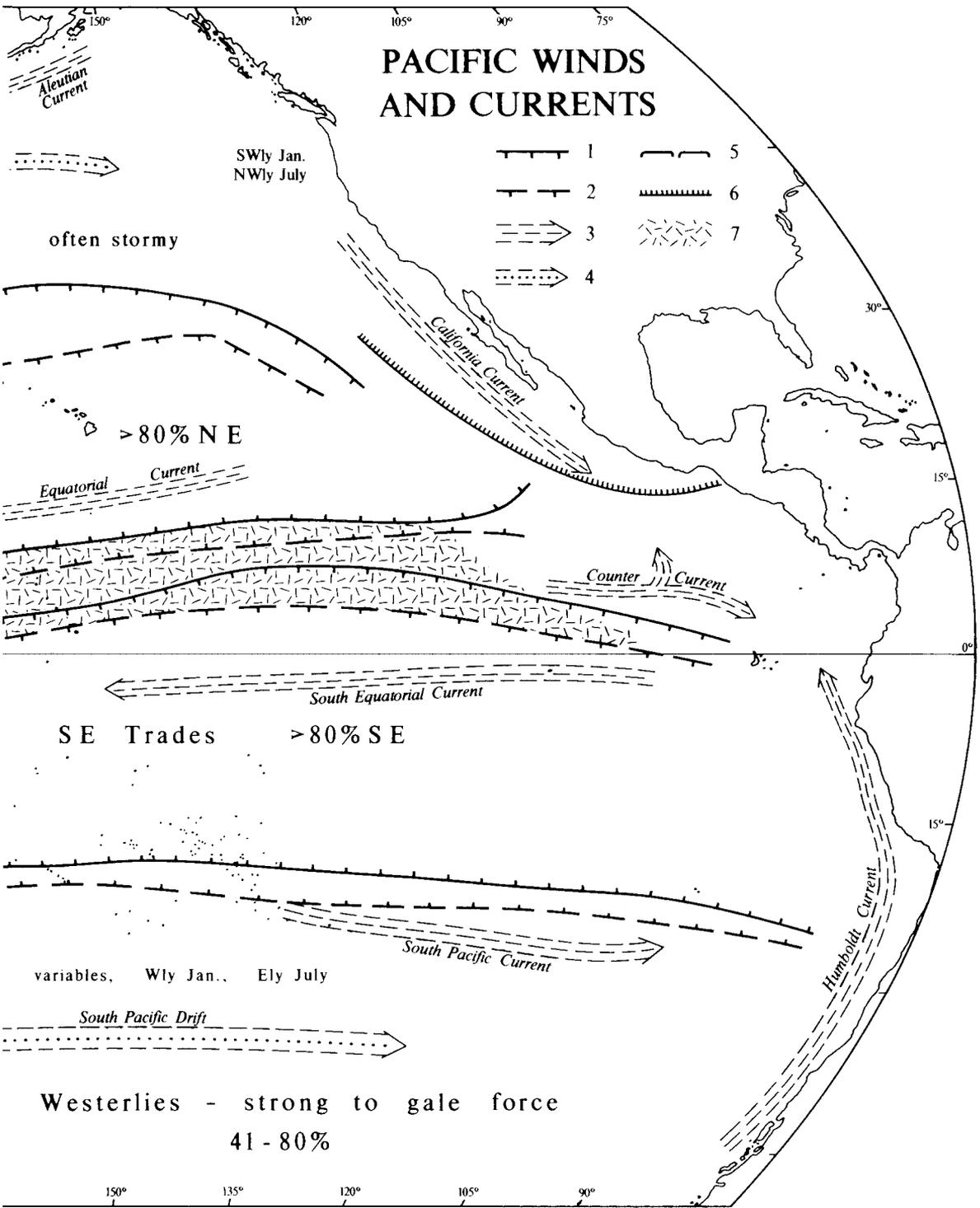


Figure 1. PACIFIC WINDS AND CURRENTS. 1, approx. limits of Trade Wind belts, April-September; 2, same in October-March; 3, approx. trend of main currents; 4, of main drifts; 5, encloses area dominated by Southeast Asian monsoons; 6, areas of high typhoon risk, especially July-October; 7, belt of calms and light airs (Doldrums). Figures indicate frequency of prevalent wind in total observations, excluding calms. Central meridian 165°W.



Compiled from *Fiziko-Geograficheskiy Atlas Mira* (Moscow 1964), Plates 40-1; British Admiralty Charts 5215, 5216. Base map by courtesy of American Geographical Society, New York.

Preface

This book is written in the spirit of Lucien Febvre's words introducing the Chaunus' great work *Séville et l'Atlantique*: 'these studies of maritime relations, these reconstructions of the histories of the Oceans considered as real entities, historical personalities, primary factors in the collective efforts of men. . . .' I have no illusions that in this to some extent impressionistic outline I can measure up to that monumental work; but then I may perhaps claim the indulgence due to the pioneer *por mares nunca dantes navegados*, through never-navigated seas. Many sectors of my theme have been illuminated by scholars of the first order; little attempt has been made to see the Pacific as a real entity, as a whole over space and through time.

The aim of my work, of which this is a first instalment, is to seek to explicate the process by which the greatest blank on the map became a nexus of global commercial and strategic relations. From the very beginning, the implications of Magellan's voyage made the Ocean a theatre of power conflict. For this reason, some attention must be given to the political background in Europe, and more to the economic background of Spanish America, an extrusion of European polity which was naturally in far closer contact with the Ocean than was the metropolis; or rather perhaps the fulcrum by which, in this first or Iberian phase, Europe extended its power in the opposite half of the globe.

This is a history of the Pacific, not of the Pacific peoples, a difference which I have sought elsewhere to explain; as such it may seem, in this age, somewhat Eurocentric. But then there was not, and could not be, any concept 'Pacific' until the limits and lineaments of the Ocean were set: and this was undeniably the work of Europeans. To say this is in no way to disparage the achievements not only of Aztecs and Incas, Chinese and Japanese, but of the peoples whose skill and daring found and peopled the remote and scattered islands of Oceania. Of this great diaspora, more will be said in a later volume; even in this one, in an Asian context the Iberians must appear less than the unchallenged Conquistadores that they were depicted in the historiography of imperialism; but no less human and heroic for that. The fact remains that until our own day the Pacific was basically a Euro-American creation, though built on an indigenous substructure. This is changing, and not before time, and in that change I may say *pars minima fui*. The change will demand a new historiography, which is indeed in hand; for this, despite inclination, I have not the skills, and my work will perhaps appear a requiem for an era of historiography, which yet must serve as a basis for that which is to come.

If it would take a lifetime to visit all the shores and islands of the Pacific, one sometimes feels that it would take nine lives to master fully the vasty literature of the deep. All that the explorer can do is to mark some positions and take some soundings; and if mine are not a close net like that of Chaunus' Atlantic charting, I may at least hope that I have run my lines with enough intelligence to bring out the main lineaments of the Ocean. The work is inevitably based on secondary sources and on printed collections of primary and sub-primary sources; with all respect for archival historians, whose work is often fundamental, not all that is found outside archives is insignificant, and not all that is found in MSS. really matters. I can only say that I have tried to arrive at a synthesis drawn from reputable authorities. I have no doubt at all that specialists will find superficialities and errors in my treatment of some of the multitudinous topics which a study of this scope and scale involves. But this is the occupational hazard of playing the generalist game, and I have also no doubt that it is a game well worth playing, as an effort to see the theme as a whole and not as cut up into discrete sectors; and it is great fun to play—nor is a feeling for fun, that neglected factor in human affairs, incompatible with serious intent.

As for the skill and success with which I have played the game, that is of course altogether another matter. I have written elsewhere at more length on the methodological and even ethical problems involved in such work; and on these papers I would rest my case.* In the last resort, one can always console oneself with the noble apologia for unavoidable error, and the canons of criticism there implied, with which Samuel Johnson closed the Preface to his *English Dictionary*.

How much the execution of such a work falls short of his ideal, only its author can truly know; he alone also knows both its drudgeries and its delights. The drudgeries have been lightened, the delights immeasurably enhanced, by the constant loving kindness of my wife.

O.H.K.S.

Canberra
18 March 1977

*'The Pacific as an Artefact', in N. Gunson (ed.), *The Changing Pacific: Essays in honour of H. E. Maude* (Melbourne 1978), 32–45; 'Prolegomena to a History of the Pacific', *Geographia Polonica* (Warsaw) 36, 1977, 217–23.

Acknowledgements

It is impossible to name all who have helped me, especially amongst my colleagues in The Australian National University. To begin with a debt of piety, my much-loved friend Jim Davidson was an inspiration to my first steps in Pacific history. I owe much to Gavan Daws, his successor as head of the Department of Pacific and Southeast Asian History, to Harry Maude, doyen in Australia of Islands historians, and to Pat Croft of the ANU Press, for their constant interest and encouragement; and to Professors Anthony Low, the Vice-Chancellor, and Wang Gungwu, Director of the Research School of Pacific Studies, for their blessings and support to an ambitious project. In the Department itself, Bob Langdon and Tony Reid let me borrow at will from their private libraries, Norah Forster fed me with references, and Robyn Walker enlivened her meticulous typescript with pencilled marginalia, always to the point and always welcome. The maps owe everything except their conception to the care and skill of Keith Mitchell of the Map Room, Department of Human Geography. But indeed the whole ambience of the ANU is in itself a magnificent support for scholarship.

I must thank staff members of the following libraries for their always courteous assistance: in Australia, the ANU and National Libraries, Canberra, and the New South Wales Public Library and the Mitchell, Sydney; in Chile, the Biblioteca Nacional, Santiago; in Peru, the Biblioteca Nacional, Lima; in the United Kingdom, the Bodleian at Oxford, and in London the British Library and those of the Institute of Historical Research, the Institute of Latin American Studies, the Royal Geographical Society, and the University of London; in the United States, the University of California and the Bancroft Libraries, Berkeley.

In South America, I received most generous hospitality from Messrs Noel Deschamps and W. R. Carney, respectively the Australian Ambassador to Chile and Chargé in Peru; but most of all my thanks are due to Claudio Véliz, who made my visit possible by inviting me to the memorable Conferencia del Pacífico held in 1970 at Viña del Mar. Far to the North, in Nova Albion, Professors D. W. Hooson and J. J. Parsons very kindly gave me office facilities in the Department of Geography, University of California at Berkeley; and I received valuable assistance from Professors Woodrow Borah and Robert F. Heizer of the University and Mr Robert H. Power of Nut Tree. Fr Michael Cooper of Sophia University, Tokyo, was most kind in helping me to secure photographs for the plates, as was Miss Elizabeth Ellis of the Map Room in the National Library of Australia.

Scholars who have kindly answered specific queries are acknowledged individually in the notes, but I must mention in particular Dr Helen Wallis, in charge of

the Map Room of the British Library, and Captain Brett Hilder of Queensland.

Finally, the dedication of this book reflects my gratitude to a great scholar, whose generosity was unfailing for twenty years from my first approach to him as a diffident novice to a Master *nos feitos que os portugueses fizeram*. It is a great sorrow that my tribute must be posthumous.

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Preliminary Data

I. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

References

For a work cited more than once, the full title with place and date of publication is given at its first appearance, with a short title in brackets, thus: E. C. Chapman, *A History of California: The Spanish Phase* (New York 1921) [*California*]. This full reference is repeated for every chapter in which the work recurs. Where several places of publication appear on the title page, only the first so listed is given. Where citations are from a paperback edition, the name of the series is given: A. L. Rowse, *The Expansion of Elizabethan England* (Cardinal ed. London 1973). Where it appears significant, the original date of reprinted works is indicated. It is worth noting that when the place of publication is Berkeley, this normally implies the University of California Press; Amsterdam, Israel; Harmondsworth, Pelicans or Penguins and their brood.

Sub-titles of articles in journals are sometimes omitted, when they add nothing to the point.

Abbreviations

A few works are so often cited that they are referred to by author's or editor's name only:

- Blair & Robertson E. H. Blair and J. A. Robertson, *The Philippine Islands 1493–1803* [–1898], 55 volumes, Cleveland 1903–9; reprinted in Manila, c. 1962.
- Chaunu Huguette and Pierre Chaunu, *Séville et l'Atlantique (1504–1650)*, 8 volumes in 12 tomes, SEVPEN, Paris 1955–60—a mighty work based on the analysis of 17,761 trans-Atlantic voyages. The first seven tomes, by both authors, are the 'Partie statistique', including a volume of graphics; the last four form the 'Partie interpretative' by Pierre alone. The most important for this book is Tome VIII.1 (CXXV+1212 pages), *Les structures géographiques*, and unless otherwise stated all references are to this one.
- Hakluyt R. Hakluyt (ed.), *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English nation . . .*, London 1589. All references are to the Everyman edition in eight volumes, London 1907.

Abbreviations for periodicals are self-explanatory, except for:

HAHR *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 1918+.
MM *Mariner's Mirror*, 1911+.

and also:

HS 1st Publications of the Hakluyt Society, First Series 1847–1899,
 (2nd) Ser. Second Series, 1899+ (serial number also given).

General

Translations are by myself, except when quoted from previously Englished works as indicated in the notes.

A formal bibliography of works consulted would be inordinately long, and unless made longer by being turned into a *catalogue raisonnée* would add little of value to the documentation in the notes. 'To end a book with a display of the machinery by which it has been assembled is to stress the toil which has gone into its making, not the pleasure'—C. M. Rourke, quoted in G. Seldes, *The Stammering Century* (Colophon ed., New York 1965), 412. The machinery and the toil of the making of this book are adequately illustrated in its notes; and some of them will reflect, and I hope give, the pleasure.

This seems the appropriate place to mention two works not directly drawn upon but covering some of the same ground as my own. O. Hardy and G. S. Dumke, *A History of the Pacific in Modern Times* (Boston 1949), is a soberly researched college text; its Pacific includes a lengthy treatment of China, surely continental rather than oceanic, but *per contra* nothing on Pacific Spanish America after Independence: a stout effort, but routine in its approach and at times naïve in interpretation. C. Hartley Grattan, *The Southwest Pacific to 1800* (Ann Arbor 1963), combines a clear narrative with lively and intelligent comment, though its sequel—*Since 1800*—seems written rather more *con amore*. Finally, the encyclopaedic four volumes of the (British) Naval Intelligence Division's Geographical Handbook on the *Pacific Islands* (1943–5) form an indispensable *vade mecum* for factual information on Oceania.

2. GENERAL

Dates

There is no difficulty about dates until 1582–3, when the Catholic states of Europe accepted Pope Gregory XIII's correction of the Julian calendar, by which 5 October 1582 became 15 October; most Protestant states followed suit in 1700, but Great Britain not until 1752. In this book, dates for *English* voyages after 1582 (Cavendish, Richard Hawkins) are in Old Style (ten days behind New), but the year is taken as beginning on 1 January, not 25 March as was contemporary English practice.

Leagues

Although the metric system is used in this book, distances are often given in leagues, since these were the most common unit used at sea for distance run. The 'sea league', Portuguese in origin, was 4 Roman miles (3.2 nautical or approximately 3.7 statute miles, 5.9km). However, following the erroneous Ptolemaic estimate of the circumference of the globe, the Spanish reckoned $16\frac{2}{3}$ leagues to a degree instead of the better Portuguese value of $17\frac{1}{2}$: a factor of great importance in the Luso-Castilian debates over the partition of the globe. Moreover, 'English sailors, however, at least in the last half of the [16th] century, used the value of 20 leagues or 60 miles' to the degree, for convenience (a mile a minute!), neglecting the difference between Roman and English miles (Taylor). It is worth remembering that the mean length of a degree of latitude (or of a degree of longitude on the Equator) is roughly 69 statute miles or 111km.

See C. Jack-Hinton, *The Search for the Islands of Solomon 1567-1838* (Oxford 1969), 1-2, 99-101; E. G. R. Taylor (ed.), [Roger Barlow's] *A Briefe Summe of Geographie*, HS 2nd Ser. 69 (London 1932), 186-7; D. W. Waters, *The Art of Navigation in England in Elizabethan and Early Stuart Times* (London 1958), 65-6.

Money

Sums of Spanish money in our period are given in *maravedis*, *ducats*, or *pesos*, of which the first two after 1497 became merely moneys of account, the ducat being 375 maravedis, while salaries and so on were usually expressed in maravedis. Actual coinage was in *reales* or subdivisions or multiples of them. Much the commonest unit in our sources is the peso, but unfortunately it is often not clear which of several pesos is meant; and scholars as authoritative as Chaunu (I.269-71) and H. R. Wagner (*Sir Francis Drake's Voyage around the World*, Amsterdam 1966, 506-8) give different values in maravedis for the *peso de oro*.

Pesos de oro of 16 reales (544 maravedis) are sometimes stipulated, but the 'heavy' *peso ensayado* or *de minas* ($13\frac{1}{4}$ reales, 450 maravedis) was more usual as a money of account in the Indies. It must be remembered that much 'monetary circulation' was in uncoined silver bullion. Much the most important actual coins seem to have been the Mexican *pesos de a ocho reales* or *pesos corrientes* (8 reales, 272 maravedis); these, the famous 'pieces of eight' or 'Mexican dollars' were destined to a great future as an international medium (see Ch. 7). According to Wagner, the piece of eight was worth between four and five English shillings of the time, but others make it nearly twice as much. Very roughly, 30,000 gold pesos could be taken as rather over £13,500—J. A. Williamson, *Hawkins of Plymouth* (2nd London ed., 1969), 148. The wild debasements of the seventeenth century (see Ch. 7) introduce further confusion.

With these uncertainties, and given the inflations of the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, not to mention the vastly changed conditions of economic life, any attempt to translate these currencies into modern equivalents seems a nonsense.

The figures in pesos cited in this book are, then, given for what they are worth, and that is simply as indices or orders of magnitude.

Non-English names and terms

Accents were not used in sixteenth century Spanish, and are omitted here except in one or two given names (Andrés, Bartolomé); they are of course retained for quotations, personal names, and book titles in modern Spanish. They have also been omitted from place-names: Perú, Panamá seem pedantic. As a rule Spanish or English forms of place-names are used according to context: Magellan's 'Puerto San Julian' becomes 'Port St Julian' when visited by Drake or Cavendish. Occasionally there may be a bastard form in quotations, e.g. Hakluyt has 'cape of S. Lucar' when either 'Cape St Lucas' or 'Cabo (de) San Lucar' would be correct. Normally the form used today in the respective country is used, e.g. 'Cape Mendocino' (California) but 'Cabo Deseado' (Chile). Some inconsistencies may doubtless be found.

Titles of rank are given as in the original language, e.g. 'Marques de Montescarlos', with some exception for world-famous figures whose titles have taken on an English style, such as 'Duke of Alba' (not 'Duque de Alba') and 'Prince Henry', not 'Infante Dom Henrique' (still less 'Henry the Navigator'!). Names of foreign sovereigns are also as in the original, e.g. 'João III' (of Portugal), not John. But for the Emperor Charles V and the Philips of Spain, this would be mere pedantry, since they are so well-known in English historiography. But sometimes there is a departure from this rule for the sake of emphasis; e.g. in the context of the Treaty of Zaragoza, 'D. Carlos I' makes the point better than 'Charles V'; similarly at times with 'Nueva España' and 'New Spain'.

Spanish terms such as *encomienda*, *almiranta/almirante*, *obraje*, Japanese such as *daimyo*, and so on, are italicised at their first appearance, thereafter in Roman. Their meaning is given (sometimes by context) at first appearance or main treatment, and these can be found from the index.

Shipping tonnages

Like the currency, the question of shipping tonnages is almost intolerably complex. The basic English 'ton' in our period derived from the tun (French *tonneau*) of the Bordeaux wine trade, which when full and including the weight of the cask itself was reckoned as 2240 lbs (1016kg) in England and 2000 *livres* (979kg) in France. Allowing for the space wastage resulting from the shape of casks, the cubic equivalent was reckoned at about 60 cu.ft (1.7m³). Payment by weight at this equivalence for lighter cargoes than wine was obviously not in the carrier's interest, since his ship's space would be full before she had taken on as much weight as she could carry, and hence 'In England the space obtained by paying for a ton [weight] of freight became standardised fairly early at 40 cu.ft [1.13m³]' (Lane, 354). In Spain the corresponding unit was the *tonelada*, and early in the sixteenth century the equivalents are straightforward: 1 deadweight ton = 1

tonneau de mer = 1 Seville *tonelada*, all of which luckily approximate to 1 metric tonne burden. Conveniently also, 1 tonne in weight terms is very close to 1 ton avoirdupois. So a ship of 100 tons could carry 100 tuns of wine, or translated into volume, she had a cargo capacity of 56–60 × 100cu.ft (1.58–1.70m³) (Lane, 364, 366). Deadweight tonnage was the difference between the displacement of the ship empty and laden, i.e. the maximum weight of cargo which could be safely carried, and this was used for heavy cargoes, which would bring the ship to its maximum draft long before it was ‘full’. (Venice had the equivalent of ‘Plimsoll lines’ in the thirteenth century.)

So far all is more or less straightforward, but now expediency ceases and complications set in. The units varied from time to time, from place to place, from function to function; there was a continual interplay between a desire to keep the nominal tonnage down, so as to minimise port dues and so on, and one to keep it up so as to charge more when the ship was chartered or (as was very common) hired by the government for war; hence the development of various ‘registered tonnages’, complicated by various formulae for equating the dimensions of a ship with the reckoning of its tonnage, while the methods of measurement varied in English, Spanish, and French practice.

For our purpose, the most important points are the differences between English and Spanish reckoning. In 1520 the ton and the *tonelada* were virtually the same, but during the century the Spanish reckoning changed, and by 1620 the Spanish registered *tonelada* was only about 0.6 of a ton. The date generally given for this change is 1590, but Chaunu (I.132–6) argues plausibly that so great a change could hardly be made at a stroke of the official pen, but was in effect a codification of a practice which had been going on since mid-century: that of reckoning in a sort of registered ton, based on the ship’s dimensions rather than on *toneladas*. The upshot was that a ship of 500 *toneladas* at the end of Charles V’s reign would be only, say, 350 tons at the end of Philip II’s; and hence an English ship of 100 tons would be the equivalent of a Spanish of about 145 tons, more or less. There was a further difference between Spanish ‘Merchant’ and ‘War’ tonnage, a merchantman taken into the Armada Real having 20 per cent added to her nominal tonnage. (This practice seems to have come much later in the Royal Navy—Lane, 364–5.) By the time comparisons are significant for this book (say 1570+), the differential between Spanish and English reckonings was substantial, and the necessary adjustments are damaging to the patriotic English view of the odds in 1588: thus the *San Salvador* was registered in Spain as 953 tons, but when measured by her English captors came out as only 600 (M. Lewis, *The Spanish Armada* (Pan ed., London 1966), 75).

The tonnages given in this book are those in the immediate source, Spanish or English; and all such figures should be regarded, like sums of money, as orders of magnitude rather than as absolutes: according to Naish, Drake’s *Golden Hinde* could be 100, 120, or 150 tons, according to where and how she was measured. The important point to remember is that by the time of Drake’s activity in the

Pacific, one must add 30 to 45 per cent to an English figure to get the Spanish equivalent.

It is not necessary at this stage to go into the more modern refinements of registration, such as: is a deckhouse an enclosed space?—a matter of financial importance when it comes to tolls (see G. Mack, *The Land Divided* (New York 1944), 522–8). Given the differences not only in laws but in ship construction, comparisons with modern figures are pointless. One must agree with Joseph Needham (*Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. 4, Part 3 (Cambridge 1971) at 628), that ‘Perhaps the most urgent need of naval archaeology to-day is a systematic, sober and definitive study of estimated tonnage in all historical periods and cultures. Obviously this work cannot be done here.’

This note is based mainly on F. C. Lane, ‘Tonnages, Medieval and Modern’, in *Venice and History* (Baltimore 1966), 345–70 (also in *Econ. Hist. Rev.* 2nd Ser. 17, 1964, 213–33), and Chaunu, I.130–41. See also C. R. Boxer, *The Great Ship from Amacon* (Lisbon 1959), 13; F. C. P. Naish, ‘The Mystery of the Tonnage and Dimensions of the *Pelican-Golden Hind*’, *MM* 34, 1948, 42–5; L. G. C. Loughton, ‘English and Spanish Tonnages in 1588’, *MM* 44, 1958, 151–4; A. P. Usher, ‘Spanish Ships and Shipping in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, in A. H. Cole *et al.* (eds), *Facts and Factors in Economic History* (Cambridge (Mass.) 1932), 189–213 at 208; J. H. Parry, ‘Transport and Trade Routes’, in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, III (1967) 155–219 at 218–19. The only other measure which needs mention is the *quintal*, which was 46kg or 100 lb avoirdupois.

Plates

Every effort has been made to trace the owners of the copyright in the plates; any omission is inadvertent and will be willingly rectified.

The abbreviations ‘ANU’ and ‘NLA’—respectively The Australian National University and the National Library of Australia—indicate the sources of some of the plates.

Special Usages

‘Straits’ unless otherwise stated or clearly implied by context means the Straits of Magellan; ‘Cape’, the Cape of Good Hope; ‘Islands’ (except for named groups such as Falkland Islands), those of Oceania; ‘Galleon’ or ‘Galleons’ when capitalised refers to those used on the Manila-Acapulco run, as distinct from galleons in general. A distinction is made between the shores of oceans or seas and the coasts of landmasses. ‘Conquista’ with initial capitalisation is used for the historical process, on the analogy of the ‘Reconquista’ in Spain itself, or the ‘Reformation’; ‘conquista’, with lower case ‘c’, for specific episodes.