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### ***Portuguese “discovery” and “naming” of the Formosa Island, 1510-1624: A history based on maps, rutters and other documents***

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# Portuguese “discovery” and “naming” of the Formosa Island, 1510-1624: A history based on maps, rutters and other documents

Paul Kua\*

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## Resumo

A lenda de que os marinheiros portugueses do século XVI foram os primeiros europeus a descobrir Taiwan e a chamá-la de Formosa tem uma longa história e é bem conhecida por muitos, embora também seja tipicamente embelezada com detalhes conflitantes. Recentemente, alguns historiadores rejeitaram essa lenda e afirmaram que foi o navegador espanhol Francisco Gali quem deu o nome à ilha em 1584. Este artigo examina roteiros, mapas e outros documentos relevantes, principalmente portugueses, reconstrói a história da “descoberta” e do “batismo” da Formosa, elimina as alegações historicamente errôneas e aproxima-nos de um consenso informado sobre o assunto.

**Palavras-chave:** Era da descoberta, Formosa/Taiwan, roteiros e mapas portugueses, Lopo Homem, Jan Huyghen van Linschoten.

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## Abstract

The legend that Portuguese sailors in the Sixteenth Century were the first Europeans to discover Taiwan and call it Formosa has a long history and is well-known to many, though typically also embellished with conflicting details. Recently, some historians rejected this legend and claim that it was the Spanish navigator Francisco Gali who named the Island in 1584. This paper examines relevant rutters, maps and other documents, mostly Portuguese, reconstructs the history of Formosa’s “discovery” and “naming”, eliminates historically erroneous claims and moves us closer to an informed consensus on the matter.

**Keywords:** Age of Discovery, Formosa/Taiwan, Portuguese rutters & maps, Lopo Homem, Jan Huyghen van Linschoten.

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## Portuguese “discovery” and “naming” of the Formosa Island, 1510-1624: A history based on maps, rutters and other documents

Paul Kua

### Introduction: Conflicting Claims

The largest island off the south-eastern coast of China was “discovered” by the Europeans in the sixteenth century and later “named” Formosa Island, or literally the “beautiful island”. The name Formosa and then its Chinese renditions Fiermosha福爾摩沙 (a transliteration of the word Formosa) or Meilidao美麗島 (literally Beautiful Island)<sup>1</sup> have been adopted from early on and are still commonly accepted today, even though a more recent and sinicised label, Taiwan臺灣<sup>2</sup>, is probably more widely recognised.

It may seem odd to many that an island so close to the Chinese mainland and so densely populated by ethnic Chinese should have such a westernized if idyllic name given by its latter-day European discoverers. The legend of the discovery and naming of Formosa has been well known to generations of people inside and outside the Island, and is usually credited to the Portuguese. It is useful to recap just *some* variants of this legend, taken from recent books, organized into three periods based on their claimed years:

1) *Early (1517)*: “In 1517 Portuguese vessels en route to Japan passed by Taiwan and recorded their sighting as *Ilha Formosa*” (Davison 1998, 7); “In 1517, a Portuguese ship sailing through the Taiwan Strait on the way to Japan sighted Taiwan. In the ship’s log, the captain recorded the words *Ilha Formosa*, meaning ‘beautiful island’”. (Cooper 2015, 9)

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<sup>1</sup> Fiermosha and Meilidao are, respectively, the modern *pinyin* romanisation of the Chinese equivalents of Formosa and Beautiful Island. In this paper, while older romanisation of Chinese names found in the European sources cited will generally be used, for some key names the Chinese characters and their *pinyin* equivalents will also be included.

<sup>2</sup> The history of the adoption of the name Taiwan, based on earlier Chinese nomenclature linked to a part of the island, is beyond our scope. Suffice it to say that it probably came from the name Dawan大灣, literally big bay or “grote baai” in Dutch, the name of a bay on the southwestern coast of the island. It is also known by its homophones in Mandarin or the Fujian dialect as Dayuan大員, Taiyuan台員, etc. The Chinese source *Dongfanji*東番記 (1604) referred to the place as Dayuan大員, but the oral traditions of the name likely went back earlier.

2) *Middle (1544)*: "Taiwan was 'discovered' by the Portuguese active in the western Pacific. [...] At present, this 'discovery' is [...] presumed to be in 1544". (Ito 1993, 10-11)<sup>3</sup>; "In 1544, a Portuguese merchant ship passed the Taiwan strait [...] Sailors on the ship saw a lush green and large island on the side of their route [...] [and] exclaimed: 'Ilha Formosa!' [...] [this] was recorded by the Dutch navigation officer Linschoten on board". (Lin 2005, 31)<sup>4</sup>

3) *Late (1590)*: "Taiwan [...] is [...] 'discovered' by the Portuguese in 1590. They named the tobacco-leaf-shaped island 'Ilha Formosa' or 'Beautiful Island'" (Salter 2004, 8); "The modern history of Taiwan goes back to around 1590, when Jan Huygen van Linschoten, a Dutch navigator, passed by the island on a Portuguese ship and exclaimed 'Ilha Formosa'". (Ho 2007, 241)

There does not seem to be a consensus in these recent books in English, Chinese and Japanese. Though none of these books is a study dedicated to the history of the names of Taiwan, some of their authors hold doctorates and/or are professors, including a few who specialize in Taiwanese history.

Then Jiayin Weng, another Taiwanese historian, challenges all the above claims in one fell swoop, with an article in 2006 (Weng 2006, 4-13), incorporated into a book in 2017, jointly authored by him and Yan Huang (Weng & Huang 2017). As reported in the news, this book concludes that "The island which the Portuguese saw then was probably not Taiwan, but Okinawa" (Radio Taiwan, 2017)<sup>5</sup>, and that "a name resembling Formosa did not become equated with Taiwan until 1584 when the Spanish fleet first sailed past Taiwan and named it 'As Ilhas Fermosas' [...] making the Spanish the first to call Taiwan Fermosas". Weng and Huang further suggest that "Textbooks should be re-written", giving the credit of the naming to the Spanish (Weng & Huang 2017, 40)<sup>6</sup>. This revisionist view is shared by fellow historian Fenmei Luo, who claims that "The foreigners who had sighted Taiwan after the Portuguese were the Spanish. They [...] were the

<sup>3</sup> 台湾は西太平洋で活躍するポルトガル人によって、『発見』された。 [...] 現在のところこの『発見』は [...] つまり一五四四年のことと推定されている」。All English translations are by this author, unless otherwise noted. In this paper, original Japanese, Chinese, Dutch, Latin and *pre-20th century* Portuguese, French, and Spanish texts translated into English in the body text will be included in the footnotes for ease of reference.

<sup>4</sup> 「西元1544年，有一艘葡萄牙商船，在從南中國海經台灣海峽航往日本途中，船上的水手看到一個草木蒼翠的大島 [...] 讚嘆：『Ihla Formosa!』 [...] 被船上的一位荷蘭籍航海官『林士登Linschoteen (sic)』記載下來」。

<sup>5</sup> 「當年葡萄牙人看到的島嶼可能不是台灣，而是沖繩」。

<sup>6</sup> 「教科書理應改寫」。



people who truly named it ‘Formosa’”, citing as supports Weng’s article and the Chinese edition of Martino Martini’s *Novus Atlas Sinensis* (Luo 2013, 19, 34)<sup>7</sup>.

This new finding has apparently also influenced official narratives of Taiwan. The chronology in the official yearbooks issued by the Taiwanese government in the early 2000s typically note that “1544: The Portuguese sailing to Japan spot Taiwan and refer to it as ‘Ilha Formosa’ (beautiful island)” (Government Information Office 2002, 51). But the most recent yearbook issued in 2019 makes a more cautious and generalized claim, suggesting an impressive responsiveness to latest academic findings: “1500s: It is commonly believed that European sailors passing Taiwan record the island’s name as Ilha Formosa, or beautiful island” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2019, 16). Pretty soon if not already, one imagines, secondary school textbooks will follow, and remove any reference to the Portuguese exclamation “Ilha Formosa!”.

While some of these claims about the origins of the name “Formosa” may indeed be based on some earlier or even “primary” sources which historians revered, they obviously cannot all be true, if any is. This paper attempts to re-construct the history of Formosa’s “discovery” (defined as knowing or sighting) and “naming” by the first Europeans, as opposed to, say, the aborigines, the Chinese or other Asians. It will identify and revisit relevant primary documents and maps created by the Europeans (particularly the Portuguese), assess their relative qualitative value vis-à-vis our investigation, and examine them in the contexts of the above claims. It hopes to, if not determine conclusively on the matter, at least narrow the range of possibilities, and move us closer to an informed consensus on it. In this paper, the terms Taiwan and Formosa will be used interchangeably to refer to the main island of Taiwan, regardless of when these names have become generally accepted.

First, a few words on physical location and dimension measurements, as these would become useful later in the paper. Taiwan’s coordinates are defined as “23.6978° N, 120.9605° E”, which is approximately the centre of the Island. But it is a large and elongated island, with location measurements ranging from 21.89° N to 25.30° N, and from 120.04° E to 122.00° E. It is often said to be one of the largest islands in the world. In fact, even excluding the large continents Afro-Eurasia, the Americas,

<sup>7</sup> 「繼葡萄牙人之後看見臺灣的老外是西班牙人，他們[.....] 且是『福爾摩沙』的真正命名者」。

Antarctica and Australia, it ranks only no. 39, with 34,507 km<sup>2</sup> (length, 394 km; width, 144 km). Still, it is larger than many islands, including Sicily and Hawaii. Amongst the islands off the coast of the Chinese mainland, Formosa is indeed the largest, with Hainan, a close second, at 33,210 km<sup>2</sup>, and Chongming, a distant third, at 1,267 km<sup>2</sup> (Wikipedia, "List of islands", n.d.).

### Learning about Formosa, the 1510s

If "discovery" is defined as "knowing of/learning about" (however imperfectly), we can safely conclude that Portuguese explorers were first amongst the Europeans to "discover" Taiwan. Of course, the Island was known to the Chinese and some other Asians long before, and was possibly described in the *Sui-shu* 隋書, official history of the Sui Dynasty (581-618AD) (Hsu 1980, 5), though only as what the Chinese had called Liuqiu 琉球. The name Liuqiu, rendered in Western sources as Liu-kiu, Lieou-k'ieou, Liqueo(s), Lequeo(s), Lequio(s), Llequeo(s), Lequia(s), etc, was for centuries a source of confusion. Firstly, it could refer to present day Taiwan or the Ryukyu Islands, or both. Secondly, when distinguished between Greater and Lesser Liuqiu in early Chinese sources, the latter referred to the much larger Taiwan, while the former the tiny Ryukyu (Okinawa, its largest island, has an area of 1,200 km<sup>2</sup>), i.e., the exact opposite of their relative sizes, possibly because "the 'Great' Lieou-k'ieou was the one which recognize[d] Chinese suzerainty" (Kammerer 1944, 27). Thirdly, as many European sources followed this illogical Chinese nomenclature and labelled Taiwan Lesser Liuqiu, some cartographers would be misled, and would represent Ryukyu or Greater Liuqiu as bigger than Taiwan<sup>8</sup>.

Portuguese knowledge of the location and magnitude of Taiwan was far from perfect initially. In fact, at that time, even the Chinese, who ought to be better informed due to their proximity, had limited understanding. The world map in the encyclopaedic work *Sancai tuhui* 三才圖會 (1609) shows three similar-sized round islands from south to north off the east coast of China, marked as Liuqiu; then another further north east, just slightly bigger, marked as Japan, all clearly inaccurate representations of the many islands in that region.

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<sup>8</sup> As was the case with the maps drawn by Velho and Georgio, included here as Fig. 2 and 4 below.

Dom Manuel I, King of Portugal from 1495, ruled when his Empire was at its peak, thanks to the control of both Brazil and the eastern trade, making him “the richest king in Christendom” in his time (Pinto & Catz 1989, xxi). He appointed Francisco de Almeida as the first governor of Portuguese India in 1505, and sent a fleet to Malacca to open a trading post in 1509. This latter effort failed when the Sultan ambushed Portuguese ships which then withdrew, leaving twenty Portuguese imprisoned, among them Rui de Araújo, the appointed factor.

In the meantime, Afonso de Albuquerque became governor from November 1509. Araújo, in a letter on 6 February 1510, provided him intelligence about Malacca, noting that “the Gores who come here in January” brought “gold pieces” (Ramos-Coelho 1892, 223)<sup>9</sup>. Then “Gores” was identified by some with Liuqiu, which included Taiwan. Hence, one could argue that the Portuguese had learned of Formosa as early as in 1510. But it should be emphasized that this was possibly a mis-identification. C. R. Boxer thought that the Gores who were in Malacca were likely Japanese traders; others conjectured that they might have been Koreans who had taken refuge in the Liuqiu (Boxer 1936, 14; Cortesão 1944, 128). If the Gores were not natives of Liuqiu/Taiwan, then the Portuguese would have been misinformed about Formosa at best, as we shall see was indeed the case.

Albuquerque’s ships arrived in Malacca on 1 July 1511 and took it with clever manoeuvres by end of August despite advantage in number on the Sultan’s side. He then sacked the city and fortified it. In a letter dated 1 April 1512 to Dom Manuel, he mentioned the capture of “a big map of a pilot from Java” which he had his cartographer Francisco Rodrigues traced so that “your highness can truly see from where the Chins and the Gores come [...] and where the gold mines are” (Pato 1884, 64)<sup>10</sup> (In fact, neither Formosa nor Ryukyu has significant gold deposits, but the Portuguese only learned this fact years later).

The first captain of Malacca sent Jorge Álvares in 1513 to southern China for trade, making him the Portuguese who had “raised in China the first standard of the King of Portugal” (Keil 1933, 7)<sup>11</sup>, likely only on an island near Canton (or Guangzhou, the capital city of the Southern Chinese province of Guangdong), possibly Tamão. He was followed by the Italian Rafael Perestrello who reached Canton in 1515 and returned months later with a

<sup>9</sup> “Os Gores vem aquy em Janeiro”, “ouro em pasta”.

<sup>10</sup> “[...] ua grande carta d um piloto de jaoa”, “[...] voss alteza poderá ver verdadeiramente os chins domde vem e os gores [...] e as minas do ouro omde sam”.

<sup>11</sup> “[...] levantando na China o primeiro padrão do Rei de Portugal”.

promising report. Tomé Pires' *Suma Oriental* (1512-1515) has a section on "Lequeos" or "Guores", whose "island is large" and "[i]n China they trade in the port of Foqem [Fujian, a coastal province north east of Guangdong]" (Cortesão 1944, vol. 1, 129), though much of the description relied on hearsay and mixed up between Taiwan and Ryukyu. Rodrigues' manuscript maps (1512) include a sketch of an elongated island, running south-north, with this inscription: "This is the principal Island of the Lequeos. They say that there are wheat and copper works on it" (Cortesão 1978, 466)<sup>12</sup>. Armando Cortesão rightly concludes that this "must represent Formosa", though Rodrigues did not use that name (Cortesão 1978, caption for plate XXXV, after 370)<sup>13</sup>. The map even shows small islands on the southwest coast, perhaps corresponding to the Pescadores or the Penghu澎湖 Islands.

Fernão Peres d'Andrade, Pires and Jorge Mascarenhas departed from Malacca in June 1517 with a letter from Dom Manuel for the King of China. They arrived in Tamão in August, and reached Canton by September, where Pires, the designated Ambassador to China, and his mission went ashore to await permission to travel to Beijing. Gaspar Correia's voluminous *Lendas da Índia* devotes a chapter to Andrade's trip. Two points are relevant: Firstly, while there, Andrade "learned that[...] there was another land called Lequia, in which there was a lot of gold, silver and silk" and sent Mascarenhas to Chincheo (in Fujian) to learn more. Secondly, Andrade was in Canton "fourteen months, taking a lot of information [...] left in September of 1518" and returned to Malacca by November (Correia (Correia) 1861, tomo 2, parte 2, 529)<sup>14</sup>; while Pires waited in Canton<sup>15</sup>. In his *Secunda Decada*, João de Barros confirms that Mascarenhas did not go to Taiwan from Fujian:

And because Jorge Mascarenhas was a bit too late to cross from there to the Lequios Islands, which would be to the east a voyage of a hundred or so leagues, the first of which is in twenty-five and half degrees North [...]; Having consulted with the Chinese pilots he was taking, he did not leave

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<sup>12</sup> "Esta he a principal Ilha dos Llequeos / dizem que há nella trigo e obra de cobre".

<sup>13</sup> "[...] deve representar a Formosa".

<sup>14</sup> "Estando Fernão Peres [...] soube que além de Cantão avia outra terra chamada Lequia, em que avia muyto ouro, e prata, e seda [...]"; "Fernão Peres esteve na terra catorze mezes, tomando muyto enformação de todolas cousas, e se partio em setembro do anno de 518."

<sup>15</sup> Pires never got a formal audience with Emperor Zhengde (1491-1521) in Peking, though historians disagree as to whether they had met informally in Nanking, where the emperor was touring. The ambassador was later imprisoned and died in China years after.

there, and found himself trading (in Chincheo) with double the advantage of what was done in Canton. (Barros 1945, *Segunda década*, 104)<sup>16</sup>

The latitude of 25½° is accurate for northern Taiwan. The distance of a hundred nautical leagues is not exaggerated, if the pilots were estimating the whole journey to all the Liuqiu islands further north, not just Taiwan.

To conclude, while the Portuguese knew about Taiwan in as early as 1510 as noted in the letter from Araújo to Albuquerque, they did not visit the Island in 1517 or 1518, although Mascarenhas was asked to do so by Andrade.

### **First sightings of Formosa, 1542/1543**

First sightings of Taiwan were to take place decades after the Portuguese had learned of its existence. After 1518, the Portuguese had continued to cultivate trade with China through Canton. They suffered a setback in 1522, when Martím Afonso de Melo Coutinho tried “to build a fortress and establish peace” (Barros 1946, *Terceira década*, 426)<sup>17</sup> on Tamão, which led to an attack by the Chinese and the capture (and later execution) of forty-plus Portuguese, forcing Coutinho to retreat to Malacca in October. Some Portuguese then set up a post further north, which “by 1530 at the latest”, they named “Ilhas de Liampo” (Kammerer 1944, 71). Barros conjectured that Liampo was but “a corrupted name by our people of the city of Ningbo” (Barros 1946, *Terceira década*, 90)<sup>18</sup>, for the Portuguese had probably settled in an uninhabited island outside this city in Zhejiang (another coastal province northeast of Fujian), until the post disappeared, being replaced by Macao.

There are two “competing” records of the “first” trip to Japan by the Portuguese in 1542, both linked to Liampo. First, there is the fascinating if controversial account in *Peregrinação* by Fernão Mendes Pinto. As with Marco Polo, the truthfulness of Pinto’s accounts has often been challenged.

<sup>16</sup> “E porque Jorge Mascarenhas foi um pouco tarde, pera atravessar dali às ilhas dos léquios, que serão contra o Oriente obra de cento e tantas léguas, a primeira das quais está em vinte e cinco graus e meio do Norte [...]; havendo conselho com os pilotos chins que levava, não partiu dali, e leixou-se estar fazendo seu comércio com dobrado proveito do que se fez em Cantão”. Note Barros’ first three *Décadas da Ásia* were first published in 1552, 1553 and 1563, respectively; the 1945-1946 edited version for all three is used here.

<sup>17</sup> “[...] Coutinho foi a China pera fazer ua fortalieza e assentar paz”.

<sup>18</sup> “[...] a cidade Nimpó, a que os nossos corruptamente chamam Liampó”.

In reading this source, soon rendered into Spanish, German, Dutch and English and was for years popular in Europe, one should be reminded that its many amazing tales contain conflicting details and obvious discrepancies. This mistrust of Pinto was so prevalent that a character in William Congreve's comedy *Love for Love* (1695) declared: "Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee, thou liar of the first magnitude" (Congreve 1999, 39). On the other hand, there are learned scholars who vouched for him, including Richard Henry Major, the British geographer, curator of the maps of the British Library and secretary of the Hakluyt Society, who declares that Pinto "has by this time (mid-nineteenth century) recovered much of his forfeited reputation, and [...] some of his most remarkable statements have been confirmed by more recent explorations" (Mendoza 1853, xxxvii).

Pinto's adventure in 1542 has many twists and turns, we will only mention a few. He and two other Portuguese started from Canton (on board a pirate ship!) and headed north for Liampo, then a fierce tempest forced them "to set sail towards the Island of the Lequois where this pirate was very well known by the king and other people of the land" (Pinto 1614, 158)<sup>19</sup>. But the winds and tides were against them, so they drifted for over twenty days and ended up in southern Japan.

They had a warm reception there and left with handsome profits for Liampo. Months after, a large Portuguese fleet was organized for Japan in the hope of even more profits. But they shipwrecked on "Gotom, which is at 38°", with seven of the nine junks, valuable merchandise and six hundred persons lost. Pinto claims that "the two junks which escaped miraculously continued [...] as far as the Lequios Islands" (Pinto 1614, 166v)<sup>20</sup>. Yet another storm took one junk and more lives, and the twenty-plus "who escaped this miserable shipwreck" "knew when it was daytime that [they] were on the Greater Lequio, seeing the Fogo Island and the Taydacão Mountain" (Pinto 1614, 167r)<sup>21</sup>. They went ashore, were discovered, surrounded, captured, imprisoned, faced trial by the "king", questioned for two months, sentenced to death, pardoned, stayed free for forty-five days,

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<sup>19</sup> "[...] nos foy forçado arribarmos em popa â ilha dos Lequios onde este cossayro era muyto conhecido, assi do Rey como da outra gente da terra".

<sup>20</sup> "Os dous juncos que escapamos milagrosamente, seguimos por nossa derrota [...] até tanto avante como á ilha dos Lequios".

<sup>21</sup> "Os poucos que escapamos deste miseravel naufrágio, que naó forão mais que vinte & quatro [...] tanto que a menham soy clara conhecemos que a terra em q estamos era do Lequio grande, perlas mostras da ilha do fogo & a serra de Taydacão [...]".



and finally departed on a Chinese junk for Liampoo. Pinto describes the island as follows:

This Lequia [sic] Island is situated on 29°, has a circumference of 200 leagues, is 60 leagues in length and 30 in width. The land is almost like that of Japan, in parts very mountainous, but the interior of the hinterland is flatter and more fertile, and many fields watered by twelve rivers, with abundance and provisions, mainly of wheat and rice. (Pinto 1614, 173r)<sup>22</sup>

The exact location of the shipwreck (if it did take place) has been debated over the years. Pinto said it was on Greater Liuqiu and that there was a “king”. These would point to Okinawa, the seat of the Ryukyu kingdom. But other details point to Taiwan. Formosa was known as a pirate’s hideout in those days. A length of 60 leagues and a width of 30 equal 289 km and 145 km, much closer to Taiwan’s measurements than those of Okinawa (112 km, 11 km). Taiwan is mountainous, with its three highest peaks all over 3,800 m; while the highest peak in Okinawa, Mount Yonaha, is only 525 m. The latitude of 29° does not make sense, as it would place this shipwreck north of both Taiwan and Okinawa.

The second account of the first Portuguese visit to Japan is noted in the *Tratado* by António Galvão, a soldier and chronicler who was in India from 1527 to 1540:

In the year of (1)542 one Diogo de Freitas was captain of a ship in the realm of Siam... Three Portuguese, named Antonio da Mota, Francisco Zeimoto, & Antonio Pexoto, fled (from him) in a junk to China. They took the route to the port in the city of Liampo [...] There was such a storm on their stern that they were separated from the land, & in a few days they saw an island to the east [...] which they call Japan. (Galvão 1563, 75r-76v)<sup>23</sup>

This story shares a few features with Pinto’s: both took place in 1542, involved three Portuguese, who journeyed from south to north, encountered a storm and ended up in Japan. Note Pinto was not one of the three

<sup>22</sup> “Esta ilha Lequia jaz situada em vinte & nove grãos, tem duzentas legoas em roda, sessenta de cõprido, & trinta de largo. A terra em sy he quasi do teor do Iapaõ, algum tanto em partes montanhosa, mas no interior do sertão he mais plana, & fertil, & viciosa de muytos campos regados de rios dagoa doze, com infinidade e mantimentos, principalmente de trigo & arroz”.

<sup>23</sup> “No anno de 542 achandose Diogo de Freytas no Reyno de Syam [...] a capitam de hu navio, lhe fogiram tres Portugueses ses em hu junco q hia pera a China, chamauase Antonio da mota, Francisco meimoto, & Antonio pexoto. Hindo se caminho pa tomar porto na cidade de Liampo [...] lhe deu tal tormenta aa popa, q os apartou da terra, & em poucos dias ao Leuãte viram hua ylha [...] a q chamam os Iapoes [...]”.

named here. Albert Kammerer rightly asserts that “one cannot go from the coast of Fujian to the Liuqiu without recognizing the northern tip of Taiwan Island, which forms a screen and forces a diversion”; and asks “are we not entitled to conclude that they (the Portuguese) already considered Formosa one of the Liuqiu (islands) and the most important, to which they gave the name of Grande Lequeo” (Kammerer 1944, 22)? In other words, was Pinto’s second shipwreck on Taiwan, though he called it “Lequio grande”? Or, if this were only a tall tale weaved together by Pinto, did the Portuguese who fled Siam and drifted to Japan at least sighted Taiwan, though they did not land on it? If one of the above is true, then there is written record of the “discovery” (first sighting) of Formosa by the Portuguese in 1542, though, it must be emphasized, these tales do not mention anything about “naming” it.

Japanese source *Teppōki* 鉄炮記 (1606) by Nanpo Bunshi confirms the arrival of a Portuguese ship in Tanegashima off southern Kyushu on 23 September 1543. The two Portuguese on board and the firearm they carried were objects of curiosity, ensuring them an entry in the local chronicle. George Schurhammer concludes that “Japan was discovered by the Portuguese in 1543”, relying largely on the account in *Teppōki* and also Francisco Xavier’s letters in 1552, stating that the discovery was made “eight or nine years before” (Schurhammer 1946, 118)<sup>24</sup>. There appears to be no Japanese source on an earlier arrival in 1542, but some believe, and this author concurs, that “there could have been one junk visiting Tanegashima in 1542 just for commerce, a junk that was not recorded even though there could have been (three) Portuguese on board” (Lidin 2002, 19)<sup>25</sup>. After all, Xavier’s letters mentioned only an approximate and not a definite date before his arrival, and did not provide any details.

At any rate, many other Portuguese followed soon after and traded at the port of Kagoshima in Kyushu, including Alvaro Vas and (a different) Jorge Álvares. They had both met the Japanese Anjirō (弥次郎, アンジロー, “Paulo Iapão”) there in 1546. Álvares took Anjirō to Malacca in 1547, and Francisco Xavier (in Asia since 1542) baptized him in Goa in 1548 (Higashibaba 2001, 4-8). Xavier and several Jesuits (with Anjirō as interpreter) arrived in Kagoshima in August 1549. A letter dated 5 November

<sup>24</sup> “O Japão foi descoberto pelos Portugueses em 1543. Deduz-se claramente dos nossos textos”, “Francisco Xavier escreve, em Janeiro e Abril de 1552, que o Japão fora, oito ou nove anos antes, descoberto pelos Portugueses”.

<sup>25</sup> This conjecture is attributed to Tokoro Sokichi 所莊吉, the author of *Hinawajū* 火繩銃 (Tokyo: Yuzankaku, 1964).



1549 from him speaks of being in “the kingdom of Japan to add to our Holy Faith”<sup>26</sup>. Xavier stayed for two and a half years, had some success in converting Japanese, and returned to Southeast Asia by July 1552<sup>27</sup>. Pinto became a Jesuit in 1554, “returned” to Japan in 1556 with Melchior Nunes Barreto (Catz 1988, 62), though he left the Society in 1557 and went back to Portugal in 1558.

In other words, three near-primary sources support the claim that the Portuguese had discovered Taiwan in 1542 or, at the latest, 1543—some Portuguese sailors would have sighted if not landed on (albeit involuntarily, due to a shipwreck) Taiwan in those two years, as they sailed from China to Japan.

### **Naming of Formosa, the early 1550s**

This lengthier section on the history of the naming of Formosa draws on some important sailing records and maps, interspersed with a few other documents, and examines them generally in their chronological order.

We will first deal with several early Portuguese “roteiros”, hailed by Abel Fontoura da Costa as “a national monument which no other nation possesses” (Costa 1939, 407), deemed most helpful in our present investigation. Dutch Catholic Jan Huyghen van Linschoten (hereafter “Linschoten”, instead of the more formally correct “van Linschoten”), secretary of the Portuguese archbishop of Goa from 1583 to 1588, had accumulated many secret documents on navigation in Asia before he returned to Holland in 1592. His works published a few years later are said to have “hastened the decline of the Portuguese and therefore diminished Spanish influence and profits as well” (Koeman 1985, 30). Most relevant for our purpose is his *Reys-gheschrift*, first issued in Dutch in 1595, consisting of sixty-seven “roteiros” or rutters, which provide detailed journey descriptions essential for negotiating the various sea routes and sailing to different ports in Africa and Asia. Fontoura observes that “the originals of the entire collection were lost” and only a few copies are still known to exist (Costa 1939, 329)<sup>28</sup>, so it is most fortunate for us that

<sup>26</sup> “[...] reyno de Iapon para acrecentar nossa santa fe[...].” (Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, “Carta” 1549).

<sup>27</sup> Xavier tried to enter the mainland of China in August 1552, but sadly died on Shangchuan Island in December, literally at the Empire’s doorstep.

<sup>28</sup> “Perderam-se os originaes de tôda a collecção. Das cópias, só se conhecem a do Roteiro de Diogo Afonso [...] e as do Livro de Marinharia [...]”.

these rutters were preserved by the meticulous Linschoten in one place, and even made available in print in several European languages.

In short, as shall be seen, five of the rutters cover voyages from Guangdong to Japan, two of which identify Taiwan as "Lequeo pequeno", and the other three as "Fermosa". Boxer suggests that this was because "the distinction between the Ryukyu Islands and Formosa was not always clear to the early navigators" (Boxer 1951, 130). But these rutters are important primary sources so it would be useful if we could date them and examine how they refer to Taiwan. It will be shown that it is likely that the name "Fermosa" simply gained increasing acceptance over time, and gradually replaced "Lequeo pequeno" in the later rutters. We will look at these five rutters in the order of their estimated dates, not in the order of their chapter number, citing mostly from the English translation, and referring to the Dutch original when needed.

Chapter 33 is the records of "[a] voyage made by a Portingale Pilote (with a Soma, that is a Chinish Shippe)", and starts with this opening statement:

The nineteenth of June béeing Saturday, we departed from the Island called *A Ilha das Outeas*, (lying on the west side of the issue or chanel of Macau) running outward to sea, putting out at the place where the ships of Malacca doe diually enter. (Linschoten 1598, 385)

As the voyage started from an island the Portuguese called *A Ilha das Outeas* instead of Macau, we know it took place between 1543, when Portuguese trade with Japan had started, and 1557, when Macau was established as the base. Furthermore, the phrase "The nineteenth of June béeing Saturday" is most helpful here, for on the Julian calendar (the Gregorian calendar was only introduced in 1582), this date only occurred three times in these decades, namely in 1540, 1546 and 1557 (Academia Sinica, "Calendar Converter"). As 1540 would clearly be too early, and 1557 too late, 1546 appears to be the correct year for this rutter. The relevant excerpt is as follows:

[...] from thence forwarde wée sawe no more of the coast of China, and running in that course of Northeast [...] wée perceived the Island of Lequeo Pequeno [...] This Island of Lequeo Pequeno stretcheth Northeast and Southwest [...] the furthest point or end northeastward of the same Island lyeth full under 29. Degrees ½. (Linschoten 1598, 386)

At first sight, it might seem that Taiwan was not being described, as the latitude of 29 degrees would be further north. But, upon further investigation, we will learn that this was clearly a printing error in the English edition, for the original Dutch edition says: “the Island Lesser Lequeo lies at 25 ½ degrees (Dit Eylandt Lequeo pequeno [...] is gheleghen op 25 ½ graden ruijin)” (Linschoten 1595, 81), the correct latitude for the northern tip of Taiwan. At any rate, this rutter dated 1546 did not mention “Fermosa” at all, but used Lesser Lequeo, the Chinese term then commonly used for Taiwan, suggesting that, as of 1546, the name Formosa had not yet emerged.

We know a bit more about this visit in 1546 from the first Japanese who converted to Catholicism later, Anjirō, mentioned earlier. In a letter dated 1548, he noted that he, then in trouble with the law for he had committed murder, asked for help from Jorge Alvarez, the captain of one of the two Portuguese ships which visited Kagoshima that year, who “took me with him [...] bringing me in his ship, to give me to Father Francisco (Xavier), of whom he is a great friend” (Anjirō 1598, tomo 1, fls. 2v-3v)<sup>29</sup>. As already noted, Xavier later baptized Anjirō, who then returned to Japan with Xavier as his interpreter in 1549 to start the missionary work in Japan.

Chapter 32 describes a journey from Lampacau to Hirado, with no date of any sort given. But as the journey started from Lampacau, an earlier base for the Portuguese in Southern China, we could again place it between 1543 and 1557. Furthermore, depending on sources, we know that Hirado was first visited by the Portuguese in either 1549 (18<sup>th</sup> Year of the reign of Tembun) (Sadakaze 1902, 2)<sup>30</sup> or 1550 (19<sup>th</sup> Year of Tembun) (Schurhammer 1946, 114). As rutters were usually recorded during the first years of a new route, our “educated guess” would be that this was likely dated 1550 or shortly after. This rutter records passing by “Lequeo pequeno”, identified as a “very high and long island” which was “lying under five and twenty degrees” (Linschoten 1598, 381). This clearly refers to the northern tip of the main island of Taiwan, where the ship sailing from South China to Japan would pass by and need to adjust direction. In other words, as of around 1550, Taiwan was still referred to as Lequeo pequeno, and not yet as Formosa.

<sup>29</sup> “[...] Jorge Alvarez me trouxe consigo, & me fêz muito gasalhado, trazendo-me na sua nao, para me entregar ao meu Padre Mestre Francisco, de quem hé grande amigo”.

<sup>30</sup> 「抑て平戸港に歐洲の貿易開けしは、後奈良天皇の御代天文十八年に始まん[.....]」

The earliest cartographic evidence of Portuguese “naming” of Formosa that is known today is a hand-drawn map by Lopo Homem, the “Master of our (Portugal’s) marine maps” who could “correct all marine needles” in Dom Manuel’s time (Viterbo 1893/1894, 542)<sup>31</sup>. This important map did not go unnoticed among historians in Taiwan, starting with a classic study by Yong-he Chao (Chao 1962). Homem’s map dated 1554 shows a sizeable island off the east coast of China and north of the Tropic of Cancer, not elongated but shaped like an amoeba, labelled “I. Fremosa”. Though the shape was inaccurate, the location is correct at least in terms of the northern part of Taiwan.



1 Detail of Manuscript Map by Diogo Homem, 1558, similar to that by Lopo Homem, 1554, identifying “I. Formosa”. The British Library, London, “The coasts of Asia eastward of the Indus, with the islands of the Indian Archipelago”. © British Library Board, MS. 5415.A, fl. 18r (Permission to use granted in 2021).

A similar map of Asia drawn in 1558 by Lopo Homem’s son Diogo (Fig. 1) shows a chain of islands linking China’s east coast to Japan in a north-easterly direction. Diogo had left his homeland for England, seeking “refuge from a charge of murder” (not unlike Anjirō!), and this map was presented “probably to Queen Mary” (Wallis 1981, 464). Again, at the southern tip is a large island nearest to China, north of the Tropic,

<sup>31</sup> “Lopo Homen, mestre de nossas cartas de marear, faça e coregua (corrija) todas as agulhas de marear [...]”. The Portuguese already knew about magnetic declinations in the early 1500.

labelled “I. Formosa”. Northeast of this are small islands marked “I. dos regis mago”, “I. dos legos”, “Leguiosa”, etc. This representation of Formosa in both Homem maps was likely based on a written “roteiro” (used by the older Homem and presumably made available to his son later possibly through a letter) which would typically just describe the coast lines and relative positions of northern Taiwan as a key landmark during the voyage. Incidentally, it also shows a bay after one passes the northern tip of Formosa, possibly corresponding to the Keelung bay.

Note the difference in spelling for the name for Taiwan in the two Homem maps. The old Portuguese words “fermosa” and “fremosa” (meaning “beautiful” or “fair”) were used interchangeably then, according to two authoritative dictionaries by the learned Hieronymum Cardosum, dated 1570 and 1694, respectively (Cardosum 1570, 1694)<sup>32</sup>, though the former seemed more prevalent; until the word evolved later, and became “Formosa” (Vieyra & Aillaud 1813; Valdez 1875)<sup>33</sup>. The Spanish, when they entered the picture, tended to use the Spanish equivalent, “hermosa”. The Dutch did not attempt to translate it and used “formosa”. As an aside, it should also be noted that the Portuguese did have a track record of naming places they discovered “beautiful”, including another “Ilha Formosa” in Africa and a “Rio Fremosso” in Malacca (Barros 1945, *Primeira década*, liv. 2, 73; Cortesão 1944, vol. 2, 243, 262).

Like the first Portuguese who went to Japan in 1542 or 1543, Portuguese traders travelling from China to Japan would have seen the northern tip of Taiwan routinely and could have exclaimed “Ilha Formosa!” But no document supporting the “naming” on a certain date has been identified, suggesting room for future research. Perhaps there was not even a single event, and that the Island (or the northern part sighted) was marvelled at enough times that “Formosa” gained acceptance and replaced the Chinese name Liuqiu. But, given that ship logs and reports from Asia took time to get to Europe, and the Homem maps were also time-consuming to make, it could be safely assumed that the “naming” of Formosa took place in the early 1550s, after the rutters of 1546 and around 1550, already discussed above, and before the completion of the first Homem map in 1554.

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<sup>32</sup> In these two dictionaries, the Latin-Portuguese portion defines “pulcher” as “(cousa) fermosa”, or “beautiful (thing)” (adjective); and the Portuguese-Latin portion defines “fremosa cousa” (different spelling) as “pulcher/formosus”.

<sup>33</sup> In the 1813 dictionary, “fermoso, or formoso” are both defined as “beautiful, handsome”; in the 1875 edition, only the words “formoso/formosa” are left.



A map by the Portuguese Bartolomeu Velho dated 1561 (**Fig. 2**) shows, from south to north, “lequeo pequeno”, then “i. fermosa”, both small islands, then “lequeo grande”, somewhat larger (Kammerer 1944, 22)—in other words, inaccurate as to relative sizes of the islands, but correct again in terms of location of at least northern Taiwan, with the southern part of it perceived mistakenly as a separate island known still by its Chinese name. But the portolan of Lâzaro Luiz of 1563 shows just north of the Tropic a larger island, corresponding to Taiwan, but without a name, a second island up north of similar size, marked “lequeo pequeno”, then “dos reis magos”, etc (Kammerer 1944, 22), suggesting that even among the Portuguese, the name of “Fermosa” had yet to be universally accepted or was used interchangeably with the name Liuqiu.



2 Manuscript Map by Bartolomeu Velho, 1561, identifying “i. fermosa” and “lequeo pequeno”. Museo Galileo, Firenze, “Velho’s map of Asia, cir. 1561”, Carte nautiche: Asia: fotografia (Record nr. 33506) di Velho (Permission to use granted in 2021, note this detail image of the map is somewhat blurred as provided by the source).

We must now return to another Portuguese rutter preserved by Linschoten as Chapter 34 of his book. This rutter, again, does not have a definite year. But the facts that the recorded journey started “from the haven of Macau”, and did not visit Nagasaki allow us to place it between 1557 and 1571, for “from this year of 1571, Nagasaki became the recognised terminal port in Japan for the Great Ship from Macao” (Boxer 1963, 35). This is still a rather big range of years. Fortunately, further research enables us to narrow down the time. Ōmura Sumitada, the first Japanese Daimyo to accept Catholicism, had invited the Jesuits to settle in Yokoseura and

built a church there, and the Portuguese ships visited this port in 1562 and 1563. But sadly, in 1563, the port of Yokoseura was destroyed by jealous merchants and anti-Christian groups in Japan, making it unsuitable for use thereafter (Boxer 1963, 27-29). Regarding the final approach to the harbour, this rutter instructs the navigator to “holde your course on the right hand, whereby you shall presently see a round Island, hauing a Crosse on the toppe thereof [...]” (Linschoten 1598, 389). Léon Bourdon rightly concludes that the port was Yokoseura, as the above description fits that given by Luís de Almeida in a letter dated October 25 1562 of this harbour “almost point by point”, and hence dates this rutter between the two years of 1562 and 1563, “more probably in the first” (Moura 1972, 163).

This rutter, unlike the two earlier ones already discussed here, first mentions Formosa. It indicates that holding the course east-northeast away from the Chinese coast, one shall eventually

[...] find on the Stearebord side is the end or point of the Island Lequeo Pequino [...] and the beginning of the Island called Ilha Fermosa, that is, the faire Island, and on the larebord side. (Linschoten 1598, 388-389)

This description may seem confusing at first but would make sense if seen in the context of maps such as that by Velho in 1561, which show Taiwan as two parallel islands, “Lequeo Pequino” on the south, which would appear on the starboard (right) side of the ship, and “Fermosa” on the north, which would be on the port (left) side, when the ship sailed across the Taiwan Strait in a North-eastern direction. In the original Dutch edition, Linschoten adds the phrase “that is: the Beautiful Island (dat is: tschoone Eylandt)” right after the words “Ilha Fermosa” (Linschoten 1595, 83), this is likely one of the earliest mentions in Dutch of Taiwan using this name, hence contributing to popularizing the Portuguese name among the Dutch.

Among the letters published by the Jesuits is one dated 1564 which “an honourable Portuguese gentleman” wrote from Japan to Francisco Perez in China, describing his journey from China to Japan:

We left for Japan on the sixth day of the month of July in the year 1564 & the day that we left the port [...] we slept between the islands that are close to Macao, & from there to Chincheo, or so on we stayed for five days,

where (when) we were running to (past) Ilha Fermosa, & the Lesser Liqueio ["Carta que [...]"] 1598, 150v-152v].<sup>34</sup>

This "honourable Portuguese gentleman" mentions only several key intermediate points along the way, namely, Macao, Chincheo, Formosa and Lesser Liuqiu. It is significant that the name "Ilha Fermosa" is simply noted in the letter as if it were a place well-known to both the writer and the recipient of the letter, needing no further elaboration. This document supports the theory that, by the early 1560s, this name for Taiwan (or just its northern portion) was generally known among the Portuguese in China and Japan, if not outside.

Fernão Vaz Dourado, a soldier and cartographer born and trained in India, drew some beautifully illuminated atlases based on sources from the "frontier of these parts". The first two, done in 1568 and 1571 in Goa for the viceroy of India and the captain of Malacca, cover "all the kingdoms, lands, islands, which are in the vicinity of the territory, with their routes and latitudes [...]" (Raczynski 1847, 73)<sup>35</sup>. These maps show Taiwan as three parallel islands forming an elongated group straddling the Tropic from 25° to 22°, only with the name "Llequio pequeno"<sup>36</sup>. While "Fermosa" does not appear, Taiwan's true dimension is better reflected here, though as three islands and not one, possibly because the wide river mouths on the coasts gave the impression from the ships that there were separate islands.

The monumental atlas *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, first issued in Holland by Abraham Ortelius in 1570, contains then the best *printed* maps outside Portugal. The texts for the map of "India" explains that "there are many contiguous islands here in its sprawling ocean", so much so that "one might say that it is a world of islands" (Ortelius 1570, 48)<sup>37</sup>. The relevant section of the map shows a chain of islands in a southwest-northeast direction, linking China to Japan. At the south end is "Lequiho pequinho" (midway between the 30 and the 20 degree lines marked), north of this are

<sup>34</sup> "Partimos pera Iapão a seis dias do mês de Julho de 1564 annos & o dia que partimos do porto [...] dormimos entre as ilhas que estão perto de Amacao, & dali ate o Chincheo, ou tanto avante posemos cinco dias, a onde indo nos correndo a Ilha Fermosa, & o Liqueio pequeno [...]"

<sup>35</sup> "Mappamundo que fez Fernão Vas Dourado fronteiro n'estas partes, que trata do todoes os reinos, terras. Ilhas, que ha na redondeza da terra com suas derrotas e alturas per esquadria. Em Goa, 1571". The frontispiece of the 1571 map is now lost.

<sup>36</sup> Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Coleção Cartográfica, 165, Atlas de Fernão Vaz Dourado (1571).

<sup>37</sup> "Multae illi contiguae sunt Insulae hinc inde in suo Oceano sparsae, adeò ut meritò Orbem Insularum dicere quis posset".



“Reis magos”, “I. Formosa” (close to the 30 degree line), then “Lequiho grande”, etc., then Japan (Fig. 3). In other words, “Formosa” is clearly but *mistakenly* identified as a small island north of “Reis magos”, at around 29 degrees; while Taiwan is correctly marked at 25 degrees, as Lesser Liuquiu. Similar misplacement of “I. Formosa” appears in the map of India in the 1573 edition. It should be emphasized that this erroneous identification of Formosa with a smaller island further north of Taiwan in printed and hence more accessible Dutch maps differs from the earlier and secretive Portuguese manuscript maps by the Homem and Velho and did not reflect the correct Portuguese understanding of Formosa’s location.



3 Abraham Ortelius Map, 1570, similar to that of 1573 which mistakenly identified “I. Formosa” as a tiny island further north of Taiwan. Detail of Abraham Ortelius, *Theatrum*, (1570), after p. 4, “*Asiae Nova Descriptio*”. Source: Wikimedia Commons ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1570\\_Ortelius\\_Map\\_of\\_Asia\\_\(first\\_edition\)\\_-\\_Geographicus\\_-\\_AsiaeNovaDescriptio-ortelius.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1570_Ortelius_Map_of_Asia_(first_edition)_-_Geographicus_-_AsiaeNovaDescriptio-ortelius.jpg)). Public domain.

Another proof of Portuguese understanding of the location of Formosa is seen in the rutter in Chapter 35 of *Reys-gheschrift*. This is a record also of a voyage from Macao to Japan, but this time “to the harbour of Langhesaque or Nangesache (Nagasaki), which in these days is most frequented by

the Portuguese" (Linschoten 1595, 84)<sup>38</sup>. Given that Nagasaki is noted as "the most frequented" harbour, this rutter should be from around 1571. It advises the navigator to hold the "course Northeast, and Northeast by East, alwaies keeping from the coast of Chinchon (sic) [...] (and) runne in the middle of the channel", it notes that near "the Island of Fishers called *A Ilha dos pescadores*, you shall finde lesse depth", it warns that "in those countries you have a storme with the winds called Tuffon", and it says that "when you are right against the Island *A Ilha Fermosa*, then runne Northeast, by which course you shall goe right upon the Straight (sic) of Arima [...]" (Linschoten 1598, 391).

While the exact location of Formosa is not noted in this rutter, it does mention that one must change course slightly, from "Northeast by East" to "Northeast". If we consult a modern map of the area, we will immediately see that this is precisely what one needs to do when the ship reaches the northern tip of Taiwan, before it voyages along the western coast of the Ryukyu islands. In other words, if Formosa were indeed part of the Ryukyu islands, as marked by the erroneous Ortelius maps of 1570 and 1573, then there would be no need to change sailing direction when one reaches the island, since the Ryukyu islands are generally aligned in more or less a straight line.

If we discount the possible shipwreck of Pinto in 1542, the 1582 shipwreck was the first (involuntary) landing on Taiwan, an event that was verified by eyewitness accounts by three Jesuit survivors. Pedro Gómez's letter in Portuguese on 13 December 1582 tells us that on 6 July 1582, four priests and a brother departed from Macao for Japan, and after the first storm they had some good weather, but "in the morning of 16 July [...] amidst rough waters, our junk collided against an island called Liqueo Pequeno" where, he added, "I do not know if the Portuguese had ever landed" (Mateo 2001, 2-3)<sup>39</sup>. Alonso Sánchez's account in Spanish on 15 August 1583 says:

We sailed eight or ten days from Macao to Japan, beset by difficulties...In the end, God did not want us to go there. Along the way, traveling through this gulf, is an island called Hermosa ("una isla que llaman Hermosa"), for its tall and green mountains seen from this side are a sight lovely to behold. The Portuguese have travelled to Japan between this island and the Chinese coast for about forty years without ever exploring or landing on it. This [accident] we owe to the pilot's negligence [...]. (Mateo 2001, 10-11)

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<sup>38</sup> "[...] tot de Haven van Langhesaque ofte Nangesache toe, welcke is de gheen die huydens daeghs aldermeest vande Portugesen ghefrequentteert wordt [...]"

<sup>39</sup> English translation from Mateo, same for the following two citations from Mateo. The book also has the original texts in Portuguese or Spanish as cited here for these three documents.

Finally, a later third report by Francisco Pirez in Portuguese also indicates that the accident took place on Formosa (Mateo 2001, 12-15)<sup>40</sup>. The identification of the shipwreck locations of Liqueo Pequeno by Gómez versus that of Hermosa/Formosa by Sánchez and Pirez should not surprise us, as they wrote separately and might have consulted different maps which identified Taiwan as either or sometimes both.

It is interesting that Sánchez, who was Spanish, noted that the island was called “Beautiful (Hermosa)” “for its tall and green mountains seen from this side are a sight lovely to behold (por la linda apariencia que tiene de esta parte de montañas altas y verdes)”. In other words, as early as the 1580s—just forty years after the island was “discovered” by the Portuguese and over four hundred years from today—the key components of the legend regarding Portuguese naming of Taiwan as Formosa were already well-known among Europeans in Asia, reassuring us that this story is certainly not one of recent invention.

Portuguese cartographer Ludovico Georgio’s map, first drawn in 1579 (Cortesão 1935, 277), was used by the Dutch to rectify some mistakes in their printed maps issued earlier. Georgio’s map of China was included in the 1584 edition of *Theatrum* (Fig. 4). It shows two large islands off the coast of Fujian, the southern one being “Lequeio parua (small in Latin)”, a bit up north is “Ins. (Island) Ferosa”, then a series of tiny islands, before another big one, “Lequeio magna (great)”. While there are still mistakes, including the splitting of Formosa into two and the much-exaggerated size of Okinawa, at least (one of) the big island (s) closest to China, corresponding to northern Formosa, like in the Homem and Velho maps of the 1550s to 1560s, is now correctly identified as Ferosa in the popular Ortelius maps, finally aligning Dutch knowledge of the position of Taiwan with that of the Portuguese (Ortelius 1584?, after 93, 3, 94)<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> This letter is undated but was written sometime in late Sixteenth Century.

<sup>41</sup> Note no publication date appears in this volume, but the latest year on the individual maps, i.e., the map of “Chinae”, after p. 93, is dated 1584. Note also two other relevant maps, “Asiae Nova Descriptio” and “India”, after pp. 3 & 94, still misidentified Formosa as a tiny island further north of Taiwan, continuing with the mistake from the 1570 and 1573 editions of *Theatrum*.





Again, the comment about “the Island Fermosa lying by Lequeo pequeno” makes sense in the context of the perception that Taiwan consisted of two islands. After  $25\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  was “the *end* of the Island Fermosa”, described as “a long and low land” broken in the middle by what “seemeth to be a beach”. These comments agree with Homem’s earlier drawing for the landscape when one turns eastward after passing the northern tip of Taiwan, it also describes the topography around the bay of Keelung reasonably well.

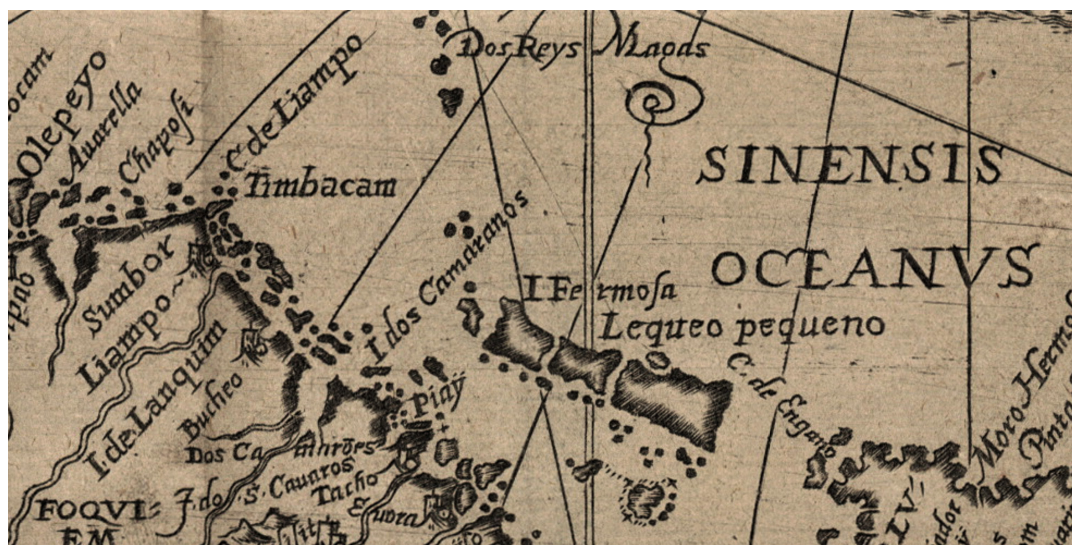
Several chapters of *Reys-gheschrift* record the journey of the famous Spanish navigator Francisco Gali who travelled from Acapulco in South America to Manila in the Philippines, then Macao, and back to South America<sup>43</sup>. Chapter 54 contains the Spanish rutter for the return journey from Macao to South America, starting on 4 July 1584, and the first portion of this record is of interest here:

[...] we ran East southeast, an hundred and fiftie miles, to get above the sands called Os Baixos dos Pescadores, and the beginning of the Islands Lequeos on the East side, which Islands are called As Ilhas Fermosas, that it, the faire Islandes. This I understood by a Chinar called Santy of Chinchon, and hee said thye lie under 21 degrees and  $\frac{3}{4}$  [...] Being past the faire Islands, we held our course East, and East and by North, for two hundred and sixtie miles, until we were past the length of the Islands Lequeos [...]. (Linschoten 1598, 414)

As indicated in this rutter, the name “As Ilhas Fermosas” and the latitude “21 degrees and  $\frac{3}{4}$ ”, which corresponds to the southern tip of Taiwan, were information provided by “a Chinar called Santy of Chinchon” presumably the native pilot from Fujian who knew the surrounding waters well and was employed on the ship. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that the above English translation is faithful to the Dutch original, which also indicates that Gali said that “I knew this information (i.e., the Portuguese name ‘Ilhas Fermosas’ and the latitude of  $21\frac{3}{4}^{\circ}$ ) from a Chinese named Santy from Chinchon (‘dit wist ich hoor informatie van een Chijn, ghe-naemt Santy van Chinchon’)” (Linschoten 1595, 104).

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<sup>43</sup> A recent study argues that Gali might have been Italian and not Spanish, as he apparently had an Italian middle name “Stroza”. See Loureiro, Rui Manuel. 2019. “Inquérito sobre um navegador enigmático Francisco Gali e as suas viagens transpácificas”. *Revista de Cultura* 60: 92. But his nationality is not of great significance in our arguments here.



5 Map in Linschoten’s book, based on Lasso’s map drawn in 1590, showing Taiwan as three islands, with “I. Formosa” being the northern one (note north is oriented to the left). This map is included in J. H. van Linschoten’s *His Discours*, facing p. 32.

The map of Asia by Bartholomeu Lasso, the Portuguese “master of marine maps” under Dom Sebastian (1554-1578) (Viterbo 1893-94, 543)<sup>44</sup>, was completed in 1590 and acquired through bribes by the Houtman brothers in 1592 or 1593 in “their secret mission to Portugal, at the suggestion of Petrus Plancius” (Koeman 1985, 39)<sup>45</sup>. Plancius, a Dutch clergyman, cartographer and later influential member of the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, VOC), then published this map in 1595, and a re-engraved version appears in later editions of Linschoten’s books (Fig. 5). This printed map based on Lasso’s manuscript followed Dourado’s three-islands tradition, which, when combined, is much closer to Formosa’s true shape. Just as importantly, the northern-most of the three islands is now marked as “I. Formosa”.

Under Philip II of Spain, the Spanish first occupied Cebu in the Philippines in 1564, and then Manila by 1570, and the latter became the capital of Spanish East Indies. The Spanish, not the Portuguese, were first to express serious interest in occupying Formosa. A letter dated 8 July 1596 from the interim governor Luis Pérez Damsmariñas to the Spanish king notes “the advisability and importance of sending a military expedition from these islands to Isla Hermosa”, apparently due to fear of possible occupation by the Japanese (Mateo 2001, 18).

<sup>44</sup> “Dom Sebastiam & faço saber que Bertolameu Lasso, mestre de cartas de marear [...]”.

<sup>45</sup> The 1590 manuscript map of Lasso survives and is in the Maritime Museum at Rotterdam.



Hernando Rios Coronel, who went to the Philippines from Spain as a soldier in 1588 and had taken part in military expeditions in the 1590s, also chimed in (Crossley 2011, 3). In a memorial to the king on 27 June 1597, he stresses the need of the “taking of a port on the Chinese mainland and at the same time Formosa Island (Isla-Hermosa)” (Navarette 1851, tomo 1, 637)<sup>46</sup>. Coronel saw occupying Formosa as important due to its “close proximity to fertile and rich land”, “as a point of compulsory landfall on the journey from China and Japan for the Philippines” and also to avoid “the great damage that would ensue if the Japanese were able to carry out their project of seizing it” (Navarette 1851, tomo 1, 638).<sup>47</sup>



6 Ríos Coronel’s map, 1597, showing “Isla Hermosa” as one island. Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain, “Map of Luzon, Isla Hermosa (Taiwan), and a Part of the Coast of China, 1597”, MP Filipinas 216. Source: Wikimedia Commons ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_of\\_Luzon,\\_Isla\\_Hermosa\\_\(Taiwan\),\\_and\\_a\\_Part\\_of\\_the\\_Coast\\_of\\_China,\\_1597.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Luzon,_Isla_Hermosa_(Taiwan),_and_a_Part_of_the_Coast_of_China,_1597.jpg)). Public domain.

Coronel apparently attached a map of Formosa to this memorial, for the back of the map also shows the date of 27 June 1597 (Fig. 6). This would likely be “the first Spanish map of Taiwan” and, even though the island’s

<sup>46</sup> “[...] de la importancia de que en Tierra-firme de la China se tomase un puerto y al propio tiempo en Isla-Hermosa”.

<sup>47</sup> “[...] por su cercana vecindad con reinos fértiles y ricos, de fácil adquisición, urgiendo sobre todo la toma de Isla-Hermosa, no solo como punto de forzosa recalada en la travesía desde China y el Japón para las Filipinas, que aquellos isleños entorpecían pirateando, sino por el grande daño que sobrevendría si los japoses lograsen realizar su proyecto de apoderarse de ella”.

location (northeast of the Philippines (not shown here) though it should be almost north) and orientation (running northeast to southwest instead of north to south) are both “awry”, it “correctly depicted (Formosa) as a single island”, unlike some of the earlier maps mentioned here (Crossley 2011, 47).

It was neither the Japanese nor the Spanish, but the Dutch, not having a foothold in China then, who got to Formosa first. The “first Hollander who is known to have arrived” on Penghu, twelve miles from Formosa, was Wybrand van Warwyk (Campbell 1903, 26). The Dutch admiral left Patani in June of 1604 to sail to Macao, but a storm “forced them to take the open sea, drove them so far off course” that they had to go to the Pescadores (Penghu) instead, and arrived there on 7 August 1604 (Groeneveldt 1898, 16)<sup>48</sup>.

In 1622, Cornelis Reyerszoon, on failing to conquer Macao, went to Penghu again, and proceeded to build a fort there. However, this fortification proved to close for comfort to the Chinese. In his diary dated 13 July 1622, Reyerszoon noted that he was asked “to depart with the ships from there to Isla Formosa” (Groeneveldt 1898, 360)<sup>49</sup>, confirming Dutch adoption of the name Formosa for Taiwan. In the end, a large Chinese fleet surrounded the fort in July 1624, forcing the Dutch to withdraw days later to Formosa, where they finally decided to stay. Thus, W. A. Ginsel notes, in Formosa, the Dutch “were ‘allowed’ to build a fortress with an office or lodge” and “[o]n a sandbank on the SW coast of Formosa in August 1624 the castle Zeelandia was founded” (Ginsel 1931, 4).

Miguel Garcia Serrano, Archbishop of Manila, informed the Spanish king Philip IV (Philip III in Portugal) in a letter on 15 August 1624 that “despite God’s Providence, the enemy has come to our shores this year” for “there is more pressure now on Isla Hermosa, our closest port to China”, after the Dutch occupation of the Island (Mateo 2001, 57).

From then on, much of the coastal area of Formosa remained under the control of the VOC, and was ruled by the Formosan Government (Formosaanse Landtregeringe), consisting of the Governor and the Council (Chiu 2008, 7). Henceforth, Formosa, “the island christened by the Portuguese” and referred to as “Hermosa” by the Spanish, became the

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<sup>48</sup> “[...] toeu een storm uit het noordoosten hen dwingen kwam het ruime sop te kiezen en hen zoover uit den koers dreef, dat zij meenden Macao niet meer te zullen kunnen halen, maar er de voorkeur aan gaven naar de Pescadores te gaan, waar zij den 7en Augustus sankwamen”.

<sup>49</sup> “[...] dan versochten dat wij met de schepen daervan vertrecken souden naer Isla Formosa [...]”.



“Eijlandt Paccam ofte Formosa” in VOC documents (Hamel 1920, iii)<sup>50</sup>. In May 1626, the Spanish established themselves at Keelung in the northern tip of Taiwan, “intended not only as a strategic counterweight to Dutch Zeelandia, but also as an entrepot for trade and the gateway for missionaries to China and Japan” (Mateo 2001, ix), until they were driven out by the Dutch in 1642. The Dutch era ended in February 1662, when they, in turn, were expelled by the Chinese led by Koxinga after a nine-month siege.

The Dutch had ample opportunities to survey the Island since establishing themselves on Formosa. For example, in 1630, “a VOC junk” surveyed its west coast “as far as 14 ‘Duytse mijlen’ (just over a hundred kilometers) north of Zeelandia, also charted the Pescadores;” and further charting exercises were performed in 1632, 1634, etc. (Zandvliet 1998, 109). As a result, Taiwan maps issued in this period were increasingly accurate. These consistently label the whole island “Formosa”, and only the “capital” city on its southwestern coast where the Dutch colonizers were based “Tayowan”, as indicated in an undated map from this early period entitled “Kaart van een gedeelte der Chineese Zee en Kust” (Fig. 7).



7 Seventeenth Century Dutch map, labelling Taiwan as Formosa. National Archief, Hague, NL-HaNA-4. VEL-272, “Kaart van een gedeelte der Chineese Zee en Kust”. Source: <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/kaartencollectie/af99516c-d0b4-102d-bcf8-003048976d84>. Public domain.

<sup>50</sup> “Formosa. Zoo werd het eiland gedoopt door de Portugeezen; bij de Spanjaarden heette het Hermosa [...]; in Compagnie’s stukken wordt gesproken van het ‘Eijlandt Paccam ofte Formosa’, b.v. in Gen. Miss. 3 Febr. 1626: “Tot ontdeckingh vant Eijlandt Paccam ofte Formosa [...]”.

Therefore, in short, Lobo Homem's manuscript map of 1554 followed by those of Diogo Homem, Velho, Georgio and Lasso all confirm that most Portuguese cartographers (with the prominent exception of Dourado) had referred to Taiwan (or at least its northern part) as Fremosa/Fermosa from 1554 through to 1590. Portuguese rutters dated 1546 and circa 1550 labelled Taiwan as Lesser Liuqiu, but, on the other hand, those dated around 1562, 1571 and 1585 all named the Island Fermosa. This same name was used in a Portuguese letter dated 1562, and a Spanish letter written in 1583 (which credited the naming of Formosa to the Portuguese and repeated the related legend). As Portuguese maps drawn in Lisbon would reflect primary sources from Asia, it is safe to conclude that the naming of Taiwan as Formosa happened in the early 1550s, after the rutter dated circa 1550, and before the Homem map dated 1554.

### Concluding remarks

Given the large number of sources discussed, it is perhaps useful at this point to list the key rutters, maps and other supporting documents related to the "discovery" or "naming" of Formosa chronologically in a table form (Fig. 8).

Date	Source
<i>"Discovery" (knowing) of Formosa</i>	
2.1510	Letter, Araújo to Albuquerque on "Gores"
4.1512	Letter, Albuquerque to Dom Manuel on "Gores"
1512-1515	Book, Pires' <i>Suma Oriental</i> on "Lequeos"
1512	Map, Rodrigues' tracing of "Llequeos" as 1 island
1517-1518	Information, Andrade on "Lequia", Mascarenhas on location at 25½°N
<i>"Discovery" (first sighting) of Formosa</i>	
1542	Books, Pinto's <i>Peregrinação</i> , Galvão's <i>Tratado</i> , 3 Portuguese
1543	Book, Bunshi's <i>Teppōki</i> , 2 Portuguese with firearms
<i>"Naming" of Formosa</i>	
1546	Rutter, ch. 33 in Linschoten, to Kagoshima, "Lequeo Pequeno"
c. 1550	Rutter, ch. 32 in Linschoten, to Hirado, "Lequeo Pequeno"
1554	Map, Logo Homem, "Fremosa"
1558	Map, Diogo Homem, "Fermosa"
1561	Map, Velho, 2 islands, "Fermosa"

c. 1562	Rutter, ch. 34 in Linschoten, to Yokoseura, “Fermosa”
1564	Letter, “honourable Portuguese gentleman”, “Fermosa”
1570-1573	Map, Ortelius, “Fermosa” <i>wrongly</i> identified further north
c. 1571	Rutter, ch. 35 in Linschoten, to Nagasaki, “Fermosa”
1579 (1584)	Map, Georgio, 2 islands, “Fermosa”
8.1583	Letter, Sánchze on shipwreck on 7.1582, “Hermosa”
7.1584	Rutter, in Linschoten, to Mexico, Gali, “Ilhas Fermosas”
1585	Rutter, in Linschoten, to Nagasaki, Pais, 2 islands, “Fermosa”
1590 (1595)	Map, Lasso, 3 islands, “Fermosa”
7.1596	Letter, Damsmariñas to Philip II, “Hermosa”
6.1597	Letter & Map, Coronel, 1 island, “Hermosa”
1622	Diary, Reyerszoon, “Formosa”
8.1624	Letter, Serrano to Philip IV, “Hermosa”

8 Rutters, maps and other documents by date, 1510-1624<sup>51</sup>.

The claims related to Formosa’s discovery and naming cited in the beginning of this paper can now be addressed. First, let us return to the claim that it was the Spanish, not the Portuguese, who had first given Formosa its name. To Weng and Huang (and on this point this author concurs), “as Ilhas Fermosas at 21¼ °” noted in Gali’s ship log in 1584 must refer to “the main Island of Taiwan” (or at least its southern tip) (Weng & Huang 2017, 39)<sup>52</sup>. But to conclude that “the Spanish (were) the first to call Taiwan Fermosas” or even that the legend about “‘Portuguese exclaiming Beautiful Island’ is a case of ‘creating something from nothing’ and ‘accumulating mistakes into correctness’” is going too far (Weng & Huang 2017, 40)<sup>53</sup>.

Three main arguments have been put forward to support the above conclusions. Firstly, it is argued that “*most* Portuguese documents call the main island of Taiwan ‘Lequeo pequeno’” (Weng & Huang 2017, 37)<sup>54</sup>. It is true that early Portuguese sources like Pires, Correa (Correia) and Barros from 1510s onward refer to Taiwan as (part of) Liuqiu. It is also likely that many pilots continued to call Taiwan both by this Chinese name and “Fermosa” when the latter emerged, so Liuqiu persisted in some rutters,

<sup>51</sup> To keep the table simple, some sources discussed are omitted, including Dourado’s maps of 1568 and 1571, which did not mention Formosa; or the undated Pirez report of the 1582 shipwreck and the Dutch manuscript map (Fig. 7), which did.

<sup>52</sup> 「提到As Ilhas Fermosas (美麗諸島)位於北緯21¼度」; 「這是臺灣本島」。

<sup>53</sup> 「『葡萄牙人驚嘆美麗之島』[.....]誠屬無中生有, 積非成是」。

<sup>54</sup> 「大部分葡萄牙文獻指稱臺灣本島為Lequeo pequeno(小琉球)」。

maps and letters. That the two names co-existed would be expected, given the mixed ethnicity and mutual influence of European and Chinese pilots on typical Portuguese ships in those days. But these by no means imply that the name “Fermosa” did not have a Portuguese origin. Furthermore, as have already been shown, from the 1550s to the 1590s, many if not most Portuguese sources, including maps, rutters, and letters, identify the main island (or at least the northern part of it) as “Fermosa”, providing solid evidence of Portuguese usage of this name for Taiwan, much earlier than the Spanish.

Secondly, it is claimed that “Formosa as noted by the Portuguese often vaguely referred to some island north of Taiwan” (Weng & Huang 2017, 40)<sup>55</sup>. Admittedly, the Ortelius maps of the early 1570s issued in Holland which misidentified Fermosa with a small island north of Taiwan could have influenced some reports. But, while these maps printed by the Dutch were more numerous than the well-guarded Portuguese manuscript maps from the 1550s onward, they simply did not reflect Portuguese knowledge and must be discounted. Weng and Huang claim that the Portuguese rutter dated July 1585, the relevant portion of which he translates as “next day the end of Fermosa Island can be seen. Fermosa is ‘an oval shaped, unoccupied (leech) island’”, proves that Fermosa was perceived as “an island just north of Taiwan” (Weng & Huang 2017, 39)<sup>56</sup>. Given this argument, that portion of the rutter, cited earlier in this paper using Boxer’s translation, warrants a second reading, this time from the original Dutch edition:

[...] the end of the Island Ilha Fermosa, or the beautiful island, which is an oval-shaped/oblong/elongated and bare/empty/unoccupied land, which seems broken/fractured/ damaged or torn/rent/ruptured/cracked in the middle, [...] (/’t eynde van ‘t Eylande Ila Fermosa, ofte ‘t schoone Eylão/’t welke een lanchwerpent en leech landt is/wesende in ‘t midden gebroken ofte geschuert/). (Linschoten 1595, 87)

Weng and Huang’s Chinese rendering of the two first adjectives in this excerpt, namely “lanckwerpent” (langwerpig) and “leech” (leeg), into “oval shaped” and “unoccupied” is an improvement over the 1598 English version, using the less accurate terms “long” and “low”. But the main point here is that both the 1595 Dutch original and the 1598 English translation share the same sentence structure—what is being described after the word

<sup>55</sup> 「葡萄牙人所指的『福爾摩沙』，多是模糊地指臺灣北鄰之島嶼」。

<sup>56</sup> 「翌日可看到Fermosa島的盡端。Fermosa是個『橢圓形、無人佔領(leech)之島』」；「緊鄰臺灣本島北部之一島」。

which/welche is the *end* ('t eynde) of the Island, not the whole Island (as translated by Weng & Huang), since the second part of this sentence uses the word land (landt), not island (Eylande). Elsewhere on the same page, this rutter also says that “[t]he day before wee sawe the Island Fermosa, which is a very high Land, and seemeth to reach unto the cloudes” (Linschoten 1598, 394), which is a good description of the west coast of Taiwan, and would indirectly reconfirm that the narrative cited above could only be that of another part of Formosa, namely “the end of the Island Ilha Fermosa”, and not a small and separate island. Furthermore, as already noted, the topography as described seems appropriately that of the harbour of Keelung after one turn eastward from the northern tip of Taiwan. In short, this rutter does not confirm that “Ilha Fermosa” “referred to some island north of Taiwan”, but, instead, describes the last portion of “Ilha Fermosa” which could be seen before the Portuguese ship sail further to Ryukyu.

Thirdly, it is concluded by Weng and Huang, based on the Gali rutter, that “the term ‘As Ilhas Ferosas’ first appears in a Spanish ship log in the 1580s, (making the Spanish) more definitely than the Portuguese in calling the main island of Taiwan Fermosa” (Weng & Huang 2017, 37)<sup>57</sup>. The rationales for Spanish naming of Taiwan based on the 1584 rutter are, frankly, rather weak, based on common sense and given the existing internal and external textual evidences. One wonders why Gali, a late comer to the China sea, would deem it appropriate to name an island (and in Portuguese instead of Spanish!) there, knowing full well that many Europeans had seen it before him. Also, the rutter dated 1584 clearly explains that Gali learned of this name from a local expert, “the Chinar called Santy of Chinchon”. Incidentally, a copy of this rutter appears in another Portuguese source, Diogo do Couto’s *Da Ásia*, which also confirms that after passing the Pescadores or Penghu Islands one would see (the Southern tip of) the Formosa Islands, and that “the information about them (came) from a Chinese pilot”, who was with Gali on the ship (Couto 1788, liv. 5, 501)<sup>58</sup>. Lastly, and most importantly, the name “I. Fremosa/Fermosa” had first appeared in Portuguese primary sources such as the

<sup>57</sup> 「1580年代, 西班牙人的航海誌才出現As Ilhas Ferosas (美麗諸島)一詞, 比葡萄牙人更明確地以Fermosa來指稱呼臺灣本島」。

<sup>58</sup> “Governando a Les-Sueste 150. léguas, dobrou os baixos dos Pescadores, e principio dos Lequios da banda de Leste, a que chamão as Ilhas Ferosas, que estão em 21. grãos e três quartos; e posto que nesta derrota os não vio, teve informação delles por hum Piloto Chincheco, que comsigo levava [...]”.



manuscript maps by the Homem's in the 1550s (likely based on lost/hitherto unidentified "roteiros" or letters received from Portuguese India), the Vehlo map of 1561, the rutter to Yokoseura dated 1562, the letter from the "Honourable Portuguese gentleman" in 1564, the rutter to Nagasaki dated 1571, Georgio's map drawn in 1579, Sanchéz's letter on the 1582 shipwreck, etc. These sources all predated the 1584 Spanish rutter, and they all use the name "Fermosa" and mostly even identify (the northern portion of) Taiwan correctly as "Fermosa". In short, there are ample Portuguese primary sources which supported Portuguese usage of the name "Fermosa" for Taiwan from 1554 through to 1582, making the claim that the Spanish were the first to use that name for the island in 1584 clearly untenable.

Earlier in this paper it is also noted that another historian has cited Martini's *Atlas* as further support for the claim that it was the Spanish, not the Portuguese, who had given us the name Formosa for Taiwan. Martini, in the original Latin edition of *Atlas* in 1655, says "[t]he name of Formosa, I think, was introduced by the Spanish, when they built the fortification of Kilung (sic) on the north promontory" (Martini 1655, 19)<sup>59</sup>. But this claim, though from the learned Martini, must be challenged. Firstly, it is not a primary source, even though it was published in 1655. Secondly, he did qualify his claim by saying "I think (ego puto)". Finally, we have seen from primary sources presented here that it is simply not true, as the name was introduced much earlier by the Portuguese into their documents and maps, then adopted by the Spanish and the Dutch, many decades before the Spanish built their fort in Keelung in 1626.

We can now deal with the various traditional "mainstream" claims of Portuguese "discovery" and "naming" of Formosa cited at the start of this paper, which are considerably easier to tackle. Any claimed date in the late period, i.e., around the 1590s, regardless of their details, can now easily be dismissed, given the existence of the 1554/1558 Homem maps, the 1561 Velho map, the 1562/1571 rutters and the other supporting documents in the 1560s to the 1580s already cited.

Similarly, the claims in the early period, based on the year 1517, must also be considered invalid, since not only do we not know of any Portuguese "captain's log" dated 1517, both Correa (Correia) and Barros, our best near-primary sources, have confirmed that while Andrade had sent Mascarenhas to Fujian in 1517 to investigate Liuqiu further, neither

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<sup>59</sup> "[...] Formosae nomen ego ab Hispanis inditum puto, quando in ejus Boreali promontório... munimentum Kilung exstruxerunt [...]".

of them had visited Taiwan in this or the following year. Taiwan was only “discovered” by the Portuguese in the early 1540s en route, in their first visit to Japan.

Finally, how about the claims related to the middle period, or, specifically, the year 1544? Firstly, some details in one such claim supposedly linked to this date must be dismissed. Linschoten, born in 1563, was only in India from 1583 to 1588, and never even travelled to the China sea. He could simply not have been the “Dutch navigation officer [...] on board” who recorded the sailor’s exclamation “Ilha Formosa!” in the ship log in 1544, almost twenty years before his birth. The historian Ito provides a rationale for his claim related to 1544, since he explains that this assumes that the “discovery” and “naming” event took place “the year after the (first) Portuguese ship floated to Tanegashima, or in 1544” (Ito 1993, 11)<sup>60</sup>. This is what could be termed a reasonable “educated guess”. But given that both the 1546 and the 1550 rutters used “Lequeo Pequeno” and not “Fermosa”, the “educated guess” is still early by some years. As already noted, the possible range of years would be between 1550, after the 1550 rutter was recorded, and 1554, when the first Homem map was produced.

In short, we can rest assured that it was indeed the Portuguese (among the Europeans) who had first “discovered” Taiwan, both in the sense of knowing of it (in the 1510s) and sighting it (in the early 1540s). They also “named” it after the first sightings, likely in the early 1550s and before 1554, when “Fremosa/Fermosa” initially appeared in a Portuguese map. From 1580s onward, it was referred to by the Spanish in their documents and maps, rendered in Spanish as “Hermosa”. Finally, from early Seventeenth Century, the Dutch adopted it in its updated Portuguese form “Formosa” as the official name of the whole Island, and continued to use it when they were in control of a large part of coastal Taiwan through to the early 1660s.

It should be noted that the name Formosa was only used by the Europeans at the time and, as evidenced by the Dourado maps of 1569 and 1571, in parallel use with the Chinese name Lesser Liuqiu (“Llequio pequeno”) for some years or, as shown in the Ortelius maps of 1570 and 1573, even erroneously identified by the Dutch with a small island further north of Taiwan. Contemporary Chinese sources including *Shiliuqiulu* 使琉球錄 published in 1579 and the Chinese manuscript rutter *Shunfeng xiang-song* 順風相送 dated late Sixteenth Century both refer to Taiwan as (Lesser)

<sup>60</sup> 「現在のところこの『発見』は、ポルトガル船の種子島漂着の翌年、つまり一五四四年のことと推定されている」。

Liuqiu (and, less frequently, also other names), not Formosa (Xiao 1579, vol. 1, 35-36; Jiao 2014, 178, 181, etc.).<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, as demonstrated by the accounts in the 1584 Gali rutter, Chinese pilots who dealt with Europeans were also aware of the westernized name for the Island and will refer to it when communicating with the latter.

At any rate, as far as the legend about Formosa is concerned, perhaps official narratives from the government of Taiwan can revert to a more definite version with confidence, giving credit of the naming of the Island to the Portuguese in the early 1550s. And, arguably more importantly, perhaps secondary school textbooks in Taiwan on her history need not be rewritten after all, and the young students there today could still safely be taught essentially the same legend learned by their parents and grandparents, complete with the familiar Portuguese exclamation "Ilha Formosa!".

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<sup>61</sup> See esp. annotated drawing/map on pp. 35-36 of vol. 1 of Xiao; and *Shunfeng xiangsong* (c. late Sixteenth Century), a full facsimile copy of which can be found in pp. 60-185 of Jiao, with references to Liuqiu on pp. 178, 181, etc. The original of *Shunfeng xiangsong* is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford University.



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