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Trade and its historical trend between China and the Philippines in the late Ming Dynasty: an analysis on the almojarifazgo data

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Abstract With its opening in the 1570s, the trade between China and the Philippines began to grow speedily, and a large amount of silver flowed from the newly discovered America into China. In order to gain more profits from this trade, Governor of the Philippines, Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa, carried out the new customs policy known as almojarifazgo in 1581. This new tax policy had been well implemented through the next several decades though there were some changes of the tax rates. Based on an analysis of almojarifazgo data stored by AGI, the aim of the present research was to examine annual scale and historical development of this trade from 1591 to 1644. The total amount of American silver flowing into China could also be reestimated.

Keywords China in the late Ming Dynasty, Spanish Philippines, almojarifazgo, trade data

In the Age of Discovery, Spain continued to expand westward of the Atlantic Ocean in accordance with the relevant laws of the “Padroado Real” and eventually crossed the American continent, across the Pacific Ocean. In 1565 and 1571, a colonial fortress and trade front station were built in places neighboring China—Cebu and Manila of the Philippines

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respectively. Coincidentally, after years of sea-opening and sea-closed disputes, Ming government also announced part of the sea opening of the Fujian area in the early years of Emperor Longqing (after 1567), and ships could trade in Eastern and Western Oceans.^① China's bulk commodities such as raw silk and porcelain had long been the best sellers in the global market, while the Spanish had a large amount of American silver. Therefore, under the urgent needs of the two markets, the trade between China and the Spanish Philippines in the late Ming Dynasty (hereinafter referred to as Sino-Philippines trade) began to rise after 1573, and its scale continued to expand. The continuous flow of American silver into China had a profound impact on China's commodity production and social and economic development. In the discussion of early economic "globalization" and the "silverization of currency" in China in the late Ming Dynasty, the amount of American silver imported into China via the Spanish Philippines was always a hot topic.^② However, the historical materials used by scholars are always scattered and inadequate, and the relevant conclusions often deviate from the real situation of the development of

^① [Ming] Zhang, X. Xie, F. (ed.) *Research of the East and the West* (东西洋考), Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 131 (2008).

^② It is difficult to count the research results of scholars at home and abroad on the import of American silver into China. The main writing refers to Quan Hansheng's *Chinese Economic History* (中国经济史论丛), New Asia Institute of Advanced Chinese Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, (1972); Qian, J. *Southeast Asian Affairs* (南洋问题研究), (3) (1985); Liang, F. *Liang Fangzhong's Economic History Anthology* (梁方仲经济史论文集), Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, (1989); Ni, L. & Xia, W *Study on the History of Chinese Social Economy* (中国社会经济史研究), (3) (1990); Zhuang, G. *Research on Currency History* (货币史研究), (3) (1995); Zhang, K. *History of Relations between China and Spain* (中国与西班牙关系史), Kaifeng: Elephant Press, (2003); Wan, M. *Hebei Academic Journal* (河北学刊), (3) (2004) C. R. Boxer, "Plata Es Sangre: Sidelights on the Drain of Spanish-American Silver in the Far East, 1550–1700," *Philippine Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1970, pp. 457–478; William S. Atwell, 1 "International Bullion Flows and the Chinese Economy circa 1530–1650," *Past & Present*, No. 95 (May 1982), pp. 68–90; G. B. Souza, *The Survival of Empire, Portuguese Trade and Society in China and the South China Sea, 1630–1754*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 84; *Richard von Glahn, Fountain of Fortune, Money and Monetary Policy in China, 1000–1700*, California: University of California Press, 1996; Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Girádez, "Spanish Profitability in the Pacific, the Philippines in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in Dennis O. Flynn, Lionel Frost and A. J. H. Latham eds. *Pacific centuries: Pacific and Pacific Rim History since the Sixteenth Century*, London & New York: Routledge, 1999; William S. Atwell, 1 "Another Look at Silver Imports into China, ca. 1635–1644," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Dec 2005), pp. 467–489.

Sino-Philippines trade history, so it is inevitable to have shortcomings and deficiencies. With the continuous exploration of new historical materials, this situation is expected to be greatly improved.

1 Review of historical materials and methods

Restricted by the defense of Yi-xia and the political and cultural mentality of Celestial Empire, most officials and scholars of the Ming Dynasty did not know maritime affairs. The official documents and literati notes on the Sino-Philippines trade are mostly unclear and quite crude.^① In addition, Sino-Philippines trade has the attributes of non-government trade or private trade, so it is also certain that there is no possibility of retention of systematic business papers. Therefore, when dealing with trade scale and so on, Chinese and foreign scholars mainly extract relatively rich and reliable trade data from Western literature through the following methods.

One of the methods that scholars often use is to extract relevant data from letters or reports left by the pro-persons who have experienced the trade themselves. Among them, several sporadic records in “The Philippine Islands” (1493–1898) have been cited many times, and the influence is extensive. For example, in 1598, the Archbishop of Manila, Ygnacio de Santibañez, wrote to Felipe II, claiming that the amount of silver flowing into China from Nueva España was 1 million pesos per year. In 1602, Franciscan missionary Martin Ynacio de Loyola sent a letter to Felipe III, mentioning that the amount of silver flowing into China through the Philippines reached 2 million pesos. On August 1, 1633, the Governor of the Philippines, Juan Cerezo de Salamanca, wrote a letter to King Felipe IV, arguing that the amount of silver flowing into the Philippines from Nueva España might be 2 million pesos per year.^②

^① Chinese historical materials that can provide clear data are particularly rare, which have been comprehensively sorted out by Quan Hansheng, see *Chinese Economic History* (中国经济史论丛), 428–429.

^② Emma Helen-Robertson and James Alexander eds., *The Philippine Islands*, 1493–1898, Vol.10, Ohio: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1904, p.145; Vol.12, 1904, p.59; Vol. 24, 1905, p.292. For research based on such data, see Peng, X. *The History of Chinese Currency* (中国货币史),

However, the information provided by such records is not sufficient and accurate. First, the author did not state the source and credentials of the data; second, given the author's complex identity and specific intent when writing the paper, the authenticity of the data may be worth exploring further;^① third, even if the data provided by the author are true and correct, it involves only a few years, and the time span is too large to explain the overall situation of Sino-Philippines trade and the complex changes in different historical stages.^②

Shanghai People's Publishing House, 710 (1965); Quan, H. *Chinese Economic History* (中国经济史论丛), 436-444; Qian, J. *Southeast Asian Affairs* (南洋问题研究), (3) (1985); Liang, F. *International Trade and Silver Import and Export in the Ming Dynasty* (明代国际贸易与银的输入), 173.

^① Cautious approach should be taken to the data in historical documents and studies of past generations. For example, Inacio Loyola in 1602 mentioned that "2 million pesos" of silver flowed into China, with the intention of emphasizing the dangers of trade between the Philippines and China, thereby persuading the king to strengthen the control of West India by Spain. (See Emma Helen-Robertson and James Alexander eds., *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, Vol.12, pp.58-59). This kind of data are plausible, but other records are too speculative. Scholars such as C. R. Boxer, G. B. Souza and Willian S. Atwell et al. have cited a data of 1602, saying that 5 million pesos flowed to Manila every year, and even 12 million pesos in 1597. (See C. R. Boxer, "Plata Es Sangre: Sidelights on the Drain of Spanish-American Silver in the Far East, 1550-1700," *Philippine Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1970, p.464; G. B. Souza, *The Survival of Empire, Portuguese Trade and Society in China and the South China Sea, 1630-1754*, p.84; Willian S. Atwell, "International Bullion Flows and the Chinese Economy circa 1530-1650," *Past & Present*, No. 95 (May 1982), p.74), which is to illustrate the amount of American silver flowing into China. A review of the above references reveals that the sources of the data point to the work of Woodrow Borah. Woodrow Borah said, "for in 1602 the Mexico City cabildo instructed its agents at the Court of Madrid to inform the king that the silver lost to his realms through shipment to the Philippines and so eventually to the Chinese came to five million pesos a year and that in 1597 the specie sent from Acapulco reached the staggering total of twelve millions." (See Woodrow Borah, *Early Colonial Trade and Navigation between Mexico and Peru, California: University of California Press, California: University of California Press, 1954*, p.123). However, Woodrow Borah misread the corresponding historical materials, the original document is "que salen deste Reyno Para las yslas filipinas todos los años tres millones y que de cinco años a esta parte se ha salido mas de doze y que no se ha tenydo de retorno a esta ciudad," which can be translated as: Three million pesos a year are exported from this country (Nueva España) to the Philippine islands. Within five years (1597-1602), the amount of silver left in the Philippines was 12 million pesos, which was never returned to Mexico. Namely, the Mexican official only said that between 1597 and 1602, 3 million pesos of silver were exported to the Philippines each year, not 5 million. "12 million pesos" refers to the amount of silver that has stayed in the Philippines for five years (and then exported to places like China), rather than one year.

^② According to the data of 1602, 1604 and 1633, Quan Hansheng points out in *Import of American Silver into China during the Ming and Qing Dynasties* that "in the 17th century, (the annual American silver imported from the Philippines to China) increased to 2 million or more than 2 million pesos." This is obviously debatable.

In order to overcome the above shortcomings, some scholars have turned to another method. The “number of ships” on the Sino-Philippines trade route is used as a statistical indicator, and the increase or decrease in the number of ships indicates the expansion and contraction of the trade scale. In this respect, the works of Quan Hansheng, which has been frequently cited by academic circles at home and abroad, are the most representative.^① After reading the text, it is not difficult to find that the data used are almost entirely from the research of French scholar Pierre Chaunu.^② In addition, “The Philippine Islands” mentioned above also records a large number of Chinese ships traveling to the Philippines, so it has become a source of historical data for some scholars.^③ To illustrate the problem, the two kinds of data are organized in Table 1.

Data sources: It is organized according to the relevant data in *Les Philippines et le Pacifique des Iberiques (XVIe, XVIIe, XIIIe Siecles)* (pp.148–160) by Pierre Chaunu and “Sino-Philippines Trade before the 17th Century and the Manila Massacre of 1603” (page 44) by Zheng Peiyi.

Compared with the method of citation of scattered historical materials, this statistical data with more years covered have higher reliability. But it is undeniable that the data are still not enough. As shown in Table 1, in the 72 years of the Sino-Philippines trade in the late Ming Dynasty, the number of years in which the number of ships is clearly recorded in “The Philippine Islands” is less than 20, and the rest years are blank. Although Pierre Chaunu also compiled the “almojarifazgo” data of Chinese ships, which are relatively complete, but 31 years’ data are still missing. There is a large gap between the data, and the continuity is obviously insufficient.

^① Quan, H. *Trade between China and the Philippines in the Ming Dynasty* (明季中国与菲律宾间的贸易), 430; Fan, S. *History of Late-Ming Dynasty* (晚明史: 1573–1644) (Vol.1), Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 60–61 (2003); [Japan] Akira, M. *Research on the History of Overseas Trade in the Ming Dynasty*, Li, X. (trans) Tianjin People’s Publishing House, 490 (2016).

^② Quan, H. *Trade between China and the Philippines in the Ming Dynasty* (明季中国与菲律宾间的贸易) 430; Pierre Chaunu, *Les Philippines et le Pacifique des Iberiques (XVIe, XVIIe, XIIIe Siecles)*, Paris: S. E. V. P. E. N., 1960, pp.148–160.

^③ See G. B. Souza, *The Survival of Empire, Portuguese Trade and Society in China and the South China Sea, 1630–1754*, pp. 67–84; Qian, J. *Southeast Asian Affairs* (南洋问题研究) (3) (1985); Zheng, P. master’s thesis, Taiwan University, 44 (2008). The number of Chinese ships contained in “The Philippine Islands” is completely compiled in it.

More importantly, the fact that only the number of Chinese ships is used as a statistical basis may not truly reflect the actual situation of commodity trading. By the common sense, because there is no official organization and coordination of such trade activities, the size of the ship and the cargo carried can vary widely. Even if the number of ships or even the tonnage is roughly equal, the number of transactions and the total value of goods in different years are often very different.^①

It is worth noting that Pierre Chaunu also compiled the “almojarifazgo” data of Chinese ships in the same book, which provides a third way to sort out the scale of Sino-Philippines trade. The tax amount on Chinese ships is listed in Table 2.

Table 1 Number of Chinese ships going to Manila for trade (Unit: ship)

Year	Number of ships	Year	Number of ships	Year	Number of ships	Year	Number of ships	Year	Number of ships
1573	- / 3	1587	- / ≥30	1602	18 / -	1616	- / ≤7	1635	40 / -
1574	- / 3	1588	46 / ≥30	1603	16 / -	1617	- / ≥11	1636	30 / 33
1575	- / 12—15	1590	- / -	1604	15 / 13	1618	- / -	1637	50 / -
1576	- / -	1591	21 / 28	1605	18 / 18	1619	- / -	1638	16 / -
1577	9 / -	1592	- / 22	1606	26 / 25	1620	23 / -	1639	30 / ≥5
1578	9 / -	1593—1595	- / -	1607	39 / -	1621—1626	- / -	1640	7 / -
1579	- / -	1594	- / -	1608	39 / -	1627	21 / -	1641	8 / -
1580	19 / -	1595	- / -	1609	41 / -	1628	9 / -	1642	34 / -
1581	9 / -	1596	40 / -	1610	41 / -	1629	2 / -	1643	30 / -
1582	24 / -	1597	14 / -	1611	> 21 / -	1630	16 / -	1644	8 / 3
1583	- / 20	1598	- / -	1612	46 / -	1631	33 / 50		
1584	- / 25 or 30	1599	19 / -	1613	- / -	1632	16 / -		
1585	- / -	1600	25 / -	1614	- / -	1633	30 / -		
1586	- / -	1601	29 / -	1615	- / -	1634	26 / -		

Note: For comparison, the ship data compiled by Pierre Chaunu and the ship data recorded in “The Philippine Islands” are listed side by side. The former is listed on the left, and the latter on the right, with a “/” interval. “-” represents missing data.

^① For example, about the Chinese ships recorded in the “*Research of the East and the West* (东西洋考),” the small ones are “sixteen feet wide,” while the big ones may be “twenty-six feet wide” or more. (See Zhang, X. “*Research of the East and the West* (东西洋考), 140–141). Taking the ship data of Pierre Chaunu in Table 1 as an example, in 1596 and 1609, 17 years apart, the number of ships going to the Manila were 40 and 41 respectively, roughly the same. However, Table 4 of this paper shows that the trade scale of the latter (1,284,083 pesos) is more than twice that of the former (518,333 pesos).

Table 2 The tax amount of Chinese ships in Pierre Chaunu’s works (Unit: peso)

Year	Average amount	Notes
1581—1585	—	Five-year data missing
1586—1590	3 750	1586, 1587 and 1589 data missing
1591—1595	22 065	1593—1595 data missing
1596—1600	24 155	1598 data missing
1601—1605	30 104	
Continued		
Year	Average amount	Notes
1606—1610	46 382	
1611—1615	64 482	1613—1615 data missing
1616—1620	31 045	1616—1619 data missing
1621—1625	—	Five years data missing
1626—1630	11 513	1627—1630 data missing
1631—1635	24 951	
1636—1640	23 927	
1641—1645	12 305	

Data sources: It is organized according to relevant content in *Les Philippines et le Pacifique des Iberiques (XVIe, XVIIe, XIIIe Siecles)* (pp.200–205) by Pierre Chaunu.

The “almojarifazgo” data are generated from the tariffs imposed by Manila’s official valuation of the goods of each ship. Therefore, the total value of the Chinese ship’s goods deduced reversely by it is far more reliable, meticulous and closer to the real situation of commodity trading than relying on scattered document records or simple number of ships. For this reason, the almojarifazgo data compiled by Pierre Chaunu have been widely recognized as an authoritative research foundation.^① In reality, however, this statistic still failed to completely eradicate defects similar to those described above. First, as shown in Table 2, the “almojarifazgo” amount provided by Pierre Chaunu is all the average amount in several years (mostly 5 years) and cannot reflect the annual difference in trade size. Second, Pierre Chaunu also stated in the notes that the trade data were missing for 28 years among 64 years (1581–1644). It is evident that the lack of nearly half of the data does not provide us with convincing historical support for analyzing the scale and direction of trade.

^① See Richard von Glahn, *Fountain of Fortune, Money and Monetary Policy in China, 1000–1700*, p.124; Zhang, K. *History of Relations between China and Spain* (中国与西班牙关系史), 89–92.

2 Implementation and reform of the “almojarifazgo” system

As mentioned above, most of the “almojarifazgo” data currently used by the academic community come from Pierre Chaunu, and his data are completely taken from the “Contaduría” document in the “Archivo General de Indias” (AGI) in Seville. Therefore, before further analysis is carried out, it is necessary to first analyze the origin of the “almojarifazgo” system and the newly discovered “almojarifazgo” data.

For the hunger for commercial interests, as early as 1565, when Miguel López de Legazpi colonized the Philippines, officials from Real Hacienda went along. The three most important positions of Real Hacienda are the contador, the tesorero and the factor-veedor, who hold these positions are usually responsible for assessing royal interests and recording relevant financial data. While Manila was built in 1571, the authorities also established some “caja real.” The members of Real Hacienda are responsible for managing revenues and expenditures and writing accounting documents.^①

Or because the early scale was really insignificant, the Sino-Philippines trade, which began in 1573, was initially not favored by officials of the Real Hacienda. The number of Chinese ships and transaction data are not recorded. However, it does not mean that the Manila authorities have completely ignored this potential source of income. The Philippine Governor, Franciscode Sande, who advocated the use of force to conquer China, stated in his report on June 8, 1577, “Up to the present time there have been no duties on exports or imports, or any other duties. And as I came during so hard times, and the people were so poor and few I did not dare to impose them. It seems to me too soon to talk of duties until it can be made profitable. This amounts to but a small sum, and whatever is

^① The Contaduría documents of 1565–1577 (No. AGI, Contaduría, 1195–1199b) were compiled by the tesorero Guido de Lavezaris, the contador Andrés de Cauchela and the factor-veedor Andrés de Mirandaola. See Luis Alonso Álvarez, *El Costo del Imperio Asiático, La formación colonial de las islas Filipinas bajo dominio español, 1565–1800*, Mexico: Instituto Mora, 2009, pp. 73–92; Fang, Z. *Chinese and Luzon Trade (1657–1687): Analysis and Translation Notes of Historical Materials* (华人与吕宋贸易 (1657–1687): 史料分析与译注), Xinzhu: Tsinghua University Press, 60 (2012).

brought from China by the vessels is but a small matter.”^① Obviously, the decision of Governor Sande temporarily not levying taxes is based on the realistic consideration of Sino-Philippines trade still in a “hard times.” Because even if the tax is levied, it will not be “a small sum.” Besides, the prospect that “until it can be made profitable” and benefit from it clearly shows the long-term intention of the Manila authorities.

As a circumstantial evidence of the above speculation, we notice that during the tenure of Governor Sande (August 1575–April 1580), the Manila authorities have only imposed a “derecho de anclaje” on Chinese ships. In response, Philippine official Juan de Ledesma recalled in a 1585 report, “When Dr. Sande served as the governor of the Philippines, sangleys y chinos who came to the Philippines were required to pay an anclaje for each ship, namely, one pays 25, 30 or 50 pesos depending on the size of the ship. There is no need to pay any other taxes.”^② Ledesma did not provide more details in the report, nor did he specify the specific year of the mooring tax levy. However, considering that the time for the arrival of the Chinese ships in the Philippines was mostly in the first half of the year,^③ and Sande arrived in Manila on August 25, 1575, the actual collection time of the anclaje would not be earlier than 1576. Effective implementation was likely to be delayed until 1577.^④

Just as Governor Sande envisioned, the number of Chinese ships going to Manila trade in 1580 had risen to 19, and the scale of Sino-Philippines

^① Emma Helen-Robertson and James Alexander eds., *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*, Vol.4, 1903, p.88.

^② Relacio de lo que se Entiende de las Islas Philipinas por Papeles que se Han Visto Tocantes a ellas(c.1585), Patronato, 24, R. 66, AGI. This manuscript also has an incomplete transcript, see P. Pablo Pastells, *Labor Evangelica Ministerios Apostolico de los Obreros de la Compañia de Iesvs, Fvndacion, y Progressos de Su Provincia en Las Islas Filipinas*, Barcelona: Imprenta y Litograf á de Henrich y Compañía, 1900, Tomo I, p. 355. The sangley in the citation is generally translated as person who comes regularly, in Chinese Chang-lai, and in most cases refers to Chinese merchant. Fang, Z. *Chinese and Luzon Trade (1657–1687): Analysis and Translation Notes of Historical Materials* (华人与吕宋贸易(1657–1687): 史料分析与译注), 10.

^③ Juan Gil, *Los Chinos en Manila: Siglos XVI y XVII*, Lisboa: Centro Científico e Cultural de Macau, 2011, pp.585–589.

^④ Perhaps because of the levy of derecho de anclaje, we are able to find the number of Chinese ships taxed in 1577, 1578, and 1580 in the “Contaduría” (AGI, Contaduría, 1200), which are 9, 9, 19 respectively. See Pierre Chaunu, *Les Philippines et le Pacifique des Iberiques (XVIe, XVIIe, XIIIe Siecles)*, pp. 148–150.

trade had increased significantly. The new Philippine Governor Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa began to “talk of duties” in the second month after taking office. On June 20 of the same year, Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa officially proposed to the king that a 3% almojarifazgo would be imposed on the import and export goods of the Philippines. At the same time, a flete of 12 pesos per tonelada was imposed on ships heading to Nueva España.^①

The formulation of the almojarifazgo is a major event in the history of Sino-Philippines trade, marking the development of bilateral trade to a new stage. According to scholars, the word “almojarifazgo” is derived from the Arabic word “al-musrif,” which is also known as “reales derechos” in some documents, and has been widely used in Spain and the vast regions of “Indias Occidentales.”^② It is important to note that, although the scope of almojarifazgo implemented in the Spanish Philippines covers all import and export commodities, due to the limited local production, it is actually levied mainly on Chinese goods entering and leaving the island.^③ However, the implementation of the almojarifazgo does not seem to be so smooth. In this regard, Juan Grauy Mofalcon, Manila’s procurator-general, recalled in 1637, “In the year 1581, Governor Don Juan Ronquillo de Peñalosa imposed a duty of two percent on the merchandise exported to Nueva España, and three percent on that carried by the Chinese to Manila. Although he was censured for having imposed those duties without having any order for it, they remained.”^④ Some important information is revealed in the short few words. The procurator’ general

^① Copiade un Capitulo de Carta que el Gouernador don Gon9alo Ronquillo Escrivio a su Magastade en 20 de Junio de 1580(Junio 20, 1580), Filipinas, 6, R.4, N.44, AGI; Juan Gil, *Los Chinos en Manila: Siglos XVI y XVII*, p.51.

^② Moors first imposed this tax in Andaluc á, and during the Fernando III (St. Fernando, 1201–1252), the Catholic state began to adopt this taxation method. See Emma Helen-Robertson and James Alexander eds., *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*, Vol. 42, 1906, p.119, note. 41; Fang, Z. *Chinese and Luzon Trade (1657–1687): Analysis and Translation Notes of Historical Materials* (华人与吕宋贸易(1657–1687): 史料分析与译注), 75. When talking about the almojarifazgo, Juan Gil stated that Seville imposed a 5% excise tax on goods from India after 1566. See Juan Gil, *Los Chinos en Manila: Siglos XVI y XVII*, p.51.

^③ *Relación Productos de Filipinas al Perú*(1581), Patronato, 24, R.55, AGI.

^④ Emma Helen-Robertson and James Alexander eds., *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*, Vol.6, 1904, p.312.

official said that in 1581, Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa's implementation of the new policy was "without having any order" and was therefore "censured." There is evidence that the blame seems to come first from the nominal superior administration, namely the Nueva España authorities far from the Americas. On March 10, 1581, Domingo de Salazar, who had just been appointed the first bishop of Manila, sent a letter to Philippine financial officer Ledesma in Chilapa, Mexico, insisting that the Philippines was not yet in a position to levy the almojarifazgo, and said "because that country (the Philippines) is in the new stage, it is not enough to support itself."^①

Due to the lack of more materials, it is unclear why a churchman who was not involved in the Philippines made irresponsible remarks about affairs beyond his duties. But in response to this, in the year following the implementation of the new policy, in 1582, some "algunos mercadores y personas particulares" in the Philippines reported to the Spanish royal court anonymously, "The Governor Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa imposed a 3% tax on all the ropa, which caused Chinese businessmen to be extremely dissatisfied. These Chinese businessmen claim that they will not come to Manila again because the transaction is no longer free. Since we have not conquered this region for a long time, this country (the Philippines) is so fragile and vast, and if all aspects are free, I am afraid that it will be destroyed."^②

Due to the theme of the paper, we will not elaborate on many disputes and subtleties in the implementation of the new tax system. But these conflicts are enough to illustrate the contradictions between the stacked colonial administration and the interest groups. It is also doubtful that the new tax system was formally approved, despite all the criticism. On May 10, 1583, the Audiencia Real of Manila, ordered to investigate the propriety of the new policy, reported the final results as follows: "Your

^① Carta de Domingo de Salazar Infromando sobre su Viaje (Marzo 10, 1581), Filipinas, 74, N.3, AGI.

^② Relacion de lo que Escribieron de las Islas Philippinas a a Algunos Mercadores y Personas particulares de aqui sobre los Derechos que el Gouvernador Don Gon9alo Ronquillo Puso en las Mercaderias de los Sangleyes Chinos que Vinieron a las dichas Islas el A1o Passado(1582), Filipinas, 6, R.4, N.44, AGI.

Majesty ordered that the said Audiencia look into the matter of the three percent customs duty imposed on goods, both imports and exports, by Don Gonzalo Ronquillo, when he was governor of these islands; and, in case this duty be not expedient, to remove it, or to take such measures as they deemed best. Considering the poverty of the royal treasury of these islands, and the many current expenses here, the Audiencia ordered that the three percent duty continue in force.”^①

On the theoretical level, a stable tax rate will facilitate the smooth development of trade activities, and the establishment of professional institutions will also make the collection and recording of relevant data more complete. Perhaps because of the contradictions between the administrative agencies, and the relevant policies are not fully executed in the early days, for a long time after the implementation of the *almojarifazgo* policy, we still cannot find the records that should be included in the “Caja de Filipinas-Cuentas de Real Hacienda” under the “Contaduría.” In the first 10 years of the new tax system (1581–1590), according to Pierre Chaunu’s statistics, except for sporadic records, the tax records of Chinese ships were almost blank.

Perhaps under increasing financial pressure, the ninth Philippine Governor, Francisco Tello, proposed on June 13, 1598 to adjust the 3% tax rate to 5%. In a few days, the Governor proposed to raise the tax rate to 6% on the 22nd day of the same month.^② Compared with the urgency of the Philippine authorities, the attitude of the king seems to be more cautious. In a reply dated August 16, 1599, Felipe II claimed that he “wanted more advice on raising tax rates” and required the Governor Francisco Tello and the Audiencia Real of investigating the possible negative effects of higher taxes.^③

In the original literature so far, no findings have been found on the

^① Emma Helen-Robertson and James Alexander eds., *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*, Vol.6, p.312.

^② Juan Gil, *Los Chinos en Manila: Siglos XVI y XVII*, p.53.

^③ Copia de Cédula sobre Aumentar Derechos a Mercaderes á las Chinas (Agosto 16, 1599), Filipinas, 18B, R.9, N.138, AGI.

matter, and Tello's proposal seems doomed. But a few years later, in 1605, the Audiencia Real's oidor, Antonio de Ribera Maldonado, revisited the old case and again suggested raising the tax rate to 6%. To illustrate the necessity of this move, he even attached a copy of Manila's fiscal expenditures.^① Perhaps thanks to the careful handling of the oidor, the proposal progressed particularly smoothly this time. The following year (November 20, 1606), the case was approved by King Felipe III and later written into the famous "Recopilación de Leyes de los Reinos de Indias."^②

The new tax system included in the above code had not been implemented until the new Governor, Juande Silva, took office in 1610.^③ After receiving this news, Felipe III was quite satisfied and praised in a letter to the Governor on November 12, 1611, "What you have done (adjust it to 6%) in regard to the matter of the three percent from the Chinese is well, and accordingly its collection will be continued."^④ At this point, the 6% tax policy on goods was finally implemented and continued until the end of the Ming Dynasty.

^① Carta de Ribera Maldonado sobre Arbitrios para Mercaderías (1605), Filipinas, 19, R.6, N.98, AGI.

^② *Recopilación de Leyes de los Reinos de Indias*, Tomo 3, Madrid: Por Ivlian de Paredes, 1681, fl.78v. It should be pointed out that, or because of the 1606 King's decision to increase the almojarifazgo to 6% was included the *Recopilación de Leyes de los Reinos de Indias*, many researchers believe that the 6% tax rate took place in the same year (See Quang, H. *Chinese Economic History* (中国经济史论丛), 433; Zhang, K. *History of Relations between China and Spain* (中国与西班牙关系史), 89; Zheng, P. *Sino-Philippines Trade before the Seventeenth Century and Manila Massacre in 1603* (十七世纪初以前的中菲贸易与 1603 年的马尼拉大屠杀), 47; Fang, Z. *Chinese and Luzon Trade (1657–1687): Analysis and Translation Notes of Historical Materials* (华人与吕宋贸易(1657–1687): 史料分析与译注), 73; 平山笃子『スペイン帝国と中華帝国の邂逅』資料, Hosei University Press, 29–47 (2009). However, this view misunderstands the formulation and implementation of policies. In fact, scholars such as Pierre Chaunu, G.B.Souza and Juan Gil have already indicated that the implementation of the new tax system was in 1610. See Pierre Chaunu, *Les Philippines et le Pacifique des Iberiques (XVIe, XVIIe, XIIIe Siecles)*, pp. 34, 154; G. B. Souza, *The Survival of Empire, Portuguese Trade and Society in China and the South China Sea, 1630–1754*, p. 82; Juan Gil, *Los Chinos en Manila: Siglos XVI y XVII*, p. 53.

^③ On July 10, 1610, the Audiencia Real fiscal Alvaradode Bracamonte claimed in the report that the new Governor, Silva, imposed an additional 3% almojarifazgo for Chinese in the same year, bringing in 40,000 pesos, extra income. See Carta del Fiscal Alvarado sobre Situación General (Julio10, 1610), Filipinas, 20, R.4, N.31, AGI.

^④ Emma Helen-Robertson and James Alexander eds., *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*, Vol.17, 1904, p.175.

3 Multiple sources of “almojarifazgo” data

Whether it is the initial introduction of the almojarifazgo or all the indescribable conflicts of interest occurring in the process of tax rate increase, one thing is clear: The continuous expansion of Sino-Philippines trade is the most basic condition for the Philippine authorities to make the above decisions. With the development of trade, the record of the payment of the almojarifazgo by the Chinese ship is no longer “almost blank,” but gradually becoming systematic and complete.

After Chaunu, the Spanish scholar Gil further compiled the voluminous Contaduría documents. In 2011, he published for the first time a list of more than 60 pages, which contains the name of Chinese captains and the amount of customs duties paid by them when their ships arrived Manila between 1591 and 1700 (hereinafter referred to as Gil data).^① Taking 1591 as an example, Juan Gil said that a total of 21 Chinese ships registered and paid the almojarifazgo in Manila in the year, with a total tax of 16,829 pesos 5 tomíns and 4 granos.^② The name of the captain of a Chinese ship was not recorded. Only the tax amount of 190 pesos 5 tomíns and 2 granos was written down. The other 20 ship captains’ names and tax details are as follows:

Onçeq pays 1126 pesos 1 tomín and 3 granos; Guanyo pays 397 pesos 7 tomíns and 9 granos; Tiquey pays 1962 pesos 3 tomíns and 5 granos; Viscan pays 721 pesos 6 tomíns; Quasan pays 1819 pesos 2 tomíns and 9 granos; Tiancan pays 436 pesos 6 tomíns and 7 granos; Cuigdo pays 816 pesos 3 tomíns; Ansan pays 503 pesos 4 tomíns; Sauqui pays 653 pesos 5 tomíns ; Chancan pays 716 pesos 4 tomíns; Chantay pays 353 pesos 6 tomíns and 1 grano; Dienpou pays 81 pesos 4 tomíns and 3 granos; Pintian pays 1316 pesos 2 tomíns and 6 granos; Tingoan pays 663 pesos 7 tomíns; Chion pays 863 pesos 4 tomíns and 2 granos; Guancha pays 851 pesos 1 tomín and 10 granos; Guadhoo pays 820 pesos 2 tomíns and 4 granos;

^① This list is called (Nómina de los Capitanes Chinos Llegados a Manila y Registro del almojarifazgo que Pagaron por sus Mercancías), see Juan Gil, *Los Chinos en Manila: Siglos XVI y XVII*, pp. 574–639.

^② Tomín and grano are smaller units of money, 8 tomíns equals to 1 peso and 12 granos equals to 1 tomín.

Guacian pays 1298 pesos 7 tomíns; Tonguian pays 1038 pesos and 1 grano; and Chupou pays 215 pesos 1 tomín and 1 grano.^①

Due to the large scale of the statistics of Gil, it is inconvenient to completely transcribe the other years' data. Compared with Chaunu's statistics, "Gil data" are obviously more specific. It not only provides the name and tax amount of the captain of each Chinese ship going to Manila during this period, but also indicates the tax date and the "total value of the goods" of the Chinese ship in certain years.^② This will enable future data analysis to be based on the "single ship tax amount" as the smallest unit, providing a more comprehensive and solid foundation for the analysis of Sino-Philippines trade. However, because the Contaduría documents are not well preserved, Gil data are still missing for 16 years (1592–1594, 1613–1619, 1621–1626). He is also regretted to note under the relevant items: "The contaduría documents are lost."^③

However, by using a variety of methods, the newly discovered "Filipinas"^④ documents can not only make up for the missing, but also obtain more reliable conclusions through data analysis of overlapping years. For example, Gil failed to find data for the period 1592–1594, which can be obtained from the *Cartas y expedientes de gobernadores de Filipinas* in the "Filipinas." On June 20, 1592, the Governor Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas stated in a letter to Felipe II, "If suspending trade with China, Your Majesty will lose the corresponding tax. In the import and export tax on Chinese goods, the local annual income is as high as 30,000–40,000

^① Juan Gil, *Los Chinos en Manila: Siglos XVI y XVII*, p.577.

^② "Gil Data" record the date of taxation of each ship from 1607 to 1612, 1620, 1627–1644 (It can be seen that the arrival of ships is concentrated in the first half of the year) and the total value of each Chinese ship. See Juan Gil, *Los Chinos en Manila: Siglos XVI y XVII*, 685–609.

^③ Juan Gil, *Los Chinos en Manila*, p.592.

^④ The "Contaduría" are almost all records related to "accounting," covering major cities and ports in western India. In contrast, the documents collected in the "Filipinas" are entirely related to the Spanish Philippines. "Filipinas" is further subdivided into "Cartas y expedients de gobernadores de Filipinas" and "Cartas y expedients de la Audiencia de Manila" and so on. It is worth noting that since the Philippine governors and officials must be clear about the official data of the Sino-Philippines trade each year, some of the documents in the "Filipinas" often contain "almojarifazgo" data. There are also a number of important "almojarifazgo lists" in the "Filipinas."

pesos.”^① Considering that the Governor’s letter was made in June 1592 and his appointment was in 1590, the letter stated that “the annual income is as high as 30,000–40,000 pesos” should be an overview of Sino-Philippines trade during the two years. If a proportional export tax is deducted, the import tax included (namely the Chinese ship tax amount between 1590 and 1592) should be between 15,000 and 20,000 pesos. If the *almojarifazgo* rate is 3% at that time, then the total value of goods imported into the Philippines in 1592 should be between 500,000 and 670,000 pesos.

Regarding the 1593 data, no reliable documentation has been found.^② However, in the report of the new Governor Luis Pérez Dasmariñas on June 24, 1595, the tax data of 1594 are found. The Governor made it clear, “Last year, in 1594, a tax of 3% was imposed on 50 Chinese ships for 23,133 pesos 4 *tomíns* and 5 *granos*.”^③

As for the other two periods with relatively concentrated losses (1613–1619, 1621–1626), more complete data can be obtained from the two “*almojarifazgo* lists” in “Filipinas.” The first was a short tariff record made on September 23, 1632 (hereinafter referred to as “List 1”).^④ Anonymous author records in detail the exact data of the Chinese ship’s tax payment in Manila from 1606 to 1631, as shown in Table 3.

^① Carta de G.P. Mariñas sobre Situación General (Junio 20, 1592), Filipinas, 18B, R.2, N.16, AGI.

^② In order to facilitate statistical analysis, the latter will temporarily equate the trade scale of 1593 with the processing of 1592. The specific data are for further research.

^③ Carta de L. P. Mariñas sobre Pago de Situado (1595), Filipinas, 18B, R. 5, N. 41, AGI.

^④ Certificación de lo que Han Valido los Reales Derechos de *almojarifazgo* de las Mercaderías de China que Han Traído los Sangleyes a la Ciudad de Manila desde 1609 hasta 1619, y las que Han Traído los Portugueses de Macao, desde 1619 hasta el Presente (Septiembre 23, 1632), Filipinas, 27, N. 197, AGI. It was G. B. Souza who used this list earlier, see G. B. Souza, *The Survival of Empire, Portuguese Trade and Society in China and the South China Sea, 1630–1754*, p.83. However, this list has another transcript with no date and signature, see *Relación de los Derechos que Pagaron los Sangleyes en los Años que Tuvieron la Contratación de las Mercaderías de China, 1606–1618, y los que Han Pagado los Portugueses de Macao en otro Periodo de Tiempo equivalente, 1619–1631*(c.1632), Filipians, 41, N.16, AGI. Zheng Peiyi used the English translation of the latter transcript, see “Sino-Philippines Trade before the Seventeenth Century and Manila Massacre in 1603,” p.47. For more background information on these two lists, see Li Qing’s “Portuguese Monopoly of Chinese Goods in the Manila Market and the Far East: 1619–634,” *Journal of Macao Polytechnic Institute* (Humanities and Social Sciences), (3), (2016).

Table 3 Tariff data of Chinese ships in Manila from 1606 to 1631 (Unit: peso, tomín, grano)

Year	Tax amount						
1606	32 113. 3. 3	1613	69 427. 7. 0	1620	27 797. 0. 0	1627	20 385. 0. 0
1607	75 462. 0. 4	1614	36 105. 2. 6	1621	6 692. 6. 11	1628	2 943. 0. 0
1608		1615	41 588. 1. 1	1622	8 040. 0. 0	1629	3 957. 0. 0
1609	131 41. 4. 0	1616	23 377. 0. 0	1623	1 759. 3. 9	1630	6 287. 0. 0
1610		1617	37 179. 5. 5	1624	2 998. 6. 0	1631	18 344. 0. 0
1611	26 053. 0. 7	1618	5 770. 0. 0	1625	10 894. 0. 0	—	—
1612	95 639. 2. 8	1619	11 148. 0. 0	1626	22 580. 0. 0		

Note: The unit of data in the table are peso, tomín and grano. For example, the correspondence of 32,113.3.3 in 1606 means that the tax amount of the Chinese ship is 32,113 pesos 3 tomíns and 1 grano.

Data source: It is organized according to relevant content in Filipinas, 41, N.16, AGI; Filipinas, 27, N.197, AGI.

Compared with “Gil data,” the number of years involved in “List 1” is not too large, only 26 years. However, its data are extremely accurate and coherent, supplementing the 13-year (1613–1619, 1621–1626) data missing from “Gil data,” which provides an indispensable historical support for the construction of the complete data link of the Sino-Philippines trade in the late Ming Dynasty. In addition, the overlap between “List 1” and “Gil data” (1606–1612, 1620, 1627–1631) can be used to further analyze the annual data of the Sino-Philippines trade. For example, the data from 1607 to 1608 and 1609 to 1610 in “List 1” are the sum of the two-year tax amount, not the tax amount for the individual year. It is clearly stated in “Gil data” that 36 Chinese ships arrived in 1607, and paid taxes 34,490 pesos 5 tomíns and 1 grano. In 1608, 35 Chinese ships arrived and paid 38,506 pesos 2 tomíns and 10 granos, and totally 72,996 pesos 7 tomíns and 11 granos for two years. It is also recorded that 35 Chinese ships arrived in 1609, and paid taxes 39,143 pesos 6 tomíns and 10 granos. In 1610, 37 Chinese ships arrived in Hong Kong and paid 91,156 pesos 6 tomíns and 1 grano, and totally 130,300 pesos 4 tomíns and 11 granos for two years.^① The difference between the two is not so great. The value of “Gil data” in 1607–1608 is about 3000 pesos less than “List 1,” and the value in 1609–1610 is only 1000 pesos less.^②

^① Juan Gil, *Los Chinos en Manila*, pp.585–590.

^② Juan Gil, *Los Chinos en Manila*, pp.585–589.

The second “almojarifazgo list” named “list of the tax records of 1079 ships between 1620 and 1681” (*Lista de 1079 Navíos Registrados entre 1620 y 1681 y los Derechos que Pagaron*, hereinafter referred to as “List 2”) was completed in 1681 and was nearly 200 pages long.^① The author of “List 2” clearly states that the internal data were taken directly from the “*los libros y papeles dela Contaduría.*” Therefore, List 2 may contain some important data that has already been lost in the “*Contaduría*” of the *Archivo General de Indias*. Taking 1624 as an example, “List 2” records the tax information of the following seven Chinese merchant ships in addition to the merchant ships from Macau, Siam, Malacca and India:

The captain of a Junco from Camboxa is Sansou, a “Sangley” who pays 229 pesos 6 tomíns and 8 granos under the inspection of the royal officials; the captain of a Chinese ship is Fuqui who pays 609 pesos 1 tomín and 9 granos under the inspection of the royal officials; the captain of a Chinese ship is Fongan, a Sangley who pays 545 pesos 2 tomíns and 4 granos under the inspection of the royal officials; the captain of a Chinese ship is Hienqua, a Sangley who pays 641 pesos 6 tomíns and 10 granos under the inspection of the royal officials; the captain of a Chinese ship is Vinchin, a Sangley who pays 329 pesos 7 tomíns and 6 granos under the inspection of the royal officials; the captain of a Chinese ship is Cuimoan, a Sangley who pays 269 pesos and 11 granos under the inspection of the royal officials; and the captain of a Chinese ship is Onco, a Sangley who pays 374 pesos and 7 granos under the inspection of the royal officials.^②

Before the discovery of “List 2,” we can only learn from “List 1” the total amount of almojarifazgo of the Sino-Philippines in 1624 was 2998 pesos, nothing else. However, according to the data in 1624 in “List 2,” it can be found that: Six Chinese ships went directly to Manila for trade this year, and one went to Manila through Camboxa. Seven Chinese ships totally pay taxes 2999 pesos 2 tomíns and 7 granos. Compared with the data recorded in “List 1,” the difference between the two is less than 1 peso. Such a negligible difference can provide strong evidence for the reliability

^① *Lista de 1079 Navíos Registrados entre 1620 y 1681 y los Derechos que Pagaron*(1681), *Filipinas*, 24, R.2, N.14, AGI.

^② *Lista de 1079 Navíos Registrados entre 1620 y 1681 y los Derechos que Pagaron*(1681), *Filipinas*, 24, R.2, N.14, AGI.

of the two documents.

4 Scale and historical trend of Sino-Philippines trade

Throughout the Sino-Philippines trade in the late Ming Dynasty, the almojarifazgo data before 1591 being little kept may be due to the small scale of early trade and the repeated reform of the tariff system of the Philippine authorities.^① Since then, due to the continuous expansion of Sino-Philippines trade, coupled with the relatively complete and stable tariff system, the almojarifazgo record has been quite rich. According to the important documents such as “Gil data,” “List 1” and “List 2,” it has been able to clearly explain the scale and historical direction of Sino-Philippines trade between 1591 and 1644. Based on the above historical materials and corresponding treatment principles,^② the annual

^① Even so, we can learn from other literature about the size of the Sino-Philippines trade at that stage. Among them, the more important three records are: (1) In the following year of the implementation of the almojarifazgo, namely on June 16, 1582, Governor Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa reported to Felipe II with excitement, “The development of this country’s trade (Philippines) is particularly rapid, with the value of the goods carried on ships to Nueva España reaching 400,000 pesos.” (2) In 1584, the “Philippines Annual Financial List” led by the Real Hacienda Accounting Officer Andrés de Cauchela recorded that the Manila authorities collected 6000 pesos from the “Nueva España and Chinese goods” in 1584. (3) On June 30, 1586, the Philippine Audiencia Real Oidor, Pedro de Rojas stated in a letter to the King, “The amount of silver flowing from this country to China every year is 300,000 pesos, and this year it is more than 500,000 pesos.” According to the above literature, the scale of Sino-Philippines trade in 1582 may be around 300,000 pesos; It showed a slight decline in 1584, no more than 200,000 pesos; In 1586, it reached about 500,000 pesos. See *Carta de Ronquillo sobre Franciscanos, Poblamientos, etc* (Junio 16, 1582), *Filipinas*, 6, R.4, N.49, AGI; *Relación de Tributos y Gastos de Filipinas* (Junio 15, 1584), *Patronato*, 25, R.16, AGI; *Carta del Oidor Rojas sobre Disputas en la Audiencia* (Junio 30, 1586), *Filipinas*, 74, N.29, AGI.

^② In these 54 years, more than two-thirds of the years have two to three different historical materials to verify each other. The final adoption of the data mainly follows the following principles: (1) Few is derived from “single evidence,” namely the data from a single document. Although not convinced, it is still included in the final statistics for future comparison. (2) Since it is not excluded that there is a possibility of typos in the data transcription, when the tax data of individual ships differs in different literature records, the original manuscripts that the author has seen are generally used (lists 1 and 2). (3) Most of the previous studies focused only on Chinese ships that traveled directly from China to Manila, revealing a simple “peer-to-peer” (Fujian-Manila) trade. In fact, there are still many Chinese ships that first travel to Camboja, Taiwan and Japan, and then travel to Manila from these places. Therefore, the actual form of Sino-Philippines trade is the “inter-network” trade with “Fujian-Manila” as the main axis. The statistical data should cover such Chinese ships. (4) Where there is a total value of the goods in the tax payment data, it should be directly adopted. If there is no total value of the goods, it is calculated through the formula: Total Value = Tax Amount/Tax Rate (5) The scale of trade presented by official data are usually smaller than the actual scale. Therefore, after comparing multi-party data, the text generally chooses a larger value that may be closer to the actual scale.

total value of the goods of the Sino-Philippines trade in 1591–1644 is now summarized in Table 4.

According to the total data in Table 4, the total value of Sino-Philippines trade goods from 1591 to 1644 is about 31,563,631 pesos. In addition, the estimated total value of goods from 1581 to 1580 and 1581 to 1590 are 800,000 and 3 million pesos respectively.^① It can be inferred that the total value of Sino-Philippines trade goods in the late Ming Dynasty is about 35.33 million pesos. If the total value of the goods of Chinese ship is equal to the amount of silver returned by the Chinese ship,^② then it can be inferred that the American silver imported into China by the Sino-Philippines route in the late Ming Dynasty is about 28.26 million silver tael (It is set at 0.8 tael per peso). In order to examine more intuitively, analyze the evolution trend and main features of Sino-Philippines trade, Figure 1 is drawn according to Table 4.

^① Based on the above, the total value of 1573–1580 and 1581–1590 are calculated at 100,000 and 300,000 pesos per year, respectively.

^② The total value of the cargo of the Chinese ships and the amount of silver that the Chinese carried back to China cannot be equated. Even though there are quite a few Chinese and Western literature claims that ships returning to China have almost only silver and no other goods. However, from the records of Chinese ships looted by the Dutch, some Chinese ships carry a limited amount of silver, but carry a lot of spices instead. In addition, the “commodity tax, in Chinese Lu Xiang” written in the “Research of the East and the West,” namely, the tax on dozens of goods such as pepper and ivory, also shows that the Chinese ship will indeed bring back a lot of foreign goods. See Qian, J. *Southeast Asian Affairs* (南洋问题研究), (3) (1985); Jiang, S. (trans.) *De Dagregisters van het Kasteel Zeelandia*, Government Culture Bureau of Tai Nan City, 107, 109 (2002); Zhang, X. *Research of the East and the West* (东西洋考), 141–147.

^③ For example, Pierre Chaunu’s analysis result was misled by the average tax amount. He believed that the development trend of Sino-Philippines trade was as follows: (1) It continued to rise before 1620; (2) After 1620, it was stable and began to decline slowly; (3) After 1640, it plummeted. In 1999, Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Girález believed that the trade volume between China and the Philippines did not fall seriously after 1620, and did not fall suddenly after 1640. Obviously, there are shortcomings in both views. Therefore, William S. Atwell criticized the historical materials used by the latter in 2005. See Pierre Chaunu, *Les Philippines et le Pacifique des Iberiques (XVIe, XVIIe, XIIIe Siecles)*, p. 250; Dennis O. Flynn, Arturo Girález, “Spanish Profitability in the Pacific, the Philippines in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” pp. 27–28; William S. Atwell, “Another Look at Silver Imports into China, ca. 1635–1644,” pp. 474–475. However, it seems that they have not completely rejected the other’s point of view. When discussing the historical trend of trade development, the holders of various views can always find suitable historical materials from the vast literature to support their preset views without emphasizing the “consistency” of historical materials in the source and the “continuity” of historical materials in the age.

Table 4 Annual total value of the goods of the Sino-Philippines trade in 1591–1644

Year	Total value of the goods								
1591	560 967	1602	1 218 700	1613	1 157 117	1624	49 983	1635	649 383
1592	583 333	1603	871 067	1614	601 750	1625	181 567	1636	724 383
1593	583 333	1604	425 467	1615	692 633	1626	403 350	1637	615 000
1594	771 100	1605	879 667	1616	389 617	1627	380 950	1638	175 883
1595	910 000	1606	1 070 433	1617	619 650	1628	52 473	1639	329 616
1596	518 333	1607	1 190 212	1618	96 167	1629	47 162	1640	138 167
1597	233 900	1608	1 264 562	1619	185 800	1630	134 165	1641	56 483
1598	1 000 000	1609	1 284 083	1620	463 283	1631	374 117	1642	375 067
1599	1 062 167	1610	1 498 243	1621	111 533	1632	244 050	1643	324 883
1600	1 374 300	1611	434 293	1622	134 000	1633	358 750	1644	179 466
1601	1 518 833	1612	1 585 807	1623	29 316	1634	449 067	—	—

Note: The data in the table are only counted to the “peso,” the smaller units—tomín and grano are rounded up.

Data source: Juan Gil, *Chinos en Manila: Siglos XVI y XVII*, pp. 574–639; *Filipinas*, 18B, R. 2, N. 16, AGI; *Filipinas*, 18B, R. 5, N. 41, AGI; *Filipinas*, 27, N. 197, AGI; *Filipinas*, 24, R. 2, N. 14, AGI.

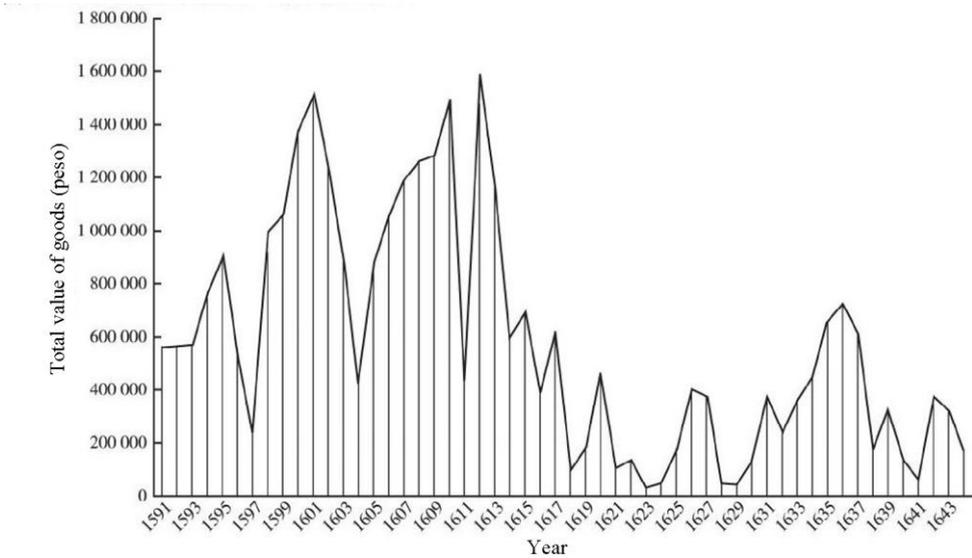


Fig. 1 Line of annual total value of the goods trend of the Sino-Philippines trade in 1591–1644

The “scale” and “historical trend” of trade development are integrated. Therefore, due to the defects in historical materials and methods, previous studies have not been agreed on the characteristics of the development of Sino-Philippines trade history, and there have been many disputes.^① The

newly discovered data on *almojarifazgo* will help solve such problems. It is shown in Figure 1 that following the development trend since the “initial period,” Sino-Philippines trade developed rapidly after 1591, and the trade scale reached the peak of several million pesos per year, entering an unprecedented “golden period” (1591–1615). During the period, the total value of goods in 1612 is as high as 1.58 million pesos, which has become the highest point in the history of Sino-Philippines trade. However, the development also shows ups and downs, even in the above-mentioned “golden period,” there are three violent fluctuations. The first significant decline occurred in 1597, and the trade volume fell from 500,000 pesos to below 230,000 pesos. In the following 15 years, there were two more intense shocks. The trade volume in 1604 and 1611 suddenly fell from the peak of the million pesos to the trough of about 400,000 pesos. However, after each plunge, the scale of Sino-Philippines trade can be quickly restored, and sometimes it can create a record high. Different from the previous ones, it can be seen from Figure 1 that after the “cliff” decline from 1617 to 1618, the Sino-Philippines trade was in a state of sluggishness and fell into a long-term downturn. Although the trade volume once rose back to 720,000 pesos in 1636, it quickly showed a decline tendency and fell below 400,000 pesos. Finally, it was quite bleak in 1644, with a trade volume of less than 200,000 pesos.

The rise and fall of Sino-Philippines trade in the late Ming Dynasty involves many factors. Although these changes are related to the internal changes of Chinese society, they are more direct, mainly due to the changes in the international political situation. The “unusual movement” and “node” presented in this paper are often the result of the fierce competition between great powers and the turning point of various forces. The reasons for this are rather complex and will be discussed separately.