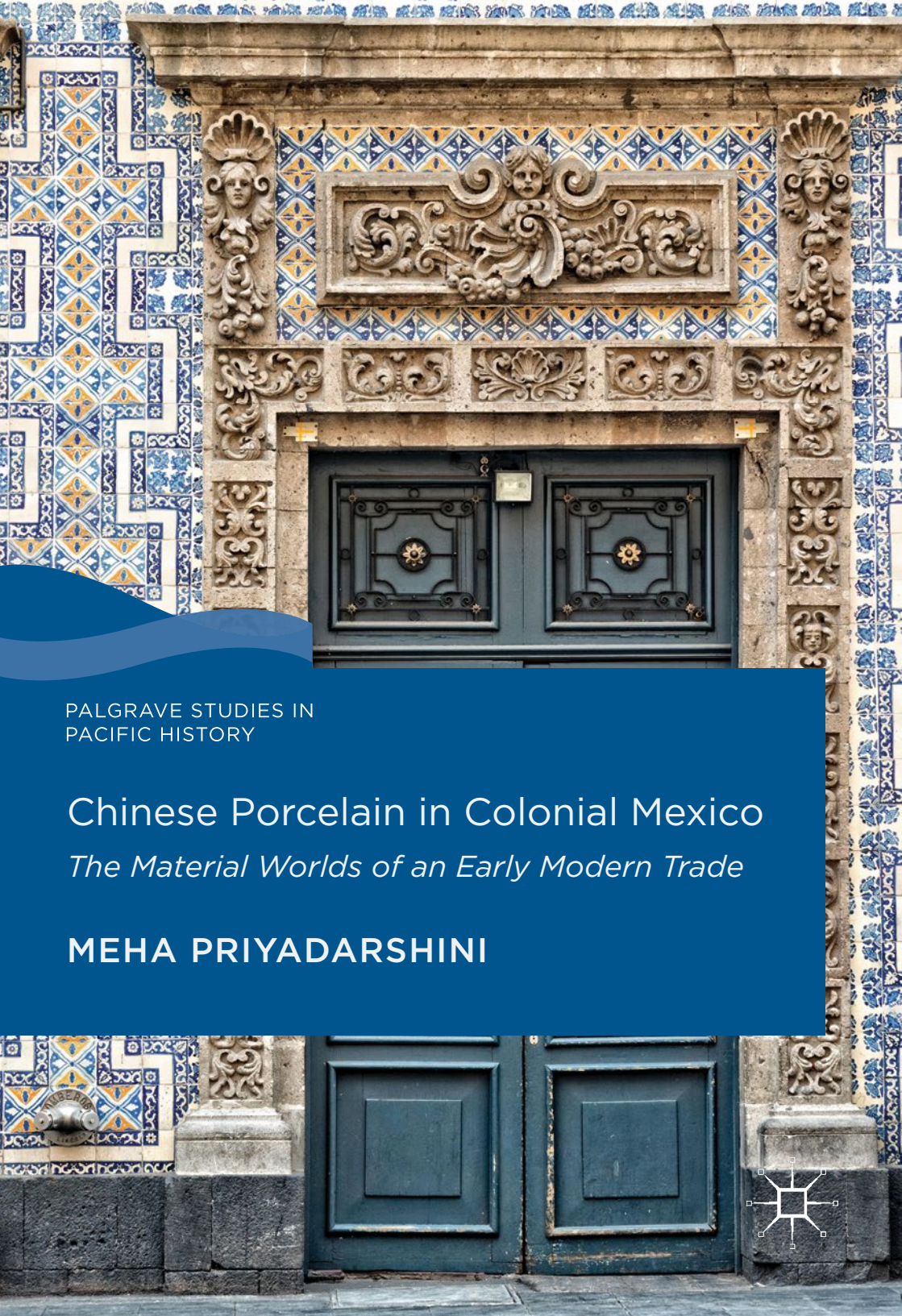

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Chinese Porcelain in Colonial Mexico

The Material Worlds of an Early Modern Trade

MEHA PRIYADARSHINI

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In gratitude to Adam McKeown (1965–2017)

白泑青花一火成,
花從泑裏吐分明。
可系造物先天妙,
無極由來太極生。

景德鎮陶歌

Glaze and porcelain into the fire are thrown,
Distinct flowers from the glaze bloom.
It could be nature's innate cleverness,
That from chaos, harmony is born.

Jingdezhen potters' song

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To complete this book, I have traveled a great deal, much like the objects I write about, and on these travels I incurred debts to many people who made this endeavor possible. The project would never even have taken off without the support of my Ph.D. supervisor, Adam McKeown, who ushered me into the field of global history and helped me think critically about early modern connections. Adam was an incredibly generous mentor and a friend, and I miss him dearly. This book is dedicated to him.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: A Global Commodity in the Transpacific Trade

In the heart of Mexico City, not far from the Plaza Mayor, the main square, there stands a peculiar, colorful building. When it is seen up close it becomes clear that ceramic tiles give the edifice its unique look (Fig. 1.1 and cover image). These tiles are vaguely reminiscent of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain, and at one point it was even claimed that the tiles used to decorate the *Casa de los Azulejos* (House of Glazed Tiles) had been brought especially from China.[1] The more accurate account is that the Countess of Orizaba, María Graciana Suárez de Peredo, renovated the house in the eighteenth century and introduced this method of decorating façades of buildings to Mexico City. It was common in Puebla de los Ángeles (Puebla), the city where she grew up and where artisans were known to produce quality ceramics and tiles.[2] Although the tiles were made in Mexico, the myth about them being imported from China was not entirely fanciful. Inside the house Chinese porcelains have been used as architectural elements, serving as bases for lamps which were built to light staircases (Fig. 1.2). The *Casa de los Azulejos* is a unique landmark that showcases the skill of colonial Mexican artisans, but also demonstrates that Asia was an important part of the colony's mixed heritage, proved both by the myth about the Asian origin of the tiles and by the Chinese porcelains used as decorations in the house.[3]

This book follows the journey of Chinese porcelains from Asia to Mexico and uncovers the history of how these ceramics were integrated

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Fig. 1.1 The *Casa de los Azulejos*, Mexico City, 2017. Photo by Aurora Pellizzi

into colonial Mexican society. The trade that connected China and colonial Mexico is often referred to as the Manila Galleon Trade, and began in the late sixteenth century (Fig. 1.3). Silver from the mines in Spanish America was sent across the Pacific Ocean to Manila in the Philippines, which was also under Spanish rule at the time. The silver was used to support the colony in the Philippines and to purchase Asian commodities for the colonial Latin American market. In Manila merchants bought textiles, furniture, spices, porcelain, and various other goods and shipped

Fig. 1.2 Chinese porcelain *guan*-shaped jar used as the base of a lamp in one of the staircases of the *Casa de los Azulejos*. Photo by Aurora Pellizzi

them to Acapulco in Mexico. The transpacific trade was particularly important because with its inception, the Americas were directly connected to Asia, and from that moment all the major continents were tied together in a web of commerce and exchange: it was the beginning of global trade.[4]

We will follow the trajectory of Chinese porcelains on their journey along different sites of the Manila Galleon Trade network. We will begin in Jingdezhen, China, where much of the world's porcelain was produced,

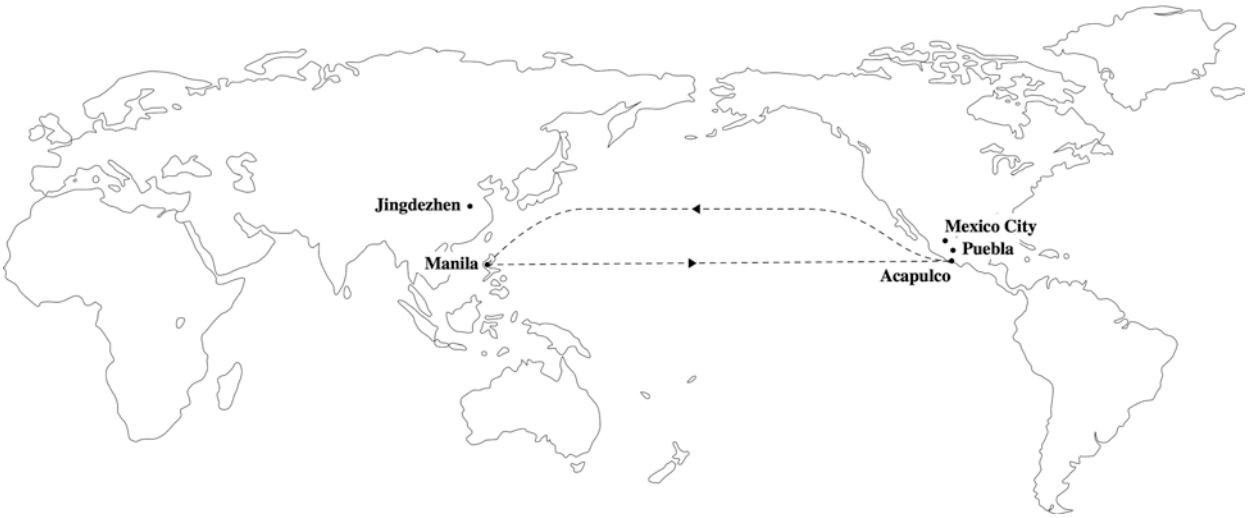

Fig. 1.3 The routes along which Chinese porcelain would have been transported for the Manila Galleon Trade. The ceramics would be sent by river transport from Jingdezhen to a port in southern China. From there they would be taken to Manila. On the journey from Manila to Acapulco, owing to the wind currents, the ships could not go directly east and instead had to go north and then go south, hugging the coast, until they arrived in Acapulco. This would take roughly six months. The return trip for the silver-laden ships sailing from Acapulco to Manila was direct and could be done in half of the time

and then move to Manila, where Chinese merchants sold the porcelain to Mexican merchants. The next site will be Acapulco, the point from which Asian commodities were distributed to various parts of colonial Latin America.[5] From Acapulco we will move to Mexico City, where Asian goods were sold in the central marketplace. The journey will end in Puebla, where local potters drew inspiration from Chinese porcelain and other artistic traditions for the invention of a new ceramic style known as *talavera poblana* (Figs. 1.5, 5.5–5.7).

Tracing this trajectory through various nodes is productive for several reasons. On a macroscopic level, we see the commodity chain that linked China to Mexico in the early modern period. Producers, merchants, and consumers are brought together in the arc of one narrative, and their distinct contributions to the functioning of the trade network are made visible. Such a materialist perspective on trade lays bare the fact that although the exploration of a route to Asia via the Pacific was driven by the Spanish Crown's desire to have access to Asia, the making and development of the transpacific trade network was not based upon Spanish imperial desires alone, but also depended on the quality of Asian goods, the motivations of Chinese and Mexican merchants, and the demands of the consumers in colonial Latin America.

The multi-sited narrative of the book also reveals that the local impact of participating in this long-distance trade varied significantly in the sites that were thus linked together. For example, the global success and accessibility of Chinese porcelain had a different impact in Jingdezhen from that in Puebla. In the early modern period Jingdezhen and its ceramics became world-famous, but the Chinese artisans who made the prized objects did not themselves come into contact with the world beyond China. By contrast, the artisans in Puebla were a mixed group (Europeans, creoles, mestizos, and the indigenous) who consciously borrowed from several different artistic traditions that they came into contact with to create a unique style of their own.

We think of the early modern period as a time of increased connectivity, and the burgeoning trade and movement of objects between far flung places is often used as proof of early modern globalization.[6] While that is largely true, by considering several sites in one narrative we see that these connections were uneven and that in some cases the growing trade of this era could isolate certain groups of people or change the manner in which they had been previously interacting with the wider world. By following one commodity through a trade network we can arrive at a "translocal

global history," a history where we see the direct engagement between local conditions and the global forces of trade and empire.[7]

Moreover, our focus on the transpacific connection is significant because it forces us to reorient our view of the world. Most world maps to this day are made with Europe and Africa placed in the center, thus giving primacy to the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and the interactions facilitated by them. The study of the early modern period has been dominated by considerations of Europe's increased connections with different parts of the world, and particularly with comparisons and interactions between Europe and Asia. Working with a world map with the Pacific Ocean in the center, by contrast, compels us to prioritize the connections facilitated across the largest body of water, and to consider sites and actors that thus far have not figured as prominently in early modern global history.[8]

The Manila Galleon Trade in the Early Modern World

It is common knowledge that when Christopher Columbus left Spain in 1492 in search of India and all the riches it had to offer, he actually arrived in what we today call the Americas. The search for a sea route to India continued, and it was the Portuguese Vasco da Gama who first arrived on the shores of India in 1498 by going around the Cape of Good Hope. Da Gama accomplished this feat after the Spanish and Portuguese had signed the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), according to which they divided the lands along a meridian in the Atlantic Ocean: everything west of the line would belong to Spain and everything east of it to Portugal. This meant that the Spanish could not use the route discovered by da Gama to reach Asia.

Explorations of a transpacific route to Asia from the Americas began after Ferdinand Magellan's circumnavigation of the world in 1522. By that time the Spanish had defeated the Aztecs and conquered the area that we today know as Mexico. From there they began exploring the Pacific Ocean in search for a route to Asia, and once that was discovered, conflicts between the Spanish and Portuguese arose again since the lands in that region had not been known to the Iberians when the Treaty of Tordesillas was signed. Another treaty was necessary, and in 1529 the two crowns agreed on the Treaty of Zaragoza, which gave the Moluccas to the Portuguese. It was after that point that the Spanish began considering the

islands that are today identified as the Philippines as their base for operations in Asia. By then the Viceroyalty of New Spain had been created, encompassing what is today Mexico and Central America, with its capital in Mexico City.[9] In 1542 an expedition was sent forth from Mexico specifically to investigate the feasibility of occupying the previously discovered islands, and in 1564 armed forces conquered some of them. These came to be named the Philippines after King Philip II of Spain and were placed under the jurisdiction of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. The city of Manila was established in 1570, and the transpacific trade officially began in 1571.

Around the same time that the Spanish were settling in Manila, the Ming emperor in China was lifting the ban on maritime trade, allowing Chinese merchants to engage in commercial activities with foreigners. The Chinese emperor had also recently changed the tax base to silver, thus creating a greater demand for the precious metal in the region, and so the meeting between Chinese merchants and their counterparts from the Spanish colonies was a fortuitous one. The demand for Spanish American silver in China was met with a voracious demand for Chinese silks and other goods in the markets across the Pacific. The galleons that came laden with silver from Acapulco returned to the same port filled to the brim with a wide variety of commodities. The lure of the profit that could be made in Mexico through the sale of Asian commodities was so great that in Manila the galleons were at times overloaded to such an extent as to jeopardize their safety, and on some occasions the cargo had to be thrown overboard during the voyage to avoid capsizing.

The trade between Manila and Acapulco was unique at the time because, though both ports were under Spanish rule, the Spanish Crown itself was left out of the exchange. As the ships went directly from one port to the other, the Crown could not regulate the trade, and a considerable amount of silver from the mines in Spanish America went to Asia against the wishes and interests of merchants operating in Spain. These merchants argued that not only were they losing silver to commerce conducted in Asia, but they were also unable to sell their own products, such as silk, to the American colonies, where the populace preferred the goods brought from Asia. The Spanish king was made aware of these problems and tried to put an end to the transpacific trade in a decree addressed to the Viceroy of New Spain in the year 1590:

> To the Marques de Villamanrique, my kinsman, and viceroy, governor, and captain-general of Nueva España [New Spain]. Having understood that the

> silks brought from China and the Philipinas Islands to your realms are quite worthless, but that nevertheless, because of the low price set upon them, they are sold and distributed; and because, if that trade continues, the trade in cloth exported from these realms [Spain and Portugal] would cease or be greatly decreased … therefore, having carefully considered this as well as other inconveniences set forth, it has seemed best to discontinue this trade with the Philipinas Islands and China …[10]

Silk was one of the most valuable commodities of the Manila Galleon Trade, which is why the king singles it out in his admonishment. The colony's buying of Chinese silk meant not only that the empire lost silver to China but also that the Spanish silk industry suffered from the competition posed by the cheaper silk available in Manila. The king's letter has the tone of a parent telling his inexperienced child that the child does not understand the value of certain goods and does not know how to appreciate their quality. It tries to mask the worry of possibly losing the child to the more attractive commodities provided by a rival party.

This was a valid concern because people residing in Mexico remarked on the availability of fine Asian goods in the colony that were not yet accessible in Spain. In 1574 Inés de Solís, a resident of Mexico City, wrote a letter to her sister in Medina del Campo in Spain describing the riches from China that were available in Mexico:

> … they have discovered in these parts a very rich land that they call China, which can be reached from here, and from there they have brought, and continue to bring, very fine things of the many types that exist in the world today, of which in Spain there cannot be any better or more refined, like satin, damask, taffeta, brocades …[11]

Inés de Solís lists several different types of textiles made with silk that were brought from China, proving that this particular commodity was much in demand and readily available in Mexico. According to her, these goods were of considerable value and quality, in contradiction to the king's stated opinion. In the tone of her writing she is also boasting of the privileged position of the colony in having access to these goods.

The king's anxieties about the transpacific trade between his colonies in the Americas and Asia were not unfounded since the Spanish Empire lost considerable amounts of silver to this trade, but his orders were clearly not followed as the trade continued into the nineteenth century. In his

response to the king, Viceroy Villamanrique cited proselytization as one of the reasons to keep a hold on the colony in the Philippines, although the commodities that the king describes as being of "trifling value" were clearly another significant reason to carry on with the trade.[12] According to some estimates, in the seventeenth century the Manila galleons carried two million pesos in silver annually to Asia.[13]

News of the lucrative transpacific trade spread fast, and as early as 1600, the Dutch, who by that time had begun to participate in Asian trade, began attacking Spanish galleons that traveled between Acapulco and Manila. Such incursions continued to plague Manila, with the Dutch attacking the city in 1646 and the British occupying it a century later from 1762 to 1764.[14] In addition to these external threats, the city also had domestic troubles, most notably repeated violent conflicts that arose between the Spanish and Chinese residents.[15] However, Manila always managed to bounce back from these episodes, and the transpacific trade continued to be profitable for merchants in colonial Latin America into the eighteenth century.

In the mid-eighteenth century, as more actors entered the scene, the direct link between Acapulco and Manila was no longer as lucrative. In 1765 the Spanish, under the control of Charles III, decided to commence direct trade with the Philippines, going around the coast of South Africa. Galleons were still going to Acapulco at this time, and though the volume of the trade to Spain was smaller than that to Mexico, their intrusion nevertheless had an impact.[16] In addition, a complete ban was imposed on trade between Acapulco and Lima, Peru, thus cutting off an important artery. Consumers in Peru and other parts of South America could still have access to Asian goods via ports in the region that were served by other European merchants, but this meant that the transpacific trade suffered.[17] Besides this downturn, the havoc wreaked on the Iberian Peninsula by the Napoleonic Wars of the early nineteenth century and the War of Independence in Mexico combined to halt the galleon trade for a few years and eventually led to its demise in 1815.

Despite the long duration and importance of the transpacific trade, when it comes to the study of the early modern consumption of Asian commodities, the field has been dominated by scholarship on European demand for Asian goods and the resulting explosion of consumerism and industry.[18] In many narratives colonial Latin America figures as a mere

source for the silver that facilitated global trade, rather than as a place that had its own demands and needs for Asian commodities. The current work is an example of new scholarship that has brought colonial Latin America more squarely into debates on early modern global history.[19]

In the case of Mexico, the direct exchange and interaction with Asia was significant because it allowed the colony to distinguish itself from the metropole, a phenomenon that is often overlooked and which is particularly evident in the colonial arts and crafts such *talavera poblana*. The Manila Galleon Trade began in 1571 and ended in 1815, two dates that are significant for different reasons. The earlier one is telling of the fact that people in the Spanish American colonies had access to Asian commodities in great quantities earlier than most of Europe, as evidenced by the letter written by Inés de Solís to her sister in Spain. The prevalent notion that metropoles influence their colonies is turned on its head when we realize that often Spanish society was getting its Asian goods via Mexico, and in some instances adopting new customs of using Asian objects from the colony. The later date, 1815, is important because it signifies the duration of the direct trade between Mexico and Asia. These nearly two and a half centuries of trade show that the journeys of ships across the Pacific were not without consequence for the places that were engaged in this commerce.

The *Guan* and the *Chocolatero*: Why Chinese Porcelain in Colonial Mexico?

As mentioned earlier, in this work we will investigate the Manila Galleon Trade by following the trade of Chinese porcelains from the place where they were produced to the place where they were consumed in Mexico. Scholars who write histories of the movements of goods and people across regional boundaries are often plagued by the question of reconciling the local context with the global flows that they write about. To avoid this dilemma, in this study we will focus on just one commodity and investigate how its production, exchange, and appropriation were contingent upon both global trade and local conditions. Recent scholarship has focused on the movement and trade of goods in the early modern period and shown that the introduction of foreign commodities had the ability to transform local economies, cultural habits, and artistic practices.[20] The study of material objects in particular has become a useful means of investigating this period because this approach allows access to the experiences

of those people who may not appear in the written record, and it gives visibility to exchanges that have not been addressed fully in historical scholarship.

Take for example the *Casa de los Azulejos*, which stands as a material artifact that demands a more thorough exploration of colonial Mexico's ties with China: in order not only to determine how Chinese porcelains were brought to Mexico, but perhaps more importantly to understand why in the legend about the house, the colonial populace chose to create the myth that the tiles were imported from China rather than Spain, which was the colony's metropole and the location from which the technique for making glazed ceramics was originally adopted. The building and the myth surrounding it point to the importance of Asia in the creation of a colonial identity in Mexico.

The significance of the transpacific trade to the colony can be observed through the study of many different goods, so we might question the exclusive focus on Chinese porcelain, especially when silk was the more valuable commodity. Several factors make Chinese porcelain a compelling commodity to study. On a practical level, Chinese porcelain has survived much better than other goods, especially textiles, which owing to their fragility cannot withstand the ravages of time or shipwrecks. On an analytical level, Chinese porcelain's global popularity and ubiquity make it a particularly apt source for the study of the early modern period. It is a commodity that proves the reaches of global trade, and its various local adaptations show the ways in which people responded to the accessibility of new kinds of goods in that era.

In the seventeenth century Chinese porcelain could be found in the far corners of the world, from the collections of Mughal emperors in India to the homes of mariners on the Swahili coast of Africa, from the sitting rooms of Dutch households to churches in Peru, and even in shipwreck sites off the coast of Oregon. In most of these places the ceramics were recognized as Chinese because of their characteristic blue-and-white colors and the distinctive qualities of porcelain: the vessels were finely potted and had translucent, vitreous bodies. Because of its recognizability, Chinese blue-and-white porcelain can be considered the world's first global brand.[21] We only need to look to the English language to see evidence of this, since we refer to fine porcelain objects as "china." The brand status of Chinese porcelain is further proved by the fact that in numerous places local imitations were made of the highly desirable ceramics. For these reasons, the historical scholarship on Chinese porcelain is extensive,

and recently it has garnered particular attention as a commodity that can be used to think broadly about global connections and world history.[22]

The current work adds to this body of scholarship by highlighting the unique ways in which the colonial populace in Mexico appropriated this global commodity. One of these unique appropriations can be seen in the ways in which potters in the city of Puebla borrowed designs from Chinese porcelain to create a new ceramic style. The techniques for making these earthenware ceramics were brought from Spain, but the designs were original and distinct from those of Spanish ceramics. Puebla potters borrowed from indigenous and Chinese aesthetics and combined them in novel ways with European and Hispano-Moresque designs (the latter were developed when Spain was under the control of the Moors).

Let us consider the Mexican *chocolatero,* a vessel used to store cacao beans that was modeled after the Chinese *guan* (罐). The shape and surface design of the *chocolatero* shown here are borrowed from Chinese porcelains, but individual motifs have been altered so that they would resonate with local Mexican consumers (Figs. 1.4 and 1.5).[23] The central motif in each panel is a local bird, the quetzal, which was important in Aztec mythology. It was probably adapted from a Chinese phoenix, which was often depicted on Chinese porcelains. The function of the vessel too has been adapted so that the lid was not only a cover, but could actually be locked to prevent the theft of the valuable cacao beans.

Through such adaptations, alterations, and combinations the potters in Puebla created a wholly new style of ceramics, which became a mark of pride in colonial Mexico, as seen in the comments of a clergyman, Juan Villa Sanchez, in the eighteenth century:

> The pottery that is made in Puebla is so fine and exquisite that it equals or exceeds that of Talavera and Cartagena [two Spanish cities known for their ceramics], thus achieved by the determination of the potters of Puebla, who emulate and try to make objects that resemble the ceramics of China; there is much of this pottery, especially that of the most ordinary kind, which is consumed the most in the kingdom.[24]

In the quote the comparison of the city of Puebla with Spain and China is not accidental. The eighteenth-century scholar wanted to show that Mexico had become self-sufficient and could produce goods that were superior to those of Spain and comparable to those of China. The case of *talavera poblana* shows that access to Chinese porcelain provided a

Fig. 1.4 Porcelain in *guan* form with underglaze blue, Jingdezhen, before 1600. Height with cover: 43.5 cm. Photo Frank Goddio. Excavated from the *San Diego* shipwreck (1600) off the coast of the Philippines. The surface design has been divided into four lobed panels each showing a seated sage as well as decorative top and bottom scroll bands

repertoire of designs which the potters could borrow, and also served as a reference point for judging the quality of the locally produced ceramics. The clergyman used the occasion to specifically align the crafts of Puebla with China rather than Spain, even though the techniques to make *talavera* ceramics were introduced to the colony from Spain.[25]

Several ceramic traditions in the world were influenced by Chinese porcelain, and in most of these cases the goal was to recreate Chinese porcelain or to make an adequate substitute. In the case of Meissen porcelain,

Fig. 1.5 *Chocolatero* with iron lid. Tin-glazed earthenware with overglaze, Puebla, ca. 1700. Height: 26 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The shape is borrowed from the Chinese *guan*, and the surface decoration too borrows elements from the common jar shape, such as the division into four distinct parts and top and bottom scrolls

which was the first porcelain produced in Europe, German alchemists were forced to discover a formula for porcelain so that local potters could recreate its material properties, which had long confounded Europeans.[26] In the case of Delftware, it is argued that the industry developed as a result of trying to make ceramics that could substitute for Chinese porcelains during a time when production in China was disrupted.[27] By contrast, the potters in Puebla were not always trying to recreate the material qualities of porcelain, nor were they necessarily making a substitute for Chinese ceramics. Their goal in emulating Chinese porcelain was to produce a new and unique ceramic tradition that would be distinct from the Spanish one. This is not to say that the appropriations and adaptations of Asian goods and aesthetics led to a sense of Mexican nationalism, but the unique

position of Mexico between Spain and Asia did afford the colonial society an opportunity to distance itself from the metropole.

Jingdezhen to Puebla: A Multi-sited Narrative

We trace the entire trajectory of the *guan* from China to Mexico, where it was used to create the *chocolatero*, because in addition to the various local factors that dictated ceramic production in Puebla, the incorporation of Asian aesthetics also depended, inter alia, on the ability of Chinese artisans to make ceramics worth emulating, on the ability of merchants in Manila to make these ceramics available in Mexico, and on the generally positive reception of Chinese and Asian goods in the colony. The choices, decisions, and activities at each site were important for the functioning of the trade and had an impact on the eventual appropriation of Asian goods into colonial Mexico.

This multi-sited approach offers us a means to compare the places that were participating in global trade in the early modern era. Jingdezhen and Puebla were both known as ceramic production centers, but the manner and the extent to which their respective ceramics circulated differed significantly, as did the resulting impact on the producers of these ceramics. The potters in Puebla used their position and their access to goods imported from Asia and Europe to create their own style. Indeed, the potters' ordinances (which were written by the potters themselves) reveal a conscientious effort on their part to emulate different aspects of various artistic traditions. By contrast, the artisans in Jingdezhen, while they were producing for a much larger market, had a narrower world view. The exigencies of having to produce great quantities meant that the artisans focused very much on the manual skills that ensured that the porcelains were of standard sizes and designs. Even though the handiwork of the potters in Jingdezhen could be found all over the globe, they were not exposed to people and things from other parts of the world in the way the potters in Puebla were. A comparison between the artisans of Jingdezhen and Puebla serves as a corrective to our idea of the early modern period, which in recent years has often been depicted as an era in which the world became smaller because it was better connected. The conditions of the Jingdezhen potters remind us that this was not the case for everyone and that indeed the increased connectivity could, paradoxically, result in the isolation of some groups.

A similar argument can also be made from a comparison between Manila and Acapulco, both of which were ports. In the case of Manila,

the success of the transpacific trade depended on the fact that the site was already a place of exchange where merchants operating in the South China Sea region brought their goods to trade with the local indigenous population. The transpacific trade was built on preexisting commercial knowledge and technology, and once it began, Manila was transformed from a regional hub to a global entrepôt. Yet with this transformation some of the precolonial trade connections were significantly altered or disappeared entirely, showing again that for some groups of people the early modern era was a period of severed connections rather than increased exchanges.

Acapulco, by contrast, was created as a port expressly for the functioning of the transpacific trade; it was not a regional hub in the precolonial era. While it did not become a global entrepôt like Manila, it did hold the "most renowned fair of the world" for almost 250 years.[28] Every time a galleon arrived from Manila, the sleepy hamlet would transform into a busy thoroughfare for a few weeks. During that time one could find Asian migrants, European merchants, African former slaves, and indigenous laborers all mingling in Acapulco. It was a microcosm of the world; it was also an ideal representation of what early modern globalization might look like. It was a space that was carved out especially by global trade, and in that regard it had features in common with Puebla, which was also built anew in the sixteenth century. These various sites—Jingdezhen, Puebla, Manila, and Acapulco—coexisted in the early modern period, and seeing them side by side provides a more comprehensive view of the many different ways in which people experienced the increased connectivity that defined that era. The voyages of ships across the Pacific did herald the age of global trade, but we should not accept this label for the early modern period uncritically.[29]

The book is organized in such a way that each site of the trade is analyzed both on its own and as a part of the larger system. Each of the main chapters begins with a historical overview of the site being discussed to explain the context in which the trade took hold. The first chapter on the journey of the ceramics (Chap. 2) is set in Jingdezhen, the city that provided porcelain to "all the markets of the world."[30] Titled "Crafting a Global Brand: Jingdezhen and Its Artisans in the Early Modern World," the chapter begins with the evidence of the reach of Chinese ceramics and then delves into a brief history of the development of the material we define as porcelain, showing why Jingdezhen in particular was well suited to become the porcelain capital of the world. The main focus of the chapter is

on the manual skills and the organization of the production process that made possible the manufacturing of large quantities of ceramics.

Our emphasis on the work of artisans is due to the fact that they are often not included in histories that discuss the commodities that spurred global trade, partly because the particular skills of artisans are difficult to communicate since they are bodily practices. The chapter seeks to address this omission by trying to understand what the early modern period looked like from the perspective of the people who made the very objects that are symbols of that era of connectivity.

Beginning the journey in Jingdezhen and focusing on the hands that shaped the objects is essential for the subsequent chapters because we are forced to think about the materiality of the objects as we move to the other sites. The question of how the ceramics were handled in each place and the kinds of spaces they occupied become significant as we trace their journey out of the kilns in Jingdezhen, into cargo holds in Manila, on to sitting rooms in Mexico City, and to potters' workshops in Puebla.

In the next chapter, "From Junk to Galleon: Commercial Activity in Manila" (Chap. 3), we travel to a different kind of early modern place, a port city that epitomized the meeting of different cultures that was the defining characteristic of the era. The chapter begins with a history of the area before Spanish colonialism, arguing that the infrastructure of the transpacific trade network was partly built on preexisting commercial knowledge and the available technology in the region. By following the history of the city from precolonial into colonial times, we see how it was transformed into a global hub, especially through the efforts of the Chinese merchants, artisans, and various laborers. The port city stands in contrast to Jingdezhen, which guarded the knowledge of its artisanal practices by barring the entry of foreigners within its walls.

This chapter recreates the journey of the porcelains introduced in the preceding chapter, from a Chinese junk, through the market and shipyards of Manila, and onto a Spanish galleon, which would transport it to Mexico. It also discusses the practical elements of trade, such as the creation of a marketplace in Manila, the packing and marking of boxes, the making of ship manifests, and the construction of galleons. The emergence of a global brand depended also on the goods being made accessible through trade, which was within the purview not just of merchants, but also that of others such as architects, shopkeepers, shipwrights, and notaries.

Manila emerges as an essential site for the transpacific trade, and not merely a way station for the exchange of bullion for goods. It was in

Manila that important decisions were made about what goods would be shipped across the Pacific and how. The significance of this site was not lost on the consumers who benefitted from the Manila Galleon Trade. In Mexico City, the capital of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, the central marketplace was known as the Parián, after the area in Manila where much of the exchange of goods was conducted.

The cargo that was prepared in Manila is unpacked in the following chapter, "A Parián in the Plaza Mayor: Making Space for Asia in Colonial Mexico" (Chap. 4). In this chapter we are introduced to the colonial society in which Asian objects made a mark. It was a place that was under the rule of the Spanish Crown, and the society was a mixture of indigenous, European, and African cultures, to which was also added an Asian influence with the inception of the transpacific trade. Although Mexico was a colony, it did not always take cues from the metropole. With respect to the consumption of Asian goods, colonial subjects took charge of their own needs and preferences. They refused the Crown's wish that the trade be discontinued and adapted Asian goods to fit local purposes. They used Asian objects or created local imitations of them to record and depict historical events and places in Mexico, to adorn homegrown deities, and to consume indigenous products, most importantly chocolate. The global brand was welcome in Mexico precisely because it represented the colony's ability to directly access worldly goods.

In this chapter we follow the objects from the ships docked in the port of Acapulco into the central marketplace in Mexico City and from there into more intimate spaces, such as churches, sitting rooms, and kitchens. The movement from large to small spaces allows us to analyze how Asian commodities were construed broadly and publicly and what meanings were ascribed to them in individual and specific contexts. So, for example, we see in the transformation of the port of Acapulco and the Plaza Mayor that the trade with Asia had a significant impact on the colonial society as a whole, and when we move into smaller, domestic spaces, we see how specific objects and types of goods were employed in daily life. The following chapter, "Blue-and-white *Chocolateros*: Crafting a Local Aesthetic in a Colonial Context" (Chap. 5), focuses on the distinct ways in which potters in Puebla borrowed from Chinese porcelain. Like the other chapters it begins with a history of the site. Puebla was initially established as a religious and cultural center for the colony, being built in a previously unsettled area so that it could be a purely Spanish city, free of influences from the native populations. However, this goal was not realized, and the

ceramics produced in the city were a testament to the diverse populations and various different cultural influences present in the colony. Potters in Puebla created a style of their own that combined indigenous, European, and Asian designs. The resultant aesthetic was uniquely Mexican and became a point of pride in the eighteenth century. By considering the sociopolitical reality of the city in which the potters worked we see that when the potters rendered foreign motifs into locally recognizable forms (such as the substitution of the quetzal for the phoenix) it was not always because they were interpreting East Asian forms based on what they knew, but also because they were creating ceramics that were meant to appeal to consumers as a local product and not as a replacement for Chinese porcelain.

When the history of a place is contextualized in a broader framework, the local events take on a global significance. Such is the case with Puebla when it is studied as an important node in the transpacific and transatlantic trade networks. It emerges as a city comparable to the early modern cultural capitals of the world that had access to a wide variety of goods and where new tastes and fashions originated. The tiles of the *Casa de los Azulejos* and the *chocolatero* are examples of novelties created in Puebla that were then adopted and used throughout the Spanish colonies.

Historical Sources: Material, Visual, and Textual

The multi-sited narrative outlined above is constructed with the help of a variety of historical sources used in different combinations. Taking a cue from anthropologists and archaeologists, in recent years historians have begun to use material objects for their investigations, and this turn in historical scholarship has inspired the current work.[31] Ceramic objects spurred this study of the transpacific trade and thus are the most important historical sources in the work. Instead of merely using these objects as "props," the aim here is to take seriously their materiality, their various trajectories, and their ability to transform and shape people's lives.[32] We follow the journey of ceramics from China to Mexico and investigate the different worlds they inhabited and transformed.

Various catalogues and books document Chinese porcelain objects that can be found in Mexico today.[33] However, the provenances of many of these objects are not known; we do not know when exactly they came to Mexico. Shipwreck findings are the most accurate sources for locating objects that were sent from Manila to Acapulco, and the findings from the

discoveries of the *San Diego* shipwreck (1600) and the *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción* shipwreck (1638) are the most well known. Among the various forms of earthenware ceramics made in Mexico, the focus is on the finer ware, which was often painted blue. Many of the objects in this category incorporate Asian designs. For these ceramics the problems of provenance are different. The potters in Puebla were supposed to sign their fine pieces according to guild ordinances, but few of the surviving objects bear signatures. Although it is not possible to match potters with their objects, the ordinances and other documents pertaining to the potters' guild, such as the examination records, are useful for understanding how the potters were expected to practice their craft.[34] These sources were written by practitioners of the craft themselves, and the technical instructions and biographical information included in the records show the concerns of the guild leaders to maintain control over the development of the craft by setting rules for who could practice it and how. Only after learning about the official rules can one see when and how they were broken and determine whether these transgressions were significant to the making of the *talavera poblana* style.

Textual sources on porcelain production in Jingdezhen are quite different from the records of the potters in Puebla. Artisans in Jingdezhen were at times organized into guilds according to their particular vocations or clan relationships, but we have little information on these groups.[35] The sources that do exist describe the many steps in the production process, and some even mention the skill of the potters. For the most part these works were not written by the artisans themselves and therefore do not offer insight into how they perceived their own work or even what individual design decisions they made. The Chinese sources that describe the production process of porcelain were written by and for laymen and serve as a testament to the diligence of the artisans and the efficient division of labor found in Jingdezhen. They do not include instructions, formulas, or recipes that could provide technical information on making porcelain, which was known only to the artisans themselves. Few foreigners were allowed into Jingdezhen, but we have letters from Jesuits who did manage to see the city and write down their observations, which include details not found in the Chinese sources.

The textual record pertaining to the ceramics is used in combination with other visual and material sources. The meanings ascribed to both the Chinese and Mexican ceramics can be studied in art works that depicted them, including still-life paintings, miniatures, *casta* paintings, and images

on folding screens. These depictions offer glimpses into aspects of life in colonial Mexico that are not often included in textual sources. In addition to such representations of ceramics, extant paintings of ports, cities, and marketplaces provide visual clues about the places where goods were exchanged.

For information on the way the trade was conducted Spanish archival sources are helpful to a certain degree. These include ship manifests, cargo lists of passengers and crew, and various kinds of correspondence.[36] The official sources, including the records of what was being carried on the ships, were not always accurate, and repeated decrees are proof that the rules were often broken. For unofficial accounts of what was happening, lay histories, memoirs, and letters are excellent sources. Although the writers of such documents had their own prejudices, they provide descriptions of the atmosphere of a place, and their biases reveal what kinds of observations were important to writers and readers of the time.

The authors of lay histories and memoirs are introduced in the chapters of the book as they are cited, but one individual, Italian traveler Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri, commonly referred to as Gemelli Careri, who appears in all four of the main chapters, deserves an extended introduction here. Careri was born to a noble family in Radicena in 1651. He studied law and worked in Naples until some misfortunes forced him to travel. On the first significant tour of his life he restricted himself to Europe, but once he had tasted the joys of travel, his next journey, in 1693, took him on a tour of the world. He began his voyage to the east with Sicily and Malta and went on to Alexandria. From there he continued further east through Palestine, Persia, India, China, and the Philippines and across the Pacific to Mexico, from where he returned to Europe. The entire journey took him more than five years, and throughout that time he kept a meticulous journal with observations that have proved useful to historians over the years. The journals were published in six volumes in Italian in 1699–1700, and subsequent translations in other languages were made available shortly after, the English one as early as 1704.

Although not every event or observation that Careri included in his work can be treated as veridical, his account adds details to what we know of the places discussed in this study. Careri did not go to Jingdezhen himself, but while he was in China he was informed of the place where porcelain was produced, which he correctly identified in his work as belonging to Jiangxi province. He also described the production process of porcelain as he understood it, which is telling of what foreigners knew

of the material in the late seventeenth century. From China, Careri went to many other places, including Manila, Acapulco, Mexico City, and Puebla, the very sites that are important to this story, and his writings are helpful for comparing the various towns and cities.

Other textual sources, such as histories written by the colonizers of the Philippines, reveal the motivations of the Spanish Crown and recount the military feats that led to the conquest of Manila. They provide an overarching narrative of how the trade was established and emphasize the role of the Spanish. By contrast, for the present study, the advantage of writing from the perspective of one particular commodity is that it ruptures the meta-narratives created by histories written from the point of view of a colonizing force. These ruptures can be seen in the sites through which we follow the objects. In these various places we are forced to reckon with the tangibility of objects and recognize the tactile dimensions of commerce. We have to consider the hands of the people who made the commodities of trade, those who packed and shipped them, and those who treasured and studied them.

Notes

1. Magdalena Escobosa de Rangel, *La Casa de los Azulejos: reseña del palacio de los condes del Valle de Orizaba* (Mexico: San Angel Ediciones, 1986), 74. Along with the tiles, the ironwork was also said to have come from China. The word *azulejo*, used to refer to a glazed tile, comes from the Arabic *al-zuylacha*. The techniques for producing glazed ceramics and tiles were introduced in Spain by the Arabs. Initially, in the medieval period, decorating edifices with such tiles was a sign of prosperity and an indication of social status. As manufacturing techniques improved, they began to be used both in public and private spaces and the custom was adopted in the Spanish colonies in America. See Anthony Ray, *Spanish Pottery 1248–1898* (London: V&A Publications, 2000), 309–310.
2. Carla Zarebska, *La Casa de los Azulejos* (Mexico: Sanborns Hermanos, 1999), 33.
3. Chinese porcelain jars are attached to marble columns on a staircase inside the house. For more detail see Zarebska, 37.
4. For more on this argument see Arturo Giraldez, *The Age of Trade: The Manila Galleons and the Dawn of the Global Economy* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015).
5. The distribution of Asian goods in colonial Latin America was wide. Records show that they were consumed as far north as New Mexico and as

far south as Buenos Aires. See Donna Pierce, "Popular and Prevalent: Asian Trade Goods in Northern New Spain, 1590–1850," *Colonial Latin American Review* 25, 1 (2016): 77–97; Mariano Bonialian, "Tejidos y cerámica China por la gobernación de Tucumán y Buenos Aires. Siglo XVIII. Apuntes sobre su circulación y consume," *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, 71, 2 (2014): 631–660; Paulina Machuca, "De porcelanas chinas y otros menesteres. Cultura material de origen asiático en Colima, siglos XVI–XVII," *Relaciones* 131 (2012): 77–134.

6. See for instance Daniela Bleichmar and Meredith Martin, eds., *Special Issue: Objects in Motion in the Early Modern World*, *Art History* 38, 4 (2015), 606. The editors argue that the early modern period was "the first truly global moment in history" and do so by investigating the movement of objects: "This was a period when cultures and peoples encountered one another in unprecedented ways as a result of geographical discoveries, new cultural encounters, the spread of overseas colonies and empires, worldwide missionary projects, and the creation of long-distance trading networks. But while many humans travelled farther than they had in the past, the real globetrotters of the era were inanimate—not humans but things. Objects, ranging from rare and fragile luxury goods to natural commodities, were the most habitual and inveterate travelers, traversing vast geographical and cultural distances and permitting humans to encounter other places and other peoples at home." Other useful works that make a case for studying the interconnectedness of the early modern period through the study of objects include Paula Findlen's *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500–1800* (London: Routledge, 2013), and Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello's "Spaces of Global Interactions: The Material Landscapes of Global History," in *Writing Material Culture History*, ed. Anne Gerritson and Giorgio Riello (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 111–134.
7. Matt Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples and Cultures* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 5–6. Matsuda makes a similar argument on writing a translocal history of the Pacific that emphasizes both the local histories of different sites in the Pacific and their interconnectedness.
8. Recent works on the topic include Arturo Giraldez, *The Age of Trade: The Manila Galleons and the Dawn of the Global Economy* (2015); Salvador Bernabéu Albert, ed., *La nao de China, 1565–1815. Navegación, comercio e intercambios culturales* (Seville: Editorial Universidad de Sevilla, 2015); Mariano Ardash Bonialian, *China en la América colonial: bienes, mercados, comercio y cultura del consumo desde México hasta Buenos Aires* (Mexico City: Instituto Mora, 2014); Rainer Buschmann et al., eds., *Navigating the Spanish Lake: The Pacific in the Iberian world, 1521–1898* (Honolulu:

University of Hawai'i Press. 2014); Rainer Buschmann, *Iberian visions of the Pacific Ocean, 1507–1899* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Tatiana Seijas, *Asian slaves in colonial Mexico: From Chinos to Indios* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Dana Leibsohn and Meha Priyadarshini, eds., *Special Issue: Transpacific: beyond silk and silver*, *Colonial Latin American Review*, 25, 1 (2016); Eva Mehl, *Forced Migration in the Spanish Pacific World: From Mexico to the Philippines, 1765–1811* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

9. In the Spanish Empire, the colonies of the Americas were divided into viceroyalties, which were each governed by a viceroy appointed by the Crown. In the sixteenth century there were two such viceroyalties, New Spain and Peru, and once the Philippine islands were colonized they were placed under the jurisdiction of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. The Viceroyalty of New Spain encompassed an area that is larger than today's Mexico, but in this work we mostly focus on colonial Mexico. For more on the Spanish imperial system see John Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).
10. "Decree Regarding China Trade," in *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898: Explorations by Early Navigators, Descriptions of the Islands and Their Peoples, Their History and Records of the Catholic Missions, as Related in Contemporaneous Books and Manuscripts, Showing the Political, Economic, Commercial and Religious Conditions of Those Islands from Their Earliest Relations with European Nations to the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*, Volume 6, translated and edited by Emma H. Blair and James Robertson (Cleveland: The A. H. Clark Company, 1903–1909), 282–283.
11. Enrique Otte, *Cartas Privadas de Emigrantes a Indias* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993), 89–90. Translation mine. Spanish original: "... por allá cómo se ha descubierto en estas partes una tierra muy rica que llaman la China, y se navega dende aquí, y han traído y traen de allá cosas muy ricas, que en España no las puede haber mejores ni tan pulidas de cuantos géneros de cosas hay hoy en el mundo, como son rasos, damascos, tafetanes, brocados …"
12. "Letter from Marques de Villamanrique to Felipe II," in *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1803*, Volume 6, 284–289.
13. Dennis Flynn and Arturo Giraldez, "Cycles of Silver: Global Economic Unity through the Mid-Eighteenth Century," *Journal of World History* 13, 2 (2002), 398. It is difficult to calculate the exact amounts of silver taken to the Philippines. We have only official Spanish records which do not take into account the illicit trade that was a significant feature of the transpacific exchanges.

14. For more on the significance of British occupation of Manila see Peter Borschberg, "Chinese Merchants, Catholic Clerics and Spanish Colonists in British-Occupied Manila, 1762–1764" in *Maritime China in Transition 1750–1850*, eds. Gungwu Wang and Chin-Keong Ng (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), 355–372, and Joanne Mancini, "Disrupting the transpacific: objects, architecture, war, panic," *Colonial Latin American Review*, 25, 1 (2016): 35–55.
15. For further discussion of the ethnic tensions in Manila see Ryan Crewe, "Pacific Purgatory: Spanish Dominicans, Chinese Sangleys, and the Entanglement of Mission and Commerce in Manila, 1580–1620," *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015): 337–365, and Dana Leibsohn, "*Dentro y fuera de los muros*: Manila, Ethnicity, and Colonial Cartography," *Ethnohistory* 61, 2 (2014): 229–251.
16. María Lourdes Díaz-Trechuelo, "Eighteenth Century Philippine Economy: Commerce," in *European Entry into the Pacific: Spain and the Acapulco-Manila Galleons*, eds. Dennis O. Flynn, Arturo Giráldez and James Sobredo (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 299.
17. For example, ports in Jamaica, Panama and San Blas. For more on this see Mariano Bonialian, "Comercio y atlantización del Pacífico mexicano y sudamericano: la crisis del *lago indiano* y del Galeón de Manila, 1750–1821," *América Latina en la Historia Económica* 24, 1 (2017): 7–36.
18. See for example works by Maxine Berg, especially "In Pursuit of Luxury: Global Origins of British Consumer Goods," *Past and Present*, 182 (2004): 85–142; Anne McCants, "Exotic Goods, Popular Consumption and the Standard of Living: Thinking about Globalization in the Early Modern World," *Journal of World History*, 28, 4 (2007): 433–462; Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). For a critique of the assumption of a monolithic "rise of the west" see Craig Clunas's review essay "Modernity Global and Local: Consumption and the Rise of the West," *American Historical Review*, 104, 5 (1999): 1497–1511.
19. A similar argument is made by Rainer Buschmann, Edward Slack and James Tueller in their *Navigating the Spanish Lake: The Pacific in the Iberial World, 1521–1898* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 5: "… in its relationship with the Pacific Ocean, New Spain was not simply a dependency of its Iberian namesake; economically, politically and culturally it behaved as a metropole itself." Before this work, economic historians Dennis Flynn and Arturo Giraldez had argued for the importance of colonial Latin America to the early modern world economy by studying the flows of silver to Asia from the Americas. See Flynn and Giraldez, "Born with a 'Silver Spoon': The Origin of World Trade in 1571," *Journal of*

World History 6, 2 (1995): 201–221, and "Cycles of Silver: Global Economic Unity through the Mid-Eighteenth Century," *Journal of World History* 13, 2 (2002): 391–427. Carmen Yuste López has also challenged the assumption that the metropole held all the economic power by studying influential merchants in Mexico City and their dealings in the transpacific trade. See Carmen Yuste López, *Emporios transpacíficos: comerciantes mexicanos en Manila, 1710–1815* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2007).

20. Examples of such works include Tim Brook, *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), Giorgio Riello, *Cotton: The Fabric that Made the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), Robert Finlay, *The Pilgrim Art: Cultures of Porcelain in World History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), and Marco Musillo, *The Shining Inheritence: Italian Painters at the Qing Court, 1699–1812* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2016). See also Daniela Bleichmar and Meredith Martin, eds., *Special Issue: Objects in Motion in the Early Modern World*, *Art History*, 38, 4 (2015).
21. Art historian Craig Clunas first used the term "global brand" to describe Chinese porcelain. He argued that blue-and-white porcelain can be considered the world's first brand owing to its distinctive features and wide availability. Craig Clunas, *Empire of Great Brightness: Visual and Material Cultures of Ming China, 1368–1644* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007), 81–82. Robert Finlay has made a similar argument, writing that in the early modern period porcelain became a "truly worldwide commodity" and the earliest manifestation of the "globalization of material culture" began with "chinaware motifs, colors and shapes." See Robert Finlay, *The Pilgrim Art: Cultures of Porcelain in World History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 12–13.
22. Robert Finlay, *The Pilgrim Art: Cultures of Porcelain in World History*; Anne Gerritsen and Stephen McDowall, eds., *Global China: Material Culture and Connections in World History*, *Journal of World History Special Issue,* 23, 1 (2012); Stacey Pierson, *From Object to Concept: Global Consumption and the Transformation of Ming Porcelain* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013).
23. The Art Institute of Chicago has a *chocolatero* similar to the one shown in Figure 1.5 (museum accession no. 1923.1537). It still has the lock and key and also bears the quetzal motif.
24. Juan Villa Sanchez, *Puebla sagrada y profana: Informe dado a su muy ilustre ayuntamiento el año de 1746* (Puebla: Impreso de la Casa del Ciudadano Jose Maria Campos, 1835), 38. Translation mine. Spanish original: "… la

Loza de que se labra mucha en la Puebla, tan fina y tan primorosa, que ó iguala, ó esce de á la de Talavera y á la de Cartagena de las Indias llega á conseguir el empeño de los poblanos Alfareros, emu lar y asemejar el primor de la Loza de la China; de esta hay mucha saca, especialmente de la mas ordinaria, qu e tiene mas consumo en el Reyno."

25. For further exploration on the implications of colonial consumption of Asian goods see Dana Leibsohn, "Made in China, Made in Mexico," in *At the Crossroads: The Arts of Spanish America and Early Global Trade, 1492–1850*, eds., Donna Pierce and Ronald Otsuka (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2012), 11–40. One of the arguments Leibsohn makes is that there was a particular hybridity created by the encounter between Asian goods and colonial Mexican culture that was unique from what was seen in Europe. Edward Slack makes a similar point about the distinctiveness of the contact between Asia and colonial Latin America. He argues that Asians who migrated to Mexico in the early modern period were integrated and incorporated into the colonial society in such a way that their difference was minimized rather than exaggerated, as seen in the process of "orientalizing" in Europe. See Slack, "Orientalizing New Spain: Perspectives on Asian Influence in Colonial Mexico," *Análisis* 15, 43 (2012): 97–127.
26. The word "porcelain" comes from the Italian *porcellane*, which referred to cowry shells. Since Chinese porcelain had the whiteness and the sheen of cowry shells, the famed Italian traveler Marco Polo thought *porcellane* was an apt name also for the ceramics. This conflation reflects the lack of knowledge about the material of porcelain at the time of Marco Polo's travels in the thirteenth century. See Finlay, *The Pilgrim Art*, 71.
27. C.J.A. Jörg, *Interaction in Ceramics: Oriental Porcelain and Delftware* (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1984), 19.
28. Alexander von Humboldt, *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain; the John Black translation* [1811], Mary Maples Dunn, ed. (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1972), 206.
29. Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello have also cautioned against a facile understanding of connectivity in their introduction to *Global Lives of Things: The Material Culture of Connections in the Early Modern World* (London: Routledge, 2016), 16: "Connectivity has been a key concept in recent global histories. Yet the shaping and articulation of connections in the early modern world was far from being either unilateral or univocal. A great deal of the history of trade—focusing as it does on large categories of traded commodities—has tended to portray commercial connections as the movement of goods from places of production to places of consumption. This type of easy material connection (from 'A' to 'B') is problematic as it rarely reveals the complex linkages across spaces, how often connections broke

down, the shifting meanings that artefacts assumed within and between these spaces and the fact that mobility often reshaped artefacts physically and changed the very cultures entering into contact through exchange. Artefacts are a good way to consider the processes of connections affecting the early modern world." For an economic perspective on early modern globalization, see Jan de Vries, "The limits of globalization in the early modern world," *The Economic History Review* 63, 3 (2010): 710–733.

30. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow describes Jingdezhen and its ceramics in this manner in his poem "Kéramos," in *The Poetical Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1887), 269.
31. The seminal volume *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) edited by Arjun Appadurai was central to this intellectual turn. See also the essays in Christopher Tilley et al., eds., *Handbook of Material Culture* (London: SAGE, 2006) for a wide range of ways in which the study of material culture is fruitful.
32. Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, "Introduction: Writing Material Culture History," in *Writing Material Culture History*, 2.
33. George Kuwayama, *Chinese Porcelain in Colonial Mexico* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997); María Bonta de la Pezuela, *Porcelana China de exportación para el mercado novohispano: La colección del Museo Nacional del Virreinato* (Mexico City: UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2008); Rocío Díaz, *Porcelana china para España* (London: Jorge Welsh Books, 2010); Cinta Krahe, *Chinese porcelain in Habsburg Spain* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispanica, 2016).
34. Many of these records were compiled in the early twentieth century by Mexican scholar Enrique Cervantes. See *Nómina de loceros poblanos durante el período virreinal* (Mexico: 1933) and *Loza blanca y azulejo de Puebla* (Mexico: 1939).
35. For more information on these groupings see Fang Zhuofen, Hu Tiewen and Jian Rui, "The Porcelain Industry of Jingdezhen" in Xu Dixin and Wu Chengming, eds., *Chinese Capitalism, 1522–1840* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).
36. Many of these documents can be found in Emma Blair and James Alexander Robertson's fifty-five-volume *The Philippine Islands*, which consists of primary documents on colonial Philippine history translated into English by the two authors. Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*, 55 Volumes (Cleveland, Ohio: The A.H. Clark Company, 1903–1909).

CHAPTER 2

Crafting a Global Brand: Jingdezhen and Its Artisans in the Early Modern World

The legendary beauty of Chinese porcelain was known and disseminated far and wide not only through chinaware itself but also through references to its beauty in the sister arts of poetry and painting. The popular nineteenth-century poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882) wrote a poem titled "Kéramos" dedicated to the many ceramic traditions of the world. The poem moves on two levels which mingle and interweave as the speaker marvels over the transformative powers of art while the potter—plying at his wheel—sings a ditty reflecting on the transience of life. The speaker finds himself "[t]ransported on wings of song" and "gliding" to "regions far remote," taking his readers on a journey across various parts of the world that were known for their ceramic art. He moves from places as diverse as Delft in the Netherlands to Cairo in Egypt and eventually to Jingdezhen in China. The verses on Jingdezhen describe it as an industrious city that produced ceramics which were distributed worldwide:

> O'er desert sands, o'er gulf and bay,
> O'er Ganges and o'er Himalay,
> Bird-like I fly, and flying sing,
> To flowery kingdoms of Cathay,
> And bird-like poise on balanced wing
> Above the town of King-te-tching [sic],
> A burning town, or seeming so,—

M. Priyadarshini, *Chinese Porcelain in Colonial Mexico*,
Palgrave Studies in Pacific History,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-66547-4_2

Three thousand furnaces that glow
Incessantly, and fill the air
With smoke uprising, gyre on gyre
And painted by the lurid glare,
Of jets and flashes of red fire.

As leaves that in the autumn fall
……
So from this grove of chimneys whirled
To all the markets of the world,
These porcelain leaves are wafted on …[1]

In the succeeding stanza the speaker of the poem recalls a design he had seen on some Chinese porcelain ware from his childhood, which had a pattern he remembered: "with its bridge of blue/Leading to unknown thoroughfares; The solitary man who stares;/At the white river flowing through/Its arches, the fantastic trees/And wild perspectives of the view …" Such motifs with arched bridges or pagodas with Chinese figures were commonly seen on export ware that went on to inspire imitations in Europe (see Fig. 6.1).

In his paean to the art form presided over by the Greek deity Kéramos, Longfellow praises all the ceramic traditions that he chooses to include, but singles out the ceramics of Jingdezhen as having a wide global appeal. His ode is indicative of what people in the Western world knew or imagined Jingdezhen to be, and it speaks to the far-reaching resonances of the ceramics produced in Jingdezhen; they were so widespread that they appeared even in this American poet's "dreamy song."[2]

The characteristic blue-and-white jars, plates, cups, ewers, and so on made in Jingdezhen can be considered a global brand because to their consumers these objects evoked a sense of luxury and were seen as representative of their country of origin, China. This brand value of Chinese blue-and-white porcelains is evident in paintings from around the world that depicted these prized objects. As early as the fifteenth century we have examples of Chinese porcelains appearing in an album of paintings, believed to be from either Samarkand or Tabriz, depicting a bridal procession carrying blue-and-white jars on carts.[3] The famed Italian painter Andrea Mantegna also made a small blue-and-white porcelain cup the focal point of his late fifteenth century work known as the *Adoration of the Magi*.[4] These two paintings suggest that the Chinese ceramics had made a mark on the artists' imagination, besides providing proof of their trade along the Silk Road.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Chinese porcelain objects appeared in Mughal miniature paintings in India and with even greater frequency in European paintings, reflecting the development of oceanic trade.[5] By the late seventeenth century and the eighteenth century Chinese porcelains had come to be a staple of European still-life paintings. The material qualities of porcelain, such as its translucence and shine as well as the blue surface decoration, made the objects ideal models for such works because by depicting their sensuous properties in the most realistic way, an artist could show off his skills (Fig. 2.1).

Fig. 2.1 Willem Kalf (1619–1693), *Still Life with a Chinese Porcelain Jar*, 1669. Oil on canvas. Indianapolis Museum of Art. The jar depicted in this work is in *guan* form. The glass like qualities that were treasured in Chinese porcelain are highlighted in this painting, where the jar shines and the leaves placed in the adjoining vessel are reflected on the surface

In addition to inspiring paintings, the popularity and desirability of Chinese ceramics also spurred imitations, or knock-offs so to speak, around the world. Many ceramic production centers around the world developed blue-and-white ceramics of their own, inspired by the Chinese porcelain introduced to them. Among these places were Korea, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Mexico, the Netherlands, France, and England. Even though they did not necessarily have access to the right materials or the knowledge to produce porcelain, they worked with what was available locally to create objects that were modeled after Chinese ceramics.

Jingdezhen porcelains were prized commodities owing in large part to the matchless skill of the craftsmen who made them. These artisans worked in a highly efficient system of mass production. Porcelain, or any ceramic, is made from raw materials dug out of the earth, which go through a series of transformations. The process is long and arduous and requires the aid of many different types of tool and technology. In order to meet the demands of "all the markets of the world," the system of production in Jingdezhen was segmented into discrete tasks so that these artisans could produce high-quality objects of near-perfect uniformity in great quantities.

When scholars explain the production process of porcelain they often write about the ways in which the chemical properties of the clay change at the successive stages, but the question of specifically how artisans worked the materials to elicit those changes remains difficult to put into writing. Longfellow's words on watching a potter at work allude to this difficulty:

> Like a magician he appeared,
> A conjurer without book or beard;
> And while he plied his magic art—
> For it was magical to me—
> I stood in silence and apart,
> And wondered more and more to see
> That shapeless, lifeless mass of clay
> Rise up to meet the master's hand,
> And now contract and now expand,
> And even his slightest touch obey …[6]

To a layman, a potter's ability to give form to clay can indeed seem magical. It is a wonder that a slippery, malleable material can be turned into a sturdy form. Communicating the potters' skill and ability is difficult

since it is an embodied practice, but through the use of a variety of different sources we will try to reconstruct the process by which potters in Jingdezhen created their ceramics.[7] Given the paucity of sources that give us access to the embodied experience of the Chinese artisans, an investigation of their particular manual and artistic skills is one way in which to study how this group of people contributed to and participated in long-distance trade during the early modern period.

In recent years, as a result of the material-cultural turn in historical research, scholars have increasingly turned to investigating the making of things. Notable efforts include recreating experiments or workshops to try to understand how artisans viewed, understood, and interacted with the material world around them, especially as they were coming into contact with new types of commodities and goods.[8] This scholarship has served to make the people who made early modern goods more present in the histories of the period. For our purposes, the focus on the Chinese artisans and their skills is a way to integrate them into the larger narrative about the long-distance trade network that stretched from China to Mexico. It is an important means to understanding how they contributed to early modern trade, and how they in turn were affected by it.

To be able to access the experience of these artisans in some form we have to rely on a variety of sources, such as paintings that depict the production process, first-hand accounts of Jingdezhen potters at work, and even observation of artisans practicing the craft today.[9] The potters who produced the porcelain for the most part did not write their own treatises, and the Chinese sources that do exist were written by scholars and officials supervising the production process and the administration of the kilns of Jingdezhen. The earliest Chinese source that specifically discusses ceramic production in detail is *Tiangong Kaiwu* (“Heaven’s Craft and the Creation of Things” 天工開物), a manual on various industries in China published in 1637.[10] It was written by a scholar by the name of Song Yingxing (b. 1587), who was not an artisan himself but wrote this encyclopedic work for laymen. Song’s approach to writing about the different crafts was to be comprehensive and factual because as a scholar he believed that he could record in writing the entire range of actions that one could observe from “seeing and hearing.”[11] For Song the world was divided into two groups: scholars and commoners. In his conceptualization, the scholars were the people who possessed the intelligence and talents and therefore had the ability to communicate the knowledge of the craftsmen. While there is

obvious hubris in Song's attempts to put the skills of artisans into words, his work can nonetheless be read for clues as to how the potters trained and used their bodies to develop skills that were important for a successful ceramic production system.

Another account of the manufacturing process in Jingdezhen was written by Tang Ying (1672–1756), who was the imperial officer in charge of the kilns in Jingdezhen from 1728 to 1756.[12] One of his works is the set of captions he gave to illustrations, commissioned by the emperor, of the production process in Jingdezhen. Tang's work summarizes the entire process in twenty steps; in some regards it is quite brief, but it is still useful for providing an overview and for revealing some of the different kinds of labor and skill that were necessary.[13]

Tang Ying's descriptions were used by another scholar, Lan Pu, who also wrote about the production process in his *Jingdezhen Taolu* ("Records of the Jingdezhen Kilns" 景德鎮陶錄), published in the nineteenth century.[14] In both Tang's and Lan's works the importance of the division of labor is given prominence, and within this division they specify the expertise of the artisans who were involved in each step of the process. As someone who was living among the artisans, Tang had a different attitude towards the work of the potters from Song because he recognized that the talents and expertise of the artisans were essential to a successful firing. Be that as it may, Tang was writing as an official for other officials or scholars who were interested in an overarching description of the production process in Jingdezhen, and in this context there was not much room for the specifics of the Jingdezhen artisans' own knowledge about their labor.

There are also administrative records pertaining to the operation of kilns in Jingdezhen which were created with the purpose of providing a new official with the knowledge he needed to oversee the operation of workshops. In the case of the development of kiln technology, these records do not tell us about the contribution of master craftsmen, who had the expertise for building kilns and firing wares. This expertise was combined with the work of kiln overseers and the skills of those who loaded and unloaded the kilns.[15] Thus innovations in the firing process depended on the work of a great many people who are not credited in accounts written by the supervisors, who were prone to attribute the successful developments to their own efforts.[16] This was true of other innovations in the production process as well, such as the discovery of a proper glaze and the use of cobalt.

We may never be able to know who was responsible for which improvement or advancement in the production process, but sources do exist that,

in the interest of discovering the secret to making porcelain, describe the work of the artisans in a different manner from that of the Chinese scholars and officials. The letters of François Xavier d'Entrecolles (1664–1741), a French priest who proselytized in the area in the early eighteenth century, provide details that would not be included in official accounts. His account is not exhaustive, but does provide a comprehensive view of the production process in Jingdezhen.[17] D'Entrecolles was general superior of the French mission in China between 1706 and 1719, and superior of the French residence in Beijing for ten years between 1722 and 1732. He published works in both Chinese and French. In Chinese, he wrote in defense of the Christian faith. For the French audience, he wrote about the many aspects of Chinese society that he observed, particularly in the realm of manufacture.[18]

D'Entrecolles wrote two letters about Jingdezhen and the porcelain production process. The first one was dated September 1, 1712 and the second, almost ten years later, was dated January 25, 1722. Both letters were written before a formula for porcelain was discovered in Europe. In the first he hoped that his "detailed description of all that is concerned with this sort of work should be of some use in Europe."[19] Presumably he wanted to help Europeans make porcelain on their own. D'Entrecolles's investigation consisted of observing the process first-hand, speaking with potters who had supposedly converted to Christianity and consulting Chinese books that discussed Jingdezhen, of which he mentions only the *Annals of Fuliang*, its title referring to the county where Jingdezhen was located. In the second letter he further explained things he did not fully understand or know when he wrote the initial letter.

While at times d'Entrecolles was impressed with the artisans' capabilities, he could also be disparaging when he observed a task that he believed was better done in Europe. In those instances, his bias is apparent, as is his lack of understanding about what exactly the knowledge of the artisans comprised. His writings are useful for his observations on how the artisans worked and for his descriptions of some of the seemingly minor tasks in the production process that were nonetheless quite important for a successful firing.

These various textual sources are helpful for reconstructing the production process in Jingdezhen, but each also has its particular limitations for helping us understand the experience of the artisans and the impact on them of the increasing popularity of the objects they produced. To some extent this gap in our knowledge can be overcome by direct contact with

potters that continue to practice the craft. At the Folk Kiln Museum in Jingdezhen today the artisans do not use any motor-powered tools, and many parts of the process are performed in much the same way as that described in first-hand accounts and other texts from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[20] Observing the movements of the artisans, their postures, their techniques for holding and working with their tools, their speed, and the way they coordinate their labors helps us understand the kind of physical effort that they had to make, as well as how attentive they had to be with their bodies (Fig. 2.2).

Furthermore, by observing a craftsman in a workshop environment one realizes that in addition to training his body he also had to have an extensive knowledge of materials, tools, measurement systems, visual imagery,

Fig. 2.2 Painter at a workshop in Jingdezhen. Note her posture and the way she uses the wheel and the paintbrush. One hand is on the wheel so that she can turn it without having to interrupt her painting. She is holding the brush in such a way as to be able to paint a certain part of the object properly depending on its curvature. Different brushes are used for different purposes, and the artisan also has to have knowledge of those. There is a small piece of sponge between the heel of her palm and the vase so that she does not smudge the parts that have already been decorated. Author photo

and so on.[21] Watching an artisan repeatedly pour glaze might give the impression that his work is merely about being agile or swift when in fact his skill is also contingent upon mastery of the properties of the glaze and the tools used to apply it. By using a combination of historical sources and observation in the field, we can see not only the manual skills that the potters possessed to create the world's first global brand but also how the trade of this brand impacted the way they worked and the demands made on their bodies.

The emphasis on the skill and bodily practice of the artisans provides a way to see what early modern global connectivity looked like from the point of view of the people who were responsible for making the very objects that symbolized the increased trade and contact of the era. In the following pages Jingdezhen will emerge as one example of the kind of space that developed and expanded as a result of global trade in the early modern period. Unlike some of the other nodes of the transpacific trade network that will be discussed in subsequent chapters, Jingdezhen was not a cultural, political, or commercial center that attracted people from around the world. The city's singular focus on producing porcelain for the world isolated it, and yet, paradoxically, it also had world-historical impact as home to the first global brand.

Jingdezhen: History, Geography, and Geology

History

The blue-and-white aesthetic that had such wide reach and appeal has a global history of its own. In China blue-and-white ceramics were first made in the north of the country during the Tang Dynasty (618–907). However, these objects were not produced in great quantities and the trend did not last.[22] During the time when the first blue-and-white ceramics were made, Jingdezhen, as a designated town, did not exist. Historians have surmised that before the Tang Dynasty the kilns in the area that is today Jingdezhen operated only when the local populace was not involved in agricultural activity. It was during the Song Dynasty (960–1279) that the kilns became privately owned and began to focus solely on ceramic production. During this period the craftsmen evolved from farmers to highly skilled potters, specializing in various aspects of the production process.[23]

Jingdezhen was given the designation of a *zhen* (真), or market town administration seat, during the Jingde reign (1004–1008), and it is for

this reason that it is known as Jingdezhen. Kilns in the area flourished during the commercial expansion of the Song because they were producing porcelain for official use and for trade with the Jin or Jurched peoples in the north.[24] At this time Jingdezhen was known for producing a white ware known as *qingbai* (青白), which is translated as "bluish-white" because that was the tone produced by the glaze and the firing.[25] This porcelain was the precursor to the blue-and-white porcelain that was developed in Jingdezhen during the Yuan Dynasty.

Porcelain production in Jingdezhen area also received a boost from the increased consumption of tea in China during the Song period, when the beverage became popular beyond the world of the monks who used it as a stimulant for meditation. The manner of preparing tea changed over time and required the use of additional utensils, such as teapots.[26] In addition, green tea became more popular, which made the white porcelain of Jingdezhen more appropriate for enjoying the color of the tea.[27] The beverage was also responsible for increasing the demand for Chinese porcelain abroad in later periods. In the late sixteenth century the tea ceremony became increasingly popular in Japan, and consumers there began to custom-order Chinese porcelains.[28] In the seventeenth century tea was introduced to Europe, where demand for Chinese porcelain increased as the beverage gained popularity.

Patronage of ceramics produced in Jingdezhen continued to expand under the Mongols in the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368), when the kilns developed into larger factory complexes. It was during this period that the blue-and-white aesthetic became prominent again. Two foreign groups were partially responsible for the resurgence and dissemination of blue-and-white ceramics: the Mongols from the north who were ruling at the time and the Islamic consumers in Southwest Asia. During the Yuan Dynasty Jingdezhen expanded as a ceramic production center because the Mongol rulers demanded new products, but more importantly they also encouraged trade, especially with Muslim merchants from Southwest Asia, who initially provided the cobalt that was used for the blue painting of the vessels.[29] Potters in Southwest Asia had long been trying to make blue-and-white ceramics and had the cobalt to produce a blue color, but they did not have the right materials to make a white ceramic body.[30] The artisans in Jingdezhen were able combine the two elements to make a product that appealed to these two groups and that eventually became popular beyond the Muslim world.

Even after the Mongol rulers were ousted Jingdezhen continued to flourish because the new Ming rulers established an official porcelain factory

towards the end of the fourteenth century. At this point the kilns of Jingdezhen were divided into two categories: those that produced imperial porcelain (*guanyao* 官窯) and those that made the rest (*minyao* 民窯). Despite the distinction there was considerable collaboration between the two types of kilns.[31] Ming emperors were known to commission a great variety of objects from the kilns of Jingdezhen, keeping them busy to the point that the official kilns had to rely on private kilns to finish their orders.[32]

The *minyao* wares that were not made or sent to the imperial capital were sold in other parts of China through a network of producers, brokers, and merchants. The brokers were based in Jingdezhen and were divided into groups known as *bang* (幫), which were responsible for dealing with buyers from specific regions. Merchants would send their orders to the particular middleman who was in charge of orders for their region, and everything would be arranged beforehand, so that very little of the porcelain that left Jingdezhen was not already sold. Beginning in the early seventeenth century Huizhou merchants (from today's southern Anhui region), who traded porcelain in addition to various other commodities, strengthened and expanded their trade networks and were thus responsible for making Jingdezhen porcelain available in many parts of China and to markets abroad.[33]

Towards the end of the Ming era, imperial supervision slackened as the court was losing power; consequently, production for private sales to the foreign market increased. Support from foreign markets kept the Jingdezhen kilns active even as new rulers were coming into power, but by the 1670s the civil unrest reached southern China and many kilns in Jingdezhen were destroyed.[34] However, this was not the end of Jingdezhen's prominence. In the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), with the support of its emperors, the kilns of Jingdezhen were revived, and by the year 1683 they were producing porcelain again.

Like the Ming emperors, the Qing leaders also took an interest in the porcelain produced in Jingdezhen and commissioned porcelain ware for their palace. In this final period of Jingdezhen's glory, the artisans continued to innovate, producing new kinds of shapes and glazes and developing their use of overglaze enamels. Jingdezhen's prominence in the world of ceramics began to wane in the late eighteenth century owing to internal problems of patronage as well as competition from European ceramic centers that had discovered formulas to make their own porcelain. By the end of its reign as porcelain capital of the world Jingdezhen had been producing ceramics for nearly 800 years.

The workshops of Jingdezhen are considered to have formed the biggest industrial complex of the early modern period in China and possibly even in the whole world.[35] However, there was no central control of this complex. Imperial support of the kilns was necessary for Jingdezhen's development, but the kilns either survived or were rebuilt following dynastic changes. The potters were somewhat under official control, especially at the imperial kilns that produced porcelain specifically for the emperors, but when imperial support waned they were mostly beholden to the merchant capital that ensured the continued production and dissemination of the goods they produced.

Jingdezhen was a place that was carved out by both local demand, especially from the emperors, and foreign consumers' demand. The emperors who took an interest in Jingdezhen and commissioned objects sometimes put undue stress on the industry, but they also spurred innovation as the artisans tried to make objects that suited their fancy. Jingdezhen remained a major producer of porcelain because the artisans could keep both local and foreign consumers interested in their products, as a producer of a good brand is wont to do.

Geography and Geology

A certain amount of luck was also responsible for Jingdezhen's success as a porcelain production center. First, the city was fortunate both geographically and geologically, being located close to several bodies of water, which were useful for making ceramics as well as for transporting them. It was connected to the Yangzi River and the Grand Canal, so the objects could be taken to the capital when it was in Nanjing and also later when it moved further north to Beijing. To transport materials to the south, merchants used the Gan River. The 900-kilometer journey to Guangzhou, or Canton, the major port for trading with China, included a day-long trek over the Meiling Mountain Pass, which was the only occasion on which land transportation was used.[36] Water transportation was useful not only to take porcelain away but also to bring materials to Jingdezhen, such as the firewood needed to fire the kilns.

The artisans in Jingdezhen were also fortunate in that they had access to the right minerals for making porcelain, which in the early modern period was a highly desirable material. It was in demand for its aesthetic value as well as its utility. In the sixteenth century its virtues were praised by a Portuguese friar, who tried to persuade the Pope to use porcelain for his table service instead of silver or glass:

> We have—in Portugal—a sort of service that, being of clay, is so much better than silver in beauty and cleanliness that I advise all princes (if a humble friar can give such advice) not to use any other service and to banish silver from their tables. In Portugal we call it porcelain, it comes from India and is made in China. And the clay is so fine and transparent that the white porcelain is clearer than crystal and alabaster, and those that are striped in blue enrapture the eyes, appearing like a composition in alabaster and sapphires. What it loses in breaking easily, it gains in cheapness. The greatest princes can esteem it for its delights and rarity and it is seen as such in Portugal.[37]

The friar confirms that porcelain objects were identified with China even if they had been procured in other locales and that in the sixteenth century they were still a luxury accessible only to the very wealthy. Porcelain could compete with silver because it was still rare, but the friar also points out that it was cleaner than this metal as well. This was due to the fact that porcelain's impermeable surface helped decrease bacterial infections because particles of food could not become stuck in scratches and pores as they did in vessels made of wood, earthenware, and precious metal.[38]

When we speak of porcelain we refer to a particular type of ceramic body. In most basic terms this body is categorized as being white, translucent, and high-firing, and as a result it is also non-porous. Porcelain can be contrasted with earthenware, which fires to a brown or red color and is porous. Another common type of ceramic body is stoneware, which falls between earthenware and porcelain and can be fired at higher temperatures than earthenware but does not have a white body. In order to make blue-and-white earthenware and stoneware objects, they have to be glazed in white first, fired once, decorated, and then fired a second time, whereas blue-and-white porcelain only needs to be fired once. The earthenware and stoneware imitations are also not translucent like porcelain. The porcelain in Jingdezhen was made of two materials, kaolin or china clay, and petuntse or china stone. In the broadest terms, we can think of these materials as "clay minerals," which when combined with water form clay. The surrounding areas of Jingdezhen had great quantities of both minerals. In fact, the word "kaolin" comes from *Gaoling* (高嶺), which is the name of the mountain close to Jingdezhen where the mineral was mined. The word "petuntse" comes from *baidunzi* (白墩子), or white bricks, which refers to the form of the mineral once it had been processed for use. The fact that the English words used for these materials come from Chinese is yet another example of the influence of Chinese ceramics in the broader history of the development of ceramic technology in the world.

Other parts of the world also had access to the minerals used to make porcelain, but they were discovered later in these places. For a long time there was mystery around this material that was known to come from China, and there were fantastical theories about how it was produced, such as the following one by Portuguese traveler Duarte Barbosa, who wrote an account of his travels in the early sixteenth century:

> They make here [China] great store of porcelain, which is good merchandize everywhere. This they make from the shells of fish ground fine, from eggshells and the white of eggs and other materials. From these they make a paste which they place under the ground "for a certain time." This among them is held to be valuable property and treasure, for the nearer the time approaches for working it the greater is its value [and this paste they leave as a treasure to their sons, and they always have some left to them by their ancient predecessors with records of it, place by place]. And when the time is fulfilled they fashion it in many styles and manners, some coarse, some fine, and after it is shaped they glaze and paint it. [And in the same place where it was buried they place fresh paste, so they always have the old to work on and the new to bury.][39]

Already by the early sixteenth century, Barbosa was aware that porcelain was something that sold well in different parts of the world. Yet he clearly did not know what it was made of, or how the "paste" was prepared.

Inés de Solís, whom we encountered in the previous chapter in a letter she wrote from Mexico City to her sister in Spain in 1574, also mentioned porcelain as one of the prized commodities that was readily available in Mexico. She wrote that the glazed pottery available in Mexico is "better than that of the India of Portugal; it is transparent and decorated in a thousand styles, made in a way that even the most inquisitive officials here do not know how it is produced …"[40] Solís compares the ceramics coming into Mexico from China to those of "India of Portugal" because the Portuguese were the first to have direct access to Chinese porcelain. The porcelain that the Portuguese brought to Europe would have been the same as the porcelain brought to Mexico, but given the tone of her letter as a whole we can surmise that Solís regards the ceramics exported to Mexico as superior because she is making the case for Mexico being better situated than Spain and having access to a superior quality of goods. Finally, she also mentions that there was a mystery surrounding how the Chinese ceramics were made, confounding even the most "inquisitive" of people. This tells us that knowledge of how porcelain was made was still

limited in the late sixteenth century and that this mystery had become a popular topic of discussion.

The mystery was beginning to dispel to some extent by the time Italian traveler Gemelli Careri made his trip around the world in the late seventeenth century. During his travels through China, Careri journeyed from Canton and north into the country to the capital, and stopped in a town that he identified as Vien, which according to him was a point from which all the porcelain of the country was shipped. It is not clear what town he is referring to exactly, but he was aware that it was not far from the place where all the porcelain for domestic and foreign consumption was made. He did not identify Jingdezhen by the right name, but he did know the correct province, which he named "Kiangsi." He went on to describe what he knew of how this porcelain was made:

> But it must be observ'd, that the clay is brought from another place to Jaocheu, after it has been there bury'd almost an Age in subterraneous Wells, because of the air and water of that place; for where the clay is dug the work proves not so fine. The colouring we see in the purcellane is not superficial, but after being laid on is cover'd with the same transparent matter.[41]

Careri knew that the clay in the region was special but that it had to be shaped in a different place from where it was dug. He was also aware that the glaze used to decorate the porcelain was composed of the same material as the clay. Having access to the right materials was definitely part of the reason why Jingdezhen's artisans were able to be so prolific, and centuries of working with this clay had allowed artisans in the region to develop exceptional skills and knowledge of their materials.[42]

Making Porcelain for the World: Artisanal Skill and Division of Labor

The artisans in Jingdezhen made porcelain by mixing together kaolin and petuntse, both of which required extensive preparation before they could be combined to form a workable clay. The work of mining these different materials was done by different groups of people, who knew what properties to look for in the correct materials in nature and how to properly extract them. Kaolin had to be quarried and then levigated to remove any impurities. The remaining white sediment was then mixed with water and

was ready to be used. Petuntse also had to be quarried and then crushed to reduce its particle size. It was also levigated, then dried slightly and made into bricks. After this, whenever it was needed it was crushed again and mixed with water so that it could then be combined with kaolin.[43] For both minerals this work was divided between different groups of people with different sets of skills.[44] Those who were in charge of pulverizing the petuntse had to know how to operate the waterwheel that set drop hammers in motion to crush the mineral. This was an innovative way of grinding the material and is still used in some places in Jingdezhen since it is very energy-efficient. A wheel is placed in a flowing body of water, which propels the wheel, which in turn operates the hammers.

Once the minerals were prepared they had to be mixed together and made into a clay that could be shaped. However, once again, the artisans who prepared the clay were a different group from those who prepared the raw materials to make the clay. One of the most important steps before making the clay was to test or sample the materials in order to decide how the minerals should be combined, according to the type of objects being made. This was done by putting a small quantity of the minerals in the kiln and measuring the amount of water released, which would show the artisans the precise chemical composition of the minerals.[45] With this information they would know in what quantities the kaolin or petuntse needed to be mixed for that particular batch of clay.

We think of ceramics as quintessentially handmade objects since the potter's hand literally shapes the clay, but in the process of making a porcelain object different parts of the body were important for the different steps. For example, once the clay had been mixed and prepared it had to be trampled to make it more ductile and workable. In this process it was the feet that were used rather than the hands, and as simple a task such as pounding on wet clay with feet might seem, there was a technique even for trampling. The men and women responsible for this task moved from the edge of the clay into the center, placing one foot close to the other. In Chinese the process is referred to as "trampling the lotus mound" (踩莲花) because the clay looks like a lotus mound.[46]

Once the clay was trampled it could be shaped. The clay was shaped using a potter's wheel or in molds. In his text *Tiangong Kaiwu*, Song Yingxing describes this part of the process as follows:

> To make this type of porcelain body [round wares] first a potter's wheel has to be set-up. In the wheel a vertical wooden axle is erected, buried in the

> ground three *chi* [unit of measurement] so that it is safe and steady. On top two *chi* is permitted, and over the top and bottom round plates are arranged. The edges of the plates are turned with a short bamboo rod. A mandrel protrudes from the center of the plate. To make all the cups and dishes that do not have to be a specific shape, the clay is held with both hands on top of the mandrel, and the plate is turned. The thumbs, with the nails clipped, press the clay at the base and they lightly turn the clay and move it upwards, and thus the shape of a cup or bowl emerges.[47]

An untrained person would not be able to set up a potter's wheel, much less to throw an item on the wheel by merely reading these instructions. Only by handling the material can one learn the skill through trial and error. An artisan who threw the pot had to be in tune with the wheel and the clay. He had to monitor the speed of the wheel as well as know whether he had placed the clay properly in the center and whether it was shaping up proportionally on all sides. The object thrown on the wheel could be fairly thick because in the next step it would be trimmed, but if it was not centered properly then there was not much that could be done when trimming.

In today's pottery classes students are told that the clay responds to the slightest of movements; however, it is difficult to discern the relationship between the movements of one's hands and the clay's response to them. Students are also not always aware of the way they are moving or the kind of pressure they might be applying unintentionally. Song's description alludes to this period of learning when he says that new apprentices would inevitably spoil many pieces and would need a great deal of experience before they could throw identical objects. What he does not specifically say is that the period of learning is a time for understanding both the nature of the material and one's own body, and also for becoming conscious of it at all times in ways that one might not be used to otherwise. Song's mention of the need for well-clipped fingernails suggests an awareness of the importance of training the body and keeping it under one's control.

The effects of throwing on the wheel for a long period of time could literally be seen on a person's body. The person giving the initial shape to the object on a wheel often rotated the wheel himself with the help of a stick, in the manner seen in Song's description above (Fig. 2.3). While the wheel was moving he had to give shape to the vessel. Throwing objects in this manner required the potter to sit with his legs crossed or splayed, and after years of sitting this way the bodies of the potters changed. Their gait

Fig. 2.3 After placing the clay on the wheel, the potter rotates it with the stick. While the wheel is moving he finishes making a bowl similar to the one on the wooden plank. According to a caption to a photograph at the Folk Kiln Museum in Jingdezhen this working posture caused the potters' bodies to change: "拉坯者因长期盘膝在坯车上劳动,致使两下肢关节 变形,走路一跨一跨,故绰号为螃蟹." ("Because the potter works at the wheel for long periods of time with his legs bent, the joints of his lower limbs transform and he begins to walk one stride at a time, which is why he is nicknamed the 'crab'"; translation mine.) Author photo

changed to resemble that of a crab, which was the nickname given to them.

Today most studio potters sit on a stool and use an electric foot-operated wheel to throw their objects. They may experience discomfort if throwing for an extended period of time but irreversible change to the shape of their bodies is unlikely. Because of the way the chain of production was divided in Jingdezhen, artisans were always involved in repetitive tasks. Depending on the demand, a potter could be expected to work for hours throwing the same type of vessel. The crab-like gait of an artisan who had to work in this manner is but one example of the effects on the artisan's body in the making of this global commodity.

Once an object had been given its shape, it had to be trimmed. The artisan in charge of this step worked with the clay in a different manner from the others. He had to be able to judge how much of the clay he could trim off while still leaving it strong enough to stand. He also had to be familiar with the various blades to be used and their individual purposes. Song's description of the trimming process is as follows:

> When the unbaked piece is completely dry, as seen by its white color, it is dipped once in water, and while wet it is placed once more on the mandrel to be smoothened twice with a sharp knife (while the ware is being smoothened, the minutest shake of the hand can make speckles in the piece when it comes out of the fire).[48]

Song emphasizes the confidence and sureness of touch these artisans had to acquire, for any hesitation in their movements could affect the shape of the piece, and correcting errors could be very difficult. Like mastery of the wheel, confidence in using trimming tools came only from protracted experience.

We see that there were many demands made on the artisan's body. He had to learn the task through observation and keep repeating it until he could do it in just the right way. He also had to keep his body in shape, and then continue to practice until he had mastered his skill and could work swiftly and confidently without making errors. The highly prized finished objects are silent about the amount of physical labor that was required to bring them into being, but even observing the artisans at work can be misleading because the seeming ease with which they work conceals the bodily price paid in acquiring that ease.

Controlling and disciplining the body was not required only of the artisans who worked on the finer parts of the process of making porcelain. Even porters who were responsible for transporting finished pieces from one work station or workshop to the next had to move their bodies in very specific ways. These men had a special way of carrying the delicate vessels over their shoulders with the help of wooden planks. They could be seen and heard on the streets of Jingdezhen as they moved efficiently between workshops. D'Entrecolles was impressed with their skill and ability to move through the crowds:

> I was surprised to see that a man balances on his shoulders two long boards, on which the porcelain pieces are closely arranged, and that he goes like this through many streets full of people without breaking his merchandise.

> Truly, people carefully avoid striking him however, for one would be obliged to make good the damage one had caused. But it is astonishing that the carrier controls himself so well, and the movements of his body too, so that he never loses equilibrium.[49]

Many tasks in the arduous process of making porcelain—such as that of transporting vessels between workshops—are not immediately obvious when we see the finished product. Song wrote that a piece of clay passed through seventy-two different processes before it was finally made into a cup, and he was not necessarily exaggerating.[50] Each step of the process was divided into as many smaller tasks as possible. For example, the artisans who prepared the pigments for painting the porcelain were a different group from those who selected and separated the pigments according to their quality.[51]

Tang Ying also confirmed the separation of these tasks in his twenty illustrations. The blue of blue-and-white porcelain is made from cobalt, a mineral which is mixed with a liquid substance, often tea, to make an aqueous medium with which to create the pigment. Cobalt is an ideal mineral for underglaze painting because it survives the high temperatures required for firing porcelain.[52] During the Yuan Dynasty much of the cobalt used in Jingdezhen was probably from Southwest Asia, but by the fifteenth century domestic cobalt was being used.[53] The task of painting motifs on the objects was also divided into two steps, one for outlining the image and the other for painting it in. Tang describes the separation of the labor for the task of decorating the surfaces:

> The different kinds of round ware painted in blue are each numbered by the hundred and thousand, and if the painted decoration upon every piece be not exactly alike, the set will be irregular and spoiled. For this reason the men who sketch the outlines learn sketching, but not painting; those who paint study only painting, not sketching; by this means their hands acquire skill in their own particular branch of work, and their minds are not distracted. In order to secure a certain uniformity in their work, the sketchers and painters, although kept distinct, occupy the same house.[54]

According to Tang, the only way to ensure uniformity in the objects produced was to divide the process and to have artisans focus solely on their particular task. He even says that the ones who sketched were expected not to learn how to paint so that their hands would become accustomed to performing the one task with perfection.[55]

It was perhaps because the painters were limited in their scope that when d'Entrecolles witnessed them at work in the eighteenth century, he was not very impressed by their skill. He wrote:

> These Hoa-pei, or painters of porcelain are little less destitute than the other workers. This is not astonishing, since the abilities of one of them would not pass for a beginning apprentice in Europe. All the skill of these painters and in general for all of the Chinese painters, is not founded on any principle, and only consists in a certain routine helped by a limited turn of imagination. They don't know any of the beautiful rules of this art.[56]

D'Entrecolles's harsh judgment probably results from the fact that he saw the artisans making the same designs repeatedly and imagined that anyone who could hold a brush could paint these objects. However, by closely observing artisans at work, one realizes that d'Entrecolles may not have recognized that to be able to paint vessels, an artisan not only needed training in drawing or painting, but was also required to know how the image would be affected by the curvature of the vessels. The posture, the choice of paint brush, and the manner of holding the object could all change depending on the shape of the vessel being painted (see Fig. 2.1). The repeated creation of the same types of images might signal to some a limited imagination, but the artisans' task was not to produce fanciful images that came to their minds, but rather to ensure that the painted designs were identical and without defect. Indeed, one of the appealing aspects of blue-and-white porcelain was that it was produced in matching sets, which was important for using porcelain objects both as adornment and for dining purposes.[57]

The extended experience of painting on vessels was also useful when painters made motifs unfamiliar to them, such as the insignia of European monarchs, or wrote in scripts unknown to them, such as Tibetan, Arabic, or the Roman alphabet. These artisans would have been provided with the text that they had to paint onto unfired porcelain objects; to accomplish the task it was not necessary for them to read the script, but rather it was the knowledge of the properties of the materials they were working with that mattered. The Chinese painters had to be able to envision the foreign design or script as a composite of individual strokes and lines and thus reproduce the image one stroke at a time.[58] Their skill was in being able to break the image into smaller pieces, each of which he reproduced perfectly so that the end result was a truer imitation. In fact, this serves as a way to

understand the entire production process of porcelain in Jingdezhen since it too was divided into very specific tasks, each of which was performed by a different artisan. The artisans perfected the tasks they were to complete and learned the relevant properties of the materials that were important for them.

After the objects were painted they had to be glazed. Glaze is the glassy substance poured on a ceramic body to make it nonporous, or in the case of porcelain to protect the color of the painting in the firing process. Just as the right combination of kaolin and petuntse had to be found to create the ceramic body, the right glaze also had to be created for the kind of porcelain body produced in Jingdezhen. The glaze used for the blue-and-white ceramics was less fluid than the glazes used for *qingbai* porcelain so that the painting would not spread during the firing.[59] It was based on petuntse, and was liquid and colorless. Because the ceramic body and glaze were made from the same material, the glaze fused with the body, making it seem as if the clay came with the glaze, which is why Barbosa and others imagined that the material was dug out of the earth already painted and decorated. If the artisans failed to produce a good fit between the glaze and the body, during the firing process the expansion and contraction of the body and the glaze could occur at different rates and the glaze would crack or peel off the object.[60]

The manner in which it was applied on the objects was also important. D'Entrecolles may not have been impressed by the work of the painters, but he thought the artisans who applied the glaze were very skillful: "… there is a lot of art in the way in which porcelain is glazed, both for putting it on without any more defects than are necessary, and for spreading it equally on all sides."[61] According to d'Entrecolles, the application of glaze did not require many sophisticated tools. A successful glazing of an object was contingent upon the speed and ease with which the artisan worked. The entire process had to be completed in one smooth motion so that the glaze was applied evenly and not allowed to collect in any recesses the object might have.

Once the objects had been glazed and dried they were ready to be fired, but they could not be placed into the kilns directly. In order to make efficient use of the space in the kiln, objects were first placed in saggars, or earthenware cases. Saggars protected porcelain objects from the atmosphere in the kiln, which could consist of ash and other particles that could stick to the surface of the objects. They also allowed objects to be stacked on top of each other without any danger of getting stuck together. These containers were made by a different group of artisans who did not live in Jingdezhen.[62] Both

d'Entrecolles and Tang Ying discuss the making of saggars because these apparatuses were important for the production of blue-and-white porcelain.[63]

The objects, once placed in saggars and stacked in the kilns, were ready to be fired. Archaeological evidence shows that many different types of kiln were used in the Jingdezhen area, but by the Ming era the egg-shaped kiln had become most prevalent (Fig. 2.4).[64] This type of kiln was more fuel-efficient than the dragon kiln, which was a tunnel shaped kiln built on the side of slope, because it heated up more rapidly and was better insulated. It was also superior to some of the other kiln models because it allowed for several types of objects to be fired together, since different parts of the kiln reached different temperatures. Kiln building was another important and specialized profession in Jingdezhen and was under the control of a separate group, who were secretive about their knowledge.

The kiln was loaded by a distinct group of people who knew where to place vessels according to the temperature required, while the firing of the kiln was handled by yet another group, some of whom specialized in a fast firing while others specialized in a smooth and even firing.[65] Indeed kiln

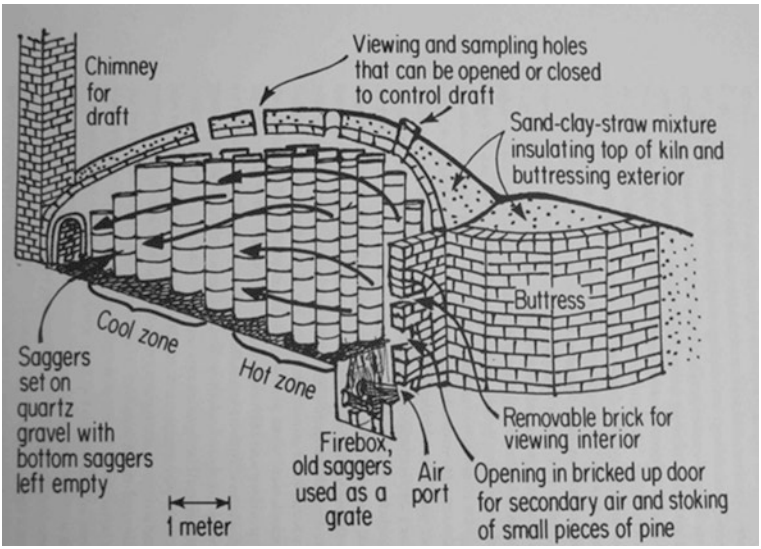

Fig. 2.4 Diagram of a Jingdezhen egg-shaped kiln. From David Kingery and Pamela Vandiver, *Ceramic Masterpieces: Art, Structure, and Technology*

technology and firing is a complicated matter that can seem quite mysterious to novices. Although many of the developments in ceramic technology probably were the result of unanticipated outcomes, by the time Jingdezhen was the porcelain capital of the world these artisans could not take the risk of not knowing what the ceramics might look like after firing. The kiln builders had to ensure that the kiln had no defects and was consistently checked and repaired. The persons in charge of the firing had to know the kiln very well, in addition to the properties of the objects that were being fired; and the fire could not be left unattended because any interruption or change could cause irreversible damage to the entire load.

Once fired, the objects had to be packed to be transported to their various destinations. This responsibility fell to a different set of workers, who were known as "mat men."[66] According to Tang, the finer-quality ware was wrapped in paper and packed in round cases, whereas the lower-quality items were tied together in bundles of ten and wrapped with straw. In earlier times, when ceramics were sent on the Silk Road, the techniques for packing were different. For transportation across land the porcelain was first placed in a container, which was then filled with sand, earth, soya, and wheat and then sprinkled with water. This mixture hardened around the porcelain and protected it on the journey. When the container arrived at its destination, the mixture was again sprinkled with water so that it would soften and the vessel could be removed.[67] The packing of porcelain was thus adapted to the specific mode of transportation that was used to move it. When it was sent on from the port cities to further locales, such as Manila, yet other techniques, based on local knowledge and methods of transporting such objects, were used.

One of the objects that was sent on the galleons from Manila to Acapulco was the *guan*, which inspired the Mexican *chocolatero*. This shape was produced in great quantities during the Yuan Dynasty when the blue-and-white aesthetic was also taking hold. The *guan* is characterized as having an ovoid shape, a short wide neck, and a wider mouth than the *meiping* vase, another popular form of the Yuan (see Figs. 1.3 and 2.1).[68] Having gotten a glimpse of the production process in Jingdezhen, we can now imagine the many artisans who would have contributed to the creation of this object. After the clay had been prepared by following the lengthy process described above, the *guan* would have been built on the wheel, but in segments: two halves would be thrown on the wheel and then luted together. The lid might be made in a mold or thrown. When the form had dried a little, it would be trimmed as required, and then left

to dry completely. At this point it would be taken to the artisans who were responsible for decorating the vessels, and they would divide the work between those amongst them who painted the outline of the design and those who filled in the color. The "sketchers," as they were named by Tang Ying, would draw panels, border scrolls, and outlines of motifs, which would subsequently be colored in by the "painters." Both of these groups would use pigments that were prepared by yet another group of artisans.

Once the decorated vessel was dry, it would have to be glazed, and given its size and shape it probably had to be dipped carefully in a container of glaze. The glaze would be wiped off the bottom of the vessel where it would touch the saggar so that it would not fuse to the saggar during the firing. It would be placed in the appropriate place in the kiln along with other objects of similar size and quality. After the firing it would be packed in paper and placed in adequate casing and then handed over to a middleman, who ensured that it reached the merchant who had commissioned or ordered the object.

Such would be the fate of the object if there was a successful firing. However, despite the advanced kiln technology and the expertise of the various groups of artisans, the making of porcelain was a delicate and fragile process. It was possible for factors such as a change in temperature or weather to affect a firing and thus to ruin a load.[69] This precarious nature of the process led people to seek divine protection for their labors. In his account d'Entrecolles mentions seeing many temples on the streets of Jingdezhen, and both he and Tang wrote about a local potter who was mythologized into a deity for his devotion to the craft and was akin to a patron saint for the potters of Jingdezhen. D'Entrecolles's version of the myth is as follows:

> As each profession has its own particular idol, and as divinity is produced as easily here as the title of Count or Marquis is given in certain countries of Europe, it is not surprising that there is a god of porcelain. The "Pou-sa" (for such is the name of the idol) owes its origin to the kind of designs that it is impossible to make. It is told that once an emperor wanted them to make him porcelain like a given model; they told him many times that it was impossible; but all these remonstrances only served to excite his desire more and more. During their life the emperors are considered a divinity to be feared by the Chinese and they believe that no one should oppose their desires. His officers therefore redoubled their efforts and used all kinds of pressure on the workers. These wretches would spend their money, go to all kinds of trouble, and only receive punishment for it. One of the workers, in

> a moment of despair, threw himself in a lighted furnace and was instantly consumed. The porcelain that was fired in this lot was perfectly beautiful, and to the liking of the Emperor, who then didn't ask for anything better. Since that time this poor fellow has been a hero, and became as a result the idol who rules over the works of porcelain.[70]

Although this account betrays d'Entrecolles's prejudice towards Chinese religion, the story is still a powerful one. A craft that required such exacting discipline of the body, in this particular instance, ultimately required the sacrifice of a body in order to achieve a successful firing.[71]

These local heroes and deities were perhaps also necessary because the potter's life was not always easy. D'Entrecolles also wrote about the impoverishment of the artisans in Jingdezhen, and while his account was biased it is true that the industry in Jingdezhen was controlled by merchant capital.[72] The artisans worked for workshops and kilns that supplied orders to the merchants, and the resultant competition and rivalry among the workshops kept wages low.[73] As early as the Yuan Dynasty foreign merchants were influential in supporting and promoting the industry in Jingdezhen, and this continued to be true until Jingdezhen lost its position as the leading porcelain producer in the nineteenth century. Despite perfecting their skills and achieving mastery over their craft most artisans did not become rich.

Tang wrote that although the kilns of Jingdezhen provided work to many thousands of workers, the nature of their work was very precarious:

> Ching-te-chen, situated within the jurisdiction of Fou-liang Hsien, is only some ten or more *li* in circuit, environed by mountains and rivers, so as to form, as it were, an island, yet on account of its porcelain production merchants throng to it from all quarters. The private kilns, between two and three hundred in number, exhibit a constant succession of flames and smoke the whole year round, and give employment to not less than several hundreds of thousands of workmen and assistants. The porcelain industry gives subsistence to an immense number of people whose life hangs on the success or failure of the furnace fires, and they are all devout in worship and sacrifice.[74]

Tang describes Jingdezhen as an island, which is an apt symbol for the city. It was a world unto itself, surrounded by mountains and rivers and covered with a smog produced by the hundreds of kilns. Despite having an impact on ceramic industries around the world, the artisans in Jingdezhen

did not themselves come into contact with many foreigners; the merchants mentioned by Tang would have been Chinese merchants. It is not even clear whether or how the introduction of foreign objects and motifs that were reproduced in Jingdezhen influenced the artisans of Jingdezhen because their allotted tasks were divided so minutely.

The artisans of Jingdezhen created a product that was in demand, and Chinese and foreign merchants formed networks and organized themselves in such a way that they could make these objects available around the world. However, as the porcelains produced in Jingdezhen were transported further and further away, the people who lived and worked in Jingdezhen did not become more connected to the places where their creations made their new homes. Instead, the world of these artisans remained restricted, and the most obvious impact of their involvement in global trade was scripted on their bodies that toiled long to provide porcelains to all the markets of the world. Jingdezhen thus stands in contrast to the next site we investigate on the journey of the porcelains, Manila, which became a global hub through its involvement in long-distance trade.

Notes

1. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "Kéramos," in *The Poetical Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1887), 269.
2. The idea of objects that "resonate" is taken from a conference workshop paper by Shigehisa Kuriyama, where he argues that the "vibrating string" is an artifact "whose resonances are so rich and far-reaching that trying to comprehend [European] cultural history without them is like … playing a lute with missing strings." Kuriyama uses the example of strings being important in the history of invention, music, mathematics, and physics to argue for the importance of this seemingly minor artifact to the development of many Western ideas. For the early modern period we can imagine that Chinese porcelain too was such an artifact, influencing many facets of life ranging from the very esoteric, such as alchemy, to the quotidian, such as eating habits. Shigehisa Kuriyama, "The Resonance of Strings," unpublished paper presented at the Workshop on the History of Material Culture, Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, December 14–15, 2001.
3. See John Carswell, *Blue and White: Chinese Porcelain Around the World* (London: British Museum, 2007), 75.

4. Andrea Mantegna, *The Adoration of the Magi* at the Getty Center, Los Angeles, CA, museum accession no. 85.PA.417.
5. See for example a painting in the British Museum collection in London depicting Mughal emperor Jahangir weighing Prince Khurram against gold and silver. In the background on shelves are shown various Chinese porcelain vessels. The painting is dated to ca. 1615. Museum accession no. 1948,1009,0.69.
6. Longfellow, 269.
7. The debates surrounding the topic of trying to understand artisanal skill are not directly addressed here, but the literature on the topic has been very useful for this research. Archaeologists and anthropologists have led the field; see for example Lambros Malafouris, "At the Potter's Wheel: An Argument *for* Material Agency," in *Material Agency: Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach*, eds. Carl Knappett and Lambros Malafouris (New York: Springer, 2010), 19–36; François Sigaut, "Technology," in *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology: Humanity, Culture and Social Life*, ed. Tim Ingold (London, New York: Routledge, 1994), 420–459; Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (London, New York: Routledge, 2000); Pamela Smith, *The Body of the Artisan: Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).
8. See for example Pamela Smith and The Making and Knowing Project, "Historians in the Laboratory: Reconstruction of Renaissance Art and Technology in the Making and Knowing Project," *Art History* 39, 2 (2016): 210–233.
9. The recent publication *Trading China: Paintings of the Porcelain Production Process in the Qing Dynasty* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Maritime Museum, 2015) has a series of thirty-four paintings from the eighteenth century that depict the process of making porcelain.
10. Ellen Huang, "From the Imperial Court to the International Art Market: Jingdezhen Porcelain Production as Global Visual Culture," *Journal of World History* 23, 1 (2012), 125.
11. Dagmar Schaefer, *The Crafting of 10,000 Things: Knowledge and Technology in Seventeenth Century China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 233. More recently Peter Golas has discussed Song Yingxing's work in his *Picturing Technology in China: From Earliest Times to the Nineteenth Century* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015) to think broadly about the place of "technology" and its representation in traditional Chinese society.
12. Huang, 127. I have used Stephen Bushell's translations of Tang Ying's writings titled "The Twenty Illustrations of the Manufacture of Porcelain" published in Robert Tichane's *Ching-te-Chen: Views of a Porcelain City*

(Painted Post: New York State Institute for Glaze Research, 1983). The Chinese original is in the official annals of Jiangxi province in book xciii, folios 19–23.

13. The twenty steps in Tang's illustrations are the following: "Mining for the Stone and Preparation of the Paste"; "Washing and Purification of the Paste"; "Burning the Ashes and Preparing the Glaze"; "Manufacture of the Cases or Saggars"; "Preparation of the Molds for Round Wares"; "Fashioning the Round Wares on the Wheel"; "Manufacture of Vases"; "Collection of the Material for the Blue Color"; "Selection of the Blue Material"; "Molding the Porcelain and Grinding the Color"; "Painting the Round Ware in Blue"; "Fashioning and Painting of Vases"; "Dipping into the Glaze and Blowing on the Glaze"; "Turning the Unbaked Ware and Scooping Out the Foor"; "Putting the Finished Ware into the Kiln"; "Opening the Kiln When the Porcelain has been Fired"; "Round Ware and Vases Decorated in Foreign Style"; "Open and Closed Muffle Stoves"; "Wrapping in Straw and Packing in Cases"; "Worshipping the God and Offering Sacrifice."
14. Lan Pu, *Jingdezhen Taolu*, translated by Geoffrey R. Sayer (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951).
15. Anne Gerritsen, "Ceramics for Local and Global Markets: Jingdezhen's Agora of Technologies," in *Cultures of Knowledge: Technology in Chinese History*, eds. Dagmar Schafer and Francesca Bray (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2011), 167.
16. Ibid., 175.
17. Robert Tichane has included translations of d'Entrecolles's letters in his edited volume *Ching-te-Chen: Views of a Porcelain City*, which has been used for this study. Robert Tichane, *Ching-te-Chen: Views of a Porcelain City* (Painted Post: New York State Institute for Glaze Research, 1983), 49.
18. He wrote about the making of silk, artificial flowers, and synthetic pearls as well as smallpox inoculation.
19. François Xavier d'Entrecolles, "Letter I," translated by Robert Tichane in *Ching-te-Chen: Views of a Porcelain City* (Painted Post: New York State Institute for Glaze Research, 1983), 51.
20. Anthropologist Fang Lili has done similar work in her exhaustive analysis of the folk kilns of Jingdezhen by combining historical resources with field-work in contemporary Jingdezhen. Fang was able to see parts of the process that I could not, and I cite from her work when necessary. Her interest in writing about the folk kilns was to detail the development of the craft in Jingdezhen so that the history of the artisans' work was not lost, which is why she systematically described all the parts of the production process. See Fang Lili, 景德镇民窑 ("Jingdezhen Folk Kilns," *Jingdezhen Minyao*) (Beijing: Renmin Meishu Chubanshi, 2002).

21. François Sigaut, "Technology," 439.
22. Stacey Pierson, *Chinese Ceramics: A Design History* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum Press, 2009), 18.
23. Margaret Medley, *The Chinese Potter: A Practical History of Chinese Ceramics* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1989), 164.
24. Michael Dillon, "A History of the Porcelain Industry in Jingdezhen," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Leeds (1976), 22.
25. Rose Kerr, *Song Dynasty Ceramics* (London: V&A Publications, 2004), 96.
26. Kuei-hsiang Lo, *K.S. Lo Collection in the Flagstaff Museum of Tea* (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1984), 24.
27. Robert Finlay, *The Pilgrim Art: Cultures of Porcelain in World History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 125.
28. Julia Curtis, *Trade, Taste and Transformation: Jingdezhen Porcelain for Japan, 1620–1645* (New York: China Institute Gallery, 2006), 3.
29. Pierson, *Chinese Ceramics*, 30–34. See also Carswell, 17–18.
30. Finlay, 158. Shelaigh Vainker, *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain* (London: British Museum, 2005), 139.
31. Dillon, "A History of the Porcelain Industry in Jingdezhen," 124.
32. Fang Zhuofen, Hu Tiewen and Jian Rui, "The Porcelain Industry of Jingdezhen," in *Chinese Capitalism, 1522–1840*, eds. Xu Dixin and Wu Chengming (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 312.
33. Michael Dillon, "Transport and Marketing in the Development of the Jingdezhen Porcelain Industry during the Ming and Qing Dynasties," *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient* 35, 3 (1992): 284–286.
34. Dillon, "A History of the Porcelain Industry in Jingdezhen," 37.
35. Lothar Ledderose, *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 86.
36. Finlay, 45.
37. A. Varela Santos, ed., Portugal in Porcelain from China: 500 Years of Trade, Volume 1 (Lisbon: Artemágica, 2007), 56.
38. Finlay, 130.
39. Duarte Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Volume 2, translated and edited by Mansel Longworth Dames (London: Hakluyt Society, 1921), 213–214.
40. Enrique Otte, *Cartas Privadas de Emigrantes a Indias* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993), 89–90. Translation mine. Spanish original: "… loza major que de la India de Portugal, toda trasparente y dorada de mil géneros, de manera hecha que los muy curiosos oficiales de acá no saben determiner de qué manera vengan hechas …"
41. John Francis Gemelli Careri, "A Voyage Around the World," in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels: Some now first printed from original manuscripts,*

others now first published in English …, Volume IV (London: Awnsham and John Churchill, 1704), 305.

42. For more on the European discovery of porcelain see Martin Schönfeld, "Was there a Western Inventor of Porcelain?," *Technology and Culture*, 39, 4 (1998): 716–727.
43. Stacey Pierson, *Earth, Fire and Water: Chinese Ceramic Technology. A Handbook for Nonspecialists* (London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, 1996), 13.
44. Fang, 265.
45. Ibid., 273.
46. Bai Ming, *The Traditional Crafts of Porcelain Making in Jingdezhen*, translated by Mao Zengyin (Jingdezhen: Jiangxi Fine Arts Publishing House, 2002), 70.
47. Translation mine. Chinese original: "造此器坯,先制陶車。車竪直木一根,埋三尺入土內,是之安穩。上高二尺許, 上下列圓盤, 盤沿以短竹棍撥運旋轉,盤頂正中用檀木刻成盔頭帽其上。凡造杯,盤,無有定形模式,以兩手捧泥盔帽之上,旋盤使轉。拇指剪去甲,按定泥底,就大指薄旋而上,即成一杯碗形(初學者任從作廢,破壞取泥再造)。" Song Yingxing, 天工開物 (Beijing: 国际文化出版公司, 1995), v. 2, 6.
48. Translation mine. Chinese original: "… 曬成極白乾。入水一汶,漉上盔帽,過利刀二次(過刀時手脈微振,燒出即成雀口)。" Song, v. 2, 7.
49. D'Entrecolles, "Letter I," translated by Robert Tichane in *Ching-te-Chen: Views of a Porcelain City*, 88.
50. Chinese original: "一坯工力過手七十二方克成器." Song, v. 2, 7.
51. D'Entrecolles, "Letter I," translated by Robert Tichane in *Ching-te-Chen: Views of a Porcelain City*, 149: "The blue material after it has been roasted, must be specially selected, and there is a particular class of workmen whose duty it is to attend to this. The superior kind selected is that which is dark green in color, of rich translucent tint and brilliant aspect. This is used in the imitation of antiques, for the monochrome blue glaze, and for fine porcelain painted in blue. When of the same dark-green color, but wanting somewhat in richness and luster, it is used for the decoration of the coarser porcelain made for sale. The remainder, that has neither luster nor color, is picked out and thrown away."
52. Pierson, *Earth, Fire and Water*, 28–29; Nigel Wood, *Chinese Glazes* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 62.
53. Carswell, 22–23.
54. Tang Ying, "The Twenty Illustrations of the Manufacture of Porcelain," translated by Stephen Bushell in *Ching-te-Chen: Views of a Porcelain City*, ed. Robert Tichane (Painted Post: New York State Institute for Glaze Research, 1983), 152.
55. At the Jingdezhen Jiayang Workshop the work is still divided in this manner.

56. D'Entrecolles, "Letter I," translated by Robert Tichane in *Ching-te-Chen: Views of a Porcelain City*, 151.
57. Consider for example dining and garniture sets that became popular in Europe as a result of the introduction of Chinese porcelain.
58. Art historian Lothar Ledderose writes about module production in Chinese art and has described the motifs on Chinese porcelain as composites of lines and strokes in *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 97.
59. Wood, 61.
60. Pierson, *Earth, Fire and Water*, 19–20.
61. D'Entrecolles, 87–88. He describes the glazing process as follows: "First one takes a cup in one hand by the outside and, holding it on a slant over the container of glaze, with the other hand one pours inside enough glaze so that it is nearly filled. This is done for a large number of cups. When the first of these is dry on the inside, one gives them a coat of glaze on the outside in the following manner: one holds one hand inside the cup, and supporting it with a little stick under the middle of its foot, one plunges it in the container of glaze, from which it is removed immediately."
62. Tang Ying, 140.
63. D'Entrecolles even discusses the way artisans put porcelain objects into the saggars because that step too required skill: "It is necessary for me to describe the manner in which porcelain is placed in these saggars; the worker does not touch the pieces directly with his hands; he might break them, for nothing is more fragile, or distort them, or fill them full of defects. Instead he picks up each piece from the board by means of a little cord. This cord is held by a stick with two branches, or a fork of wood that he takes in one hand, while with the other he holds the two ends of string, crossed or open according to the size of the porcelain piece. It is in this manner that he grasps a piece, raises it gently, and then puts it in the saggar on the little saucer. All that is done with incredible swiftness." D'Entrecolles, 91–92.
64. Fang, Hu and Jian, 310; Finlay, 93.
65. Fang, Hu and Jian, 316.
66. Tang Ying, 168.
67. Carswell, 76.
68. Medley, 178–182.
69. D'Entrecolles, 96.
70. Ibid., 102.
71. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties every major craft guild had its own patron saint or deity. This was especially true of crafts that involved transforming materials, such as metallurgy, ceramics, and lacquerwork. See Anthony Barbieri-Low, *Artisans in Early Imperial China* (Seattle:

University of Washington Press, 2007), 102–106. In Jingdezhen even the different types of tasks within the overall production process had their own deities. See Fang, *Jingdezhen Minyao*,145–149.

72. Fang, Hu and Jian, 322–323.
73. Finlay, 26.
74. Tang Ying, 170.

CHAPTER 3

From Junk to Galleon: Commercial Activity in Manila

In its depths the sea guards such mysteries
That have yet to be uncovered, so many fantasies
Stranded in the route between two ports,
Such that one has to finally reckon
That the color of the sea is not all innocent,
It has the muffled moss of history
The lost gazes of men
And the intact treasure of an immense
Blue inkwell that awaits
A paper sailboat, the seagull
Of the blank white page
That will convert the secret into an open book.

For merchant-owners and sailors the vessels used in sea trade were more than just means of transporting goods; they bore the weight of pride of the shipbuilders and the hopes and fears of the many seafaring professions. The poem quoted above, by the Spanish poet Fernando Beltrán (b. 1956), is included in a book titled *Retrato de un navio* ("Portrait of a Ship"), about a seventeenth-century Manila Galleon, *Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Zaragoza* ("Our Lady of the Pillar of Zaragoza").[1] The poet deftly links the blue of the ocean and of ink and the blank white of paper and of a seagull to allude to the imaginative work of the historian. The poem can be read as exhorting the historian to plumb the depths of the sea, which is

M. Priyadarshini, *Chinese Porcelain in Colonial Mexico*,
Palgrave Studies in Pacific History,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-66547-4_3

itself like the past that holds mysteries that await solution, or tales of vanished men and their visions that must be told anew. A great number of the galleons that traveled between Manila and Acapulco capsized and ended on the ocean floor, their treasures being hunted to this day. One such ship that went down was the *San Diego*, which was attacked by the Dutch and shipwrecked in 1600 (see Fig. 1.4).[2]

Although the goods on board the *San Diego* never reached their intended destination, by 1600 the colonial populace in Spanish America had already been receiving Asian commodities from Manila for more than two decades. For example, in 1592 a man by the name of Juan Bauptista Moroso carried 900 pieces of glazed ceramics (*loza)* from Manila to Acapulco aboard a galleon by the name of *San Philippe*.[3] The *libro de sobordo*, or book of freight, does not give us much more information about the kinds of ceramics Moroso carried, but we can surmise that such a large load might have included a wide variety, ranging from high-quality objects to ceramics meant for daily use. In the previous chapter we explored the history of Jingdezhen and saw how the world's first global brand was produced. Now we will investigate the history of Manila and the context in which these same objects were traded by Chinese merchants to their counterparts from Mexico. We will see that already by 1592 a system was set up for Chinese merchants to be able to bring their wares to Manila and sell them.

The transpacific trade system was built upon mercantile technologies and knowledge that existed in the region before the arrival of Europeans. Ceramics produced in Jingdezhen have been found in archaeological sites in the environs of Manila, proving that a longstanding trade network between the Chinese and the natives of the islands of Philippines existed before the inception of the transpacific trade. Trade in the South China Sea region had been vibrant, to the point where Chinese merchants were aware of the specific tastes of the different groups in the area and had the knowledge and ability to procure and provide the goods in demand. When the Spanish arrived in the mid-sixteenth century they saw that people on the island of Luzon, where Manila is located, had access to Chinese goods, and they chose it as the base for their activities in Asia:

> Upon capturing this island [Luzon] we found a quantity of porcelain, and some bells which are different from ours, and which they esteem highly in their festivities, besides perfumes of musk, amber, civet, officinal storax, and aromatic and resinous perfumes. With these they are well supplied, and are

> accustomed to their use; and they buy these perfumes from Chinese who come to Mindanao and the Philipinas [sic].[4]

One of the local impacts of the emergent global brand of Chinese ceramics on Manila and the Philippines of the global brand of Chinese ceramics was that it made the site attractive for Spanish colonization. The blue-and-white pieces of porcelain were a sign to the Spanish of potential lucrative opportunities.

Once Luzon and other islands of the Philippines were colonized and the transpacific trade had begun, Manila was transformed into an entrepôt of global proportions. For a few decades it was one of the busiest ports in the region, attracting merchants from around the world. An obviously admiring seventeenth-century description of Manila written by the Franciscan Friar Bartolomé Letona depicts Manila as the very center of the world:

> The variety of nations seen in Manila and its environs is the greatest in the world, for there can be found peoples from all the kingdoms and nations: Spain, France, England, Italy, Flanders, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Moscow, from all the East Indies and West Indies, Turks, Greeks, Moors, Persians, Tartars, Chinese, Japanese, Africans, and Asians. And in the four corners of the world there is hardly a kingdom, province or nation from which people do not [come to Manila], as a result of the frequent voyages that are made here from East, West, North, and South.[5]

While the founding of Manila as a city happened under the aegis of the Spanish Empire, the building and development of the port were achieved by the cumulative work of several different groups of people, most notably Chinese merchants and migrants, for whom the building of Manila was particularly beneficial. In the late sixteenth century, the Longqing Emperor of the Ming Dynasty lifted bans on trade and the economy of the Chinese Empire was in need of silver, thus making Manila a rewarding destination. Every year between about ten and forty junks arrived from China to Manila carrying a great variety of commodities for the transpacific trade as well as supplies for the diverse population living in Manila. The more valuable commodities included silk in its various forms, porcelains, lacquered goods, and spices. But the sheer volume and variety of goods being traded in Manila were such as to leave one well-known commentator almost breathless in the listing of these goods; he exclaimed that were he to "refer to them all, [he] would never finish, nor have sufficient paper for it."[6]

These junks also brought Chinese merchants, artisans, and laborers to Manila, some of whom stayed and contributed to the economic activity of the city, and also to its changing demographics as noted above by Bartolomé Letona. By the year 1603 it is estimated that there were around 20,000 Chinese residing in and around Manila, compared with a population of around 1000 Spaniards.[7]

A seventeenth-century wooden chest depicting a painting of colonial Manila symbolizes the meeting of the Spanish and the Chinese in the Philippines (Fig. 3.1). The wood used to make the chest was local to the Philippines, but the design was Spanish, and the craftsman who made it was probably Chinese.[8] The very physical construction of the chest serves as a representation of colonial Manila, where local resources were used by Spanish and Chinese merchants for a trade that created a new relationship between Chinese producers and colonial Mexican consumers. The

Fig. 3.1 Wooden chest with iron fittings, Manila, 1650–1660. Oil painting, 63.5 cm × 143 cm × 68 cm. Museo José Luis Bello y González, Government of the State of Puebla, Mexico. The painting inside the chest is one of the earliest of the port of Manila. Most of the surface is occupied by the walled city where the Spanish residents lived. In the background are several shipping vessels, some Chinese, some Spanish. Smaller boats, known as sampans, are shown coming into the city presumably laden with goods brought to the island on one of the Chinese junks shown in the background. In the bottom right corner we see a cordoned-off area, which is the Parián, the main market in Manila. Its importance to the city is made clear by the fact that a great many figures are depicted there and it is shown to be the most active area

artist who made the painting has made this connection clear by showing two different kinds of shipping vessels in the background. To the left we see Chinese junks characterized by their battened sails, and on the right a Spanish galleon, identifiable by its square rigs.

As a shipping container that would have been used to carry Asian objects to Mexico, the wooden chest can also be seen as a packaging of Asia, an object that held within it information and clues about Asia for colonial Latin American consumers. It is a miniature version of the larger cargo hold of a ship that traveled from Manila to Acapulco. The goods stowed on the Manila Galleons would make their way into various parts of colonial Latin America and offer consumers a glimpse of the people, places, and cultures across the Pacific. As it was the site where Asian goods were bought and where galleons were constructed and loaded, we can understand that Manila was a place where a certain idea of Asia was created and parceled for colonial Latin American society.

The preparation of the Manila Galleons was a process of incremental changes that included stages such as the construction of a marketplace and the emergence of specific practices for packing, marking, and recording the goods, and for the manufacture and loading of ships. In the previous chapter we saw the level of detail and the extensive production process that were required for making porcelain. In a similar manner, in this chapter we will see the various steps that were necessary to make goods from Asia available in the New World colonies. In Jingdezhen it was believed that a piece of clay passed through seventy-two hands in order to be transformed into a beautiful porcelain object. In Manila too the making and packing of the cargo hold of a ship required the work of many different groups of workers before it was ready and the ship could sail off.

To understand this process, we will first investigate the history of the trade between China and the Philippines before the arrival of the Spanish, and then move on to consider the transformation of Manila into a global trade hub in the early modern period. Having established the historical context for the development of the Manila Galleon Trade, we will then look more closely at the material aspects of the trade to underscore the fact that many different groups of people performing discrete tasks were involved in the building and functioning of a commercial network.

Nanyang Commerce Before the Arrival of the Spanish

A thirteenth-century Chinese source tells us that Chinese merchants had considerable knowledge of their various customers' demands in the South China Sea region, which they referred to as Nanyang (南洋). In *Zhu Fanzhi* ("Description of the Barbarian Peoples" 諸番志), the author Zhao Rugua, superintendent of maritime trade at the port of Quanzhou, provided detailed accounts of the kinds of ceramics that were preferred by the various communities in Southeast Asia. For example, *qing ciqi* (green porcelain 青瓷器) was preferred in Bo-ni, or Borneo, and *qingbai* ware (bluish-white porcelain 青白) was the choice of the people in Yapo, or Java.[9] In addition to listing preferences, Zhao also described how trade was carried out with the various peoples of the region. The following is from his description of what happened when a Chinese ship arrived at one of the islands that are today part of the Philippines:

> When trading ships enter the anchorage, they stop in front of the official's place, for that is the place for bartering of the country. After a ship has been boarded, the natives mix freely with the ship's folk. The chiefs are in the habit of using white umbrellas, for which reason the traders offer them as gifts. The custom of the trade is for the savage traders to assemble in crowds and carry the goods away with them in baskets; and, even if one cannot at first know them, and can but slowly distinguish the men who remove the goods, there will yet be no loss. The savage traders will after this carry these goods on to other islands for barter, and, as a rule, it takes them as much as eight or nine months till they return, when they repay the traders on shipboard with what they have obtained (for the goods). Some, however, do not return within the proper term, for which reason vessels trading with Ma-i are the latest in reaching home … The products of the country consist of yellow wax, cotton, pearls, tortoise-shell, medicinal betel nuts and yu ta cloth, and the (foreign) traders barter for these porcelain, trade-gold, iron censers, lead, coloured glass beads, and iron needles.[10]

Zhao's description can be corroborated with archaeological and anthropological research done in the region. We know that there was no centralized kingdom and that the various communities were connected by an intricate system of gift-exchange that existed before the establishment of trade relations with Chinese merchants.[11] Archaeologists have found Chinese porcelain in the coastal regions as well as in the hinterlands of the

islands, indicating that these goods were incorporated into an intra-regional system of trade between lowland peoples who had access to trade, the interior swidden-cultivating tribal groups, and the upland hunter–gatherer peoples, who were responsible for procuring the goods that were in demand in China.[12] The traders on these islands and the merchants from China connected different parts of southern China to the hinterlands of the Philippines.

For Chinese merchants Luzon and other islands of the Philippines were one of many destinations in the South China Sea region where they sold their goods. Given the geographical proximity it is easy to imagine how China might have had longstanding ties with the kingdoms and communities of Nanyang, but it was only during the Song Dynasty (960–1279) that these connections intensified through trade.[13] During this time maritime trade surpassed the overland Silk Road trade that had been going on for centuries. Chinese merchants defined two routes, the eastern and the western, along which to sell their wares.[14] The western route gave them access to Vietnam, Cambodia, Siam, the Malay Peninsula, and the Indonesian archipelago, while the eastern route led them to Luzon, Mindanao, and the Spice Islands in the eastern Indonesian archipelago.[15] In both cases the trade was conducted by merchants from the region known as Fujian, and the ports' levels of activity varied over time. Quanzhou was a major port for much of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), but later Xiamen gained importance, as did Guangzhou, or Canton.[16]

One of the reasons why the South China Sea region saw such tremendous commercial activity was because there was a demand within China for the goods from Nanyang and an extensive interior network, much of which relied on river transportation, that made these goods available inland. The products from Nanyang that were most in demand in China included frankincense, sandalwood, aromatics, drugs, spices, tortoise shell, rhinoceros horn, beeswax, and pearls.[17] Great river junks, sometimes manned by up to fifty or sixty men, would transport local foods, such as rice and salt, as well as foreign goods that were popular.[18]

Chinese goods that were sent overseas were transported in even larger vessels. The sea-going ships had more masts and sails than the river junks. Arab traveler Ibn Battuta, who was in China in the fourteenth century, commented on the design of these vessels:

> People sail on the China seas only in Chinese ships, so let us mention the order observed upon them … A single one of the greater ships carries

> 12 sails, and the smaller ones only three. The sails of these vessels are made of strips of bamboo, woven into the form of matting. The sailors never lower them (while sailing, but simply) change the direction of them according to whether the wind is blowing from one side or the other.[19]

Battuta's reference to sails is pertinent because this was a significant difference between European and Asian ships, since the two types of vessels had to deal with different kinds of winds. However, Battuta's insistence on "Chinese ships" is misleading because as early as the eighth century Chinese shipbuilding was being influenced by Javanese ships. This collaboration only increased in later periods, when contacts intensified and Chinese merchants had their ships built in parts of Southeast Asia. Today we call these ships "junks" because that is how the Portuguese identified them when they first arrived in the region, but the word is probably of Malay or Javanese origin.[20]

When Europeans arrived in the South China Sea region to join the trade in the sixteenth century much of the shipping technology required to transport goods already existed, as did merchants' knowledge about where to procure those goods. The Europeans did not demand anything of the Chinese merchants that they were not already accustomed to providing or that they did not have the resources to provide. If we think of the early modern period as a time of increased connectivity, we have to remember that the South China Sea region had already been a vibrant, intercultural space for several centuries.[21] The merchants operating in the area had created a web of commerce that linked the Chinese interior with various Southeast Asian polities and the Indian Ocean world.[22] When the Europeans arrived they joined this preexisting web, and initially some groups, like the Chinese merchants, did not object to their arrival because they brought silver with them.

However, what was a fortuitous meeting for Chinese and Spanish merchants and the beginning of the transpacific trade was also a moment that saw the end of an era of trade for many groups of islanders of the Philippines. Those living in places where the Spanish presence was notable were forced to work in shipyards or do other menial labor, and many even succumbed to the diseases brought by the Europeans.[23] This rupture in the lives of the natives is also significant to our understanding of the early modern world, since for these groups of people, the new period brought with it the experience of being disconnected from previous networks, and thus a loss in their ability to participate in the commerce of the region in a meaningful and profitable way.

Maynilad Becomes Manila: The Making of a Global Trade Hub

We saw earlier in the quote from Franciscan Bartolemé Letona that after the transpacific trade began, Manila was one of the most vibrant port cities in the world. However, the arrival of the Spanish did not bring the city global fame overnight. Before Spanish colonization, the particular site had already been a hub, a fact that the Spanish capitalized on. We already know from Chinese sources about the trade between China and the island of Luzon as far back as the Song Dynasty. A few hundred years later, when the Spanish arrived at the site that is today Manila, they noted that there were four Chinese vessels in the harbor and forty "married Chinese" and twenty Japanese living there.[24] At the time the place was known as Maynilad, a name that refers to a type of water lily that thrived in the river, today referred to as the River Pasig. The population of some 2000 was ruled by Rajah Sulayman, who was related to the King of Brunei; this made him and his family bilingual in Malay and Tagalog and made Maynilad a multicultural and multilingual place even before the Spanish invasion.

Despite the small population and territory, we must realize that the people living in Maynilad and other such places had a much larger sense of the world they knew themselves to be a part of because of their relationship with the ocean.[25] People lived in settlements known as *barangays*, a term which comes from the Tagalog for "boat" and signified a "political community defined by personal attachment, not territorial location."[26] Such settlements were usually along rivers so that those situated at a river's mouth faced the sea. Maynilad had a palisade made of palm tree logs built on a mound facing the sea. As discussed earlier, the king and his followers would have been connected to upriver settlements through a system of exchange while at the same time being tied politically to neighboring polities; and finally, because of their location by the sea, they were also situated at the crossroads of the trade networks that connected India, China, and Japan.[27] This site, like many others in Southeast Asia, was not brought into global trade by the Spanish; rather it would be more useful to think of the Spanish conquest as changing the relationship of these people to the ocean and their involvement in its currents.

The first encounter between the Spanish and the King of Maynilad took place in 1570, at which point the Spanish were based in the Visayas, south of the island of Luzon. They found it an unsatisfactory location from which to conduct business, and relations with the rulers there were tenuous.

While they were in the Visayas, junks from Luzon arrived carrying Chinese commodities, which encouraged Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, the leader of the mission, to send a group to explore Luzon.[28] That group met the Rajah, but according to Spanish records, despite a show of friendship the Rajah was actually hostile, instigating a violent confrontation. A year later in 1571 Legazpi himself returned and conquered the area, naming it Manila as a city that from thenceforth was meant to be a part of the dominion of the King of Spain, Philip II, after whom the Philippines are named.

Manila was a unique port city at the time owing to the fact that it was founded and operated under the jurisdiction of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, today's Mexico. Legazpi's mission had been planned and funded in the viceroyalty and not in Spain. Manila, then, in some respects was a colony under the control of another colonial state. Unlike later European commercial enterprises, such as those of the Dutch and the British that came in the form of trading companies, the Manila Galleon Trade operated as an enterprise of the viceroyalty in Mexico. The ties between Manila and Mexico were stronger than those between Manila and the Spanish Crown by sheer virtue of the fact that information between the Asian colony and Spain had to go via Mexico.

The close ties between the two colonies were unwelcome for the Spanish Crown because industries in Spain suffered from the competition with Asian commodities, while at the same time the Crown also lost silver to Asia. One of the most important factors for the survival of the transpacific trade was silver. It was stated earlier that silver was important for attracting Chinese and other merchants to Manila, but at the other end of the Pacific it was also important to the merchants in Mexico City who had direct access to the silver mines in the New World. They wanted to, and often did, decide for themselves how to use it. The mines in New Spain and Peru are said to have produced 80 percent of the world's silver in the early modern era, possibly around 150,000 tons.[29] While much of it went to Europe, a significant amount was also sent to Asia: 50 tons annually, according to some estimates. In the seventeenth century this amount equaled the combined shipments of silver from Portugal and the English and Dutch East India Companies.[30] It is not surprising that such large amounts were sent because on the other side of the ocean, Mexican merchants had the potential to see profits as high as 200 percent on goods that they bought in Manila.[31]

Earlier scholarship on the transpacific connection between the Americas and Asia often referred to the Pacific Ocean as the "Spanish Lake," but

recently this term has been challenged and the term *Lago indiano*, or "Lake of the Indies," is proposed since the impetus to continue the trade came from consumer and merchant interests in the Viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru.[32] The conflicts between the interests of the Spanish Empire and those of the merchants from the Americas were evident in the animosity harbored towards the merchants by Spanish colonists in Manila. The colonists complained to the Crown that Mexican merchants drove up the price of Chinese goods, thus effectively preventing the colonists from participating in the trade. They tried to control the Mexican merchants by instating the *pancada* law, which stipulated that the Spanish officials in Manila would purchase Chinese goods wholesale on the boats of the Chinese rather than in the fairs and the market, where they would have to compete with the Mexican merchants. Both the Chinese and the Mexican merchants complained against this, and ultimately the colonists were unable to enforce the new scheme.[33]

The colonists and the Crown found that the Mexican and Chinese merchants had the help of another important ally, the Church. Commercial activities were allowed to continue because they were often portrayed as being secondary to the larger and supposedly more important mission of evangelizing. In a memorandum addressed to the king in 1635, the procurator-general of the city of Manila argued that the "principal consideration" of preserving the colony in the Philippine islands was "the service of God, and the propagation of religion and the Catholic faith."[34] The Catholic orders, and especially the Dominicans in the early years of the trade, were interested in bringing as many Chinese into the fold of Christianity as possible, and in order to attract them to Manila they had to support their commercial activities. Thus, trade and religion not only coexisted in Manila, but also mutually reinforced each other.[35]

Like the merchants from Mexico, the Chinese traders too looked out for the growth of their private wealth rather than that of the Chinese Empire.[36] The region of southern China where most of the Chinese merchants and laborers came from did not necessarily flourish as a whole through Chinese involvement in the Manila Galleon Trade, though individual families and lineages did.[37] The merchants who participated in the trade did not invest their profits into the infrastructure of the ports where they traded from, but preferred to give back to their homelands, reflecting the emotional attachment that traders and sojourners felt for their native places and lineages. These people chose to either support their relatives or invest in shipbuilding and sustaining their own business networks, rather than contributing to

the general economic development of the area. Their networks connected different locales in the region, and allowed them to survive and to compete with other Asian and European merchants.

This was the sociopolitical context in which the Manila Galleon Trade was established and functioned over the years. There were various interests, which at times competed with each other, making Manila less stable in some ways than other comparable cities. In the first few decades after the trade began and into the early seventeenth century, the galleon trade experienced great prosperity. However, Manila could not maintain its status as the major port in the South China Sea region for long, owing to several factors, including strained relations with the Portuguese and the Japanese, Dutch incursions, fear of Chinese uprisings, and internal weaknesses such as lack of proper administration and development of the colony. However, in the second half of the eighteenth century we begin to see a turning point in the fortunes of the Manila Galleon Trade and perhaps a shift in power.[38]

The city did experience a decline in fortune, but it did not cease to be a hub for trade between the Spanish Americas and the Chinese. We know that the trade continued and that silver from the New World mines continued to find its way to China.[39] We also know that the demand from the Spanish American colonies for Asian goods did not abate. Even after the Crown banned trade between the Viceroyalties of Mexico and Peru, fearing the loss of Peruvian silver to Asia, repeated edicts throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are proof that the bans were ineffectual. By the late sixteenth century a system of exchange had been established that continued to be developed and improved upon as time went on. In the following pages we will focus specifically on this system, paying particular attention to three aspects of the trade process: the marketplace, packing and recording techniques, and shipbuilding and loading. These aspects allow us to see how the trade functioned but also, more importantly, they highlight the particularities of the Manila Galleon Trade.

Commercial Activity in Manila: Marketing, Packaging, and Shipping Asia

Marketing Asia: The Parián, the Adornment of Manila

Thirteenth-century Chinese chronicler Zhao Rugua, cited above, stated that when Chinese merchants went to the islands to conduct trade there

was no marketplace where they could sell their wares and that they did not even disembark from their ships; instead the natives of the islands came aboard and carried away the goods themselves. Eventually, when trade with the Spanish commenced, the Chinese played a more active role in selling and distributing their goods since they worked and operated in Manila in much larger numbers than before. The process was described by Antonio de Morga, a lawyer by training who became a high-ranking colonial official in Manila. He wrote the famous *Sucesos de las Filipinas* ("Events of the Philippines"), which was the first lay history of the Spanish conquest of the Philippines[40]:

> When the [Chinese] vessel has arrived and anchored, the royal officials go to inspect it and the register of the merchandise aboard it. At the same time the valuation of the cargo is made according to law, of what it is worth in Manila; for the vessel immediately pays three per cent on everything to his Majesty. After the register has been inspected and the valuation made, then the merchandise is immediately unloaded by another official into *champans*, and taken to the Parián, or to other houses outside of the city. There the goods are freely sold.[41]

The painting in the wooden chest shown above portrayed this very scene described by Morga (Fig. 3.1). We see the larger ships in the background and the smaller boats in the river coming into the city, approaching a cordoned-off area shown at bottom right. To judge from the painting, this is the most active space in the city, where we see many different people congregated. Some are shown on horses with attendants holding parasols for them, while other figures are vendors peddling their wares. This area was the Parián, the famed marketplace where much of the commerce conducted in the city took place.

The Parián went through several iterations during the time when the Manila Galleon Trade was active. It was first built in 1581 by Gonzalo Ronquillo. According to the first bishop of Manila, Domingo de Salazar, initially the Chinese did not have a specific place in the city where they lived and worked. In a letter to the king in 1590 he wrote that they were "scattered" and that when they were given a place to be "used as a silk-market (which is called here Parián), of four large buildings … many shops were opened, commerce increased, and more Sangleys came to this city."[42] According to Salazar, trade was improved by the creation of a dedicated space where the Chinese merchants could operate. It was not enough to merely have a port where the merchants could meet; more organization,

as seen in the creation of a marketplace, was necessary for the trade to develop.

The buildings described by Salazar could very well have been the kinds of wooden shops with thatched roofs that we see in the painting of the Parián in the chest. Such shops were susceptible to fires, and the market was damaged several times.[43] After one of the reconstructions Salazar described the Parián as a site worth seeing:

> This Parian has so adorned the city that I do not hesitate to affirm to your Majesty that no other known city in España or in these regions possesses anything so well worth seeing as this; for in it can be found the whole trade of China, with all kinds of goods and curious things which come from that country. These articles have already begun to be manufactured here, as quickly and with better finish than in China; and this is due to the intercourse between Chinese and Spaniards, which has enabled the former to perfect themselves in things which they were wont to produce in China. In this Parián are to be found workmen of all trades and handicrafts of a nation, and many of them in each occupation. They make much prettier articles than are made in España, and sometimes so cheap that I am ashamed to mention it.[44]

Salazar was clearly in favor of the Chinese and was impressed with their ingenuity.[45] The wooden chest was the kind of object that Chinese craftsmen could expertly reproduce in the Parián even though it was of a Spanish design. We can surmise that accounts like Salazar's may have begun to sound alarm bells for merchants and imperial administrators in Spain, who could see the threat posed by Asian goods bought in Manila to their own manufactured goods intended for sale in the colonies.

By the early seventeenth century the Parián was a "large enclosed *alcaicería* of many streets, at some distance from the city walls."[46] An *alcaicería* was a silk market in southern Spain and was a remnant from the Moorish past that remained in use even after the Muslim rulers were defeated.[47] The association with silk, also seen in Salazar's comment, is relevant because in Manila too silk was the Chinese commodity most in demand and of most value. However, the Parián in Manila was not only a marketplace for fine luxuries; it was also where one went to have one's shoes mended or to have a table built. It was a place where barbers set up their shops and where people could buy food supplies as well.[48] From early on the Parián had been assigned its own *alcalde,* or mayor, who was supposed to be in charge, another aspect borrowed from the *alcaicerias* of

southern Spain. In Manila, this mayor, rather than ensuring the safety of the Chinese, was meant to keeping an eye on them.

Relations between the Chinese residing in Manila and the Spanish colonists were uneasy. Over the years there were several incidences of violent confrontations between the two groups where the Chinese population in particular suffered great losses, and the Parián was often destroyed.[49] Foreigners visiting Manila noticed the hostility between the two groups, as can be seen in Italian traveler Gemelli Careri's description of the Parián. It seems that wherever the Chinese were they were under constant surveillance and within range of cannons:

> Tho' Manila be small, if we look upon the circumference of its walls, and the number of inhabitants, yet it will appear large if we include suburbs, for within musket shot of the gate of Parián, is the habitation of the Chinese merchants call'd *Sangley*, who in several streets have rich shops of silk, purcellane, and other commodities. Here are found all arts and trades, so that all the citizens are worth, runs through their hands, through the fault of the Spaniards and Indians, who apply themselves to nothing.[50]

Careri also confirms what we learn from other accounts about the importance of this marketplace to the city, saying that all citizens had to depend on the trades of the Parián and the Chinese who ran it.

Despite the tensions between the Spanish and the Chinese, by the eighteenth century the Parián could be seen as a symbol of cooperation between the two groups. In 1756 the government in Manila decided to construct a new, more permanent market where the offices for accounting would be housed together with the shops, along with residences for merchants (Fig. 3.2). It was known as the *Alcaicería de San Fernando* and was a unique double-storied structure in the shape of an octagon, with a central courtyard surrounded by shop fronts. It was designed to make the movement of goods from boat to market easier. In this way several of the procedures of the trade, from unloading to selling and accounting, could be carried out in one place, and in this way they were also easier to surveil. This structure was designed by a Spanish architect, Lucas de Jesús María, and built by a Chinese Christian by the name of Antonio Mazo.[51]

In the *Alcaicería de San Fernando,* and in the previous iterations of the Parián, the porcelain objects brought from China could have been sold individually or in bundles. Objects that were specifically custom-ordered would not necessarily have been sold in the Parián or even displayed in the shops there. It has been suggested that among the Chinese, different

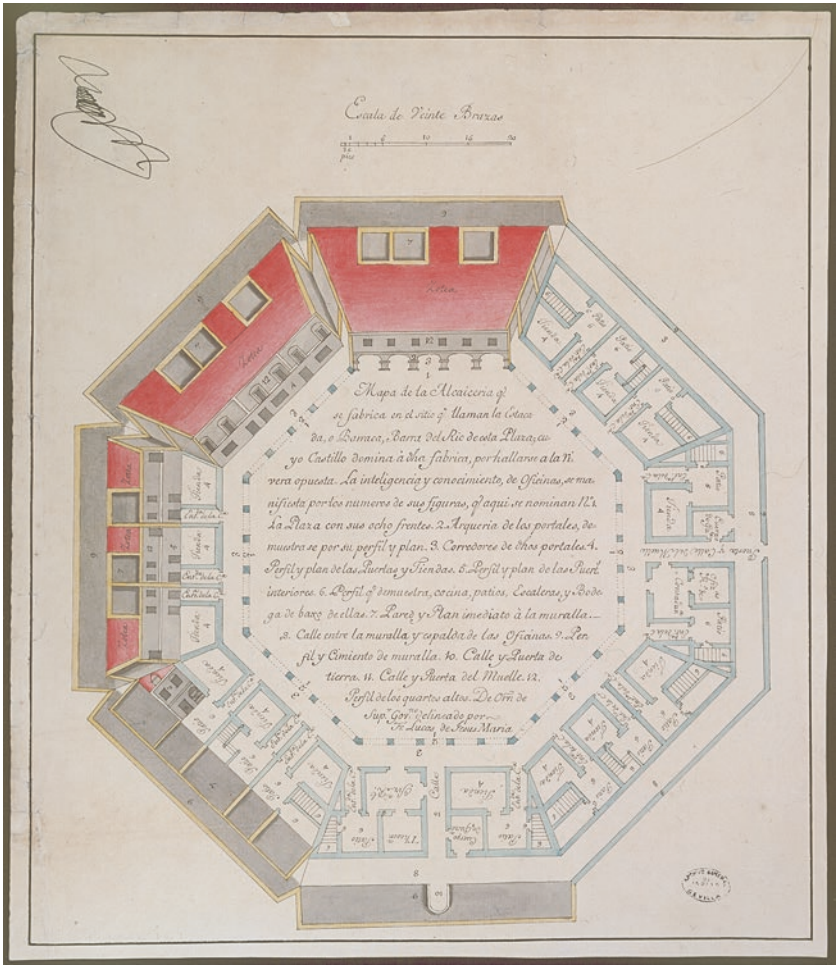

Fig. 3.2 Plan of the *Alcaicería de San Fernando*. Archivo General de Indias, Seville, MP-FILIPINAS, 38BIS. The caption in the center points out some features of the market, which included shops and staircases leading up to storage spaces. One of these spaces was delineated as an accounting office. The structures with roofs are the officials' quarters

merchants specialized in different goods, and so it is quite possible that the porcelain from Jingdezhen was under the purview of a particular set of merchants, while other goods were under other merchants, and so on.[52] Over time the shops in the Parián also came to be specialized, and according to one source, in 1755 the Parián had fifteen stalls that sold porcelain out of a total of 627.[53]

By the time the *Alcaicería de San Fernando* was built, Manila was past its heyday, as other European powers operating in the region were growing more powerful. But even if the city had lost its global importance, the building of this structure suggests that the trade was still very important to the Spanish and Chinese merchants, who had a great deal to gain from it. What is more, the fame of the Parián extended beyond Manila. In the seventeenth century the central marketplace in the capital of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, Mexico City, also began to be popularly called the Parián. Clearly the marketing of Asian goods in Manila itself had worked so well that the space where they were traded also captured the imaginations of distant consumers.

Packaging Asia: Bales and Books of Freight

Once merchants had bought the goods they wanted, they had to arrange for them to be packed and loaded onto the next galleon heading across the Pacific to the Americas. This would involve repackaging the goods and marking the parcels in such a way that they could be identified as belonging to a particular individual. Because of the restrictions on the trade, a notary would be required to create a book of freight, which would list all the merchandise being shipped from Manila and its value. This book would be inspected in Acapulco to ensure that the galleon was not bringing goods of more value than was allowed. In the case of Juan Bauptista Moroso, cited above, the record lists the number of pieces of ceramics he was carrying on board as 900. However, generally the records are not so specific when it comes to ceramics: usually it is the different types of containers that the ceramics were packed in that are listed. These containers came in various shapes and formats, such as boxes (*caxones*), bales (*fardos*), and sacks (*bolsas*). When packed in these containers, the ceramics, especially the high-quality porcelains, would be surrounded by straw, aromatic herbs, or other fibrous materials to protect them during the long journey ahead.[54]

An interesting point to note in terms of packing techniques is that the more valuable pieces would be packed on the very inside of the crate and the inferior pieces would make up the outer layers so that the value of the entire crate would be based on the more readily visible and accessible pieces, thus enabling merchants to cheat when their goods were being inspected. Such techniques were also used when packing silk textiles, which were of even greater value than Chinese porcelain. Packers in Manila employed a "pressing" technique to pack in more pieces than were officially sanctioned by the quotas allotted. These methods of evading official rules developed in Manila as a necessity since the Crown repeatedly tried to restrict the values and amounts of goods that could be shipped across the Pacific.[55]

We know that imperial officials were aware that such techniques were being employed because edicts were issued about how particular goods were to be packed and shipped. An early eighteenth-century memorandum demonstrates the Crown's concerns:

> The annual galleon shall carry no more than 4,000 piezas [pieces], 500 of these being half-chests containing the silken fabrics and the finer ones of cotton; the rest shall be half-bales, bags of cinnamon, cases of porcelain, and cakes of wax.[56]

The memorandum states exactly how many pieces the galleon could carry, allowing only an eighth of the total amount to be textiles, and those too had to be "half-chests". It continues:

> The size or weight respectively of these packages is prescribed: the half-chests and half-bales shall be each 1 ¼ vara long, 2/3 vara wide, and 1/3 vara deep, an allowance of two dedos [fingers] on each measure being made for the outside cover or packing of the half-chest and for the compression used on the half-bale. The bag of cinnamon shall weigh 150 libras [pounds] gross (that is including all packing and covers), but at Acapulco it may be allowed four or five libras more of weight, the difference between the weight of Manila and that of Nueva España [New Spain]. The case of porcelain must be one vara high and 2 ¼ varas in circumference at the mouth, no allowance being made. The cakes of wax must weigh twelve arrobas at Manila, four or five libras being allowed at Acapulco for the difference in standards of weight. Besides the 4,000 piezas, unlimited pepper and storax may be shipped; and Chinese cabinets and screens may go in larger boxes than the regulation size, provided that the capacity of these be figured in terms of piezas.

These instructions are very specific, but it is not clear that they were followed. The fact that such a memorandum had to be issued in itself suggests that the rules were being broken. Furthermore, there are allowances for different systems of measurements used at the two ends of the trade, thus creating room for discrepancies that could be manipulated by merchants.

Although the memorandum lists specific weights and measurements, the ships' records do not reveal whether the packages complied with official regulations. In fact, the manner in which notaries kept records of the ships' cargoes may also have allowed the illegal shipment of goods. The ship manifests of the transpacific trade very rarely specify individual objects, especially for the early period, so it is not easy to trace particular porcelain objects through the archives from a merchant in Manila to a consumer in Mexico.[57] Ship manifests listed the goods in categories according to how they were packaged, generally recording how many of these larger packages belonged to a particular individual and to whom they were consigned on the ship. The contents of the packages were not usually specified. This list of goods would be part of the larger book of freight, which also included lists of the officials, crew, passengers, and soldiers aboard, the rations, the artillery, and at times even an index of the official correspondence that was being sent to Mexico and then perhaps on to Spain.[58]

As with the improvement of the Parián, we see a process of development in the methods of noting the contents and values of the ships' cargoes. In some instances, the manifests become better organized, but they are not necessarily more revealing about the specific goods being shipped as compared with records from the early years of the trade. To judge from the documents that have survived, there are more complete records for the later period, from the 1730s onwards. As the trade came under increased scrutiny, especially under the rule of the Bourbons, stricter regulations came into use, and officials became more judicious about creating and preserving these records, even if they were not entirely truthful about the exact contents of the cargoes.

The document that records that Juan Bauptista Moroso was carrying 900 pieces of ceramics also states that other passengers were carrying various numbers of boxes or bales. In a slightly later document, from 1602, we find that the notary has recorded the information in a slightly different format, using a system of symbols in the margin to indicate the contents of the various boxes, which were similarly marked. The boxes are numbered, and in this particular document the contents are specified in greater

detail than even in later documents. For the most part the boxes contained various kinds of textiles such as *tafetas* (taffeta), *seda cruda* (raw silk), and *damascos* (damasks), among others.[59]

A 1731 document, similar to the 1602 one, has more a description of the packages, without much information about the contents of the packages or their value. The first entry reads as follows: "Captain Don Joseph loaded 12 sacks [*bolsas*] of the following numbers: 2, 3, 4, 8 … until 16. 10 blocks of wax of ordinary weight, two medium bundles numbered 1, 2, [all] marked with the symbol in the margin …"[60] The document is forty-five pages long. One entry on the fourth page mentions porcelain. It reads: "Captain Don Antonio Levino [?] stowed ten sacks of ceramics numbered 1 to 10 marked with the impression seen in the margin."[61]

The diversity of ways in which the ships' cargoes were documented shows that the notaries experimented to find the best way to record and communicate what a ship was carrying. Although at times the documents are disappointing for historians today owing to the lack of detail, they did at the time accomplish the goals of satisfying officials and ensuring that the goods bought in Manila and loaded onto the galleons reached the right people in Mexico, while at the same time being ambiguous enough to allow people to carry more than the official allowances.

In comparison to the records of other European trading companies, the ship records of the Manila Galleon Trade, when studied, give the impression that people involved in this trade were not concerned with its proper functioning. The lack of a textual record is peculiar to the situation where much of the exchange and transfer of goods was unofficial, for both Chinese and Spanish merchants. The transpacific trade was under the jurisdiction of the Viceroyalty of New Spain and primarily benefitted consumers in the Americas, so the records were intentionally sparse in order to keep imperial officials from knowing how much silver was actually being sent to Asia.

As seen earlier in the development of the Parián, the merchants—both Chinese and Spanish—were interested in ensuring that they could provide and procure goods that could be sold in the colonies in the Americas. Material evidence suggests that consumers in colonial Latin America had access to a wide variety of porcelain objects, including blue-and-white objects from the Transitional Period (1620–1683) and colored enameled porcelain from the Kangxi Period (1654–1722). The most popular export items were *kraak* ware, distinguishable by a paneled design on borders and central motifs showing either symbols of good omens or scenes of flora

and fauna, which were often imitated by potters in Puebla for their own creations. In addition to these various types of porcelains, consumers in colonial Latin America could also custom-order objects as their European counterparts did. We have surviving examples of porcelains ordered by the Catholic orders depicting their insignia as well as armorial porcelain belonging to wealthy families in Mexico. Specialty items, such as the *mancerina*, a vessel used to drink chocolate, were also custom-ordered from artisans in Jingdezhen.[62]

The existence of these various objects proves that even if the ship manifests were scant or vague, those involved in the commerce took care to ensure that the goods shipped reached the right owners once the galleons arrived in Acapulco. This was done through a multilingual system of marking the various bundles and boxes (Fig. 3.3). Some goods, such as spices, would have been transported in large jars, which were marked so that whoever had to move them would know where they were going, who they belonged to, and what they contained. Archaeologists have found marks in Spanish, Tagalog, and Chinese indicating that members of all three groups were involved in the process and had developed systems of markings to facilitate the trade.[63] Sometimes the marks are legible letters, like monograms that could have been matched with the ships' manifests.[64] This technique was evidently developed on the transatlantic voyages, since shippers' marks are found from shipwrecks in the Atlantic as well.[65]

We see a trend then in the packaging of Asian goods for trade to the Spanish colonies, which was towards finding ways to be able to send more than was allowed by the Crown. Such practices were common in transatlantic shipping between Spain and the American colonies, but in the case of the Manila Galleon Trade the malfeasance was the most extreme, perhaps because of the stricter limits put on the trade.[66] That these packing techniques were institutionalized into the system of trade implies that the corruption ran deep and required the coordination of many different groups of people, including the people working in Manila on behalf of the Crown.[67] The profits to be made on the transpacific trade were too great to forgo, even for those who were supposed to be regulating it.

Shipping Asia

Once the goods had been packed for shipment and recorded in the books of freight, they had to be loaded onto the galleons, which were often constructed locally. The shipbuilding industry in Spain had not been

Fig. 3.3 Archaeological drawings of shippers' marks recovered from the *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción*, which was shipwrecked in 1638. Those at the bottom towards the right are Chinese symbols. Some of the other marks resemble the monograms that were used in ship manifests to identify the owners of the various packages and even cakes of wax. Other marks are not alphabetical symbols. Image credit: Pacific Sea Resources

competitive or productive for most of the sixteenth century, and so the colonies had taken it upon themselves to build and supply ships as they needed them.[68] Shipbuilding techniques developed in Europe and the New World were used to build galleons in the Philippines, where owing to the availability of labor and materials shipbuilding was relatively inexpensive.[69] In the 1620s and 1630s the rate of construction of galleons in the region was roughly one per year. The ships that traversed the Pacific were known to be some of the largest seafaring vessels. Even in the building of

these galleons it seems that rules were broken as they were made bigger than the size that was officially sanctioned so that they could carry more goods.[70]

The cargo of a ship included not just the goods that merchants bought to sell in Mexico but also the various provisions needed for the journey, which included food, drink, weaponry in case of conflict, and materials to repair the ship along the way. In addition, the passengers and crewmen had their belongings, which were stowed in private cabins or wherever one could find space. The process of loading the ship was labor-intensive, and as in the process of the loading of the kiln seen in Jingdezhen there was particular manner in which the goods were packed into the vessel. The weight, value, and form of packaging determined where a particular box or bale might be placed in the cargo hold (Fig. 3.4). Another determining factor was whether the package could be damaged by coming into contact with water, in which case it would be placed higher in the hold. The heaviest and least valuable items were placed low and in the middle of the hold, while the more valuable and delicate objects were below the decks. Gaps between the various packages would be filled with cloth or smaller bundles.[71]

Chinese porcelain objects could be stowed in several different places on the ship. Poor-quality ceramics might be stored low and in the middle, serving to balance the ship. And since ceramics are not damaged by water, most bales and boxes that were shipments of porcelain would not have needed to be stored below decks, which was where the textiles would be kept. Passengers or crewmen may have bought individual pieces of porcelain, which could have been stored along with their private belongings in chests. These chests could be stored in various places on the ship, and groups of crewmen might store their chests together to create small, communal, private spaces where they could eat together and enjoy a game of cards.[72]

We saw that the manner of packaging goods allowed for the transport of more goods than what was officially allowed. Contraband could also be loaded onto the ship during the lading process described above. Jars meant to hold provisions for the journey could instead be used carry other goods, and the shippers' marks discussed above could have served as code to indicate which jars contained what.[73] Although the deck space was intended for cannons, captains often allowed it to be used as storage for provisions or commodities. Despite the fact that there were threats from

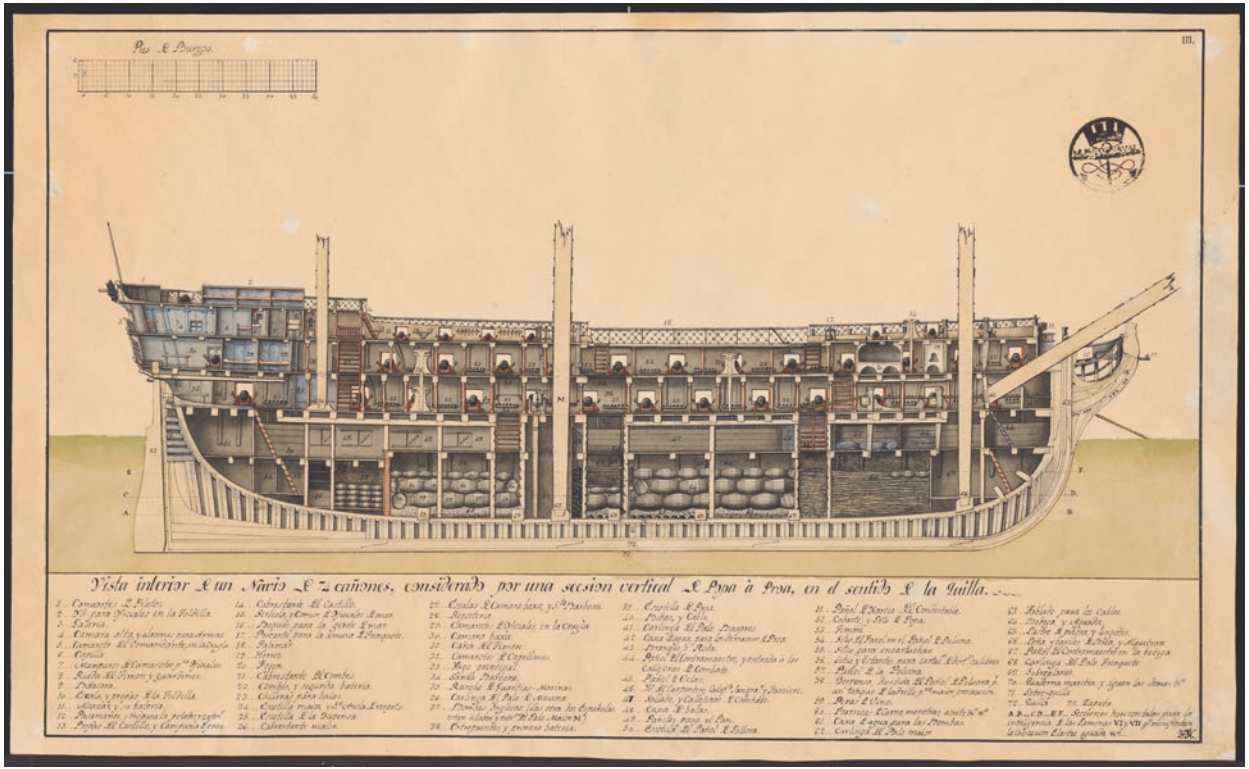

Fig. 3.4 Eighteenth-century drawing showing the cross-section of a ship. Museo Naval, Madrid. In this particular model there are seventy-four cannons on two different levels below the deck. The cabins for the passengers and crew members are located on both sides of the ship, and the merchandise is stored at the bottom

several different groups, the cannons would be carried in the ballast hold, which rendered them useless in case of conflict.

The lading space on the ships was supposedly allotted according to regulations issued by the Crown. The crew members were each given a certain amount of space according to their rank. Besides these people, officially only citizens of the Philippines were allowed to have *boletas*, or permissions for lading space, on the ships. However, these could be bought, and merchants from Mexico or their agents in Manila would often use their purchasing power to get as much space as possible on the ships and transport more goods than they or the entire ship were allowed to transport.[74] Crew members and other passengers also brought trunks that they claimed held clothes and other items necessary for the voyage when in fact they contained goods that they hoped to sell in Mexico.

Gemelli Careri saw much of this malfeasance first-hand as he was waiting for his ship to sail to Mexico. The following are observations that he recorded in his journal:

> Saturday 23rd, there were prayers for our good voyage. When we were ready to sail, the Commander called the pilots, and all other officers to give their opinions whether the vessel was fit for the voyage of New Spain, and in a good sailing posture. Most of them were of the opinion it was overloaded, and therefore could make little way. He therefore ordered all the seamen's chests to be put ashore, that all those who had two might have one left behind.[75]

Here Careri confirms that often ships were overloaded. The crew members lowest in the hierarchy governing the ship were the first to be expected to leave things behind in order to lighten the load.[76]

However, in Careri's experience, removing crew members' luggage did not unburden the ship enough to allow it to sail: casks of water also had to be taken off because the ship had been loaded with 2200 bales when it was allowed only 1500.[77] After that yet more contraband was discovered aboard the galleon:

> It is the practice in this voyage to carry the water in earthen jars, to the number of 2, 3 or 4000, proportionally to the number of people, and bigness of the galeon [sic]; and these falling short for a voyage of 7 or 8 months, the continual rains supply the defect. This time they had made two cisterns, on the sides of the ship, reaching from the deck to the bottom of the hole … and these had proved very good; yet they were broken to stow more bales

> in their place … This was done because the officers put in bales of their own in those places, notwithstanding the King's prohibition, they not minding they sent so many men to perish with thirst in such a spacious sea.[78]

After the crew members had been asked to leave their belongings behind to lighten the load of the ship, it was discovered that the ship's officers, men of higher rank and supposedly working for the king, had also stowed away boxes illegally in the space that was meant to store water, which risked jeopardizing all the lives aboard the ship. Such egregious attempts to carry contraband give a sense of how valuable the trade in Asian goods must have been.

The ship, once loaded and stocked, had a long and perilous journey ahead. Careri called the voyage from the Philippines to Mexico "the longest and most dreadful of any in the world."[79] The weather and the waters were a natural threat, and in later years enemy ships were also a big concern. The journey from Manila to Acapulco took roughly six months, in contrast to the three months of the reverse journey. Life on board the ship was difficult, to say the least. Although the Manila Galleons were some of the largest ships to traverse the seas at that time, they were still overcrowded. Humans had to share the space not only with each other and all the cargo, but also with livestock and pests such as rats and insects. The livestock were meant for food, but the supplies did not last the entire journey. Passengers and crewmen would scrounge for food during the trip, either by hunting at the various stops along the route or by trying to fish. Lack of proper nourishment and unhealthy living conditions meant that occurrences of disease and infection were high, and many would not survive the trip.

Besides the daily inconveniences of living on a ship, the journey was made all the more difficult and tense by dangers posed by the weather and the sea. Among the crew members would be carpenters, caulkers, and divers, who were responsible for repairing the ships when they suffered damage due to storms or rough waters.[80] The ships were often named for religious figures, such as *San Diego* ("Saint Diego"), *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción* ("Our Lady of the Conception"), and *Espíritu Santo* ("Holy Spirit"), an indication of the trust put into divine hands for the voyage across the ocean. Often an image of the Virgin or Christ would also be placed on the ship. In Jingdezhen the potters prayed to the gods before lighting the kilns because despite careful preparation, kiln loads could be ruined. Similarly, in Manila, the image of the Virgin seen on the back of a

ship as it sailed off was a sign of the fragility of the trade. All the hands of the various groups of people who worked to prepare the hold of the ship could not protect its valuable contents from the dangers of the sea once it had sailed.

Notes

1. Fernando Beltrán, "A Esta Historia del navio Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Zaragoza," in Jesús García de Valle y Gómez, *Retrato de Un Navio* (Madrid: Bubok, 2012). Translation mine. Spanish original: "Guarda en el fondo el mar tantos misterios/sin desvelar aún, tanta quimera/encallada en el rumbo entre dos puertos,/que uno piensa al final que su color/no es del todo inocente,/tiene el musgo apagado de la historia/la mirada perdida de los hombres/ y el intacto tesoro de un inmenso/ tintero azul que solo espera/el barco de papel, la gaviota/de la página en blanco/convirtiendo el secreto en libro abierto."
2. Jean-Paul Desroches, Gabriel Casal and Frank Goddio, eds., *Treasures of the San Diego* (Paris: AFAA; New York: Elf; Manila: National Museum of the Philippines, 1996).
3. "Relacion de los fletes del galeon San Felipe maestre Geronimo de Mendicaval vino de Philipinas y surgio en Acapulco a dos de diziembre de que se cobra treinta y dos ducados tonelada," Contaduria 897, 1592, Archivo General de las Indias, Seville, Spain.
4. From the "Expedition of Ruy Lopez de Villalobos, 1541–1546," in *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*, vol. 2, eds. Emma Blair and James Robertson, 68.
5. Bartolomé de Letona, "Description of Filipinas Islands," in *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*, vol. 36, trans. and ed., Emma Blair and John Robertson, 205. Letona's work originally published in *Perfecta religiosa* in Puebla in 1662.
6. Antonio de Morga has a lengthy description of all the many goods the Chinese brought on their junks: "These vessels [Chinese junks] come laden with merchandise, and bring wealthy merchants who own the ships, and servants and factors of other merchants who remain in China. They leave China with the permission and license of the Chinese viceroys and mandarins. The merchandise that they generally bring and sell to the Spaniards consists of raw silk in bundles, of the fineness of two strands (dos cabeças), and other silk of poorer quality; fine untwisted silk … quantities of velvets … woven stuffs and brocades … damasks, satins, taffetas, gorvaranes, picotes, and other cloths of all colors … They also bring musk, benzoin, and ivory; many bed ornaments, hangings, coverlets, and tapestries … also some pearls and rubies, sapphires and crystal-stones; metal

basins, copper kettles, and other copper and cast-iron pots; quantities of all sorts of nails, sheet-iron, tin and lead; saltpetre and gunpowder. They supply the Spaniards with wheat flour; preserves made of orange, peach, scorzonera, pear, nutmeg, and ginger, and other fruits of China; salt pork and other salt meats … little boxes and writing-cases; beds, tables, chairs, and gilded benches, painted in many figures and patterns. They bring domestic buffaloes; geese that resemble swans; horses, some mules and asses; even caged birds, some of which talk, while others sing, and they make them play innumerable tricks. The Chinese furnish numberless other gewgaws and ornaments of little value and worth, which are esteemed among the Spaniards; besides a quantity of fine crockery of all kinds … and rarities—which, did I refer to them all, I would never finish, nor have sufficient paper for it." Antonio de Morga, *History of the Philippine Islands: From their discovery by Magellan in 1521 to the beginning of the XVII Century*, trans. and ed. E.H. Blair and J.A. Robertson (Charleston: Bibliobazaar, 2006), 302–303.

7. Edgar Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850–1898* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000), 4–5.
8. The wood used was perhaps a Philippine mahogany or sandalwood. The iron fittings of the chest and the interior compartments are telling of the object's Spanish design. See Gustavo Curiel, "Los muebles," in Elena Horz de Sotomayor et. al., *Museo Bello* (Puebla: Secretaría de Cultura, 2009), 107.
9. John Guy, *Oriental Trade Ceramics in Southeast Asia, Ninth to Sixteenth Centuries* (Singapore, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 20.
10. Zhao Rugua, *Chau Ju-kua: His work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, entitled Chu-fan-chï*, translated from the Chinese and annotated by Friedrich Hirth and W. W. Rockhill (St. Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1911), 159–160.
11. Laura Lee Junker, "The Development of Centralized Craft Production Systems in A.D. 500–1600 Philippine Chiefdoms," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 25, 1 (1994), 9.
12. At a burial site in Santa Ana, Manila, Philippines, archaeologists uncovered seventy-nine pieces of ceramics made between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. These included *yingqing* wares with brown spots, blue-and-white ware, greenwares, and one piece with red underglaze decoration. Laura Lee Junker, "The Organization of Intra-Regional and Long-Distance Trade in Prehispanic Philippine Complex Societies," *Asian Perspectives* 29, 2 (1990), 202.
13. Guy, 13.
14. Roderich Ptak, "From Quanzhou to the Sulu Zone and Beyond: Questions Related to the Early Fourteenth Century," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 29, 2 (1998): 269.

15. Leonard Blusse, "Junks to Java: Chinese Shipping to the Nanyang in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," in *Chinese Circulations: Capital, Commodities, and Networks in Southeast Asia*, ed. Eric Tagliacozzo (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 222.
16. Ptak, 274–275. In the fifteenth century when the Ming emperor banned maritime trade, merchants found ways to continue their trading activities surreptitiously, and some even chose to migrate to the places where they had strong ties. See more in *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, ed. Anthony Reid (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001).
17. See Geoff Wade, "An Early Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia, 900–1300 CE," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 40, 2 (2009): 221–265 for more on what was traded between China and Southeast Asian polities.
18. Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China, vol. 4, pt. 3: Civil Engineering and Nautics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 620.
19. C. Defremery and B.R. Sanguinetti, *The Voyages of Ibn Battuta, vol. 4*, 91, as cited in Needham, *Science and Civilization in China, vol. 4, pt. 3: Civil Engineering and Nautics,* 469.
20. Pierre-Yves Maguin, "Trading Ships of the South China Sea: Shipbuilding Techniques and their Role in the History of the Development of Asian Trade Networks, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 36, 3 (1993): 266.
21. When Magellan arrived in the region in the early sixteenth century, he had no trouble in finding interpreters, often slaves, who spoke languages ranging from Spanish and Arabic to Malay and Tagalog. See Patricio N. Abinales and Donna J. Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 47.
22. In the case of porcelain, we know that it was traded as far as the Swahili coast of Africa as early as the thirteenth century. See Sandy P. Meier, "Porcelain and Mercantile Aesthetics: Trading Culture in Coastal East Africa," *Art History*, 38, 4 (2015): 702–717.
23. Linda Newson, *Conquest and Pestilence in the Early Spanish Philippines* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009).
24. "Relation of the Voyage to Luzon," in *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898,* trans. and ed., Emma Blair and John Robertson, 95 and 101.
25. Barbara Watson Andaya, "Oceans Unbounded: Transversing Asia across 'Area Studies,'" *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 5, 4 (2007): 1–21.
26. Abinales and Amoroso, 27.
27. Ibid. and Andaya, 4.
28. Gaspar de San Agustin, *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas* (Madrid: Instituto Enrique Flórez, 1975), 234–235.
29. Dennis Flynn and Arturo Giráldez, "Born with a 'Silver Spoon': The Origin of World Trade in 1571," *Journal of World History* 6, 2 (1995): 215.

30. Ibid.
31. Juan Gil, *Los Chinos en Manila* (Lisbon: Centro Científico e Cultural de Macau, 2011), 63. See also the work of Carmen Yuste López on the merchants in Mexico, *Emporios transpacificos: comerciantes mexicanos en Manila, 1710–1815* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2007).
32. See for example William Schurz, "The Spanish Lake," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 5, 2 (1922): 181–194, and O.H.K. Spate, *The Pacific since Magellan, Volume 1: The Spanish Lake* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1979). See Mariano Ardash Bonialian, "Comercio y atlantización del Pacífico mexicano y sudamericano: la crisis del *lago indiano* y del Galeón de Manila, 1750–1821," *América Latina en la Historia Económica* 24, 1 (2017): 7–36 for an argument for why the Pacific should be thought of as the "Lake of the Indies."
33. Ryan Crewe, "Pacific Purgatory: Spanish Dominicans, Chinese Sangleys, and the Entanglement of Mission and Commerce in Manila, 1580–1620," *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015): 353–354; Katherine Bjork, "The Link that Kept the Philippines Spanish: Mexican Merchant Interests and the Manila Trade, 1571–1815," *Journal of World History* 9 (1998), 39.
34. "Memorial to the King by Juan Grao y Monfalcon in the year 1635," in *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*, 15, 49.
35. It was not always an easy alliance, however, and the missionaries often found themselves frustrated, not knowing whether the Chinese conversions were "genuine" or just a means to have more rights and benefits in Manila.
36. In both the Spanish and the Chinese cases, the state apparatus did gain some amounts in the taxes that they were able to charge merchants for the part of their trade that they conducted with official approval.
37. Lucille Chia, "The Butcher, the Baker, and the Carpenter: Chinese Sojourners in the Spanish Philippines and their Impact on Southern Fujian (Sixteenth–Eighteenth Centuries)," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 49, 4 (2006), 529.
38. Rainer Buschmann et al. divide the fortunes of the Manila Galleon Trade into three distinct periods. The first one, 1571–1662, was marked by the union between the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns, which helped the trade flourish, and later when the two separated there was a contraction. The second period, 1662–1762, was relatively stable, and the final period, 1762–1815, was "frenzied," being marked by both internal and external conflicts. This final period saw the British occupation of Manila for two years (1762–1764) as well the formation of the Royal Philippine Company (1785), which conducted trade directly between Spain and Manila. Rainer Buschmann et al., eds., *Navigating the Spanish Lake: The Pacific in the*

Iberian world, 1521–1898 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. 2014), 7–8.

39. Hang-sheng Chuan, "The Inflow of American Silver into China from the Late Ming to the Mid-Ch'ing Period," *The Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong*, 2 (1969): 61–75.
40. It was first published in Spanish in 1609 in Mexico.
41. Antonio de Morga, *History of the Philippine Islands: From their discovery by Magellan in 1521 to the beginning of the XVII Century*, trans. and ed., Emma H. Blair and J.A. Robertson (Charleston: Bibliobazaar, 2006).
42. Domingo de Salazar, "The Chinese and the Parián at Manila," Manila, June 24, 1590, as translated in *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*, vol. 7, 220.
43. The Chinese were not allowed to build with stone, which was a privilege reserved only for the Spanish part of the city that was walled. See Alberto Santamaria, "The Chinese Parian (El Parian de los Sangleyes)" in *The Chinese in the Philippines 1570–1770*, vol. 1, ed. Alfonso Felix (Manila; New York: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1966), 111.
44. Domingo de Salazar, "The Chinese and the Parián at Manila," 225.
45. Friar Letona, who boasted about the diversity of peoples seen in Manila in the seventeenth century, was also positive about Manila (which he compared to Puebla and Mexico) and the Parián. He wrote: "On the eastern side of the city, but outside of it and in front of its walls, at the distance of a musket-shot is a silk-market which they call Parian. Usually 15,000 Chinese live there; they are Sangleys, natives of Great China, and all merchants or artisans. They possess, allotted among themselves by streets and squares, shop containing all the kinds of merchandise and all the trades that are necessary in a community. The place is very orderly and well arranged, and a great convenience to the citizens. It is [an indication of] their greatness that although they are so few, they have so many workmen and servants assigned to their service." Bartolome de Letona, "Description of Filipinas Islands," Blair and Robertson trans., *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*, vol. 36, 204–205.
46. Morga, 312.
47. For more on the *alcaicería* in Spain see José Luis Garzón Cardenete, *Real sitio y fuerte de la Alcaicería de Granada* (Granada: Caja General de Ahorros de Granada, 2004).
48. Gil, *Los Chinos en Manila*, 156.
49. The four major ones happened in 1603, 1639, 1662, and 1668. For more on the relations between the Spanish and the Chinese centered on the Manila Parián see Manuel Ollé, "Interacción y conflicto en el Parián de Manila," *Illes í Imperis* 10, 11 (2008): 61–90.

50. John Francis Gemelli Careri, "A Voyage Around the World" in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels: Some now first printed from original manuscripts, others now first published in English … , Volume IV* (London: Awnsham and John Churchill, 1704), 420.
51. María Lourdes Díaz-Trechuelo Spinola, *Arquitectura Española en Filipinas: 1565–1800* (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de Sevilla, 1959), 35.
52. Chia, 530.
53. Maria Bonta de la Pezuela, "The Perils of Porcelain: Chinese Export Porcelain for the Mexican Colonial Market," in *At the Crossroads: The Arts of Spanish America and Early Global Trade*, eds. Donna Pierce and Ronald Otsuka (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2012), 43.
54. Ceramics would be packed in a similar way when shipped across the Atlanticfrom Spain to the Americas, and it is possible that such techniques were adopted for transpacific shipping. See Alfonso Pleguezelo, "Ceramics, Business and Economy," in *Ceramica y Cultura: The Story of Spanish and Mexican Mayólica*, eds. Robin Farewell Gavin, Donna Pierce and Alfonso Pleguezuelo (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 116.
55. For more on the issue of corrupt shipping techniques see William J. McCarthy, "Between Policy and Prerogative: Malfeasance in the Inspection of the Manila Galleons at Acapulco, 1637," *Colonial Latin American Review* 2, 2 (1993): 163–183.
56. From "Period VIII" of the *Extracto Historial* by Antonio José Alvarez de Abreu (Madrid, 1736) as excerpted in Blair and Robertson, eds., *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898,* vol. 44, 311. This particular "period" "Relates the plan presented by the deputies for the Philipinas for regulating the commerce of that country in the year 1724; and its results up to that of 1730."
57. Rocío Díaz has found individual porcelain items listed in ship manifests from the late eighteenth century. These were commissioned pieces with families' coats of arms depicted on them. See her *Chinese Armorial Porcelain for Spain* (London: Jorge Welsh Books, 2010).
58. For more on the importance of Mexico as a point through which this correspondence was mediated to Spain see Luke Clossey, "Merchants, migrants, missionaries, and globalization in the early-modern Pacific," *Journal of Global History* 1.1 (2006): 41–58.
59. "Memoria de las mercadurias de china que yo el … [?] pido sumiga embarco en este Puerto ano e mil y seiscientos y dos," Indiferente Virreinal, Caja 4976, Expediente 6, 1602, Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, Mexico.
60. Indifirente Virreinal Caja 3504, Expediente 36, 1731, Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, Mexico. Translation mine.
61. Ibid. Translation mine.

62. For more on the various types of ceramics exported to colonial Mexico, see George Kuwayama, *Chinese Porcelain in Colonial Mexico* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997) and Maria Bonta de la Pezuela, *Porcelana China de Exportación: Para el mercado novohispano: la colección del Museo Nacional del Virreinato* (Mexico: UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2008). On armorial porcelain see Díaz; Cinta Krahe, *Chinese Porcelain in Habsburg Spain* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispanica, 2016).
63. A wreck discovered off the coast of Oregon revealed that at times even beeswax was stamped in order to show ownership. Not all the beeswax on the ship was marked, but archaeologists have been able to identify similar marks from other shipwrecks, namely the *San Diego* (1600) and the *Nuestra Señora de a la Concepcion* (1638). William Mathers and Nancy Shaw, *Treasures of the Concepción* (Hong Kong: APA Publications, 1993), 100–101.
64. Richard Rogers, "The Owners' Marks Found on Certain Blocks of Beeswax at the Nehalem Spit, Oregon." Report on the Beeswax Wreck Project site, http://www.nagagroup.org/BeesWax/about/about.htm. Accessed on May 9, 2017.
65. For more on such marks seen from shipwrecks in the Atlantic see Mitchell Marken, *Pottery from Spanish Shipwrecks, 1500–1800* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994). Interestingly Dutch and Portuguese shipwrecks did not reveal jars with such marks, which suggests that this was a Spanish practice introduced in the regions where they practiced trade. See William Mathers, Henry Parker, and Kathleen Copus, eds., *Archaeological Report: The Recovery of the Manila Galleon Nuestra Señora de la Concepción* (Sutton, VT: Pacific Sea Resources, 1990), 445.
66. Pablo Pérez-Mallaína Bueno, *Spain's Men of the Sea: Daily Life on the Indies Fleets in the Sixteenth Century*, trans. Carla Rahn Phillips (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1998), 105–128; McCarthy, 163.
67. See for example Don Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera's case detailed in McCarthy, "Before Policy and Prerogative." See also Nicholas Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines: From Conquest to Revolution* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 1971), 132.
68. Carla Rahn Philipps, *Six Galleons for the King of Spain: Imperial Defense in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 22–25. For more on the building of the galleons in and around Manila and Cavite consult William Mathers, Henry Parker, and Kathleen Copus, eds. *Archaeological Report: The Recovery of the Manila Galleon Nuestra Señora de la Concepción* (Sutton, VT: Pacific Sea Resources, 1990) and Shirley Fish, *The Manila-Acapulco Galleons: The Treasure Ships of the Pacific* (Central Milton Keynes: AuthorHouse, 2011).

69. "There is in these islands an abundance of wood and of men, so that a large fleet of boats and galleys may be built. There is a quantity of cheap iron from China, worked by the natives here, who can make what is necessary from it—which they can not do with Castilian iron, for it is exceedingly hard. We have no pitch, tallow, or rigging worth mention, because what there is is so scarce and poor that it amounts to nothing. There is no oakum for calking. Large anchors cannot be made; but the rest of the tackle can be obtained here in good condition. There is good timber also; to my way of thinking, therefore, the ship that would have cost ten thousand ducats in Guatimala [sic], and in Nueva España thirty [thousand], can be made here for two or three [thousand], should strenuous efforts be employed." Francisco de Sande, "Relations of the Filipinas." First report sent by Sande to the home government dated June 7, 1576, in Blair and Roberts, eds., *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*, vol. 4, 74. For more on shipbuilding in Manila see Jesús García de Valle y Gómez, *Retrato de Un Navio* and Fish, 156–186.
70. Mathers, Parker, and Copus, 29–30.
71. Pérez-Mallaína Bueno, 66–68.
72. Ibid., 139.
73. Gemelli Careri recounted an episode that occurred on a voyage from Manila to Acapulco where the galleon docked in Batan and was searched for contraband: "Search was then made to discover whether there were any jars that instead of water, were filled with commodities, upon pretence of carrying them safer; and several were cast into the sea full of pepper, purcelane [sic] and other goods of value." Careri, 479.
74. Bjork, 43–44. Careri also noted the manipulation of this system on his visit to Manila: "The Governor and the *oydores*, or judges, according to the King's order, are to distribute the stowage proportionally among the citizens; but there is little justice done in this point, favour carrying all, so that the rich have cockets given them, for 30 or 40, and even 50 bales, and the poorest sort only for two or three, pretending the ship can carry no more, and this contrary to the King's intention." Careri, 477.
75. Careri, 477.
76. For more on the hierarchy and division of labor on a ship see Pérez-Mallaína Bueno, *Spain's Men of the Sea: Daily Life on the Indies Fleets in the Sixteenth* Century, 75–104.
77. Careri, 477.
78. Ibid., 477–478.
79. Ibid., 478.
80. Pérez-Mallaína Bueno, 80.

CHAPTER 4

A Parián in the Plaza Mayor: Making Space for Asia in Colonial Mexico

> Who will say of your rich fleets,
> the wealth with which they enter replete and leave laden,
> if you are the sum of all of them?
>
> Your plenteous grandeur resides in you,
> You supply them with gold and fine silver;
> and they [supply] you with more prized things.
>
> In you Spain meets with China,
> Italy with Japan, and finally
> an entire world of trade and order.

According to the poem *La grandeza mexicana* (1604), from which these verses are quoted, this bounteous place where Spain meets China is Mexico.[1] The author, Bernardo de Balbuena (1562–1627), was a Spanish cleric who went to Mexico as a young man.[2] He originally intended the poem as a guide to Mexico City for a friend, the widow Isabel de Tobar.[3] It is a bombastic ode to the viceregal capital, replete with references to its prosperity:

> It is the richest and most opulent city
> The one with the greatest trade and the largest treasury
> That neither freezes like the north nor gets hot with the sun.

M. Priyadarshini, *Chinese Porcelain in Colonial Mexico*,
Palgrave Studies in Pacific History,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-66547-4_4

The silver of Peru and the gold of Chile
Come to stop here and from Terrenate
Fine clove, and cinnamon from Tidoro …

From the Great China colorful silks,
The Bezar stone from the uncultivated Andes,
Illustrations from Rome, and delicacies from Milan …[4]

There are several other such stanzas that describe the variety of goods that could be found in Mexico City. Balbuena mentions goods from every corner of the world, creating a web of connections, at the center of which he places Mexico, where all these exotic goods made their home. He puts Mexico between the proverbial East and West, thus raising its political status, and in writing that it was the richest city he deems it equal, if not superior, to Spanish and European cities.[5]

However, Balbuena's praise of the New World metropolis was not necessarily a belittling of Spain. Two chapters of the poem are dedicated to the Church and the state, and in order to have the poem published he changed the dedicatee of his work from Isabel de Tobar to the new archbishop of Mexico, García de Mendoza y Zuñiga, who arrived in Mexico not long before its publication.[6] Even though Balbuena was not writing a revolutionary text, already in the early years of the seventeenth century he was suggesting that Mexico's commercial ties gave it an advantage over Spain. His orienting of the colony away from the metropole is understandable because by the time he wrote the poem, the Manila Galleon Trade had been operating for more than three decades. Every year galleons laden with Asian goods arrived in the port of Acapulco to satisfy the Spanish colonies' demands for Asian luxuries. Among these were a variety of textiles, both silk and cotton, items of clothing such as dresses, robes, and kimonos, and pieces of furniture, ivories, porcelain, spices, and wax.

In this chapter we will consider the ways in which colonial Mexican society made space for the goods that came across the Pacific into its world. The phrase "making space" is meant to evoke an ongoing state of contestation between cultures that was yet to acquire some measure of stability. As we know, in colonial Mexico there was already a struggle between the European colonizers and the native Indians over the assimilation of the latters' cultures and peoples. Furthermore, by the mid-sixteenth century the Spanish colony had also become home to African slaves who were brought over to work in the silver mines, in homes, and for hacienda

service.[7] Thus, by the time the Manila Galleon Trade began in the late sixteenth century, the colony was settled, but it had not resolved the many conflicts and anxieties that arose from violent and forced contact among the various groups of people. There were ongoing and concurrent processes of assimilation and incorporation of certain cultural practices, as well as resistance to and erasure of others while a colonial culture slowly emerged. It was in such an atmosphere that objects and peoples from Asia were introduced into the Spanish colony.

So far we have already encountered two places, namely Jingdezhen and Manila, which developed in different ways depending on local factors and their particular involvement in global trade. Jingdezhen was a site of production, while Manila was the place where a wide array of goods were bought and packed to be shipped across the Pacific. In colonial Mexico we see examples of places that consumed these goods and the ensuing changes that resulted from that consumption. A study of the use and influence of Asian objects shows that the colony developed its own tastes for these goods on the basis of local conditions and concerns, a fact that is not obvious from just studying archival records on the Manila Galleon Trade.

Because of the variety of Asian commodities brought to Mexico we cannot say that there was one space or one way in which Asian objects were incorporated into the colonial society. However, there is enough evidence to indicate that the trade with Asia gave the colony a way to distance itself from the metropole and to distinguish itself in the world, in the way Balbuena describe in his poem. In addition, some of the objects that came from Asia, such as Japanese folding screens or Chinese porcelain, were imitated by craftsmen in Mexico, which suggests that Asian aesthetics provided an alternative mode of expression from the Spanish and native craft traditions that were prevalent in the colony.

Before discussing the ways in which Asian goods were incorporated into colonial Mexican society, we must begin with an example of the kind of syncretic or hybrid object that existed before the inception of the transpacific trade, in order to show the context in which space was made for Asian objects. The sixteenth-century feather painting depicting the Mass of Saint Gregory is an example of colonial Mexican art that has been particularly interesting for historians because it is evidence of the contact between the European colonizers and the native Indians (Fig. 4.1). Soon after the conquest, religious art and architecture were already becoming syncretic, combining local and foreign designs, materials, and techniques.

Fig. 4.1 *The Mass of Saint Gregory*, 1539. Feathers on wood with touches of paint, 68 × 56 cm. Musée de Jacobins, Auch, France. The devotion of the Mass of Saint Gregory became popular towards the end of the fifteenth century. Images of the theme were in abundance in Europe, and engravings were sent to the New World, where clergymen were evangelizing the native populace. To reproduce an image using feathers, the image would first be drawn on a base prepared with paper, cotton, feathers, and glue. On this base feathers, precisely cut to size, were applied, sometimes in layers to create visual effects. The feathers would be from various birds, including the quetzal, hummingbird, parrot, heron, spoonbill, troupial, and blue contiga

In the feather painting the subject matter is European, but the techniques and materials used to make it were native.[8] The production of such art was an important part of the process of evangelizing the natives, and feather painting in particular was promoted because the iridescence

produced by the feathers could be used to represent the divine light of the Christian God. Even though the craft of feather painting survived the conquest, it was accepted only on the condition that it be used for the promotion of the religion of the colonizers. The texts that were used as teaching aids for this art in precolonial times were destroyed during the conquest because they were seen as idolatrous.[9] The painting, then, is not only a type of syncretic artwork that was prevalent in colonial times, but also a reminder of the subjugation of the people who practiced the art.

Objects such as the feather painting have received the attention of historians because they are easily identifiable as hybrid and because they bear a trace of the violent history between the colonizers and the natives.[10] Colonial art forms bearing Asian influences have traditionally been seen as "less engaging" for art historians because they are the result of trade and exchange and therefore do not have as strong a "political valence" for contemporary scholarship.[11] Such treatment of the Asian presence in Mexico reveals the historians' own agenda rather than portraying the colonial reality. This chapter argues that while it is true that the use of Japanese furniture pieces in sitting rooms in colonial Mexico does not represent a history of the subjugation of the Japanese, the incorporation of these objects cannot be considered apolitical. Consumers in colonial Mexico made deliberate choices about the kinds of Asian objects they appropriated and the manner in which they did so. In focusing on the material world of the colony from the perspective of the Asian objects, this chapter argues that the trade with Asia was influential in the formation of a colonial Mexican identity.

The history of the introduction and appropriation of Asian arts in colonial Mexico differed from the contentious and often bloody process of acculturation between the natives and the Europeans. In many instances the manner in which Asian, especially Chinese, goods were used, displayed, and imitated suggests an admiration of and respect for Asian arts, to the point of being appreciated more than the goods that were available through trade with Europe. It is true that certain crafts of the Indians, such as feather art, were also admired by the Spanish, but their incorporation had to register the victory of the colonizers. The incorporation of Asian objects and aesthetics, on the other hand, was a way for the colony to boast of the riches available to it, as shown in Balbuena's poem, or a means to create new objects and develop a colonial Mexican aesthetic that was neither entirely Spanish nor native, as seen with the blue-and-white ceramics made in the city of Puebla, which are the subject of the next chapter.

Fascination with Asian goods was not a phenomenon that began in colonial Latin America, but a trend that was brought from Europe to the Americas. Silk textiles and porcelain objects were known in Europe as early as the thirteenth century and were considered valuable even at that time. The men and women who traveled to the colonies in the Americas would have been familiar with the status of such objects and thus were eager to procure them from across the Pacific. However, the argument made in this chapter is that once the transpacific trade had begun, making access to Asian commodities direct and unmediated through Spain, the colonies appropriated and adopted Asian objects in novel ways, often suiting local needs and tastes.

We will focus on several different spaces in colonial Mexican society where the presence of Asian objects can be observed. The first is the annual fair that took place in Acapulco upon the arrival of galleons from Manila. The celebration that was held for the sale of Asian goods signified the importance of the transpacific trade to the colony and its disregard for the Crown's efforts to stem the flow of silver to Asia. We see that Asian commodities not only made space for themselves in the port of Acapulco, but also had the ability to transform Acapulco from a village into a city for the duration of the fair.

After the fair we will move to the central square of Mexico City, the Plaza Mayor, the location of the market where many of the Asian goods were sold. Discussion of this space focuses on several different ways in which Asia has been a part of its history. Some of the earliest visual depictions of the central square were made on local imitations of Japanese folding screens. These objects show that as early as the seventeenth century colonial society was taking inspiration from Asian art forms and adapting them to record its history and memorialize its spaces. The demand for Asian goods in the colonial society was further proved when the market in the square was given the name "Parián," after the Chinese market in the city of Manila. The adoption of the Asian name was a clear indication of the significance of Asian trade in colonial Mexico.

In the previous chapter the discussion of the Parián in Manila showed the necessity of such a space in the context of a port city where people from many different places could gather to buy and sell goods and services. The market was significant for the commerce of the city but at the same time was a space that was fraught with tension between the Spanish and the Chinese. The Manila Parián was constructed outside the walled city where the Spanish residents lived and had cannons pointed in its direction.

The Parián in Mexico City was also the most significant commercial site in the capital, but unlike that of Manila it was located in the very center of the city.[12] However, it was not a space that was looked down upon or feared, as was the case with the Parián in Manila.

Having seen the impact of Asian goods in outdoor spaces, we will move to study the consumption of these ceramics in various indoor contexts. Several paintings that depict carefully placed porcelain objects indicate that the use of blue-and-white ceramics for display was not accidental, nor was their depiction in paintings. The use of Chinese ceramics for drinking chocolate shows yet another facet of colonial life: how native indigenous practices were combined with the foreign goods that were brought in from Asia. What is interesting in the case of chocolate consumption is that it shows an instance of the colony educating the metropole in the use of both indigenous and Asian goods.

The colonizers in Mexico learned how to prepare and drink chocolate from the natives, and the practice was subsequently introduced to Spanish society by people who returned from the colony. Thus the cultivation and education of this particular taste went from the Indians to the Spanish colonizers and on to the metropole. When the Manila Galleon Trade began and porcelain objects were incorporated into the chocolate service, the kinds of objects used in the colony and the manner in which they were used were also introduced to the metropole.

By the time of the inception of the transpacific trade, Spanish colonization had already drastically transformed the places that are discussed in this chapter. The focus here is not that transformation, but rather how a colonial society dealt with a trade that connected it not to the metropole but to a different part of the world. As we follow the trajectory of Chinese porcelains in colonial Mexico from large to small spaces, we see that the impact of the world's first global brand in these settings can be regarded as unique and as significant to the development of the local culture.

Asia at the Fair in Acapulco

When a galleon was spotted off the coast of Acapulco, news of its arrival was sent to Mexico and merchants thronged to the port city so that they could partake in the sale of the goods brought over from Asia. For a few weeks every year Acapulco became a commercial hub. In the early nineteenth century Alexander von Humboldt referred to the trade fair in Acapulco as the "most renowned fair of the world."[13] Acapulco was not

the only port in Mexico to host a trade fair of this sort, but perhaps since the traffic from Asia was less frequent than at other ports, its arrival was more eagerly anticipated. The fair was the only time the port came alive; for the rest of the year it was a desolate place with not much to recommend it (Fig. 4.2).[14] Italian traveler Gemelli Careri described the transformation of the port in his travel accounts:

> … Friday 25 Acapulco was converted from a rustick [sic] village into a populous city; and the huts before inhabited by dark *mulattos* were all filled with gay Spaniards; to which has added on Saturday a great concourse of merchants from Mexico, with abundance of pieces of eight and commodities of the country and of Europe. Sunday 27th, there continued to come in abundance of commodities and provisions to serve so great a multitude of strangers …[15]

Fig. 4.2 Adrian Boot, *Puerto de Acapulco en el Reino de Nueva España en el Mar del Sur*. Litog. Ruffoni, 1628. 22 × 17 inches. Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, M 972.71 1628. Boot was an engineer who was in charge of overseeing the reconstruction of the fort of San Diego in Acapulco, designated here by the letter B. The port is represented as a conglomeration of huts, giving credence to accounts of Acapulco as a hamlet

From Careri's account we see that in addition to attracting workers for menial labor, the arrival of the galleon also brought officials from Mexico City to the port so that the cargo could be inspected and the requisite tax collected. Careri witnessed these proceedings and wrote that before anyone was allowed to disembark from the ship, an officer went on board to check the merchandise and take the tax payment.[16] Once the tax was paid, the goods could be unloaded. By the early nineteenth century, at the time of Humboldt's visit, it seems that there were times when powerful merchants in Mexico City bought much of the cargo almost immediately, apparently without even opening the bales.[17]

The merchants who gathered in Acapulco stood to make considerable profit on the goods that arrived from Manila. Although it is difficult to pinpoint exact prices for porcelain objects brought on the galleons we know that they were widely available, and since they were of varying qualities they were accessible to large parts of colonial society, as we will see later. The price of a particular shipment of porcelain could be affected by conditions at each one of the sites it passed through, from the kilns in Jingdezhen to the market in Manila, the fair in Acapulco and then ultimately shops in colonial Latin America. Problems with kilns in Jingdezhen could hike up the prices, or if there was a loss of an entire ship one year the goods would be all the dearer the following year. There could also be significant differences between the original price of an object and the price at which it was ultimately bought, owing to the various commissions charged by all the middlemen. In one example, a family ordered a pair of porcelain jars for 65 pesos, but by the time they arrived in Puebla, where the family lived, they cost 400 pesos each.[18] With the possibility of such great markups and commissions on Asian goods, it is no surprise that many people wanted to be involved in the transpacific trade.

Usually only one galleon per year came to Acapulco from Manila, and it was anticipated not only by the merchants who were awaiting their goods, but also by those who could benefit from unloading the galleons, besides providing provisions and entertainment to the population that gathered in Acapulco. Careri recounts a curious event that suggests the significance to some of the work provided by the fair:

> Thursday 31st the Express returned from [sic] Mexico with the Settlement of the Duties the Galleon was to pay, being 8000 pieces of eight, so that on Friday the first of February, they began to land the bales … Thursday 7th, when all the goods were unloaded, the porters of Acapulco made a sort of

> funeral, carrying one of their number on a beer, and bewailing him as if he were dead, because their Harvest was at an end; for some had got three pieces of eight a day, and the worst of them one … Saturday 9th, I saw abundance of mules come in loaded with goods and provisions …[19]

Another group of people in the colonial society who awaited the arrival or departure of galleons in Acapulco consisted of Indians who lived along the *Camino de China*, or China Road, the route from Acapulco to Mexico City. The journey was not a comfortable one, requiring mule trains to cross the 280 miles of difficult terrain.[20] For travelers it would have been impossible without the help of the Indians who had knowledge of the land and provided accommodation and provisions over the course of the journey. The work of providing for those traveling the China Road could be quite beneficial to the Indians, who not only served to gain monetarily from renting out rooms and mules, but could also negotiate a reprieve from other forms of labor that they were forced to give to the Crown as part of the *repartimiento* system. While the indigenous men who took part in this work did not necessarily acquire Asian goods for themselves, it may be said that they did participate in the transpacific trade as an important element of the overall network that stretched from the interior of China to the interior of Mexico.

Returning to Careri's account, we see that the fair did not end once the goods were unloaded. There was a continuous supply of provisions to Acapulco because the fair also included entertainment, although not all of it was enjoyable, at least not for Careri:

> Monday 11th, the Castellan invited the General of China, Admiral of Peru, D. Joseph Lopez, the Viceroy of Treasure, me and several officers of the ships to see some very indifferent juggling, performed by an old Genoese; and the best of it was, that the guests paid for the entertainment, the old man going about when he had done, to receive every man's benevolence, without receiving any thing from the Castellan … Sunday 17th being Shrove-Sunday, the blacks, mulattos and mesticos [sic] of Acapulco, after dinner ran races with above an hundred horses; which they performed so well, that I thought they far outdid the Grandees I saw ride at Madrid, tho' these used to practice a month before they appear in publick [sic]…[21]

The fact that preparations were made for the fair in Acapulco in advance is further evidence of the importance of the trade for colonial Mexican society. Since lucrative goods were being brought in, it seems that no cost was

spared in the festivities, and apparently they were even grander than what could be seen in Madrid, the seat of the Spanish Empire.

The trade fair in Acapulco was an example of a European custom that flourished in the New World colony. Not only did the transpacific trade continue despite efforts on the part of the Crown to prohibit it, but its success was flaunted, since the festivities were conducted with such great pomp and circumstance, to the extent that the fair was renowned around the world. This celebration is proof that Balbuena's orientation of Mexico towards Asia was not a mere figment of his poetic imagination, but a reality for the colonial society. It was the Spanish Crown that wished to restrict the trade, but within the colony Asian textiles, ceramics, furniture, and even beeswax were given ample space.

Asia in the Heart of the City

Many of the goods brought into Mexico City on the China Road were resold for great profits at the main marketplace in the city.[22] This market was built soon after Hernán Cortés conquered the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan in 1521. It was situated in the central square of the city, known as the Plaza Mayor, which is also where the Royal Palace, home of the viceroy, was built. The Plaza Mayor was not only the center of the city but also the place from which the rest of the colony was governed.

We know from accounts of early colonizers that in the time of Moctezuma, the Aztec ruler who was in power when the Spanish arrived, a big market was held every day in a place called Tlatelolco, north of the Tenochtitlan, which was the seat of the Aztec Empire.[23] Both Cortés and Bernal Díaz del Castillo, another conquistador, wrote extensive descriptions of this market. Part of Díaz del Castillo's account is as follows:

> The moment we arrived in this immense market, we were perfectly astonished at the vast numbers of people, the profusion of merchandise which was there exposed for sale, and at the good police and order that reigned throughout … Every species of merchandise had a separate spot for its sale … In short, every species of goods which New Spain produces were here to be found; and everything put me in mind of my native town Medina del Campo during fair time, where every merchandise has a separate street assigned for its sale.[24]

His amazement with the market was not only with regard to its size and the variety of goods available there, but also with its orderliness. He found it similar to the fair in his hometown in Spain, although a very significant difference was that the Aztec market took place every day rather than seasonally. According to Cortés the square where this market was held was twice as big as the square in Salamanca, Spain, and attracted more than sixty thousand people every day.[25]

During the conquest the Tlatelolco market was destroyed, as were many other places and structures of importance to the Aztecs. In 1527 it was declared that six plots of ground in the Plaza Mayor would be used for the construction of a city council, a prison, a slaughterhouse, and shops.[26] As time went on the space allotted for the shops grew into a market, which eventually became the most important place in the city, at least according to one visitor to Mexico City:

> The chief place in the city is the market-place, which though it be not as spacious as in Montezuma's time, yet is at this day very fair and wide, built all with arches on the one side where people may walk dry in time of rain, and there are shops of merchants furnished with all sorts of stuffs and silks, and before them sit women selling all manner of fruits and herbs. Over against these shops and arches is the Viceroy's palace, which, with the walls of the house and of the gardens belonging to it, taketh up almost the whole length of the market.[27]

This account of the central marketplace was written by Thomas Gage, an Englishman who traveled in the New World in the early seventeenth century and published his travel memoirs in 1648. Gage had been informed that the market in Mexico City was built in the likeness of the market in Moctezuma's time.

Moving the market from the north of the city into the center was the result of a conscious decision on the part of the colonizers. This spot had also been the heart of the city of Tenochtitlan.[28] The new shops attracted various groups of people, including natives, to the center, where they could see symbols of the new ruling power in places where their own temples used to stand. The symbolism of imperial power was important not just for the natives, but for the Spanish population as well. The Royal Palace, which housed the residence of the viceroy and his family, as well as various chambers and courts of the imperial government, the treasury, an armory, and a prison, served as a reminder to the Spanish and creole population of the colony's connection and subservience to the Crown.[29]

Although not many visual images exist of the Royal Palace from the early colonial period, its imposing position on the central square can be detected from a painting on a seventeenth-century *biombo*, or folding screen (Fig. 4.3). The eight panels of the screen show the palace, the market in front of it, and the *Alameda*, a park adjacent to the Plaza Mayor. It has been pointed out that the depiction of the Royal Palace on this screen is such that it gives order to the rest of the spaces shown in the image. There are men of authority on balconies looking out at the plaza and the market, but we the viewers cannot see into the palace.[30] The power to observe and survey belonged only to those who had the privilege of looking out from inside the palace. The painting also shows the viceroy's procession, another symbol of authority.

The arguments about imperial authority that are visually represented in the painting are compelling, but what is the implication of the fact that the scene is depicted on a folding screen, a form borrowed from Japan, and the painting style too is inspired by images on Japanese screens?[31] The word *biombo* itself comes from the Japanese *byobu* for folding screens.[32] The use of Asian aesthetics to depict a colonial scene, even one

Fig. 4.3 *Biombo*, Mexico, seventeenth century. Oil on canvas, 187 × 488 cm. Museo de Americas, Madrid. Unlike Japanese screens, which were made of paper, those in colonial Mexico were made of canvas with oil paint. The golden cloud motif is copied from Japanese screens that depicted the environs of the cities of Kyoto or Edo. This particular screen seems to be made with panels from two different screens, since the painting of the viceroy's palace ends abruptly and a different scene from the *Alameda* begins

that seems to project imperial power, suggests many things, chief among which may be the fact that the colony had acquired a measure of self-confidence in its distinct identity as deriving from and yet different from the metropole. The colony, it could be argued, was not hesitant to look to foreign forms to record its evolving history and memorialize the new spaces it had created.

Furthermore, art historians have also suggested that the coat of arms painted on this particular *biombo* belonged to an indigenous noble family.[33] If this is the case then the use of the Asian form was even more politically motivated. This particular *biombo* is thought to be the earliest example of this colonial Mexican art form, and if it was commissioned by an indigenous family then it shows that some native peoples were participating in the recording of the colony's history and that they too had access to Asian objects, which they used as an alternative to Spanish or European forms for recording their history.

In Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries folding screens were a preferred medium for depicting events or designating particular spaces.[34] Examples of such objects were brought to Mexico, which then inspired the making of *biombos* and their use for similar purposes of memorializing events or places. There exists a second *biombo* showing the same scene of the Plaza Mayor and the golden cloud motif. Yet another one, made with mother-of-pearl inlay, shows a large plan of Mexico City on one side and depicts the conquest on the other; it gives equal space to the Aztecs and the Spanish and displays them in similar grandeur. The fact that by the seventeenth century an Asian form had already been appropriated to the extent of spurring local imitations, and that too for depicting important places and events, suggests the eagerness with which members of the colonial society were willing to adapt and incorporate the goods that were made available to them through the trade with Asia.

The folding screen may have been an attractive alternative medium for painting important places and events because of its very form. The size and mobility of the screens made the images painted on them more interactive than they would have been if they were on a mounted painting. The screens were taller than an average person, sometimes as high as eight feet, and the panels were connected by hinges that allowed them to be folded in various ways. This in-and-out folding of the screens gives a sense of movement to the scenes painted on them, making it easy to imagine the viceroy's carriage riding across the plaza. Sometimes the screens were referred to as *biombos de cama* ("screens for the bed") because they could

be used to give more privacy around a bed. Another word for them was *rodoestrados* because they were used in the *salón del estrado*, or sitting room.[35] These screens then not only created actual space in bedrooms and salons but also invited the people in those spaces to partake in the activities of another place, such as the Plaza Mayor. The beholder of the painting had the ability to manipulate the image by moving the panels or by moving it into different parts of the room, or simply by viewing it from several different vantage points. It has even been suggested that some of the screens were made up of panels from different *biombos*, giving the owners the power to literally change the images as they saw fit.[36] Thus this Asian art form not only gave the people of the colonial society a new means to portray important places, but also gave them the option to depict these places as they wanted to see or remember them.

We do not know whether the collection of shops shown in the forefront of the painting on the *biombo* was already known as the Parián by the time the *biombo* was created in the seventeenth century. We do know, however, that the temporary shops in the plaza had to be rebuilt and reinstalled because of fires, most notably after a riot in 1692 when parts of the Royal Palace were also destroyed. The reconstruction of the market after that incident entailed making it more permanent by using stone for some parts of the building. To the east of the stone structure were stalls where fruits and vegetables would be sold, while in the stone structure itself many of the shops were dedicated to the sale of goods brought on the Manila Galleons.[37]

A late seventeenth-century painting by Cristóbal del Villalpando gives an idea of the expanse of the new market that was constructed after the riot (Fig. 4.4). It shows the partly destroyed Royal Palace at the back, the cathedral on the left, and the bustling market taking up most of the canvas. From Villalpando's painting it is possible to see why Gage might have called the market the "chief place in the city." As in the *biombo* that depicted the plaza, in this rendition too the viceroy is represented by a carriage shown in the bottom left corner. However, the viceroy's presence does not overwhelm the painting as it does in the *biombo*. Instead he is just one of the many different kinds of people shown engaging in the commercial activity of the market. Villalpando's painting can thus be seen as a visual rendition of the chief sentiment of Balbuena's poem, where symbols of authority are shown in the background, but the main focus of the painting is the market and its grandeur. The fact that the Royal Palace is depicted as damaged perhaps also portends the waning power of the Crown, even

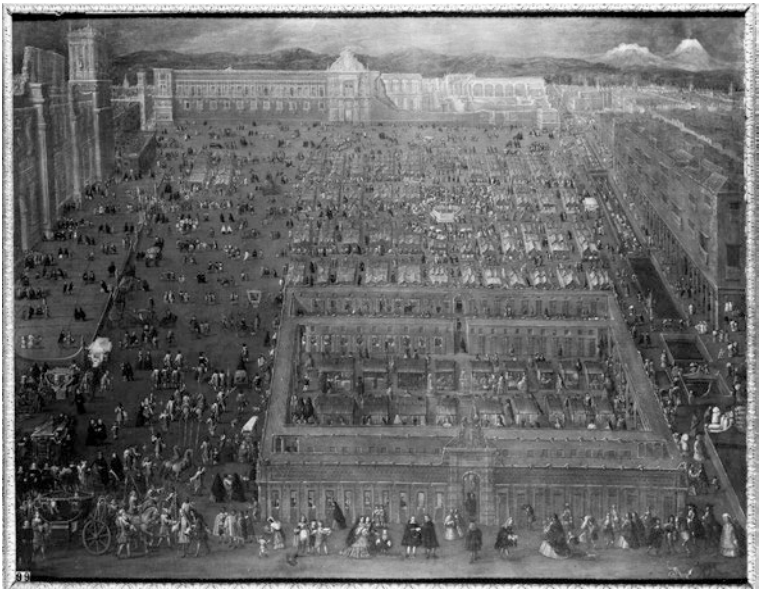

Fig. 4.4 Cristóbal del Villalpando, *View of the Plaza Mayor*, Mexico, ca. 1695. Oil on canvas. Corsham Court, Bath, United Kingdom

though the vibrant commercial activity suggests that the city itself is thriving.

We know that by the late eighteenth century at the latest the market was known as the Parián because there is a painting titled as such that was made around 1770. This painting focuses on just a few shops of the market and gives a better sense of the kinds of interaction that took place there.[38] It shows customers inspecting various goods and vendors mingling with them trying to make sales. The work belongs to the genre of *casta* painting, a form particular to colonial Mexico that recorded the racial mixing between the three main groups that inhabited the colony: native Indian, Spanish, and African.[39] The painting of the Parián is unlike most other *casta* paintings in that it does not follow the traditional format of depicting a mixed-race couple with their child. Instead there are numbers written next to some of the figures which correspond to a key on the

back of the painting that lists the different races of people living in Mexico City, including *castizos*, *negros*, *indios*, *mestizos*, and *mulatos*, among others.

In addition to documenting the racial mixtures found in the colony, *casta* paintings were also a means to present the bounties available there. Furthermore, many were meant as souvenirs of life in colonial Mexico for Europeans and as such were also a means of fashioning colonial identity.[40] The racial mixing shown in these paintings would have been looked down upon in Spanish society as a sign of the inferiority of the colony as compared with the racially pure metropole, but the display of material wealth would have countered this sentiment to some extent. In many of the paintings the couples are shown against a backdrop of lush local produce or in commercial situations where they are selling local products. The painting of the Parián does both: it shows a marketplace selling products available in the colony and at the same time represents the diversity of races present there.

The shops in the painting are shown selling furniture, glass or crystal ware, cloaks, and other textiles, proving that the colony was well supplied with both luxury goods and basic necessities. The vendors are shown carrying smaller wares in baskets, peddling them among the crowd at the market. The customers are a diverse group of people, mostly men, shown in various states of dress that indicate their social class or wealth. By showing people of various races and classes, the painting indicates that the Parián was important to all the groups of people in colonial society; it also shows that it was a popular space for these diverse groups to interact with one another as members of a single polity.

The Parián served several different functions for the colonial capital. By dedicating the central square of the city to a daily market, the colonial authorities could offer some sort of continuity to the natives who were used to such markets. Additionally, the space was such that it could be monitored and also serve as a reminder of the rule of the Spanish Crown in the form of the surrounding monuments, such as the Royal Palace and the cathedral. Yet the fact that the market became popularly known as the Parián connected the heart of the city to Asia rather than to the metropole. The choice of the Asian name can be likened to the fair at Acapulco and the colonial society's celebration of its ties with Asia. Instead of a Spanish word being adopted, or a word derived from a native language, the use of the Asian name suggests a conscious association with its counterpart in Asia, or at the very least a valorizing of Asian goods above European ones. In the Plaza Mayor, the Royal Palace and the cathedral

represented the colony's connection with Spain, but the marketplace clearly represented its ties with Asia.

Asia on Display

One of the factors that made Asian material objects easy to incorporate in colonial Mexican society was that their foreignness did not pose a threat to the identity of the ruling elite. In the case of Chinese porcelain, it has been argued that one of several features that helped popularize Chinese export porcelain around the world was the "apolitical" and "unhistorical" character of its motifs.[41] These characteristics made it particularly appropriate for display, as the motifs and designs of the objects were pleasant for decoration and could not be construed as heretic or revolutionary. Yet the manner of displaying them and the contexts in which they were shown could become expressions of ideas other than just the beauty of the objects themselves. As we consider paintings of scenes where porcelain objects are on display, we will see that even if the objects themselves were apolitical they could be used in ways that made them signifiers of specific identities or ideas.

The eighteenth-century painting of the Christ of Chalma by Pedro Calderón that includes two porcelain bottles is an example of such a scene (Fig. 4.5).[42] While these square porcelain bottles can be dismissed as mere decorations, their juxtaposition with the Christ of Chalma was not accidental. The image of the Christ of Chalma, one of several "Black Christs" particular to Spanish America, first appeared in a cave in the region of Chalma, which was known for its medicinal healing, "witchcraft," and artisanship in prehispanic times.[43] The mythic and political importance of the region allowed the local indigenous communities to adopt the new religion in ways that aligned with their own needs, which is probably why they initially portrayed Christ as dark-skinned. The mountain shrine dedicated to him began attracting devotees and hermits by the late sixteenth century and eventually became the second most important pilgrimage site in Mexico. Even though we have evidence to suggest that the earliest renditions of the Christ of Chalma were dark-skinned, by the time of Calderón's painting he was being portrayed as white, perhaps because of the extirpation campaigns of the late seventeenth century as well as renewed sensitivities regarding racial distinctions at the time.[44]

In light of this argument, the porcelain bottles may represent a further "elevating" of the Black Christ, helping to create a distance from his native

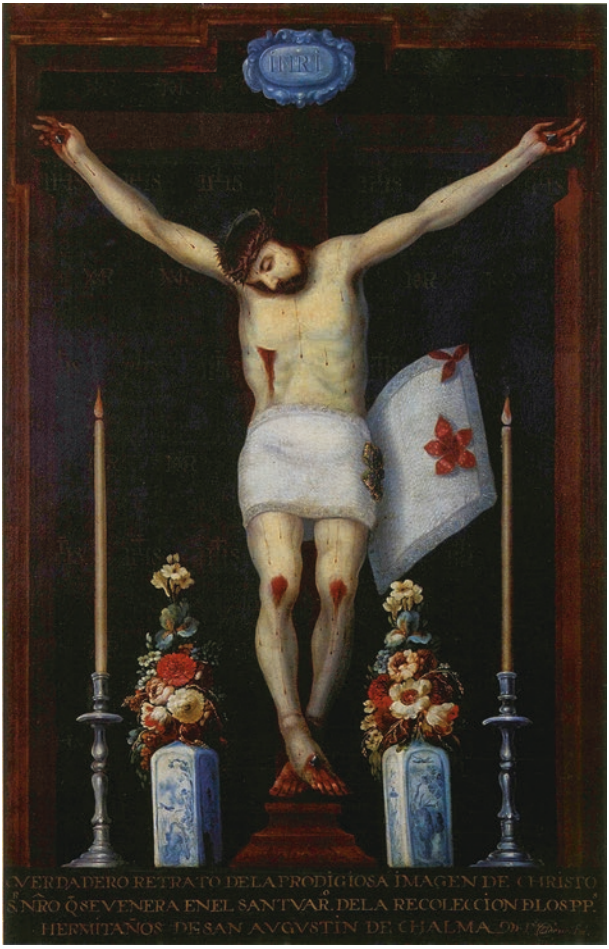

Fig. 4.5 Pedro Calderón, *Cristo de Chalma*, Mexico, eighteenth century. Oil on canvas. Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico City. The Christ of Chalma was sometimes depicted with porcelain bottles from China, which could be adorned with silk flowers made of material brought from China as well. The wax for the candles could also be of Asian origin

origins. However, the use of Asian objects to do so begs the question of why the artist chose Asian objects to create this distance rather than using something Spanish or European, such as glass or silver objects. As in the case of the Japanese folding screens, the accessibility of Asian objects

through trade afforded colonial artists an alternative if they did not want to emulate the metropole or align themselves with native Indian customs.

It is also possible that by the eighteenth century the display of Chinese porcelain on altars was common. Such a juxtaposition of Asian objects next to a powerful religious image served to make both the image and the porcelain bottles appear more local; the bottles served as symbols of Mexico's connection with Asia, and the Christ of Chalma was a colonial Mexican creation, or reincarnation, of the lord from the Old World. The painting represents a colonial Mexican reality in which a local Christ, created by native indigenous believers, is adorned with Chinese porcelain.

This reality is reinforced in another painting with the same theme from the eighteenth century by José de Mora, where the artist again depicts the Christ of Chalma with square blue-and-white porcelain bottles containing flowers, thus legitimizing the incorporation of Asian objects into local religious rituals. We do not know which painting was made first, but if one artist was inspired by the other he clearly approved of the use of the Chinese porcelain bottles as adornments for the Christ of Chalma.

Yet another painting presents Chinese porcelain in a humbler setting but also suggests the extent to which these objects were incorporated into daily life in colonial Mexico. Antonio Pérez de Aguilar's *Painter's Cupboard* is a depiction of a cabinet containing various objects that are visible to viewers through its glass door, which has a lock (Fig. 4.6). The many objects in this painting can all be singled out for interpretation, but for our purposes the Chinese porcelain plate on the bottom shelf is the most interesting. It stands out because it is the brightest object in the painting, even brighter than the silver plates with scalloped rims on the middle shelf. Yet it is not necessarily meant to be more special than the other objects, especially if we consider that the items are placed in a hierarchical order, with the ones on the top shelf being the most valuable to the painter.[45] The top shelf contains items for intellectual nourishment, such as the violin, the books, and the paintbrushes. The bottom two shelves contain objects and goods that were more for physical nourishment. There is an air of dishevelment to the cupboard. Many of the objects seem to be placed haphazardly, even precariously. Perez de Aguilar's painting quite literally seems to be a glimpse of the daily life in Mexico of a person of humble means. It proves that porcelain objects were widely available in the colony and were not just accessible to the elite.[46] Yet they were rare enough to deserve display and the care of being locked in a cupboard.

Fig. 4.6 Antonio Pérez de Aguilar, *Painter's Cupboard*, Mexico, 1769. Oil on canvas, 125 × 98 cm. Museo Nacional del Arte, Mexico City. The painting is made in the *trompe l'oeil* style of still-life painting, which was meant to be so realistic that it could trick the eye. The painting shows a variety of everyday objects that a painter possessed. The top shelf contains some books, a violin, and the painter's brushes. The middle shelf has food items, including loaves of bread and round boxes that would have held the cacao paste used for making chocolate. The bottom shelf mostly contains vessels and utensils of different kinds, such as wicker baskets, a porcelain plate and glasses. The copper pot was for making chocolate; the handle of a *molinillo,* used to froth the chocolate, is shown sticking out of the pot, and a *jícara,* a vessel to drink chocolate, is placed on top of it

In addition to these paintings where Chinese porcelain objects are quite conspicuous, there are numerous *casta* paintings where blue-and-white ceramics can be observed on display in various settings, often domestic.[47] In some of these cases it is not clear that the ceramics are necessarily

Chinese, and they may also be local *talavera* productions that have borrowed Chinese forms; but regardless, their depiction in these paintings gives us a sense of the prevalence of the blue-and-white aesthetic. One such example is a painting by Francisco Clapera, *De chino e india, genízaro*, in which a couple and their child are depicted in their home with a display of ceramics in the background (Fig. 4.7).[48] The objects include both the red *tonala* ware, which was traditional indigenous ceramic ware, and blue-and-white pottery, which in this particular example is probably Chinese porcelain rather than *talavera poblana*. Considering the mixing of indigenous, European, and Asian elements in this painting we can surmise that the blue-and-white aesthetic had been localized in a manner similar to

Fig. 4.7 Francisco Clapera, *De chino e india, genízaro* ("From Chino and Indian, Genizaro"), Mexico, ca. 1785. Oil on canvas, 51 × 39 cm. Denver Museum of Art

that seen in the Christ of Chalma: the foreign ceramics represent the colony's ties to Asia but the setting in which they are depicted also suggests the extent to which they have become a part of the local culture.

Chocolate and China in Colonial Mexico

Another notable example of Chinese porcelain being used in combination with indigenous elements is the consumption of chocolate. Since chocolate was a beverage native to Mesoamerica, the Spanish living there learned to cultivate a taste for it and prepare it from the Indians. The Spanish living in Mexico were educated by Indians in this custom, and those who went back to Spain then educated the society there. The first Spanish colonizers eagerly adopted the beverage despite discouragement from the metropole. Later the colonial population also did not give up chocolate for tea when Europe was enthralled by the Chinese beverage. They followed their own tastes, quite literally, and adapted the Asian goods available to them to fit their needs.

Chocolate is made from the seeds of the cacao fruit, and the use of the fruit in beverages was a common trait among all the diverse communities of Mesoamerica.[49] After the Spanish conquest the colonizers, despite being victorious, needed to rely on native knowledge and products to survive in the foreign land, which is how chocolate was first adopted by Europeans.[50] In the years following the conquest some groups discouraged the consumption of chocolate because of their anxieties about contact between natives and the Spanish population.[51] However, just as miscegenation could not be stopped, the detractors of chocolate were also not successful, and by the early seventeenth century chocolate was being consumed in both Mexico and Spain.[52]

Although the method of consuming chocolate changed over time, the Spanish society first learned how to consume it and appreciate its taste from the natives.[53] One of the examples supporting this theory is the use of *jícaras*, the vessels that indigenous peoples used for drinking chocolate, in both Mexico and Spain (Figs. 4.6 and 4.8). They were most often made of lacquered gourd, and the name was derived from the Nahuatl word *xicalli*.[54] In ship manifests of the transatlantic trade between the colony and Spain there are references to *jícaras* being exported for chocolate consumption, indicating that when people in Spain began drinking chocolate they too used the utensils that the natives used. This continuity between the prehispanic ritual and the colonial custom is further proved by the fact that when the lacquered gourd cups were replaced by porcelain and mayolica vessels they were still referred to as *jícaras.*

In the colonial period chocolate drinking was a familiar custom for all classes and races that inhabited the colony. In the late eighteenth century the Viceroy of Mexico is known to have made a statement regarding the wide availability of this beverage: "In this country cacao is a primary food not only for persons of means as in other countries, but also among the poor people, especially servants both rustic and urban, who are given a ration of chocolate."[55] The viceroy seems to have been making a gesture to the colony's wealth and status because all members of colonial society could drink chocolate. This sentiment was also expressed in *casta* paintings that showed both upper- and lower-class couples enjoying the beverage.

In these paintings the chocolate is almost always served in blue-and-white cups, similar to the shape of Chinese teacups. The Chinese vessels were probably used for chocolate as soon as they were brought to Mexico since porcelain is ideal for drinking warm beverages. It has been argued that giving the Chinese vessels the native name was natural because the two types of vessels were similar in size and shape.[56] While it is true that smaller *jícaras* would have been similar in size to Chinese porcelain cups, in most respects the two objects were in fact very different. A *jícara* is a very light object and its shape is bulbous, with the rim of the vessel caving in, and large *jícaras* require two hands for a comfortable grip (Fig. 4.8). The porcelain cup on the other hand is heavier and feels like glass, and its rim protrudes outwards. The experiences of drinking chocolate from the two vessels would have been different. Recognizing this difference makes the point about the Spanish learning from the natives much stronger. Chinese teacups were referred to as *jícaras* not because of a visual or material similarity between the two, but because the Chinese vessel was being used for a custom that the Spanish had adopted from the natives, and they used native referents for anything to do with chocolate.

The association between Chinese teacups and chocolate is significant because the same porcelain cups could have been used to drink other beverages, such as tea, which became popular in many parts of Europe and gave a boost to the porcelain production industry in China.[57] However, while Europeans were using Chinese cups to drink Chinese tea, in Mexico the same objects were being used for drinking chocolate. Tea did not become a popular Asian commodity in colonial Mexico, and the ship manifests of the transpacific trade do not bear evidence of tea being exported to Mexico. On the other hand, we know that cacao was one of the goods sent to Manila from Mexico for the colonial populace living in the Philippine Islands.[58] Peter Mundy, an English traveler, tasted chocolate for the first time on a Manila Galleon that was docked in the bay of Macao:

Fig. 4.8 Antonio de Pereda, *Still Life with Ebony Chest*, Spain, 1652. Oil on canvas. State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia. While the painting portrays the many accoutrements of a chocolate service, the chocolate itself is missing, suggesting that these objects were familiar enough to contemporary viewers for them to have known what the painting was about. Placed on the chest, on the right, is a gourd *jícara*. On the silver plate at the bottom left is a similarly shaped bulbous vessel, which would also have been referred to as a *jícara*, along with the two other cups on the plate. An interesting detail is the small chink in the Chinese porcelain cup on the silver tray, which perhaps alludes to the long distance such a vessel would have had to travel to reach Spain

> It seems they make rich voyages from Manilla [sic] to Nova Hispanna and back again. Aboard this ship was the first time I tasted Chacculatte (chocolate), although I had heard it spoken of. It is made of a certain grain growing in the West Indies. These they dry, grind to powder, boil in water, add sugar, spice, odours etc; drinking it warm in the mornings is accounted very wholesome.[59]

Mundy's account dates from his travels to India and the East Indies in the 1630s, and in that region too it was known that the Manila Galleons carried valuable cargoes. At that time tea had not yet become popular in Europe, but clearly chocolate was already a staple for the Spanish; and that did not change, as is clear from the viceroy's comments.

A late seventeenth-century painting, *Still Life with Ebony Chest* by Spanish artist Antonio de Pereda, shows that chocolate was also incorporated into Spanish daily life (Fig. 4.8). In addition to adopting the custom of drinking chocolate from the colonial society, the metropole also borrowed the colony's way of using Asian ceramics in the chocolate service. This is also shown in the painting, which depicts many objects brought to Spain from the New World, including a Chinese blue-and-white porcelain cup. The hue of the blue color used to paint the cup, the faintly discernable motifs, and the outward-curving rim all suggest that the cup in the painting was Chinese. Other objects in the painting include an Andean textile, ceramics from Mexico and Spain, and sugar from the Caribbean, which was possibly used to sweeten the chocolate. The ebony chest may have been used to store the cacao beans used to make the chocolate.[60] On top of the chest sits a gourd *jícara* and behind it a *tonala* ware double-handled jar.[61]

Pereda's painting does not prove that the Chinese cup was brought to Spain from Mexico, but given that it is presented with so many other products and objects from the New World it is highly likely that it too was brought to Europe from across the Atlantic. In addition, although the Chinese cup was an anomaly owing to its origin, the painting suggests that it did not stand out in that particular setting; it was a *jícara* like other vessels in the painting. By the time Pereda painted the still-life scene, Chinese porcelain cups had been incorporated into the custom of drinking chocolate in Spain, via Mexico. The *casta* painting by Francisco Clapera depicting a display of Chinese and local ceramics shows small blue-and-white cups resembling *jícaras*, suggesting that such vessels were being used even by ordinary people in the colony (Fig. 4.7).

The interaction between Chinese ceramics and chocolate went beyond the use of the teacup in colonial Mexico. As discussed earlier, another Chinese shape that was adapted for the use of chocolate consumption was the Chinese *guan*, which was recreated by potters in Puebla into a *chocolatero* (see Figs. 1.4 and 1.5). Chinese jars that lost their lids on the journey across the ocean would be fitted with iron lids that could be locked. This shape inspired local creations that were also fitted with iron lids, and both the porcelain and earthenware jars would be used to store valuable products, such as cacao beans.

The connection of Chinese porcelain with chocolate is further evidenced in the creation of the ceramic version of a New World object used for the consumption of chocolate: the *mancerina*, a vessel like a saucer that had a place for a cup of chocolate and could also hold biscuits (Fig. 4.9). The

origins of this object are not fully known. It has been suggested, owing to its name perhaps, that it was invented by a viceroy of Peru, Marqués de Mancera. According to that story, the *mancerina* was first made with silver and later ceramic versions were created, the first one possibly being made in Jingdezhen.[62] The object was popular in Europe as well, with ceramic industries in Spain and France producing their own versions.

These three objects, the porcelain *jícara*, the *chocolatero*, and the *mancerina*, offer three different ways in which Chinese porcelain was adapted for the consumption of chocolate. The Chinese teacup was used to drink chocolate and was given a local name. The *chocolatero* was an entirely new object that was created from the meeting of a local custom and an Asian object. The *mancerina* too was a new object, but it was created locally, and later reproduced by Chinese artisans in porcelain. The teacup and the *chocolatero* are examples of Chinese porcelain objects that were adapted to fit local taste, while the *mancerina* was an object for which Chinese artisans had to adapt their skills to make a novel item specifically for Mexican tastes.

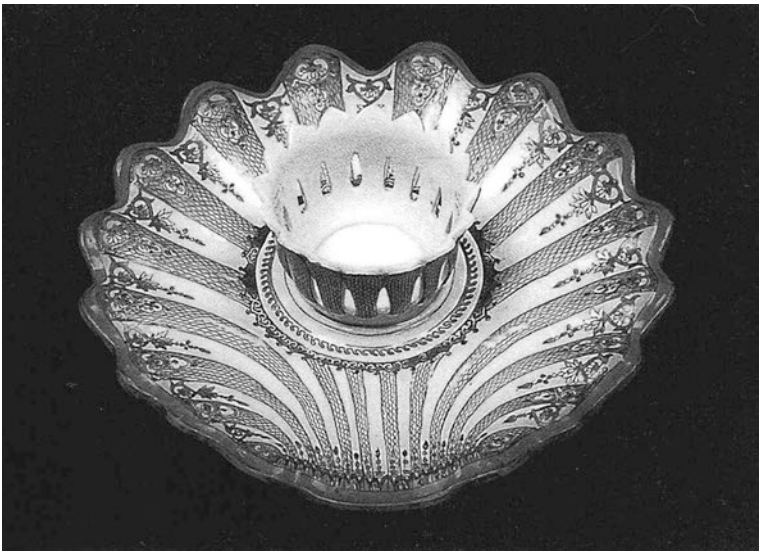

Fig. 4.9 *Mancerina*, porcelain with overglaze enamels, Jingdezhen, eighteenth century. Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico City. The shape of the object resembles that of a shell, in common with many *mancerinas*

The local impact in colonial Mexican society of Chinese porcelain and other Asian goods was multifaceted, but not haphazard. These commodities had the power to transform certain public spaces, such as the port of Acapulco and the central market in Mexico City, and also the interiors of homes and churches. Although Acapulco was also a port city, its participation and involvement in the Manila Galleon Trade was very different from that of Manila. Both cities depended on the transpacific trade network, but Acapulco quite literally required the presence of a galleon to come to life, and it was indeed a more jubilant town when the galleons arrived from Asia laden with goods. This makes Acapulco a peculiar example of a port city in a period where many such hubs of trade were developing in various corners of the world, and proves that even within the category of port cities there could be variety.

The Parián in the Plaza Mayor of Mexico City was also created by global trade, becoming a place where many commodities from around the world were sold. We know that the sale of Asian goods in this market was influential because it was given the same name as its counterpart in Manila. Even though in terms of distance Spain was closer to Mexico, there were ways in which the colony's stronger attraction to Asia was noticeable, starting as early as 1604 with the publication of Balbuena's poem. This attraction had a great deal to do with the commodities that the trade with Asia made available in the colony.

Specific goods, such as Japanese folding screens, had the ability to alter the space in a particular room. Other objects, such as Chinese porcelain or carved ivory sculptures, could transform an interior space by adding decorative flourishes. Some of these goods were also influential in the development of local crafts, as seen in the case of *biombos* that were used to record and depict locally important historical events or places. The same was true of the introduction of Chinese porcelain, which gave rise to a genre of ceramic objects used specifically for the consumption of chocolate, and provided inspiration to local potters for the new ceramic aesthetic they went on to develop in the city of Puebla.

Notes

1. Bernardo de Balbuena, *Grandeza Mexicana: Reproduccion facsimilar de la edicion principe* (Mexico: Sociedad de Bibliofilos Mexicanos, 1927), 89. Translation mine. Spanish original: "Quien de tus ricas flotas los averes/De que etran llenas y se van cargadas/Dira sit u la suma dellas eres? En ti estan

sus grandezas abreviadas/Tu las basteces de oro y plata fina/Y ellas a ti de cosas mas preciadas/En ti se junta España con la China/Ytalia con Japon, y finalmente un mundo entero en trato y disciplina."

2. Barbara Fuchs and Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, "*La Grandeza Mexicana* de Balbuena y el imaginario de una 'Metrópolis Colonial,'" *Revista Iberoamericana* vol. LXXV, 228 (2009), 676.
3. Stephanie Merrim, *The Spectacular City, Mexico, and Colonial Hispanic Literary Culture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 96.
4. Balbuena, 76–77. Translation mine. Spanish original: "Es la ciudad mas rica y opulenta/De mas contratacion y mas Tesoro/Que el norte enfria ni que el sol calienta/La plata del Piru de Chile el oro/Viene a parar aqui y de Terrenate/Clavo fino, y canela de Tidoro … De la gran China sedas de colores/Piedra Bezar de los incultos Andes/De Roma estampas, de Milan primores …"
5. A similar attitude is expressed in the letter written by Mexico City resident Inés de Solís cited in the Introduction.
6. Stephanie Merrim, *The Spectacular City, Mexico, and Colonial Hispanic Literary Cultures*, 96.
7. For more on Africans in Mexico see Colin Palmer, *Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570–1650* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976); Ben Vinson, *Bearing Arms for his Majesty: The Free Colored Militia in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Laura Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft and Caste in Colonial Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Ilona Katzew, *Casta Painting: Images of Race in Eighteenth Century Mexico* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2004).
8. Donna Pierce, Rogelio Ruiz Gomar and Clara Bargellini, eds., *Painting a New World: Mexican Art and Life* (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2004), 94–95. For more on colonial feather art see Alessandra Russo, "Plumes of Sacrifice: Transformations in Sixteenth-Century Mexican Feather art," *Res. Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 42 (2002): 226–250, and Alessandra Russo, Gerhard Wolf and Diana Fane, *El vuelo de las imagines: arte plumario en Méxcio y Europa* (Mexico DF: Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Museo Nacional de Arte, 2011).
9. Pierce, Ruiz Gomar and Bargellini, 95–96.
10. Alessandra Russo has written about the manner in which art works such as *The Mass of Saint Gregory* also had an impact on Western art. See *The Untranslatable Image: A Mestizo History of the Arts in New Spain, 1500–1600* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014).
11. Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, "Hybridity and its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America," *Colonial Latin American Review* 12, 1 (2003), 16–17.

12. According to some low estimates between 40,000 to 60,000 Asians went to Mexico while the Manila Galleon Trade was active, but 100,000 is the more probable total. Some of the people who migrated to Mexico worked as vendors and opened shops in the Parián, and on two occasions there were conflicts between them and the Spanish or creole vendors who also worked in the market. The official response to these conflicts was ambivalent: in one instance the court ruled in favor of the *chinos* and in another against them. We can surmise then that while local shopkeepers and laborers might have felt threatened by the Asian newcomers, the government did not look upon them with suspicion and fear as it did in Manila. For more on the Asian presence in colonial Mexico see Edward Slack, "The Chinos in New Spain: A Corrective Lens for a Distorted Image," *Journal of World History* 20, 1 (2009): 35–67, and Tatiana Seijas, *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico: From Chinos to Indians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
13. Alexander von Humboldt, *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain; the John Black translation* [1811], Mary Maples Dunn, ed. (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1972), 206. Edward Slack has argued that the fair in Acapulco was not just a "clearinghouse for imported Asian wares," but rather a "world's fair or international exposition" that functioned as a "vital marketplace for innumerable items grown or manufactured domestically from the farthest reaches of colonial society." He is referring especially to the iron goods that could be purchased in Acapulco, which were highly valued in parts of colonial Mexico and the Philippines. Edward Slack, "Orientalizing New Spain: Perspectives on Asian Influence in Colonial Mexico," *Análisis* 15, 43 (2012), 112–113.
14. In addition to the Adrian Boot image of Acapulco presented here, see also Nicolas de Cardona's watercolor of Acapulco from 1614. Published in Richard Kagan, *Urban Images of the Hispanic World, 1493–1793* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 78. Cardona's depiction presents Acapulco as even more desolate than Boot's.
15. John Francis Gemelli Careri, "A Voyage Around the World," in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels: Some Now First Printed from Original Manuscripts, Others Now First Published in English …, Volume IV* (London: Awnsham and John Churchill, 1704), 503.
16. Ibid.
17. Humboldt, 206.
18. Maria Bonta de la Pezuela, *Porcelana China de exportación para el mercado novohispano: La colección del Museo Nacional del Virreinato* (Mexico: UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2008), 126–127. The prices of the objects would also change if they arrived in Acapulco damaged.
19. Careri, 504.

20. Tatiana Seijas, "Inns, mules and hardtack for the voyage: The local economy of the Manila Galleon in Mexico," *Colonial Latin American Review*, 25, 1 (2016): 56–76.
21. Careri, 504–505.
22. Manuel Carrera Stampa, "Las Ferias Novohispanas," *Historia Mexicana* 2, 3 (1953): 341.
23. Stephanie Merrim, "The Work of Marketplaces in Colonialist Texts on Mexico City," *Hispanic Review* 72, 2 (2004): 222.
24. Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *The Memoirs of the Conquistador Bernal Diaz del Castillo written by himself, containing a true and full account of the discovery and conquest of Mexico and New Spain*, translated by John Ingram Lockhart (London: Hatchard, 1844), 235–236.
25. Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, translated and edited by A.R. Pagden (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1971), 103–105.
26. Ignacio Cumplido, ed., *Coleccion de Documentos Oficiales Relativos a la Construccion y Demolicion del Parian, y a la Propiedad Reconocida e incontestable que tuvo el Escmo. Ayuntamiento de Mexico en Aquél Edificio* (Mexico City: Mexico City Ayuntamiento, 1843), viii.
27. Thomas Gage, *Thomas Gage's Travels in the New World*, ed. J. Eric S. Thompson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 72.
28. Rebeca Yoma Medina and Luis Alberto Martos López, "El Parián: un siglo y medio de historia y comercio," *Boletin de Monumentos.Historicos* 10 (1990): 24.
29. Michael Schreffler, *The Art of Allegiance: Visual Culture and Imperial Power in Baroque New Spain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 12–35.
30. Ibid., 20.
31. Janice Katz, *Beyond the Clouds: Japanese Screens from the Art Institute of Chicago and the Saint Louis Art Museum* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 22.
32. Ibid. For more on Japanese screens in colonial Mexico see also Sofia Sanabrais, "From *Byōbu* to *Biombo*: The Transformation of the Japanese Folding Screen in Colonial Mexico," *Art History* 38, 4 (2015): 778–791.
33. Teresa Castelló Yturbide and Marita Martínez del Río de Redo, *Biombos Mexicanos* (Mexico: Institución Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1970), 72.
34. Katz, 22.
35. Joseph J. Rishel and Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt, eds., *The Arts in Latin America 1492–1820* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2006), 414.
36. Katz, 23.
37. Rebeca Yoma Medina and Luis Alberto Martos López, 26–28.

38. The painting is in a private collection. It has been published in Ilona Katzew, *Casta Painting: Images of Race in Eighteenth Century Mexico* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2004), 7.
39. Ibid., 5.
40. Ibid., 1.
41. Lothar Ledderose, *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 97.
42. Example of such a square bottle can be found in the National Museum of History in Mexico City. Published in George Kuwayama, *Chinese Ceramics in Colonial Mexico* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 22.
43. Jeanette Peterson, "Perceiving Blackness, Envisioning Power: Chalma and Black Christs in Colonial Mexico," in *Seeing Across Cultures in the Early Modern World*, ed. Dana Leibsohn and Jeanette Peterson (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), 54.
44. Ibid., 56. Nineteenth-century versions of this Christ were again dark-skinned.
45. Pierce, Ruiz Gomar and Bargellini, 224.
46. Maria Bonta de la Pezuela has studied eighteenth-century inventories in Mexico, which are telling to some extent of the value of porcelain objects in the colony at the time. These objects were not cheap but a singular cup or plate could be within the means of someone of humble means, especially if it had a defect, which would bring the price down. According to the inventories she found, a plate could be valued anywhere between 6 *reales* and 2 *pesos*, where 1 *peso* was equal to 8 *reales*. See Bonta de la Pezuela, *Porcelana china de exportación,* 126–130 and 293–323.
47. See for example José de Páez's *De español y negra, mulato*, ca. 1770–1780, published in Katzew, *Casta Painting,* 25, and another by an unknown artista titled *De mulato y española, sale morisco,* ca. 1780, also in Katzew, 130. Both of these examples also show blue-and-white ceramics being used for drinking chocolate.
48. The man in this particular painting is referred to as "chino." In this case the word does not refer to a man from Asia but rather is the name given to person who is the progeny of combinations such as *lobo* and *india* or *barcino* and *mulata* or *chamizo* and *cambuja*, among others. Edward Slack has analyzed the transformation of the word "chino" from referring to people from South, Southeast and East Asia in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to being used to identify people of mixed Indian and African blood in the mid-eighteenth century. He argues that this transformation points to the willingness of the colonial society to "embrace" Asians as their own to the extent that the word "chino" no longer has any connection to Asia. See Slack, "Orientalizing New Spain," 126.

49. Marcy Norton, "Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics," *American Historical Review* 111, 3 (2006): 670–671.
50. Ibid., 676–677.
51. Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 9.
52. Ibid., 12.
53. Norton, "Tasting Empire," 678.
54. Donna Pierce, "Mayólica in the Daily Life of Colonial Mexico," in *Cerámica y Cultura: The Story of Spanish and Mexican Mayólica*, ed. Robin Farwell Gavin, Donna Pierce and Alfonso Pleguezuelo (Albuquerque: University of Mexico Press, 2003), 253.
55. As quoted in Sophie and Michael Coe, *The True History of Chocolate* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2007), 181.
56. Norton, "Tasting Empire," 686.
57. Robert Finlay, *The Pilgrim Art: Cultures of Porcelain in World History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 128.
58. William Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1939), 275.
59. Peter Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1984), 45. Gemelli Careri on his voyage from Manila to Acapulco laments that he could not have chocolate on a stormy night when no fires could be lit, suggesting that it was it was not out of the ordinary to have chocolate as one of the provisions aboard the Manila Galleons. Careri, 487.
60. This use of the ebony chest has been suggested by Marcy Norton, among others, in "Tasting Empire," 685.
61. For more on this see María Concepción García Saíz, "Mexican Ceramics in Spain" in *Cerámica y Cultura: The Story of Spanish and Mexico Mayólica*, edited by Robin Farwell Gavin, Donna Pierce and Alfonso Pleguezuelo (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 186–202.
62. Pierce, "Mayólica in the Daily Life of Colonial Mexico," 254.

CHAPTER 5

Blue-and-white *Chocolateros*: Crafting a Local Aesthetic in a Colonial Context

One of the most significant consequences of the transpacific trade for Mexico was the incorporation of Asian designs and aesthetic elements into the crafts of the colonial era, a phenomenon that is particularly visible in the renowned ceramics produced in Puebla. Bernardo Balbuena's panegyric *La grandeza mexicana* shows that by the early seventeenth century Mexico City had been transformed into a place where the various trade networks of the world converged because commodities from around the globe could be found there. The city of Puebla, located southeast of Mexico City, could not compete with the importance of the colonial capital, but it too was connected to early modern trade networks, the evidence of which can be seen in its crafts.

In the early twentieth century eminent Mexican poet and art critic José Juan Tablada (1871–1945) evoked Puebla's connection to China precisely through the ceramics produced there:

> With the photographer López Escalera
> I spent a morning … I wish I could
> spend an entire month
> In the house of Padierna, the Potter
> Magician of Talavera Poblana!
>
> That morning
> Polychromatic and peripatetic,

M. Priyadarshini, *Chinese Porcelain in Colonial Mexico*,
Palgrave Studies in Pacific History,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-66547-4_5

Although very Mexican,
was a voyage to the country of porcelain,
to marvelous China.

For with clay elastic and soft
And glaze minerals
Padierna the Tlachichique revived
Immortal pieces from Nanking to Guangdong.[1]

Tablada commits to verse an experience he had in Puebla of visiting the workshop of Pedro Padierna, a well-known ceramicist of Puebla at the time.[2] He writes that although it was a very "Mexican" morning, it also felt like a trip to China because the pieces being produced in the workshop were reminiscent of objects made in Nanjing and Guangdong, two Chinese cities that by that date were more famous than Jingdezhen.[3]

In addition to creating a connection between China and *talavera poblana* ceramics, the poet also ties the craft to a prehispanic past. He uses the word *tlachichique* to describe Padierna, the potter. The word comes from Nahuatl and means "doers or makers" of decorative arts as well as architecture, writing, and painting.[4] The use of an indigenous word here is important because while the ceramics from Puebla definitely betray an Asian influence, the impact of indigenous arts on the colonial craft is notable and one of many factors that make them so unique. In the previous chapter we saw that in appropriating Chinese porcelain colonial Mexican society adapted it to accommodate local needs, such as the consumption of chocolate. In this chapter we will see that in craft production too, local factors were important in the way Asian aesthetics were appropriated.

Take for example the *chocolatero*, which as we have already seen borrows design elements from the Chinese *guan* (Figs. 1.4 and 1.5). It has a similar shape and the surface is divided into four distinct panels. Above and below these panels are patterned scrolls. This kind of division was taken from Chinese porcelain, but the painter of the Mexican jar has modified some elements. For example, the vertical motif dividing the panels is reminiscent of Rococo decorative styles. The scroll on the top looks like a modified version of the wave pattern seen in Chinese ceramics. The scroll at the bottom, on the other hand, is derived from Islamic art and from the ancient Kufic script.[5] The central motif of the flying creature painted in each panel resembles a phoenix such as would also have been seen on Chinese ceramics, but on this jar it is actually a local bird, the quetzal.

The quetzal is a bird native to Mesoamerica and is distinguishable by its magnificent feathered tail. It was considered sacred by many indigenous groups, and its feathers were prized for art work.[6] Motifs based on the quetzal could be found stamped on ceramics and sculpted into religious buildings.[7] The incorporation of these motifs and designs, often in a single object, meant that these earthenware ceramics became valuable in their own right precisely because of their distinct local aesthetic. The *chocolatero* is stylistically closer to Chinese ceramics than to prehispanic ceramics; however, by substituting the quetzal for the phoenix the painter acknowledges the cultural significance of these birds locally while maintaining the integrity of the design of a ceramic that was inspired by blue-and-white Chinese porcelain. Such substitutions were not just a matter of rendering unfamiliar motifs more familiar, but were also a means of differentiating the Mexican creations from Chinese and Spanish ceramics.

In the previous chapter we saw that the consumption of Asian goods was also, in effect, a way of creating a distance between the colony and the metropole. In a similar manner, we may surmise that the craftsmen of Puebla may have had reason to make aesthetic choices that localized their products, thus distinguishing themselves from their counterparts in Spain, who were also making objects that bore the influence of Chinese aesthetics. The fact that the ceramics made in Puebla stood out among its many arts and crafts, and thus became an important symbol for the colony, is borne out by comments such as the following:

> … there are workshops where they make coarse and fine cloth because Puebla has many skilled workers; the spinning of these workshops supports many. There exist all the many trades that are found in the republic, and in ceramics, glass, knives, and soap, the workers of Puebla surpass the rest. The pottery is finer than that of Talavera [city in Spain] and can compete with that of China; the glass, although not as nice, looks like that of Venice; the quality of the knives and scissors exceeds that of the rest, like the blades of Toledo …[8]

These are the words of a seventeenth century priest, Agustín de Vetancourt (1620–1700), who wrote a religious chronicle of colonial Mexico titled *Teatro mexicano: descripción breve de los sucesos ejemplares, historicos, politicos, militares y religiosos del Nuevo Mundo Occidental de las Indias* ("The Mexican Stage:

A Brief Description of the Exemplary Historical, Political, Military and Religious Events in the Occidental New World of the Indies"). This manuscript of four volumes included a treatise on Mexico City and another on Puebla, suggesting that in his estimation those were the two cities of the colony most worth writing about. Vetancourt's writing presents Puebla as a very lively and industrious place. He glorifies the abilities of the city's artisans and views their creations as equal to or surpassing the crafts of Europe. His description of the ceramics is particularly noteworthy because although he believes Chinese ceramics to be the best in the world he suggests that the pottery produced in Puebla is not only better than that of Talavera in Spain but can even compete with Chinese porcelain.

Indeed, the earthenware ceramics from Puebla enjoyed some fame in colonial Latin America. They were exported north to the mining regions and beyond to New Mexico, east to Veracruz, south to Oaxaca, Chiapas, Guatemala, and Honduras, and to Cuba and Santo Domingo in the Caribbean. Dissemination of *talavera poblana* to South America was more difficult since there the Viceroyalties of Mexico and Peru did not always have direct trade links. Yet there is evidence of these ceramics being found in Venezuela and New Granada, and one document even states that *talavera poblana* was traded in Peru for tin.[9] Jesuit priest Bernabé Cobo, who lived in Peru and wrote a history of the New World, was aware of the ceramics produced in Puebla and wrote about them in his work:

> They make such select pottery that is so well glazed that the [pottery] from Talavera [in Spain] is no longer needed because a few years ago they started imitating the [pottery] of China in these parts and it is very much like it, especially that which is made in Puebla de los Angeles in New Spain …[10]

It was not just the ceramics from Puebla that were exported to other parts of Mexico and beyond; many other finished goods and agricultural products were also sent from the city, making it important to local cultural and economic development. Despite its conspicuous importance Puebla is not often discussed as a significant node in global history narratives, which tend to feature places like Jingdezhen, Manila, and Mexico City owing to their importance on a global scale. By including Puebla in our narrative we are able to see a place that was connected to early modern trade networks, but not as a global production center, a point of exchange, or a capital city where political and economic decisions were being made about the trade. Its unique status thus allows us to compare it with the other sites,

especially Jingdezhen, where the artisans experienced their integration into early modern trade very differently from those in Puebla.

To further explore the impact of the Manila Galleon Trade and Chinese porcelain on Puebla and its craft traditions we will begin with an account of Puebla's history and development in the early modern period, which will be followed by an inquiry into the establishment of the ceramic industry and the specifics of making *talavera poblana* objects. We will consider the social dimensions of this industry through a discussion of the potters' guild, which will highlight the particularities of creating a new craft tradition in a colonial context. We will conclude with a study of a few objects that show us how specifically Chinese porcelain influenced local production.

Puebla: The Second City

Puebla was established in 1531, a decade after the conquest of Tenochtitlan, in a location that was not previously settled by Indians, although there were Indian towns and villages nearby that could readily provide labor.[11] By establishing an entirely new city in such a manner, Crown officials hoped to create a "Spanish" city, one where contact between natives and the Spanish could be limited. It was also made into a religious center for the region. The cathedral in Puebla was built earlier than the one in Mexico City, and in the sixteenth century the bishopric of Puebla was wealthier than that of the capital. As a new city Puebla faced challenges in defining itself. It was not the capital of the colony and did not have a past that it could refer to as Mexico City did.

The clergy approved of the creation of a city close to the Atoyac River because it meant that they could assemble those members of the Spanish colonial society who had settled beyond the capital.[12] When the city was planned in the sixteenth century the authorities kept the residences of the Spanish and the Indians separate from each other, but it was not really possible to keep the two populations segarated because indigenous labor was required for the various construction projects. Soon after its establishment the city had begun to lose its pure Spanish character and by the eighteenth century had a large mixed-race population, making it comparable to any other New World city in terms of its social makeup.

Initially, however, efforts were made to give Puebla a good start as a Spanish city. It was given its own founding myth that purported that it had divine origins. This was first written down in the second half of the

seventeenth century by Jesuit scholar Francisco de Florencia. According to the myth, Julian Garcés, the bishop of Tlaxcala (a neighboring city), had a dream on the feast day of Saint Michael about where the city of Puebla should be founded. In the dream the bishop reportedly saw a piece of fertile land flanked by two rivers; two angels were delineating the parameters of the city using cords and were also laying out the blocks and streets of the new city.[13] Puebla was thus established between two rivers and was planned as a city with its streets organized in a grid. Garcés's dream and the myth based on it were subsequently memorialized in the city's coat of arms, which depicted two angels holding up a shield bearing an image of a fortress and a river flowing underneath it. Like other heraldic symbols, this coat of arms would have been visible in various parts of the city on flags and shields and used in parades, reminding the citizens of the auspicious beginnings of their city.[14]

The founding myth gave the city of Puebla a moral backing. The colonial capital of Mexico City had the benefit of being the site where the Aztec Empire was vanquished, and its new colonial buildings were built on top of preexisting Aztec structures, serving as reminders of the glory and power of the city's new rulers. As a new city, Puebla did not have any such past, and a founding myth served the purpose of validating its existence. Another aim of the myth was to serve as a Spanish and/or Christian response to the founding myth of the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan. Although the Aztecs had been conquered, the legend of their capital city survived well into the colonial period. In turn, when the Spanish were building a new city they took the opportunity to introduce a story of their own that they hoped would become a legend and could compete with the Aztec stories, which seemed to have lasting power.

This Aztec legend bears repeating here because its imagery did indeed survive and was found depicted on *talavera poblana* ceramics. According to the legend, when the Mexica people were looking for a place to settle, their deity Huitzilopochtli told them to look for a place where the heart of their enemy had been thrown into a lake. The heart had supposedly landed on a rock, where it had grown into a big *nopal* cactus, and perched on top of this cactus was an eagle. The Mexica settled in the marshy area where they saw this apparition; this city was named Tenochtitlan and went on to become the seat of the Aztec Empire.[15] This powerful narrative was familiar to the early colonizers, who included it in the Codex Mendoza, a pictorial and textual manuscript created in 1541, twenty years after the

conquest, that describes the founding of the capital of Tenochtitlan and gives an account of the daily life of the indigenous people.[16]

The central image on the first pictorial folio of the Codex Mendoza is that of the eagle atop a cactus (Fig. 5.1). The blue crisscrossing lines represent water, as the city was founded on an island in the middle of a lake, and canals were known to be the means of transportation around the city. This was a well-known symbol that also appeared in other colonial accounts, and today it adorns the national flag of Mexico. The people who believed in this myth were themselves conquered and vanquished, but the legend lived on, as seen in the various extant reproductions of it.

It is very likely that visiting foreigners were also told about this Aztec legend. Italian traveler Gemelli Careri was shown a sixteenth-century map depicting the wandering of the Mexica people until they found Tenochtitlan. Careri had an engraving made of the map and included it in his book, thus making the myth known to his readers in Europe.[17] The native legend had an appealing narrative and was visually very salient, factors that may have contributed to its survival. The founding myth of the first purely Spanish city in the colony gave Puebla divine Christian origins, but it failed to displace or replace older native legends.

Puebla also never managed to surpass the colony's capital in political importance; it always remained the "second city." In the eighteenth century another clergyman, Juan Villa Sanchez, wrote of Puebla's many virtues in *Puebla sagrada y profana: informe dado á su muy ilustre Ayuntamiento el año de 1746* ("The Sacred and the Secular Puebla: Report on the Illustrious City Council of 1746"), and he too presented it as secondary to the capital:

> The second city of the kingdom of New Spain, second in dignity, in majesty, in ostentation, in the opulence of its workshops, in the number of residents, in nobility, in letters, in its police force, and in everything that makes up the body of a city and the soul of a Republic: the City of the Angels is truly the neck and the throat of the vast body of North America, joined with or in proximity to its magnificent and wealthy capital, whose barbarian founder Mexi gave it the name of Mexico for being such an important part of the kingdom and making it beautiful and perfect; the capital stands out and its beauty is apparent so much more since it is held up on this beautiful neck.[18]

Villa Sanchez's remarks make it clear that Puebla had many positive attributes, although they seemed to have served to make the capital and colony shine more brightly. His analogy of Puebla as the neck that held up the head

Fig. 5.1 Codex Mendoza, folio 002r, Mexico, early 1540s. The Bodleian Libraries Collection, University of Oxford, United Kingdom. The manuscript was commissioned by Antonio de Mendoza, the first Viceroy of Mexico, for presentation to Emperor Charles V of Spain. The images would have been painted by an Aztec artist and the text written by a Spanish priest. On this particular folio the eagle on the cactus symbolizes the founding myth of Tenochtitlan. The shield and arrows below the rock represent the city itself. The site, despite being marshy, was fertile and had access to fresh water, which is represented by the cross. Water was also important in the myth about the founding of the city of Puebla and was given visual form in the coat of arms of the city, perhaps as a response to the significance of water in the Aztec legend

of the colonial body is apt because Puebla supplied agricultural goods to the colony, and it was also home to many other industries and crafts that were important to it.

What made Puebla so productive was the fact it had many natural resources, such as pastures for animals and access to water from rivers and springs. It was also well located, being in the center of Mexico, to send its many products out to the various regions. Those who arrived in Mexico via the port of Veracruz had to cross Puebla since it was situated on the route to Mexico City, which meant that the residents of Puebla could buy their imports at lower prices than those of Mexico City.[19] When the Manila Galleon Trade began, merchants also brought wares to Puebla, and the residents could buy directly from them instead of having to go to Mexico City.[20] Easy access to the ports and to the capital meant that Puebla could also supply provisions for the ships that made long-distance journeys across the Atlantic and the Pacific.

There is a long list of agricultural products and finished goods that were sent from Puebla to other parts of the colony, such as wheat, corn, beans, barley, soap, cotton, textiles, glass, ceramics, raw and carded wool, and various iron goods.[21] The finer trade goods could be exported along the same routes as the agricultural products and thus helped generate a demand for them, which in turn stimulated the crafts to develop and expand. Being able to provide the colony and even other regions with such a wide variety of goods made Puebla fairly wealthy, and the city experienced a golden age from the mid-sixteenth century to the late seventeenth century.[22] When Thomas Gage traveled to the city in the seventeenth century, he remarked upon its wealth:

> We visited all the city, and took large notice of it, judging of the wealth and riches of it not only by the great trading in it, but by the many cloisters both of nuns and of friars which it maintaineth … That which maketh it most famous is the cloth which is made in it, and is sent far and near, and judged now to be as good as cloth of Segovia, which is the best that is made in Spain, but now is not so much esteemed of nor sent so much from Spain to America by reason of abundance of fine cloth which is made in this city of Puebla de los Angeles. The felts likewise that are made are the best of all that country. There is also a glass house [presumably a workshop that produced glass], which is there a rarity, none other being as yet known in those parts.[23]

Gage's enthusiastic praise for the quality of Puebla's products is reminiscent of Vetancourt's. Both traveled and published in the seventeenth

century, and the two writers seem to have had a similar outlook on the quality of European craft products. The fact that both viewed the goods produced in Puebla as equaling even the "best" that were made in Spain suggests that Puebla's unique status as the foremost industrious city of colonial Mexico deserves attention. It also suggests that at a time when cities were known to specialize in particular products, as was the case with Jingdezhen and porcelain or Segovia and cloth, Puebla was home to many different industries.

In addition to being the bread basket of the colony and supplying finished goods, Puebla was also a religious center whose importance rivaled that of the capital. In his account of the city Careri alludes to the superiority of Puebla over Mexico City in certain aspects. He was especially impressed by its religious buildings and spaces:

> The buildings here for the most part are of lime and stone, and vye [sic] with those of Mexico. But the streets are neater, tho' not paved; all of them handsom [sic] and strait, crossing one another towards the four quarters of the world; whereas those of Mexico are always stinking and dirty, so that a man had always need to go in boots … I went to see the great square. Three sides of it are adorned with good porticos, uniform, and set off with rich shops of all sorts of commodities. On the other side is the cathedral, with a most beautiful front, with a high tower, the fellow to which is not yet finished, so that this square is finer than that of Mexico.[24]

Besides the cleanliness and orderliness that Careri found commendable, he could not have failed to notice that despite its smaller size when compared with Mexico City, Puebla measured up to the capital in a certain amount of ostentatiousness, especially when it came to its churches.

Both Gage and Careri refer to the richness of the city with regard to its religious structures since building and maintaining them was costly, though it was also one of the best ways the city could present its most positive self-image to the world. However, by the mid-eighteenth century Puebla's fortunes were diminishing. The economy had begun to decline towards the end of the seventeenth century. Several factors contributed to the stagnation, including epidemics, population decline, and competition from other regions.[25] The city's religious life must have also been a burden on its finances.

Around the time when the city was experiencing a decline, an Asian woman who had lived in Puebla for some time emerged as a heroic figure. As seen above, clergymen were particularly eager to boast of Puebla, and

it was during this period of the city's weakening fortunes that some of its Jesuit leaders chose to promote a local hero, Catarina de San Juan, or China Poblana, the Asian woman from Puebla, as she was popularly known. To this day she remains a popular figure in the imagination of the local populace. The city boasts two statues of her, and the place where she passed away bears a commemorative plaque to remind passersby of this local legend.[26]

Catarina's life began in India, where she was captured by the Portuguese as a child, eventually sold to the Spanish, and brought to Mexico, where she became a servant for a family in Puebla. During her time in Puebla she became extremely devout and was well known in the city for her piety and her religious visions, or ecstasies.[27] Upon her death great numbers of *poblanos*, natives and residents of Puebla, attended her funeral, at which a Jesuit priest, also Catarina's confessor, Francisco de Aguilera, delivered a sermon that was later published.[28] This was the first of three works to be published on Catarina, who had so captured the imagination of the Jesuit leaders of Puebla that they were intent on spreading her fame.

Ceremonies such as Catarina's funeral were important events in colonial Latin America since they legitimized figures of authority while at the same time creating a sense of community and local pride. This sense of community acknowledged racial and other differences among its members but also accepted them into the fold.[29] The elaborate funeral held for Catarina is an example of such a public ceremony that served to galvanize both the Catholic and the *poblano* identities of the people who attended it. The public veneration of Catarina's virtues served as a way to unite people on the basis of their commonalities, and to feel pride for one of their citizens and thereby their city. Catarina's foreign origins were acknowledged, but at the same time she was described as a virtuous and pious woman, loyal to her adopted faith and city. Her Asian identity was not problematic in Puebla even if it was a cause for concern for the Holy Church in Europe.

In the year after Catarina's death the first volume of a three-volume biography of her was published by another Jesuit, Alonso Ramos, in order to make the case for Catarina's beatification.[30] However, while the city of Puebla and its religious elite, especially the Jesuits, were full of praise for Catarina, the Catholic Church in Rome deemed the books on her life heretical and banned them, as well as all images of her. This did not necessarily diminish Catarina's fame and perhaps made her into more of a cult

figure. In addition, the Church in Mexico was slow to respond to the edicts from Rome, so the books were not banned immediately, and in 1692 yet another book was published in Puebla on Catarina's life.[31] The fact that it was written and published despite the bans implies that the city was unwilling to give up its local hero regardless of the opinion in the metropole.

Catarina's story is especially remarkable because it shows that in colonial Mexico even a rank outsider, an Asian, could, under certain circumstances, become a local hero. Perhaps her Asian origin was even preferable because her extreme piety represented the potential spiritual conquest of Asia by Christian Europe. In fact, native indigenous women who converted to Christianity never achieved the kind of fame and status that Catarina did, and it was precisely her local popularity that made her unacceptable to the Church in Europe, which saw her following as no more than a local cult that it could not but put down in the interest of maintaining control and unity.[32] But by the same token, a local sense of attachment ensured that she was seen as a homegrown darling that the people of Puebla were unwilling to give up.

Catarina's story encapsulates the eagerness on the part of the colony to produce local heroes while at the same time seeking approval from the Catholic Church, which alone could grant her beatification. The Church's refusal to recognize her and the defiant mythologizing of her that followed reveal anxieties about the metropole's ability to control the colony. Further along our journey we will see that in the ceramic industry too there was a tension between the way in which the guild and members of the community were officially expected to operate and the ground realities of building a new craft industry in a colonial city.

Like the creation of the founding myth of Puebla, the eulogizing and popularizing of Catarina de San Juan and the creation of the China Poblana legend can be viewed as additional instances of the city's attempts at self-definition. Puebla, which began as a purely Spanish city, had by the seventeenth century made space for foreign elements to be incorporated into its history and folklore. By this time the potters of Puebla had for their part already been incorporating Chinese aesthetics into their ceramics for decades. Like China Poblana, the *talavera poblana* ceramics also emerged to represent the city. They reflected the society in which they were crafted by combining disparate elements into a coherent aesthetic; they were locally popular just as she was, and thus were indeed appropriate symbols of the city.

The Making of *Talavera Poblana*: History and Artisanal Practice

Before the arrival of the Spanish, several regions in Mexico produced ceramics. It was a rich and varied art. These ceramics were not made on the potter's wheel or glazed, but they were used for ritual, utilitarian, and decorative purposes much as they were in other parts of the world. The neighboring city to Puebla, Cholula, had been the center of the famous Mixteca-Puebla ceramic tradition since AD 900 (Fig. 5.2). Bernal Díaz del

Fig. 5.2 Pedestal bowl, earthenware, Cholula, Mexico, 1300–1500. 11.7 × 5.5 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. An example of the type of ceramics produced in the Mixteca-Puebla tradition that was popular in central Mexico before the Spanish conquest. This is an earthenware vessel made without the use of a wheel. It was fired, burnished with a stone, and then painted with various slips of paint, unlike the *talavera poblana* ceramics, which were thrown on wheels, glazed, and then painted. This pedestal bowl most probably would have been used by indigenous elites. It is decorated with cat-like figures, and the base is decorated with geometric shapes

Castillo remarked upon the popularity of the ceramics from Cholula in his account: "… the land is full of magueys from which they make their wine. They make very good pottery in the city of red and black and white clay with various designs and which supply Mexico and all the neighboring provinces."[33] This tradition of making ceramics in Cholula nearly disappeared after the Spanish conquest. But in Puebla there was a community of indigenous potters who continued to make a red utilitarian ware, though their ceramics were not nearly as ornate or sophisticated as the earlier products.[34]

The kind of ceramics that the Spanish introduced to colonial Mexico are known as mayolica, a term adopted in the English language to refer to any tin-glazed earthenware. In the ninth century potters in the Middle East had discovered that by adding tin-oxide to the lead-based glazes they were using, they could transform the earthenware clay to an opaque, white color and thus achieve the white body they had long sought.[35] This technique was introduced to Spain when it was under the rule of Arabs. The ceramic arts of southern Spain began to develop under the influence of Muslim artisans as early as the tenth century.[36] The technique of tin-glazing ceramics was also introduced to other parts of Europe, where several ceramic centers developed the craft and created their own versions, which is why the Delftware of the Netherlands is different from the mayolica of Spain, which in turn is distinguishable from the mayolica of Italy. The ceramics produced in Mexico can be seen as part of this continuum but with significant differences of their own.

The initial experiments in using Spanish techniques to make ceramics in the colonized territory were conducted in Mexico City. In the late sixteenth century the artisans active in Mexico City moved to Puebla or other artisans became active in Puebla and a larger, more significant industry was established there.[37] In addition to being well located in terms of available arable land, Puebla also had access to clay deposits and water, which made it an ideal site for ceramic production. The surrounding areas also had deposits of raw sodium, which was essential for the glazes used.[38]

The fact that the same region again became well known for its ceramics, albeit of a very different kind, in the colonial period was not entirely accidental. Local knowledge of clay deposits and other resources would have been helpful in establishing the new industry.[39] It would have also been relatively easy to train artisans who were already used to working with clay. The potters from Spain who began making pottery in Puebla used

techniques from their homeland to prepare the clay, but they needed to experiment with combining the different clays in order to achieve the desired color and plasticity. We do not have records of exactly how they might have arrived at a formula. Studies of the establishment of the ceramic industry in Puebla discuss the importance of the Old World ceramic tradition to the colonial Mexican art form and the influence of indigenous and Asian aesthetics, but this period of experimentation with local materials is not emphasized, because of the lack of historical records. Yet it was in these moments of working with new materials and introducing new tools and techniques that a colonial aesthetic and craft already began to take shape. The instances of trial and error that eventually led to a unique and coherent *talavera poblana* aesthetic are obscured by the finished products that survive.

The first few years of the development of the *talavera poblana* industry in Puebla were characterized by individual potters working in their own workshops, without the guidance of a formal institution or group. In the seventeenth century a potters' quarter began to develop in Puebla so that the artisans had their own neighborhood with their own local parish church, which was known as San Marcos.[40] By that time Asian goods had already been coming to Puebla for a few decades. Thus as the industry and the craft were developing, Asian commodities and aesthetics were being incorporated into the lives and crafts of the society.

As the community grew, the process for making *talavera poblana* began to be standardized to a certain degree. The clay used was quarried in two different places: a black clay was mined from the hills of Loreto and Guadalupe and a pink clay near Totimehuacan. These two clays were mixed together in equal proportions and then put into water tanks to "rot." The longer the clays were left in the water, the more their quality and plasticity would be improved.[41] Once the impurities were separated out, the previously mixed clay had to be prepared for shaping. This was done in a manner similar to the technique employed in Jingdezhen, where the clay was placed on the floor and trodden barefoot. After this point the clay was formed into blocks and stored in a dry place, in some cases for over a year, so that it could ripen and thus increase its plasticity.[42]

Once the clay was prepared it was shaped on a wheel or in molds. The potter's wheel that was introduced to Mexico by the Spanish was different from that used in Jingdezhen. It was operated by rotating a disk with the foot, which in turn rotated a smaller disk attached to it, on which the clay was placed and could be shaped (Fig. 5.3).

Fig. 5.3 Potter making a plate in the Santa Catarina workshop in Cholula. The same artisan was responsible for throwing the shapes and trimming, unlike in Jingdezhen where the two tasks were completed by different artisans; this is still the practice in contemporary workshops. Author photo

The introduction of the wheel meant that certain shapes could be made faster than with the coiling-method, which had been used to make vessels in the precolonial era. For making shapes derived from Chinese forms, the wheel was essential. It has been argued that in the early seventeenth century, owing to the influence of Chinese porcelain, artisans in Puebla became more careful in their choice of the raw materials they were using so as to ensure a more reliable, fine-grained clay, and were also throwing thinner shapes.[43] In the late eighteenth century the use of molds for some of the more elaborate forms also began to become common.[44] If contemporary workshops are any indication, in Puebla too the thrown objects were trimmed to make their shapes finer.

Earthenware clay is very different from porcelain. The properties of porcelain made it more appropriate for making finer pieces, although many combined skills were required to shape the clay because it was not an easy material to control and was vulnerable to the slightest errors. In Jingdezhen the pieces made on the wheel were made finer in the trimming process. Earthenware, on the other hand, being easier to shape, was kept thicker because it was not as strong as porcelain; the particles did not fuse together as well as they did with porcelain, which is also why it was porous and had to be glazed in order to be used for cooking and eating.

In Puebla, once an object had been shaped it was left to dry and then fired for up to twelve hours in a wood-fired kiln.[45] The first firing of the ceramics made the clay fuse enough for it to be glazed and painted. The clay fired to a reddish color after the first firing. The red vessel was then dipped in a tin glaze to make it white. The glaze was also prepared in the potter's workshop. According to the ordinances it was supposed to be prepared by mixing one *arroba* (liquid measurement of weight) of lead and six pounds of tin.[46] This mixture was prepared over fire so that the two would combine, and once it had cooled, the crystals were ground to a powder, which was then diluted in water. To this mixture was added some silica, feldspar, sodium, and quartz.[47] As with the discovery of the correct clays and their combinations, the glaze formula also had to be developed and perfected. For example, the sodium for the glaze was derived from a local substance called *tequesquite*, the incorporation of which also would have required a period of discovery and experimentation.[48]

Once the glaze had dried the objects could be painted. The blue designs were created with cobalt, as they were in China; this mineral most probably had to be imported and therefore would have been expensive.[49] Yet when we look at the objects today, it seems that the potters did not show any restraint in using cobalt when it came to decorating their wares, at times leaving the surface more blue than white. The vessels would be decorated either freehand or with the help of stencils. As we saw in Jingdezhen, in Puebla too the design was first outlined and then colored in.

It is possible that the surface decoration was designed by the master potter and executed by his apprentices or other workers in his workshop, and it was to protect these designs that the potters were asked to sign their

names on their creations, although most of them did not. The fact that native motifs were often included in the designs suggests that native or mestizo artisans were involved in the decoration of the vessels, even though the ordinances prohibited them from joining the guild or making fine wares. Some of the objects made by the potters were commissioned, and in these cases the person commissioning the object may have suggested certain elements of the design.

After the object had been painted it was fired a second time, this time for a longer period so that the paint would be affixed to the ceramic body. The finer wares were supposed to be fired using saggars, earthenware containers meant to protect the objects being fired, which we also encountered in the chapter on Jingdezhen. However, marks on the bottoms of vessels show that the potters preferred using cockspurs, small stilts to keep the object from touching the surface of the kiln.[50] Kilns were part of the same building or establishment where all the other parts of the production process occurred.[51] There was no need for the skillful porters we encountered in Jingdezhen who moved pieces from one workshop to another.

Although no surviving kilns have been found so far in Mexico, the potters in Puebla most probably used a version of the *horno arabe*, a Spanish Muslim updraft kiln that consisted of two chambers. It did not have a chimney, but its domed top had holes for releasing smoke (Fig. 5.4). This structure had a chamber at the bottom where the fuel (wood) burned, and another chamber on top where the pottery was placed to be fired. The wall between the two chambers was made of clay or stone with openings to allow the hot air to circulate. It appears that the kiln model used in Jingdezhen was more efficient than the one used in Spain or Mexico. The updraft kiln had several weaknesses: there was a great degree of heat loss, high temperatures could not be maintained, there were cold spots, and the design required large fuel reserves, thus affecting the overall output.[52]

The finished ceramics were often sold from the building where they were made. This meant that each workshop was an individual unit that controlled its designs, outputs, and sales, with a master potter in charge of all the various operations.[53] In the case of a master potter's death, his widow was allowed to continue the business, and a son could continue for three years without taking the required examination. Labor was divided within the workshops, and although officially there were strict rules as to who could make what type of ceramics, it is difficult to know how exactly the responsibilities were divided behind the closed doors.

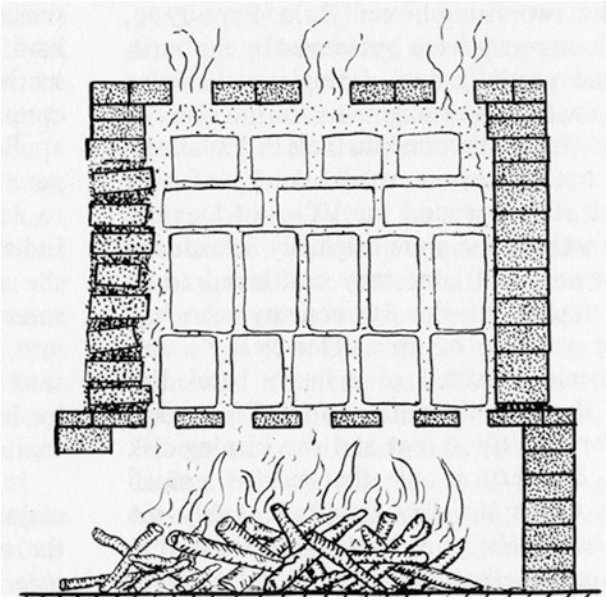

Fig. 5.4 Diagram of the kind of kiln used in *talavera poblana* workshops. The bricks on the left could be removed to load and unload the kiln. From Florence Cline Lister and Robert Hill Lister, *Andalusian Ceramics in Spain and New Spain: A Cultural Register from the Third Century B.C. to 1700*. © 1988 The Arizona Board of Regents. Reprinted by permission of the University of Arizona Press

The Puebla Potters' Guild: Making and Breaking the Rules

The overall process for making *talavera poblana* would have been established and become routine by the time a potters' guild was formed in the year 1653. In the same year the guild published a set of ten ordinances that served as rules of operation for the community of potters. As a group the ordinances are not particularly descriptive or instructive on the subject of making the ceramics, but focus more on the social makeup of the community, limiting the privileges of those potters who were not master potters, and keeping various artisans in their respective places and categories.

The first four items of the ordinances described the process of attaining the status of the "master potter." The first item stated the manner in which a person was to be examined to become a master potter, which included

the presence of a notary and elected officials. The second declared that at the time of writing of the ordinances there were no master potters, and so the authors of the ordinances themselves would be the first ones. The third item said that blacks, mulattos, and persons of "mixed color" were not allowed to take the examination.[54] The fourth stated that those who had not passed the examination could not operate pottery workshops or shops. The fifth item delineated the three types of objects that were to be made by the potters—fine ware, common ware, and yellow ware—and stated that only those who had passed the examination for fine ware were allowed to produce it.

These first five ordinances were concerned with the social makeup of the potters' community and the divisions within it. The leaders of the community wanted to restrict, at least officially, the involvement and participation of certain members of the colonial society and maintain the racial hierarchy that was a defining feature of social relations at the time. In addition to the exclusion of people of mixed heritage from the higher positions, once a person had passed the examination and belonged to the guild he could not move out of the station for which he had been examined.

The remaining five ordinances specified the potters' responsibilities and the manner in which they were to make ceramics. The sixth item concerned the transference of a potter's position to his widow and son. The seventh stipulated that all the master potters should have a copy of the ordinances in their possession so that they could not feign ignorance. The eighth item detailed the method of producing ceramics, including how the clay had to be prepared, the sizes for plates, and the painting method. The most interesting sub-clause of this item stipulated that potters should sign or mark their pieces in order to prevent fraud. The ninth ordinance stated that only potters were allowed to sell this pottery and that no retailers should be used. The final item detailed the employment of apprentices; it stipulated that each apprentice should be examined at the end of his term with a potter, and that if he did not pass he could apprenticed to another potter at the expense of the first one.

These final ordinances are not restrictive but rather protective of the potters who were accepted into the guild. They were concerned with ensuring that a potter's business and family would survive even if he passed away, and that the potters' designs were protected with the use of signatures and the control of the sale of the ceramics. Even apprentices were offered a measure of security lest they be trained improperly.

The emulation of foreign ceramics was also stipulated in subsequent amendments to the original ordinances. In 1682 the guild leaders specified the manner in which European and Chinese ceramics were to be imitated. The first of these items specified that the finest ware had to be painted using the *aborronado* technique, which derives from the Moorish tradition of filling blank spaces with dots.[55] A second item indicated that in order to achieve diversity some objects were to be painted like those of Talavera de la Reina from Spain.[56] Yet another item stated that the fine ware should be made in the likeness of Chinese porcelain: "The fine ware must be painted in the manner of the ceramics of China, very blue, made in the same manner with relief in blue, and on this type of pottery should be painted black dots and spaces of color …"[57]

In addition to the guild ordinances, the potters' examinations were another way of regulating the community and maintaining quality control. They were supposed to serve as evidence of the skill of the artisan being tested, but the records read more as evidence that the guild ran things in a proper manner. All the examinations were recorded in the same way, beginning with the date, location, and names of the people present; these were followed by a physical description of the person who was examined and then a few words on the kind of skill for which he was examined. This part was brief, merely stating whether the person was being examined as a painter or a thrower, and often no particular skill was specified. Regardless, the examination record mentioned only that the individual was able to answer the questions and capably handle follow-up questions. There was no qualitative description of the individual's particular abilities and talents. It ended with a summary of the privileges the individual was granted as a result of having passed the examination and the granting of a sealed letter confirming the fact.

While these records are evidence that the examinations were conducted in an orderly fashion, some records show that after a time the original ordinances were defied. As early as the seventeenth century men of color were making finer wares as assistants or apprentices in workshops owned by men of Spanish ancestry without taking the examination. The archives show that a mulatto slave by the name of Diego de Sandrera was apprenticed as a painter for fine ware with the master potter Diego Serrano y Peña for three years beginning in 1651,[58] and examination records from the eighteenth century show that mestizo and mulatto potters were taking the examination despite the fact that the 1653 ordinances explicitly forbade them:

> In the noble and loyal city of Los Angeles on the 20th day of the month of May of seventeen hundred and seventy sixth year in front of Mariano Francisco Zambrano notary of the town council … and trusted executioner of the our king (may the Lord guard him for many years) … appeared Juan Cabesas, Andres Olivos, Manual Maldonado, and Joseph Mariano Medrano, officers of the guild of the white and colored ware who say that they have completed their obligation in accordance of the ordinances to examine in the genre of colored ware Joseph Christoval Frias, a mestizo aged twenty-six years, of average build, black hair, wheat-colored skin, small forehead, bushy eyebrows, small olive-shaped eyes, wide nose, thick lips … in the presence of various experts and officials of both offices, they asked him to make various pieces of colored ware and asked him questions, as well as follow-up questions, and he satisfied on all counts … they have given him the title of "Examined Master" in said office for him to use and exercise, with a shop, public workshop, with officers and apprentices, registered in this city, and all other cities, villas, and places of our king (may the Lord guard him for many years) …[59]

It seems that not all the men listed as master potters took the examination, or else that some examination records have not survived, so there is no way to get an accurate account of what percentage of the potters were of mixed heritage. There are examples of mestizo master potters from the seventeenth century who did not take the examination, and not all the records list the races of the potters being examined.

The insistence on maintaining a guild, enforcing its rules, and conducting examinations was perhaps a means of keeping in touch with the way of doing things in Europe, where guilds were popular in earlier times.[60] It may be that there were instances of potters in Puebla not adhering to the rules, such as mulatto or mestizo potters making and selling ceramics and thus creating competition for the potters of pure Spanish ancestry.[61] This would explain why the ordinances were written in such a way as to be exclusive and keep certain members of the colonial society out while at the same time providing measures of protection for those who belonged to the guild.

Yet we also know that these rules were not always followed faithfully from the beginning. The artisans who made *talavera poblana* formed a community, and most of them lived close together in the western quadrant of the city, where the church of San Marcos was the center of their activities and home to their confraternity.[62] In such a tight-knit group regulation might have been easy, but each master potter operated a self-contained

workshop, and what happened within the workshop could not necessarily always be controlled by the guild.

Moreover, all kinds of rules were broken, not just the ones having to do with the exclusion of mestizo or mulatto potters. Potters did not always use saggars or sign their wares as stipulated in the ordinances. They did not spare expenses in making the finer wares, since they were trying to make objects that could compete with European and Chinese imports and so did not always adhere to the specifications of sizes or amounts of cobalt and glaze to be used. The transgression of these rules suggests that they were not very well regulated. It is also possible that despite publicizing the rules the guild was not as concerned with enforcement, since such lapses could not have gone unnoticed for long.

The crafting of a local Mexican aesthetic required a breaking of the rules–those for making ceramics or the ones that were meant to keep certain members of society from practicing the craft. This is not surprising in a city that from the very beginning did not follow the very justification for its founding as a purely Spanish city, or at one time defied the Holy Church by continuing to venerate an Asian religious figure banned by the Church. Although native and mestizo artisans were not allowed to become master potters, motifs from native arts and visual imagery from indigenous legends made their way into the new colonial craft. The tension described previously between the city's wishes to create an identity for itself in the colony and at the same time to stay true to the values of the empire can be seen in the its ceramic industry as well. The guild represented a semblance of imperial and organizational order, but the actions of some potters and the objects they produced defied that order.

Object Studies

Talavera poblana objects were made using similar materials, techniques, and tools to Spanish ceramics, but the context and market for which they were produced also made them markedly different from their European counterparts. The manner in which Chinese designs were appropriated into the craft was also different. We have already seen the example of the *chocolatero*, where the shape and surface design were borrowed from the Chinese *guan*, but the potter cleverly painted a local bird, the quetzal, as the central motif, thus making the object unmistakably Mexican. There are more such examples of potters in Puebla altering Chinese designs to make something that looked unique.

In one example of a jar that is today in the collection of the Museo Franz Mayer in Mexico City, the shape and surface design are clearly borrowed from a Chinese jar decorated with a lotus motif and lotus petal scroll which is in a private collection in Mexico (Fig. 5.5).[63] On the jar

Fig. 5.5 Jar, tin-glazed earthenware, Puebla, eighteenth century. Height: 50 cm. Courtesy of the Museo Franz Mayer, Mexico City. The decorative scheme on this jar is similar to the one seen on the Chinese jar used as the base for a lamp in the *Casa de los Azulejos* (see Fig. 1.3)

made in Puebla it is obvious that the decorative scheme has been borrowed from the Chinese one but with noticeable differences. The shape of the flowers has been made more angular, in contrast to the curvier lotus flowers of the Chinese version. The decorative scrolls on the neck and base have also been transformed. The bottom scroll on the Mexican jar is decorated with abstract forms that have been linked to the Kufic script; this decorative pattern is seen in many *talavera poblana* objects and comes from the Hispano-Moresque tradition.[64] While the abstract form is a significant departure from the lotus petal scroll on the base of the Chinese jar, the Mexican artisan has kept the verticality of the latter by choosing a similarly shaped abstract pattern. The Mexican potter's choice of base scroll design matches the angularity of his flowers ; the geometric flowers and the base pattern together make the overall design into a coherent theme. The painter borrowed the visual scheme from the Chinese jar, but then painted according to what he was familiar with or what was popular locally. The modifications were made in a manner that reflected a local aesthetic instead of looking like ill-fitting substitutions in a Chinese design.

Another way in which potters in Puebla borrowed from Chinese porcelains was to combine Chinese motifs with European and Hispano-Moresque designs. This can be seen particularly well in an eighteenth-century *lebrillo*, a basin that was often seen in churches as a baptismal font or water receptacle (Fig. 5.6). The form was introduced to Mexico from Spain, where in turn it had been introduced by the Arabs.[65] In the example used here the wall of the basin is decorated in a European fashion, and very little of the surface of the vessel is left white, an effect, known as *horror vacui*, which was especially popular in Islamic ceramics. The *aborronado* technique mentioned in the ordinances has been employed to cover some of the surface. The most striking aspect of the design is the scene depicted on the base, which pictures four Chinese figures, identifiable by their queues, billowy clothes, and parasols.

Artisans in Puebla would have seen such figures on Chinese porcelain, but they would not have been presented in the kind of setting or decorative scheme seen on this *lebrillo*.[66] A jar depicting a Chinese literati gathering, currently in the Museo Franz Mayer in Mexico City, may represent the kind of Chinese porcelain object that potters in Puebla borrowed from when painting Chinese figures on their own earthenware creations. However, instead of presenting them in a typical Asian setting they mixed them in with a European and Hispano-Moresque design scheme. These

Fig. 5.6 *Lebrillo*, tin-glazed earthenware, Puebla, eighteenth century. Courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Chinese figures are seen on many different shapes and types of ceramics, including tiles, suggesting that this was a popular motif in the potters' repertoire.

Yet another example of Chinese influence can be seen in objects where an indigenous motif was inserted into an otherwise Asian-inspired design, such as the *chocolatero* with the quetzal motif (Fig. 1.5). One of the most common Chinese porcelain designs was that of a nature scene showing a body of water with flora and fauna surrounding it, often including birds. In several *talavera poblana* ceramics, potters recreated a similar natural scene but chose to insert a local plant, the *nopal* cactus, into it. In some instances the artisans made the local symbolism even stronger by placing a bird, a Chinese crane, on top of the *nopal*, as seen in a tin-glazed earthenware jar from the eighteenth century (Fig. 5.7). This particular combination very closely resembles the symbol of the founding of the city of Tenochtitlan discussed earlier, in which an eagle was shown perched on the cactus.[67] The allusion to the legend of Tenochtitlan is made even more obvious by the fact that the cactus is shown in a body of water. The base of the jar also shows a snake, which was initially part of the legend, but was not devoured by the eagle as is shown in the national flag today.[68]

Fig. 5.7 Jar, tin-glazed earthenware, Puebla, eighteenth century. Height: 43 cm. Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America, New York. The jar borrows its shape and surface decoration pattern from Chinese porcelains. The base border scroll is derived from Hispano-Moresque aesthetics, which were also prevalent in *talavera poblana* ceramics. The central motif is clearly reminiscent of the Aztec legend of the founding of Tenochtitlan, with the clearly identifiable *nopal* cactus and bird perched on top, which in this case is not an eagle but a Chinese crane

This particular combination of motifs of the *nopal* cactus and the Chinese crane is seen on several *talavera poblana* objects, which were probably made by different potters.[69] It became a popular motif since it had various elements that could be combined in different ways. It is not clear who devised the combination of a Chinese nature scene with native elements. Perhaps a native potter inserted the *nopal* and the design was approved and popularized so that it became part of the general repertoire of designs made in Puebla.

If the potters' guild and its records represent the ceramic industry's desire to stay connected to Europe and its traditions, the objects themselves represent another colonial reality: the desire of the society to assert its own unique identity and pursue its own agenda, a phenomenon seen repeatedly in the history of colonial Mexico's ties with Asia: for example, the Mexican merchants' insistence on continuing the transpacific trade despite the Crown's prohibitions, or the local clergy's continued reverence of a woman from Asia despite the Holy Church's disapproval. With such actions colonial society was beginning to distance itself from the metropole and form a distinct identity.

There was not a causal relationship between the colony's religious and political life that trickled into the work of the artisans, but rather the artisans, through their work and experience of working in a colonial society, added their own inflection to its identity. After all, it was their work that inspired the words of Vetancourt that deemed the ceramics made in Puebla superior to those of Spain and likened them to those of China. These ceramics then were not merely a reflection of what was happening in colonial Mexico, but were contributing to, and thus constitutive of, the colony's sense of identity and self-reliance.[70]

A study of ceramic production in Puebla offers a contrast to the ceramic production process we saw in Jingdezhen, where artisans were producing for a global market but were not connected to global flows of ideas and aesthetics in the same way as the potters in Puebla were. In Jingdezhen too, artisans incorporated foreign designs into their craft. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they had to make unfamiliar designs, such as heraldic imagery, symbols of the orders of the Catholic Church, and shapes that suited the eating habits of different cultures, and they did so without coming into contact with the foreign consumers who bought their creations. The porcelain industry produced entirely different types of ceramics for the emperor and the domestic market. This was possible because the production process in Jingdezhen was divided so precisely and organized in such a manner that they could make a great diversity of objects for their various consumers.

The production process in Puebla was markedly different. While there was a division of labor, all the work from beginning to end, including the sale of objects, was done within a particular workshop. The potters were in direct contact with the racially mixed populace for which they were producing ceramics. In Puebla the foreign designs were localized: they were transformed into forms or motifs that resonated locally. *Talavera poblana* objects were exported outside the city, but the exported goods represented an

entirely new ceramic aesthetic. They were distinguishable from both Chinese porcelains and Spanish earthenwares, and were valued for their uniqueness. The potters of Puebla did not diversify their products to suit the needs of different regional markets as the industry in Jingdezhen did; instead they created a new product that the colonial society developed a taste for. It became an art form that commentators of the time cited to prove the inventiveness and productivity of the residents of the city and the colony.

Puebla was profoundly influenced by the people and goods brought to the city from across the Pacific and the Atlantic, but it was not a blank space upon which foreign objects could leave their mark arbitrarily. Local factors as mundane as the composition of the earth and as mutable as the political and social situation affected how European, Asian, and native artistic traditions were incorporated into a newly developing colonial craft. The true ingenuity of the Puebla potters lay in their ability to harness local resources and then utilize what was made available to them through global trade to fashion a unique aesthetic that was locally powerful.

Notes

1. José Juan Tablada, "Puebla de los Ángeles (Notas de viaje)," in *Los mejores poemas* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1993), 88–90. Translation mine. Spanish original: "Con el fotógrafo López Escalera/estuve una mañana … ¡Quién pudiera/Pasar un mes entero/En casa de Padierna, el Alfarero/Mago de la poblana Talavera!/Aquella mañana/Policroma y pregrina,/Aunque muy Mexicana/Fue un viaje al País de la Porcelana,/A la maravillosa China./Pues con arcilla plástica y tierna/Y los esmaltes minerales/Renueva el tlachichique Padierna/De Nanking a Kuanton las obras inmortales." For more on orientalism in modern Mexican literature see Araceli Tinajero, *Orientalismo en el modernism hispanoamericano* (Purdue: Purdue University Press, 2003).
2. Margaret Connors McQuade, "Talavera Poblana: Cuatro Siglos de Producción y Coleccionismo," *Mesoamérica* 40 (2000), 136.
3. See the photograph of Padierna's workshop published in McQuade, "Talavera Poblana," where Padierna and the artisans who worked in his workshop are surrounded by large jars modeled after Chinese examples.
4. Ramon Mena, "Nueva orientación arqueologica e historica," in *El Maestro: Revista de Cultura Nacional* (Mexico: La Universidad, 1922), 156.
5. George Kuwayama, *Chinese Ceramics in Colonial Mexico* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 81–83.
6. Frances F. Berdan and Patricia Rieff Anawalt, eds., *The Essential Codex Mendoza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 232.

7. Jorge Enciso, *Design Motifs of Ancient Mexico* (New York: Dover Publications, 1953), 94.
8. Agustín Vetancourt, *Teatro Mexicano: descripción breve de los sucesos ejemplares, historicos, politicos, militares y religiosos del Nuevo Mundo Occidental de las Indias* (Mexico: I. Escalante y Ca., 1870–1871), 360–361. Translation mine. Spanish original: "… hay obrajes donde se labran Rajas, y paños finos, causa de que haya muchos Viruegos en la Puebla; del hilado de los obrajes muchos se sustentan, y entretienen. Hay de todo género de oficios que componen República, e en Talavera, Vidrios, Cuchillos, y Jabón hacen raya en la Nueva España. La talavera es más fina que de la Talavera, y puede competir con la de China en su fineza, los Vidrios aunque no tan finos se parecen a los de Venecia; el temple de los cuchillos, y Tijeras exceed a los demás, como las hojas de Toledo."
9. Efraín Castro Morales, "Puebla y la talavera a través de los siglos," *Artes de Mexico* 3 (Spring 1989), 29; John Goggin, *Spanish Majolica in the New World: Types of the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Publications in Anthropology, 1968), 215.
10. Bernabé Cobo, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo*, *Tomo 1* (Seville: Imp. de E. Rasco Taveras, 1890), 243. Translation mine. Spanish original: "Labrase tan escogida loza y tan bien vedriada, que no hace falta la de Talavera, porque de pocos años a esta parte han dado en contrahacer la de China y sale muy parecida a ella, particularmente la que hace en Puebla de los Angeles en Nueva España …"
11. Ida Altman, *Transatlantic Ties in the Spanish Empire: Brihuega, Spain, and Puebla, Mexico, 1560–1620* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 50–51.
12. Frances L. Ramos, *Identity, Ritual, and Power in Colonial Puebla* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012), xxii.
13. Ibid., 4.
14. An early depiction of Puebla's coat of arms can be found in a document dating from 1538, MP-Escudos 45, in the Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain.
15. Frances F. Berdan and Patricia Rieff Anawalt, eds., *The Essential Codex Mendoza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 3.
16. For more on the travels of this codex see Daniela Bleichmar, "History in Pictures: Translating the *Codex Mendoza*," *Art History* 38, 4 (2015): 682–701.
17. John Pohl, *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010), 5.
18. Juan Villa Sanchez, *Puebla sagrada y profana: Informe dado a su muy ilustre ayuntamiento el año de 1746* (Puebla: Impreso de la Casa del Ciudadano Jose Maria Campos, 1835), 9. Translation mine. Spanish original: "La

segunda Ciudad del Reyno de Nueva España, segunda en dignidad, en grandeza, en ostension, en opulencia de fabricas, en número de vecinos, en nobleza, en letras, en policia y en todo aquello que constituye el cuerpo de una Ciudad y el alma de una República: la Ciudad de los Ange- les es verdaderamente el cuello y garganta del vastísimo cuerpo de esta América Septentrional, asi por la union ó in- mediacion de su magnifica y opulentisima Capital, que de su bárbaro fundador Mexi trajo el nombre de México, como por ser un miembro tan principal de este Reyno y una nobilisima parte que realza su hermosura y perfeccion, hacien- do que tanto mas sobresalga y aparezca la belleza de su Capital y Metropolitana Ciudad, cuanto mas se ecsalta y levanta sobre este hermosisimo cuello. No habrá nacion ni gente tan peregrina en el mundo, á cuya noticia no haya llegado la fama de la Puebla de los Angeles, aplaudida y famosa en los anales, celebrada en historias, delineada en mapas, copiada en pinturas y notada de todos los geografos en sus tablas; no le han dado tanto vuelo las plumas de los diligentisimos escritores que se empeñaron en recomendar sus prerrogativas á los distantes, cuanto es bastante a ecsaltarle la grandeza de su nombre."

19. Toribio Motolinía, *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España* (Mexico: Chávez Hayhoe, 1941), 270–271. "El asiento de la ciudad es muy bueno y la comarca la major de toda la Nueva España … Tiene el puerto de la Veracruz al oriente a cuarenta leguas; Mexico a veinte leguas. Va el camino del Puerto a Mexico por medio de esta ciudad; y cuando las recuas van cargadas a Mexico, como es el paso por aqui, los vecinos se proven y compran todo lo que han menester en mejor precio que los de Mexico; y cuando las recuas son de vuelta cargan de harina, y tocino, y bizcocho, para matalotaje de las naos … Tiene esta ciudad una de las buenas montañas que tiene ciudad en el mundo … todas estas montañas son de muy gentiles pastos … Hay mucha abundancia de aguas, así de rios como de fuentes."
20. Ramos, 7.
21. Villa Sanchez, 41.
22. Guy P.C. Thomson, *Puebla de Los Angeles: Industry and Society in a Mexican City, 1700–1850* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), xix.
23. Thomas Gage, *Thomas Gage's Travels in the New World*, ed. J. Eric S. Thompson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 49–50.
24. Careri, 552.
25. Ramos, 10.
26. The plaque reads "En esta casa murió la encantadora Princesa del Gran Mogol, Mirra, que despues fue la venerable en Cristo Sor Catalina [sic] de San Juan, conocida por la 'China Poblana,' el dia 5 de Enero del año del Señor de 1688." "In this house died the enchanting princess of the Great Mughal [Empire], Mirra, who later became the Venerable Sister Catalina de San Juan known as 'China Poblana,' on the 5th day of January of the year of the Lord 1688." Translation mine.

27. Gauvin Bailey, "A Mughal Princess in Baroque New Spain," *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas*, 71 (1997): 39.
28. It was published under the title *Sermon en que se da noticia de la vida … de la venerable Señora Catharima* [sic] *de San Joan* ("Sermon reporting the life … of the venerable Señora Catarima de San Joan"). See Kathleen Myers, "Testimony for Canonization or Proof of Blasphemy? The New Spanish Inquisition and the Hagiographic Biography of Catarina de San Juan," in *Women in the Inquisition: Spain and the New World*, ed. Mary Giles (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 276.
29. Ramos, xviii–xix.
30. This work was titled *Prodigios de la omnipotencia y milagros de la gracia en la vida de la venerable sierva de dios Catharina de San Juan* ("Marvels of Omnipotence and Miracles of Grace in the life of the Venerable servant of God, Catharina de San Juan").
31. José del Castillo Grajeda, *Compendio de la vida y virtudes de la venerable Catarina de San Juan* ("Compendium of the life and virtues of the venerable Catarina de San Juan").
32. Myers, 283.
33. As cited in Flora S. Kaplan, *A Mexican Folk Pottery Tradition: Cognition and Style in Material Culture in the Valley of Puebla* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), 2.
34. Juan Antonio García Castro, "Pre-Hispanic Polychrome Ceramics from Central Mexico: General Characteristics," in *Talaveras de Puebla: Cerámica colonial mexicana, Siglos XVII a XXI*, eds. María Antonia Casanovas and Margaret McQuade (Barcelona: Museu de Cerámica de Barcelona, 2007), 126.
35. In our discussion of the development of Jingdezhen's ceramic industry, we saw that Muslim merchants patronized the Chinese ceramic industry precisely because artisans there were able to produce ceramics that naturally fired to a white color, and to combine them with a brilliant blue.
36. Robin Gavin, Donna Pierce and Alfonso Pleguezuelo, eds., *Cerámica y Cultura: The Story of Spanish and Mexican Mayólica* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 2–3.
37. Margaret McQuade, *Talavera Poblana: Four Centuries of a Mexican Ceramic Tradition* (New York: Hispanic Society of America, 1999), 28–29. See also Ana Paulina Gamez Martinez, "The Forgotten Potters of Mexico City" in *Cerámica y Cultura: The story of Spanish Mexican Mayolica*, eds. Robin Farwell Gavin, Donna Pierce, and Alfonso Pleguezuelo (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 226–243.
38. Margaret Connors McQuade, "The Emergence of a Mexican Tile Tradition," in *Cerámica y Cultura: The story of Spanish Mexican Mayolica*, eds. Robin Farwell Gavin et al. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 210.

39. Margaret McQuade has also discussed the significance of local, indigenous knowledge to the development of the *talavera poblana* industry in her dissertation. See Margaret McQuade, "*Loza Poblana*: The Emergence of a Mexican Ceramic Tradition," Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York (2005), 29.
40. Florence Lister and Robert Lister, "The Potters' Quarter of Colonial Puebla, Mexico," *Historical Archaeology* 18, 1 (1984), 88.
41. Luz de Lourdes Velazquez Thierry, "Fabricación de la talavera y el origen del término," *Artes de Mexico: La talavera de Puebla* 3 (2002), 18.
42. McQuade, "*Loza Poblana*," 23.
43. Florence Lister and Robert Lister, *Andalusian Ceramics in Spain and New Spain: A Cultural Register from the Third Century BC to 1700* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988), 235. One of the ordinances published in 1653 stipulated that the thickness of plates should be the equivalent of one to four *real* coins so as to prevent cracks and chips. Ordinances printed in Antonio Peñafiel, *Cerámica mexicana y loza de talavera de Puebla epoca colonial y moderna* (Mexico: Imprimir y Fototipia de la Secretaria de Fomento, 1919), 35–36.
44. McQuade, "*Loza Poblana*," 161.
45. Luz de Lourdes Velazquez Thierry, 18.
46. This was stipulated in the ordinances. Spanish original: "Que el vidrio de talavera fina sea bien dispuesto y beneficiado, con una arroba de plomo, seis libras de estaño …" Peñafiel, 36. Translation mine.
47. Patricia Acuña, *Talavera de Puebla*, Lecturas historicas de Puebla 10 (Puebla: Gobierno del Estado de Puebla, 1987), 21.
48. Lister and Lister, *Andalusian Ceramics*, 87.
49. McQuade, "*Loza Poblana*," 141.
50. Ibid., 22–23.
51. Lister and Lister, "The Potters' Quarter of Colonial Puebla, Mexico," 91.
52. Lister and Lister, *Andalusian Ceramics*, 51–53.
53. Lister and Lister, "The Potters' Quarter," 91.
54. Edward Slack has suggested that the influence of Asian designs on *talavera poblana* ceramics was a result of *chino* slaves and freemen working in the workshops in Puebla. There is not enough evidence to suggest that there were significant numbers of *chinos* working in the potters' workshops, and none to prove that these men would have had experience of making ceramics in their former countries. Moreover, the material properties of porcelain and earthenware were so different that knowledge of making porcelain would not have necessarily helped in making earthenware ceramics. Indigenous potters familiar with local materials would have been more helpful in this regard. As for *chino* artisans introducing Chinese motifs, we see from a study of *talavera poblana* ceramics that Asian designs were not

"slavishly" imitated, but rather modified and combined with other artistic traditions to create a wholly new aesthetic, proving then that these would not have been created by newly arrived Chinese artisans. See Edward Slack, "Orientalizing New Spain: Perspectives on Asian Influence in Colonial Mexico," *Análisis* 15, 43 (2012), 120.

55. Peñafiel, 38. Translation mine. Spanish original: "Item: en lo fino deben ser Pinturas los armados de Azul, y acabados con Negro con sus pintillas á los bordos ó faldas de todo lo que se pintare dicha Pintura."
56. Ibid. Translation mine. Spanish original: "… y porque haya variación la otra pintura que se echare de dicha Talavera fina, sera contrahecha á la de Talavera …"
57. Ibid. Translation mine. Spanish original: "En lo fino deben ser sus Pinturas contrahaciendo a la de China de muy azul, labrado asimismo y realizado de azul, y se pinten en este genero de talavera puntas negras y campos de colores."
58. Enrique Cervantes, *Nomina de loceros poblanos durante el periodo virreinal* (Mexico: Manuel Casas, 1933), 42.
59. Ibid., 70–71. Translation mine. Spanish original: "En la Muy Noble y Muy Leal Ciudad de los Angeles a veinte dias del mes de Mayo de mil setecientos setenta y seis años Antemi Du. Mariano Franscisco Zambrano Escribano de S.M. Mayor Publico Propietario del Cavildo Justicia, y Regimiento y del Tribunal de Diputación y Fiele Executoria, por el Rey Ntro. Sennor (que Dios guarde muchos años) Su Notario Publico de las Indias, Islas, y Tierra firme del Mar Oceano; parecieron Juan Cabesas, Andres Olivos, Manuel Maldonado y Joseph Mariano Medrano Alcalde, y Veedores del Gremio de lo Blanco, y Colorado, y dixeron que en cumplimiento de su obligacion, y de sus Reales ordenansas, han examinado en lo Colorado a Joseph Christoval Frias el qual expreso ser mestizo, y tener veinta y seis años deedad, y es de cuerpo regular, pelo negro, color trigueño, frente pequeña, seja poblada, ojos pequeños y aseitunados, naris ancha, labios gruesos, poca barba, cari agileño, y holloso virhuelas, al qual en preciencia de varios Maestros y oficiales de ambos oficios, le hisieron executar varias piesas de Losa Colorada, con otras preguntas y Repreguntas, a dho oficio tocantes, y a todas satisfiso bien, y cumplidamente como avil, capas y suficiente official, por lo quele daban y dieron por Maestro Examinado e dho oficio para que lo pueda usar, y exerser, con tienda y obrador Publico, con oficiales y aprendises, escritudaros, assi en esta Ciudad, como en todas las demas Ciudades, Villas, y Lugares del Rey Nuestro Señor (que Dios guarde muchos años) …"
60. By the time that guilds were forming in colonial Mexico, they were losing their power in Europe. Lister and Lister, "The Potters' Quarter," 90.
61. McQuade, "*Loza Poblana*," 83.
62. Lister and Lister, "The Potters' Quarter," 89 and 93.

63. It has been published in Leonor Cortina, "Loza achinada: polvos azules de oriente," *Artes de Mexico: La Talavera de Puebla* , 3 (2002), 51.
64. Kuwayama, 81.
65. McQuade, "*Loza Poblana*," 131.
66. The Chinese jar is shown in Kuwayama, 41.
67. The ceramics found in the *San Diego* shipwreck consisted of a large number of objects with bird motifs, including some examples of a single bird perched on a branch or rock. If the *San Diego* is representative of other shipments to Manila, then we know that potters in Puebla would have access to many examples of Chinese porcelain with bird motifs. See Jean-Paul Desroches, Gabriel Casal and Franck Goddio, *Treasures of the San Diego* (Paris: AFAA; New York: Elf; Manila: National Museum of the Philippines, 1996), 342.
68. For more on the origins of the symbol see Doris Heyden, *México, orígenes de un símbolo: versión adaptada e ilustrada* (México: Dirección General de Publicaciones, INAH, 1998). See pages 52–54 for a reference to the snake in the legend.
69. See for example an *albarelo*, or apothecary jar (a form adopted from Europe), that has a similar scene depicted on it, but the crane is not placed atop the cactus. Published in Florence and Robert Lister, *Maiolica Olé: Spanish and Mexican Decorative Traditions* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2001), 84.
70. The potters in Puebla also distinguished themselves in the production of tiles. They did so not by emulating Chinese designs (although they did include Chinese motifs on some tiles), but rather by taking advantage of the masonry of the buildings and creating patterns with the bricks and textures. They were able to show off their originality through the creation of *tableros*, patterns of tiles that made figurative images. The most notable such *tablero* was made for the façade of the church of San Marcos, which was also the church for the confraternity of the potters. On this façade the potters made a *tablero* of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception, which combined with the brick to create a unique visual effect. See Margaret McQuade, "The Emergence of a Mexican Tile Tradition," in *Cerámica y Cultura: The story of Spanish Mexican Mayolica*, eds. Robin Farwell Gavin et al. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 204–225.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion: Themes from a Connected World

Porcelain objects produced in Jingdezhen were of pivotal importance in the development of several different ceramic industries in the world. We saw that American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, in his poem "Kéramos," remembered a Chinese design, which he referred to as the "Willow Pattern". In fact, this particular design was developed in England and based on scenes painted on Chinese plates and bowls. The initial Chinese pattern had made such an impression on English potters that they made their own version of it and exported it beyond England and as far as the United States of America, where Longfellow lived.

The movement of Chinese porcelain to colonial Mexico had a similar outcome. Potters in Puebla were inspired by the Asian ceramics and reinterpreted their shapes and motifs into new designs, which were then exported to other parts of Spanish America. The fact that the Chinese-inspired ceramics made in Puebla were considerably different from those of their British counterparts proves that the foreign design was transformed by the local socio-political context into which it was introduced.

Studying the multiple sites of production, consumption, and trade in a single narrative allowed us to see the development and transformation of several towns and cities as based on both local factors and their involvement in global trade networks. We were able to compare similar sites, such as the ceramic production centers of Jingdezhen and Puebla and the ports of Manila and Acapulco, that were all part of the same trade circuit but

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developed differently. Several themes emerged from investigating this connected world. We saw that a relationship of interdependence existed between the trade network and the places it connected. Although local histories and specific material conditions determined how or why the people in particular sites participated in global trade, once they were integrated into the trade circuit, these places were influenced by the movement of bullion, goods, and people between them.

Artisans also emerged as important actors in this early modern trade network. They produced the commodities of global trade, as was the case with the potters of Jingdezhen. In Puebla, artisans used the resources available to them through trade to make locally significant ceramics. The ceramics of Puebla were a symbol of Mexico's unique appropriation of Asian goods and evidence that the trade with Asia was influential in the making of a colonial Mexican identity that was distinct from that of the metropole.

The Local and the Global

The interdependent relationship between global trade and local conditions can be seen in the different sites of production, trade, and consumption along the Manila Galleon Trade network. Jingdezhen had been producing porcelain for the domestic, regional, and west Asian markets for hundreds of years before the commencement of direct trade with Europe. It had the right raw materials to make porcelain and access to waterways to transport the ceramics. The initial impetus for popularizing the blue-and-white aesthetic came partly from foreign merchants, but early modern global trade was not responsible for the creation of Jingdezhen. However, when the trade did expand to include markets in Europe and the Americas, production in the kilns increased and access to capital from the new markets protected the kilns when local support, especially from the emperors, was scant. Over the period of Jingdezhen's development into the porcelain capital of the world, spurred by demand from emperors and foreign merchants, the production process became highly specialized. The artisans were able to meet their various consumers' demands but the trade in their goods affected them too, quite literally, since they worked with their bodies, and the effects of the long duration of their work could be seen on their physiques.

The trade networks that provided the necessary capital were in turn influenced by the local contexts of the places they linked. While the skill of

the artisans and the system of production in Jingdezhen made the ceramics produced there the most desirable in the world, indeed the first global brand, they also meant that merchants around the world who wanted to trade in Jingdezhen porcelain had to develop connections at the right ports to access it and transport it to the interested markets. In their new homes the Chinese ceramics also became a standard to imitate and often shaped local production.

Like that of Jingdezhen, Manila's history before the Spanish arrived was influential in its eventual transformation into a major port. Chinese merchants had been coming to the area to trade with the indigenous people for centuries before the Europeans arrived. The Spanish took advantage of the pre-existing network and technology to establish their own port and trade with the Chinese in Manila. And yet the development of Manila was not entirely contingent upon the Spanish. The Chinese merchants and migrants who worked and lived in the city were also invested in building the city and facilitating the growing trade.

Once Manila was established as a major port, the conditions there had an impact on the transpacific trade to the Spanish American colonies. The city had a natural harbor that made it easy for ships and junks to come in, and high-quality wood was available in the vicinity with which to construct ships. In Manila, Chinese and Spanish merchants made decisions about what kinds of goods would be exported and how. The many different people involved in the commercial activities devised ways to transport goods in greater quantities than was officially allowed by the Spanish Crown. The Manila Galleons were built bigger than other Spanish ships that were used for trade in the Atlantic, the bales and crates were packed in such a way that more valuable pieces were hidden away from the eyes of inspectors, and notaries created books of freight that recorded enough information to pass official scrutiny but were ambiguous enough to allow the shipment of contraband.

A large market was also constructed in Manila. Known as the Parián, it was a significant site for the various exchanges that took place before a galleon was loaded and set sail for Acapulco. The Parián provided a space for trade to be conducted across linguistic, cultural, and political boundaries. In the initial years after the colonization of Manila there was no dedicated place where the Chinese merchants could gather and sell their wares or services; once such a space was created commerce improved. In its various incarnations the market was always located close to the river so that boats could bring in goods and necessary provisions, which would then be

sold in the various shops. Over time the structure of the market improved to facilitate more efficient transportation, sale, and accounting of the goods.

The significance of the Parián in Manila to the transpacific trade came to be so well known that the largest marketplace in colonial Mexico was given the same name. It was a symbol of the colony's demand for Asian goods, and it proved that in the early modern consumers' imaginations the places that commodities moved through were also important. Unlike its counterpart in Asia, the Parián in Mexico City was located in the center of the city, surrounded by monuments of colonial power. According to extant sources this was a dazzling place in the variety of goods that were sold there, both local and foreign. Its Asian name, however, implied that the Asian goods were the most significant or most attractive, more so than those brought from Europe.

The impact of the Manila Galleon Trade on the Spanish American colonies differed across the region, and the responses to and appropriation of the goods and people brought in from Asia varied. We see the greatest impact of the trade on the port of Acapulco, which was created specifically for the Manila Galleons. Its livelihood depended entirely on the comings and goings of ships across the Pacific. Unlike Manila it did not have a history as a point of exchange, and even once the trade started it came alive only when there was a ship in its harbor. However, when that ship was one that had returned from Asia, Acapulco became a festive place, with a fair that was renowned around the world.

In other cities in the colony, such as Mexico City and Puebla, the effect of the trade with Asia was subtler. The impact could be seen in the material world, where Asian goods found their way into shops in the marketplace, into sitting rooms and kitchens, or onto the bodies of the men, women, and children who lived in the colony. Asian objects were also found in paintings depicting life in the colony, proving that they were a significant part of the material and visual culture of the society. Artists used Asian goods to create new forms of media, such as the *biombos*, for depicting important historical events and places. They also depicted Asian goods in paintings to highlight the colony's trade with Asia or to show distinctions between social classes.

The manner in which Asian goods were incorporated into daily life and into colonial crafts was contingent upon local needs and conditions. For example, Chinese cups were imported to Mexico, but Chinese tea was not since chocolate was a more popular beverage. When borrowing Chinese

motifs too, artisans used them to their advantage, as in the example of inserting *nopal* cacti into a design imitated from *kraak* porcelain. These instances prove that trade with Asia did shape certain aspects of colonial society, but the local history and context were influential in how Asian goods were received and appropriated.

Artisans and Craft Knowledge in the Early Modern World

We saw two distinct examples of the ways in which artisans and their skill were influential in the early modern world. In China, the skill of the artisans was a factor in producing appealing commodities that influenced tastes and fashions around the world. In Puebla the potters used their skill and the various artistic influences available to them to produce a new locally significant art form. In the chapter on Jingdezhen we saw that artisans at the various steps of the production process were extremely adept at working with the clay, each in their own way according to their tasks. They used their tools and their skills of judgment and dexterity to finish every step of the process as perfectly as possible. The division of labor into many segments and the high degree of specialization were the key to the success of Jingdezhen's workshops, which were able to mass-produce ceramics of high quality and cater to various consumers, including Chinese emperors, Muslim merchants, Japanese tea masters, and European aristocracy.

The ceramic production industry in Puebla was much younger than the one in Jingdezhen and not as highly specialized. The materials and techniques that the Puebla potters worked with were also very different. Despite the fact that Chinese porcelain was also available in colonial Latin America, there was a local demand for *talavera poblana*. This was due to the fact that the potters made their ceramics locally relevant by incorporating a variety of aesthetic traditions and creating designs that resonated with the colonial populace. They were adept at harnessing what was available to them: the local materials, indigenous knowledge of those materials, production techniques from Spain, and a variety of artistic traditions from which to choose designs.

Indigenous aesthetics were among an array of artistic traditions that were influential in the development of a colonial ceramic aesthetic. Indigenous crafts in the colony were destroyed to a great extent by the conquest but were not erased completely. The surviving designs from these crafts were combined with designs brought to the colony from

across the Atlantic and the Pacific. The potters in Puebla selected and incorporated elements from the different artistic traditions available to them and created a distinctive ceramic art, which was then exported to other parts of the colony and became a source of pride. These ceramics served as reminders of the colony's ties to places both near and far, but at the same time represented a new colonial aesthetic unique to the place where they were created.

Asia in the Making of a Colonial Mexican Identity

The potters' ordinances issued by the guild in Puebla specified exactly how Chinese porcelain was to be imitated. Regardless of whether the potters followed the rules, it is clear that the imitation and use of Chinese aesthetics was officially sanctioned. Although the ordinances also specified how to imitate ceramics from Spain and how to employ Hispano-Moresque techniques, when scholars such as Agustín de Vetancourt wrote about *talavera poblana* they claimed that the potters were emulating Chinese ceramics and that their creations were superior to those made in Spain. The local ceramics and their use of Asian aesthetics then became a means for the colony to distance and distinguish itself from the metropole. They gave someone like Vetancourt evidence to prove that the colony did not have to rely on Spain for its luxury goods: it could either get them from Asia or produce its own by borrowing from Asian designs.

The appropriation of Asian goods and aesthetics in Mexico was influenced by its status as a colony, which is why we see instances, such as Vetancourt's writing, where people in the colony used the transpacific trade to challenge its subservient position or at least assert their difference by incorporating elements of Asia in their day-to-day lives. The myth about the tiles for the *Casa de los Azulejos* being imported from China was another case where colonial society linked local history to Asia rather than to Spain. In addition, the pageantry at the trade fair in Acapulco was a symbol of the colony's preference for Asian goods, as was the use of the name Parián for the central market in Mexico City.[1] The case of Catarina de San Juan was another instance in which the colony used its ties with Asia to distance itself by proclaiming that one of its residents who had come from Asia was pious and holy enough to become a saint. To her confessors in the colony her Indian origin made her a good candidate for

beatification, and although the Holy Church in Europe disagreed, her fame did not diminish.

The use of Asian motifs in the visual language of *talavera poblana* also shows that Asian aesthetics offered a means for the potters to create a ceramic tradition that was distinctive from the Spanish tradition. They borrowed forms that suited their needs, such as the *guan*, which was refashioned into a *chocolatero*, and decorated these objects with designs that were relevant to the colonial populace, as seen in the depiction of a quetzal bird where a Chinese phoenix would have been.

One of the most powerful combinations of motifs was that of the Chinese crane placed atop a *nopal* cactus in a lake. The three elements of the bird, cactus, and water together unmistakably referred to the image of the founding of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan, which eventually became a national symbol after independence. Although indigenous crafts were destroyed to a great extent, native images remained relevant when potters found ways to combine them with the motifs and designs introduced to the colony from Asia.

Asia and Mexico: Then and Now

Colonial Mexico's ties with Asia were relevant to Europe in that they made the colony a conduit through which Spain learned about Asia. Some of the porcelain objects that we followed from Jingdezhen to Puebla went on to Spain. However, by being taken to the metropole through the colony they arrived with an added layer of meaning. This was seen most clearly in the adoption of chocolate and the vessels used for drinking it. The incorporation of Chinese cups into a chocolate service was seen in the painting of Antonio de Pereda (Fig. 4.8); it was also mentioned in the memoirs of a French countess, Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy, who traveled to Spain in the seventeenth century.[2] She described her experience of drinking chocolate as follows:

> Afterwards they present you with chocolate, every one a china cup full, upon a dish of agate set in gold, with sugar in a box of the same. There was some chocolate ordered with ice, and some hot, and some made with milk and eggs: you drink it with some biscuit, or else with some thin bread as hard as if it were toasted, which they make so on purpose. There are some women which [sic] will drink six cups one after another, and this they do, very often twice or thrice a day.[3]

From d'Aulnoy's account it is clear that by the seventeenth century drinking chocolate had become a daily ritual in Spanish aristocratic households, and the use of Chinese porcelain was a part of this custom.

Tellingly, in the Spanish translation of d'Aulnoy's memoirs, which was published much later, in 1891 in Madrid, the vessel which appears in the English translation as "china cup" is referred to as "*jícara de porcelana*."[4] The Asian vessel had been given the Nahuatl-derived name in Mexico, and the association was carried to Spain. Thus the society in the metropole not only incorporated the Chinese vessel the way people in the colony had done, but also referred to it by the name used in the colony. The ceramic *mancerina*, which was created from the interaction between the colonies and Chinese porcelain, also became a popular object in the Spanish chocolate service.

Fig. 6.1 Lead-glazed earthenware, transfer-printed in underglaze blue. Hull, United Kingdom, ca. 1826–1841. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Until 1815 colonial Mexico had direct ties with Asia, but with the termination of the transpacific trade the connection was severed and the new nation was no longer in the privileged position of having access to information and goods from Asia before Spain. Today visitors to the *Casa de los Azulejos* can see how Asian aesthetics were introduced to Mexico after the end of the Manila Galleon Trade. The *Casa* is now home to Sanborns, a famous chain restaurant in Mexico, which characteristically uses blue-and-white dishes. Inside the restaurant a plaque explains that the dishes used are decorated with the Willow Pattern, the same one that Longfellow mentioned in his poem. Initially the restaurant imported this tableware from the United Kingdom, but today it is produced locally (Figs. 6.1 and 6.2).[5]

The plaque in the restaurant goes on to tell of a Chinese fable encapsulated by the Willow Pattern. It is about star-crossed lovers, See Koong and Chang, who were forbidden to marry by the girl's father. A wooden fence was built around the girl to keep her from seeing her lover; this is represented by the motif on the rim of the plate. The lovers would refer to the

Fig. 6.2 Porcelain, transfer-printed in underglaze blue. Mexico, twentieth or twenty-first century. Photo Aurora Pellizzi

seasonal changes in the willow tree to communicate with each other as to when they could meet. Although reunited, the pair were eventually killed by the girl's jealous suitor. Touched by their love story, the gods transformed them into doves, which are seen flying above the river in the design. This story, first fabricated in England to go along with the popular design, traveled with the pattern to Mexico.[6]

The ceramics used in the restaurant and their history as presented to the customers show that the direction of information and influence from Asia changed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the case of ceramics, Mexico was being introduced to Chinese aesthetics through Europe. The tables in Sanborns were not set with ceramics from China or local imitations of them; instead they used dishes decorated with a pattern imitated from a European reinterpretation of Chinese designs.

However, if we leave the restaurant and stand outside to look at the *Casa*, we see that it tells the story of an earlier time when there was a vibrant direct connection between Asia and colonial Mexico. It was a time when myths were created about a colonial landmark's connections to China, when potters in Mexico made their own patterns that borrowed from Chinese designs and when Chinese porcelain jars and cups were imported from Asia especially for consuming chocolate.

Notes

1. The market in Mexico City no longer exists, but today in the central historic district of Puebla there is a market named the Parián. It is not clear when this market adopted the name, but the fame of the market in Manila has lived on to the present day.
2. Another Spanish painting that exhibits the use of Chinese porcelain cups for the consumption of chocolate is Luis Egidio Meléndez's *Still Life with Chocolate Service* (1770).
3. Madame d'Aulnoy, *The ingenious and Diverting Letters of the Lady's Travels into Spain*. (London: S. Crouch, 1708), 147.
4. Madame d'Aulnoy, *Relación que hizo de su viaje por España la señora Condesa D'Aulnoy en 1679* (Madrid: Juan Jiménez, 1891), 111.
5. The plaque is in English reads as follows: "The beautiful design that identifies and garnish the dishes in our restaurants is known as 'Willow Pattern' which around 1780 became one of the favorite subjects of English porcelain manufacturers. With the introduction of this ware to our restaurants, the

pieces were brought from the UK. Today the company produces table Anfora especially for our company. But in addition to the pottery tradition holds, it holds in its design a beautiful love story. An ancient Chinese tale that revolves around the beautiful See Koon daughter of a powerful mandarin and a humble servant Chang …" The plaque goes on to explain the story and the design elements that correspond with it, which I have abridged above.

6. For more on the development of this story and its relation to the Chinese-inspired design see John R. Haddad, "Imagined Journeys to Distant Cathay: Constructing China with Ceramics, 1780–1920," *Winterthur Portfolio* 41, 1 (2007): 53–80.

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