



The symbolic power of the world's first circumnavigation: An approach from political communication



Antonio Baraybar-Fernández, Miguel Baños-González, Rainer Rubira-García*

Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid, Spain

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to approach the consequences, within the scope of soft power in Joseph Nye's terms, undergone by the Hispanic Monarchy due to the World's first circumnavigation, performed by Magalhães and Elcano. To that end, the symbolic power of this journey will be analysed from the communication theory through the application of Burke's dramatic pentad as a contribution to a better understanding of the endeavour's impact on historical geography. We have critically analysed historical sources, such as Pigafetta's diary and Transilvano's letter, close to the Spanish perspective on the feat. The results show the possible existence of a political communication strategy from the very beginning of the feat and the awareness of the important power that information enabled from the World's first circumnavigation five hundred years ago.

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Introduction

As citizens of today's globalised and connected world, we may face certain difficulties in reaching a full understanding of the epic nature of the journey begun by the Portuguese Fernão de Magalhães, in English Ferdinand Magalhães, in August 1519 and concluded three years and fourteen days later by the Spaniard Juan Sebastián Elcano. On September 6, 1522, only one of the five ships departed from the same place and arrived in Sanlúcar, completing the first circumnavigation trip after 14,460 leagues. It was La Victoria, with 18 survivors aboard out of the 265 who had set sail for the adventure.

This relevant fact has been extensively studied and has produced multiple interpretations depending on the political and cultural contexts of each era.¹ During the 16th and 17th centuries, it is reflected, among others, by Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, Senior Chronicler of Castilla; João de Barros, recognised as the first great Portuguese historian and contemporary to the events; and in the controversial work of the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas, who had already travelled to the Indies sometime before

starting the journey of Magalhães and Elcano.² Throughout the Enlightenment, fundamental scientific knowledge texts include abundant references to expeditions, such as those by Alexander von Humboldt or Henry Harrise.³ In the 20th century, Fernand Braudel revolutionised historiography with his holistic approach and the introduction of the world economy concept, focusing on the social consequences caused by the economic and geographical effects of maritime trade routes. If the Age of Discovery was possible, it was also thanks to the control and commercialisation of the world's production of profitable goods. At present, the considerable treatment from different areas and perspectives has allowed a better knowledge and a multidisciplinary vision of the first circumnavigation as a significant example of this type of expedition.

The present paper proposes a vision of the geopolitical meaning that the first round the world had for the Spanish Empire from the field of communication to find parallels between the relevant historical event that happened 500 years ago and our current reality; history is not only found in events that are aseptically limited in the past but also their contemporary implications. For this, we adopt a perspective of analysis from the political theory of communication,

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: antonio.baraybar@urjc.es (A. Baraybar-Fernández), miguel.banos@urjc.es (M. Baños-González), rainer.rubira@urjc.es (R. Rubira-García).

¹ R. G. Toledo, *Fernão de Magalhães/Fernando de Magallanes: a state of the art*, Madrid, 2019, 11–27.

² A. Herrera y Tordesillas and M. Cuesta Domingo, *Historia General De Los Hechos De Los Castellanos En Las Islas Y Tierra firme Del Mar Océano, O, 'Décadas'*, Madrid, 1991.

³ M. A. Castillo Oreja, *América en la cartografía del siglo XVI (1550-1556)*, Quiróga: *Revista de Patrimonio Iberoamericano*, 13 (2018) 20.

specifically in response to the pentad scheme proposed by Kenneth Burke, considered today central in rhetorical analyses.⁴ We start from the concept of power, from the dualist theory of soft power proposed by Joseph Nye and its evolution towards concepts such as the notion of intelligent power of evident actuality in the framework of international relations, in order to, once described the process, analyse its political effectiveness.⁵

Two different literary traditions or discourses about the expedition can be identified regarding the chosen sources. A predominant one of Castilian/Spanish origin and with European projection, in accordance with the interests of Carlos V and based on the stories of the Nao Victoria's crew, which has the support of the imperial diplomacy in Germany, and would be circulated through printing media in Germany, Spain, Italy and France. And a second tradition, less popular and mainly written in Portuguese, which will be partially edited and propagated only years later, related to the documentation seized by the Portuguese from the Nao Trinidad and sent to the metropolis.⁶

For the purposes of the research, sources close to the interests of the Spanish imperial Monarchy have been used during the exploratory phase of the work. Mainly, the diary of Antonio Pigafetta, *Primo Viaggio Intorno al Globo Terracqueo*, has been studied in depth.⁷ Specifically, of the four surviving manuscripts, we study the Italian edition dedicated to Felipe de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Grand Master of the Order of Saint John, as it was recognised as the most complete version and was recently published by the Real Instituto Elcano in commemoration of the feat.⁸ Pigafetta, one of the eighteen survivors, periodically refers to the events of the journey and confesses his motivation to join the expedition. This last aspect allows us to glimpse the interests of some of those adventurers: '... determine to make sure with my own eyes of the truth of everything that was told, in order to be able to make the relation of my trip to others, both to entertain them and to be useful to them and to create for myself, at the same time, a name that would reach posterity'.⁹ The newspaper represents the traveller's desire for knowledge and glory. Although the description of him responds to a previous epistolary structure, with the evident objective of recounting everything that he observed during the expedition at the service of the power of the Hispanic Court, an evolution in his style is appreciated. The use of the third person or the first person of the plural to the use of the first person of the singular turns the narration into something that recalls an autobiographical story.

But it is not the only direct testimony of the journey. *Derrotero del viaje al Maluco*, written by Francisco Albo, is a technical text that flees from the narrative in which the geographical and

astronomical data are reviewed, from the beginning to the end of the event, with fixed and repetitive structures.¹⁰ This type of information will be of great value for future navigation, demonstrating the systematisation of writing imposed by the imperial administration for practical purposes. To the two references cited above, as sources provided by the protagonists, are added the writing of Ginés de Mafra, the testimonies of Gonzalo Gómez de Espinosa and León Pancaldo, and the missives of Antonio Brito and Juan Sebastián Elcano.¹¹

Of particular relevance to this study is the letter written in Latin by Maximiliano Transilvano, Secretary of King Carlos I, just a few days after the completion of the journey. It was signed in Valladolid on October 5, 1522, and addressed to Mateo Lang de Wellenburg, Cardinal Archbishop of Salzburg and Bishop of Cartagena. Specifically, two versions of his writing have been analysed in detail, the one collected by Martín Fernández de Navarrete and a more recently edited version already published in this century.¹² Written in the first person, with a grandiloquent adjective, it is structured in 20 fragments that, in a detailed and chronological way, have an explicit intention of truthfulness based on a direct relationship of the testimonies of the protagonists of the feat. As Walter Mignolo reminds us, these epistolary texts essentially fulfil an informative function.¹³ The use of the epistolary term was very broad, being applied to royal, notarial, and private documents. In addition to being intended for a specific reader, it remains open to other potential and desired recipients.¹⁴

After the great voyages and transoceanic discoveries, the creation of an official cartography was systematised, where the power of the image was decisive to argue in the legal discussions between the Spanish and Portuguese courts as an empirical justification. Maps had the ability to maintain or transform the status quo of territorial sovereignty, representations of space became a reflection of imperial control and expansion. Sometimes they present intentional errors and manipulations that respond to particular interests on the territories through cartographic propaganda.¹⁵

The decision of the Catholic Monarchs to create a bureaucratic structure from La Casa de Contratación de Indias (House of Trade) in Seville, which the historian Antonio Barrera calls *Chamber of knowledge*, demonstrates the interest in gathering, organising, and filtering information related to contact natural nature of the newly discovered spaces and their transformation into empirical information capable of producing new knowledge necessary for decision-making that would allow colonial rule.¹⁶

The relations that took place between diverse actors and heterogeneous material elements played a transcendental role and

⁴ K. Burke, *On Symbols and Society*, Chicago, 1989; K. Burke, *A Grammar of motives*, Cleveland, 1962.

⁵ J. Nye, *La paradoja del poder norteamericano*, Madrid, 2003; J. Nye, *The future of power*, New York, 2011; J. Nye, *Soft power: the origins and political progress of a concept*, *Palgrave Commun*, 3 (2017).

⁶ F. B. Aguinagalde, Juan Sebastián de Elcano y Fernando de Magallanes, dos hombres y un destino. Ensayo de metodología y uso de las fuentes documentales castellanas y portuguesas. *Boletín de la Real Sociedad Bascongada de Amigos del País*, T. 75, 1-2 (2019), 143-146.

⁷ Original Title: *Primo viaggio intorno al globo terracqueo ossia ragguaglio della navigazione alle Indie Orientali per la via d'occidente fatta dal cavaliere Antonio Pigafetta ... Sulla Squadra del Capit. Magaglianes negli anni 1519-1522*.

⁸ E. Lamo de Espinosa (ed.), *Preparando una conmemoración: Elcano y la primera circunnavegación 1519-2019*, in A. Pigafetta, *Primo Viaggio Intorno al Globo Terracqueo. La expedición de Magallanes-Elcano 1519-1522*, Madrid, 2016, 7.

⁹ A. Pigafetta, *Primo Viaggio Intorno al Globo Terracqueo. La expedición de Magallanes-Elcano 1519-1522*, Madrid, 2016, 14.

¹⁰ The manuscript, of 83 folios, has been published under the title of 'Diario o derrotero del viaje de Magallanes desde el cabo de San Agustín en el Brasil, hasta el regreso a España de la nao Victoria' by M. Fernández de Navarrete (vol. IV).

¹¹ Among the references mentioned, the one by G. de Mafra stands out, whose 188-page manuscript is in the National Library of Madrid. It was published in 1920 in a volume edited by A. Blázquez for the Royal Geographical Society, and in 2012 by the Miraguano—Polifemo publishing house.

¹² Recount written by M. Transilvano, 1522, of how and by whom and in what time the Moluccan Islands were discovered and found, where the spice-engineering itself is born, which fall in the conquest and marking of the Royal Crown of Spain, in M. Fernández de Navarrete, *Colección de los viajes y descubrimientos*, vol. IV, 1946.

¹³ W. Mignolo, *Cartas, crónicas y relaciones del descubrimiento y la conquista*, in L. Í. Madrigal (comp.), *Historia de la Literatura Hispanoamericana*, Madrid, 1982, 57-109.

¹⁴ In the *Bibliotheca Americana Vetustissima* by H. HARRISSE, with multiple editions of the text in countries such as Italy, France, Germany, J. T. Medina, in 1897, in his study *Memorias científicas i literarias* (Spanish Bibliography of the Philippine Islands — 1523-1810, 364-369) carries out a detailed study (setting dates, editors, translations) of each of these publications.

¹⁵ A. Sánchez Martínez, *De la 'cartografía oficial' a la 'cartografía jurídica': la querrela de las Molucas reconsiderada, 1479-1529*, *Nouveau Monde, Mondes Nouveaux*, 08 septembre (2009), doi: <https://doi.org/10.4000/nuevomundo.56899>.

¹⁶ A. Barrera, *Nature and Empire in the New World*, Ph. D. diss., University of California, 1999.

created a network that brought together different realities. Consequently, inspired by previous works such as that of John Law, and, albeit superficially, we cannot ignore the scientific and technological progress that makes it possible to understand a geographical exploration of such magnitude.¹⁷ Navigation went from being an aptitude related to the skill and experience of the employer to an applied science based on mathematical knowledge.¹⁸ 'The discovery of hitherto unknown patterns of oceanic wind currents, the development of new vessels, and the mastery by sailors of new techniques to find their bearings in the open sea led in the 15th century to a growing realisation that the cosmographies inherited from the ancients were wrong'.¹⁹

John Law, in his empirical study on the way of sailing of the Portuguese during their expansion during the 15th and 16th centuries, emphasises the need to ensure global mobility with the durability of their boats that would allow a regular circulation between the centre and the periphery.²⁰

The emergence of the commercial circuit that began in the 16th century was a strong impact by becoming an imaginary of the colonial world outside the West that contributed to the self-definition of Europe. Its influences survive today, and it is an inseparable part in the development of capitalism since those times.²¹

Serge Gruzinski calls this geographical expansion on a global scale globalisation, which also implies a change in the ways of imagining. The descriptions of the new territories and their limits in continuous movement are part of the colossal effort to satisfy the greed for information, figures, ethnicities and territories.²²

The awareness of the value of information, the importance of obtaining and using it in all political decision processes meant, among other aspects, the consolidation of knowledge as an essential tool for state control. In this way, the power of knowledge 'as the ultimate expression of the Weberian conception of bureaucracy, crystallises in the 16th century, in which state structures generate, seek and exchange information for their survival'.²³ In these circumstances, 'efforts to obtain accurate information as soon as possible revealed the emergence of a new type of politician', a new model of the ruler of the Modern State.²⁴

Methodology

An approach to the concept of soft power

Joseph Nye's dualistic approach that differentiates between hard or hard power and soft or soft power took on a significant role,

¹⁷ J. Law, Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge? *Sociological Review Monograph*, 32 (1986), 234–263.

¹⁸ H. Leitão, All Aboard! Science and Ship Culture in Sixteenth–Century Oceanic Voyages, *Early Science and Medicine* 21 (2016), 2–3, 113–132, 10.1163/15733823-02123p02.

¹⁹ J. Cañizares–Esguerra, Iberian science in the renaissance: Ignored how much longer? *Perspectives on Science* 12 (2004) 86–124, 88.

²⁰ J. Law, The Methods of Long–Distance Control: Vessels, Navigation and the Portuguese Route to India, *The Sociological Review*, vol. 32, 1 (1984) 234–263, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1984.tb00114.x>.

²¹ W. D. Mignolo, La colonialidad a lo largo y a lo ancho: el hemisferio occidental en el horizonte colonial de la modernidad, 56–57, in *La colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales. Perspectivas latinoamericanas*, Buenos Aires, 2000, 55–85.

²² S. Gruzinski, *Las cuatro partes del mundo. Historia de una mundialización*, México, 2010, 51.

²³ D. Navarro, Informes, relaciones y avisos: la producción documental del espionaje hispano en tiempos de guerra (siglos XVI y XVII), *Revista de Historia Militar*, XLVIII 95 (2004) 185–220.

²⁴ J.R. Strayer, *Sobre los orígenes medievales del estado moderno*, Barcelona, 1986, 130.

being an argument widely used in academic and political forums. Among other reasons, because at present the military and economic power does not guarantee that a country can achieve its strategic objectives.²⁵

The difference between the two is polyhedral: hard power is configured through coercion, is direct in terms of control, and is related to military capacity and economic threats; soft power is immaterial, it is related to ideology and symbolic image, it belongs to the sphere of social values and culture, and it has an indirect character due to its difficulty of control.

The notion of soft power comprises two very different capacities: a persuasive and an ideological one. The first marks an address that goes from abroad to the actor, a certain seduced audience identifies with the culture generated by the dominant society. The second, on the other hand, is related to ideology and has an inverse direction, it is exerted from power outward.

In any case, Nye never considers these powers as exclusionary. On the contrary, they are complementary, and so the author insists on the relevance of both: 'It is as important (...) to attract third parties as to force change through threats or the use of military or economic weapons'.²⁶ Nye's assumptions about soft power take centre stage in a society in which the value of credibility and trust is growing, among other aspects, by the globalisation of information and the ease of dissemination.²⁷

Nye's proposal has critics and detractors. For some academics, soft power does not exist, it is hard power transformed into ideology.²⁸ Others affect its indirect nature and the difficulty in controlling it, a situation that can turn it into a counter power.²⁹ There are also scholars who do not consider soft power as real power, and it is only about policies that attempt to legitimise hard power.³⁰ However, everyone accepts Nye's dualistic approach, 'what they do is question the composition or consistency of soft factors'.³¹

Given these observations, Nye has been developing and specifying his original concept that sought to 'fill a deficiency in the way analysts thought about power, but gradually acquired political resonance'.³² Consequently, he sought to become an analytical tool and its development as an instrumental concept, never a normative concept, as evidenced in his book *The future of power*.³³

In the present text, we use the term *soft power* for its wide circulation but identifying it with a meaning close to that of *public reputation*.³⁴ This would aim to inform and influence audiences. It is noteworthy to remember that 'imperialism was, and is, much more than simple domination in distant lands/.../it has always also involved idealism and progressive agendas of interest in colonised subjects'.³⁵

²⁵ M. Naim, *El fin del poder*, Barcelona, 2015, 23.

²⁶ J. Nye, *La paradoja del poder norteamericano*, Madrid, 2003, 33.

²⁷ R. O. Keohane and J. Nye, Power and Interdependence in the Information Age, *Foreign Affairs*, 77–5 (sept–oct) 1998 81–94, 89.

²⁸ N. Rosendorf, Social and Cultural Globalization, in J. Nye and J. Donahue (eds.) *Governance in a Globalizing World*, Washington, 2000.

²⁹ T. Gitlin, El poder blando, una estrategia desestimada, *Vanguardia*, 7 (2003) 79–81.

³⁰ N. Ferguson, Power, Foreign Policy, 134 (2003), 18–24; N. Ferguson, *Coloso. Auge y decadencia del imperio americano*, Barcelona, 2005.

³¹ J. Noya, *Los españoles ante un mundo en cambio*, Madrid, 2012, 135.

³² J. Nye, Soft power: the origins and political progress of a concept, 2.

³³ J. Nye, *The future of power*, New York, 2011.

³⁴ R. W. Grant and R.O. Keohane, Accountability and Abuses of Power in World Politic, *American Political Science Review*, 99–1 (2005), 29–43, 37.

³⁵ D. Lambert and A. Lester, Geographies of colonial philanthropy, *Progress in Human Geography*, 28, 3 (2004) 320–341, 320.

Burke's dramatic pentad

From the perspective of studies on the political communication of institutions, many authors have applied Kenneth Burke's thinking to the communication of organisations.³⁶ In search of a specific application of Burke's reflections, we find his planning called dramatic pentad, capital to define situations and identify his motivations. It is a set of five elements that can be expressed as questions: The act, the scene, the actor or actors, the means used (agency) and the purpose. Each element answers the questions: what happened (act), in what context (scene), who did it (agent), how was it done (agency), and why (purpose).³⁷ With the use of the pentad model applied to a specific situation, we try to recognise what is the motivation that underlies any description of the facts.

This structure was chosen for the analysis to identify its political and ideological influence in the society of its time and determine the symbolic power of the feat. Their choice is determined, among other reasons, by the facilities for their adaptation to different scenic compositions.³⁸ The act, what the actor performs on the scene, would be, in our case, the first circumnavigation. The perspective used to detail the act significantly marks the approach to which motivation is counted.

The scene is the field in which all communication elements are included. It does not refer to a specific physical place. It is a more open concept related to the cultural and social situation. The scene is somewhat more permanent, has an existence prior to the communicative act and lasts afterwards. The explanation of the scene, when describing the situation observed, indicates the quality of the act and allows it to give value and justification.

The actor, subject who performs the act on the scene, can be more or less numerous characters or groups and must be considered with all their cultural background, history, and any other aspect that could influence the sphere of the marked objective of the situation analysed. As for the means used to carry out the communicative action, in addition to the physical instruments, the possible strategies to try to achieve the desired destiny are also contemplated.

The purpose is the ultimate goal of the act, it is not a simple effect, it implies the existence of a will that uses certain means to develop the act.³⁹ While the effects will be achieved or not at the recipient, the purpose is related to the intention of the message sender, that is, to their interest. If the communication has been effective, purpose and effects will coincide, producing a symbolic transfer.

Results

The act

Joseph Nye and Steven Lukes identified three dimensions of power: the first, and most obvious, is to get someone to act without meeting their priorities; the second dimension of power would be the ability to determine what is decided, in journalistic terms, to establish the information agenda; and, finally, to influence people's preferences in such a way that they affect their choice without being aware of the exercise of power. It is clear that the control of knowledge and information is an essential part of the second and third dimensions. 'Francis Bacon, as is known, observed that

knowledge is power, Michel Foucault reversed the idea to hold that power determines what is considered knowledge'.⁴⁰

The meaning of the first round the world has an obvious polysemic character. Among other aspects, it undoubtedly represented a naval feat, a success of the expansionist policy of the Spanish crown against its rivals; it also meant a significant advance in geographical knowledge about people and unknown lands in the west; and, finally, a relevant economic impact on the spice trade.

The discovery of the Strait of Magellan opened the commercial possibility of the wealth of the East and supposes the breaking of the Portuguese monopoly of the spice trade. However, 'its geographical location presented disadvantages for its navigation'.⁴¹ Subsequent reconditioning expeditions managed to keep the location of the transcendental passage secret for several decades, and during the reign of Philip II its fortification was constructed to maintain the security of such a valuable route for the Spanish Monarchy. 'The success of the Magalhães-Elcano expedition by circumnavigating the globe for the first time and the benefits of Portugal in Asia stimulated Spanish interest in the Pacific which was called until the mid-18th century *el lago español*, the Spanish lake'.⁴²

If at the beginning of the 17th century we could detect a reorientation of philosophical and scientific discourses, we would notice that it was tied to specific languages (the languages of the modern period: English, German, French) and that it coincided with the moment when Amsterdam began to replace Seville as the western centre of economic transactions at the end of the Renaissance/first modern/colonial period and the beginning of the Enlightenment/modern/colonial period.⁴³

The theory of the World System supposes its own vision on the role played by the Iberian countries as protagonists of modern capitalism and world trade. Authors such as André Gunder Frank, Immanuel Wallerstein or Giovanni Arrighi apply the centre-periphery theory to explain the development of capitalism proposed by Fernand Braudel and identify the States of Central Europe as the backbones of modern capitalism during the 16th and 17th centuries. 'In the 17th century, the century of mercantilism, Spain and Portugal did not become, could not be, mercantilist and were therefore transformed into semi-peripheral states, transmission belts for the Central powers in the peripheral regions'.⁴⁴ In this way, the economic surpluses obtained mainly in Latin America and Eastern Europe were transferred to England, the Netherlands and northern France. Wallerstein affirms, in fact, that one of the Iberian problems was that they were not mercantile enough.⁴⁵ In the Spanish case, an oversized and ineffective imperial bureaucracy, even without the precious metals from the New World Europe, would have lacked the collective confidence to develop a capitalist system, in which profit is based on various deferrals of realised value. The precious metal must be considered, therefore, as an essential ingredient of a prosperous world-economy in any case.⁴⁶

However, without recognising effective and tenacious management by the Spanish Crown over the trade, especially that of precious metals, it is difficult to explain the benefits received in the

³⁶ M. J. Canel, *Comunicación de las instituciones públicas*, Madrid, 2007, 47.

³⁷ K. Burke, *A Grammar of motives*.

³⁸ K. Burke, *On Symbols and Society*, 143-144.

³⁹ M. Martín Algarra, *Teoría de la comunicación: Una propuesta*, Madrid, 2003, 113.

⁴⁰ T. Garthon, *Libertad de palabra*, Barcelona, 2017, 48.

⁴¹ R. C. Rigone, Las fortificaciones proyectadas en el Estrecho de Magallanes a finales del siglo XVI, *Revista Historia Autónoma*, 10 (2017) 49-65, 52.

⁴² R. Dobado, La globalización hispana del comercio y el arte en la Edad Moderna, *Estudios de Economía Aplicada*, vol.32-1 (2014) 13-42, 26.

⁴³ W. D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, & Colonization*, Michigan, 1995.

⁴⁴ I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World System II: Mercantilism and the consolidation of the European world-economy, 1600-1750*, New York, 1980, 158.

⁴⁵ I. Wallerstein, *El moderno sistema mundial*, Madrid, 1974, 193.

⁴⁶ I. Wallerstein, *El moderno sistema mundial*, 46.

coffers of its agents and supporters. With Carlos V, knowledge and information techniques are applied to politics to keep decisions made in the periphery under control. For illustrative purposes, we can recall that the first known central state archive was founded by Carlos V in Simancas. This link between knowledge and real dominance can be explained by contact with the Arab and Jewish scientific traditions, as well as by the early expansion throughout the Mediterranean, affecting administrative processes and a culture of political communication based on the report, the description and the selection of information.⁴⁷

This way of governing will have continuity with Felipe II 'a great brain in which the knowledge of his empire converges', by creating a structure in his Court, a 'network of relationships and communication possibilities' in order to maintain colonial rule.⁴⁸ Wallerstein himself quotes Geyl, who admires Philip II's bureaucratic prowess in the Netherlands: 'It was a remarkable example [the creation of dioceses] of what the monarch could do in order to build the state, and shows Philip as a diligent worker in the tradition of his home'.⁴⁹ An art of government that needed a constant flow of information to exercise the power to reward and punish, which would sometimes motivate the primacy of loyalty or disloyalty over the truth.⁵⁰ Arndt Brendecke uses the metaphor of Felipe II in El Escorial as a spider at the centre of a communications network, bringing a new perspective to the critical vision of the isolated and blind king in the face of time and his empire.

Global trade materialises with the founding of Manila in 1571, at which time all continents began to exchange products.⁵¹ And Seville attracted the interest of powerful merchants from all over Europe, among which the most prominent were the Genoese and the Fuggers, who saw their risks rewarded with interest rates of between 20% and 40%.⁵² The benefits of the New World, that surplus obtained by the Spanish Empire, served to finance the military campaigns in multiple conflicts that allowed it to retain its dominance throughout a century. 'The Ottoman danger in the Mediterranean, the control of Northern Italy, Central Europe, France, England, the West Indies, the East Indies, the internal rebellions and, above all, the eighty years of war in the Netherlands'.⁵³

The actors

The conjunction of political and economic interests and those related to knowledge and adventure are configured as the main actors of the trip. Fernão de Magalhães and Juan Sebastián Elcano personalise the spirit of the Renaissance man who seeks social ascent, wealth and glory regardless of sacrifices. Travel stories, with a greater diffusion since the appearance of the printing press, stimulate the imagination of adventurers who dream of new worlds closer to the magical than to reality. This is reflected from the beginning in the Pigafetta text, where we can appreciate these aspects and a full awareness of the relevance of the endeavour:

'Captain General Fernando de Magallanes had decided to undertake a long voyage across the ocean, where the winds blow furiously and where storms are very frequent. He had also resolved to open a path that no navigator had hitherto known; but he was careful not to publicise this daring project, fearing that it would try to dissuade him in view of the dangers he was to run, and that the crews would discourage him'.⁵⁴

The project of reaching the Moluccas Islands by the West, had, as stated in *Historia General de las Indias* by Francisco López de Gómara, published in Zaragoza in 1522, with the knowledge 'of the cosmologist and humanist Ruy Falero and Magalhães, with a reputation for good sailor'.⁵⁵ Despite the numerous references in texts and documents on the figure of Magalhães, there is still an appreciable ignorance about his life and origins. We know that he participated in various expeditions ordered by King Manuel I of Portugal in Asia and Africa; these allowed him to acquire geographical and climatic knowledge essential for navigation, configure a geographical reality of the world and glimpse new routes.

Magalhães and Elcano are the essential protagonists of the first circumnavigation, protagonists of a largely European company, an aspect that gives this adventure a significant uniqueness compared to other expeditions of the time. Fleeing from a local perspective and visions with an excessive nationalistic charge, they present multiple points in common, and the feat cannot be explained without both. Pierre Valière synthesizes it with the following words: 'Sans le génie portugais cette expédition n'eût été ni conçue ni rendue techniquement possible. Sans le génie espagnol elle n'eût été réalisée'.⁵⁶

The first can be included within the relevant group of Portuguese explorers whose trajectory has developed in the service of their monarch and the drive to extend their empire overseas, without forgetting their personal and commercial interests. Juan Sebastián Elcano, with less experience and scientific knowledge, demonstrated his practical skills in navigation.

Regardless all modern myths around his figure, Fernão de Magalhães was a sailor with extensive experience, and 'was, without doubt, a man well prepared from the nautical, geographical and cartographic point of view to lead an innovative project of navigation towards the East by the western route'.⁵⁷

No document confirms his birth in Porto, between 1480 and 1485 in the bosom of a noble family. There is not much data about his youth either, he was the page of the widowed queen D. Leonor, sister of Manuel I.⁵⁸ Before setting sail for India, he served King Manuel I as 'servant of the king em Foro de moço de câmara', according to Fernão de Oliveira. On the one hand, he was someone who received education in the House of the King and to whom, for this reason, he owed obedience. On the other hand, he was someone who served the king among the nobility considered second

⁴⁷ A. Brendecke, *The Empirical Empire: Spanish Colonial Rule and the Politics of Knowledge*, Berlin, 2016, 40, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110369847>.

⁴⁸ A. Brendecke, *Imperio e Información, Funciones del saber en el dominio colonial español*, Madrid/Frankfurt, 2012, 23-30.

⁴⁹ I. Wallerstein, *El moderno sistema mundial*, 204.

⁵⁰ A. Brendecke, *The Empirical Empire: Spanish Colonial Rule and the Politics of Knowledge*, 492.

⁵¹ D. O. Flynn and A. Giraldez, Born with a Silver Spoon: The Origin of World Trade in 1571, *Journal of World History*, 6 (1995) 201-221.

⁵² C. Martínez Shaw, Sevilla, siglo XVI: el corazón de las riquezas del mundo, Madrid, 1993; H. Kellenbenz, The Impact of Growth on Government: The Example of Spain, *Journal of Economic History*, 21 (september) (1967) 40-62.

⁵³ D. O. Flynn, El desarrollo del primer capitalismo a pesar de los metales preciosos del Nuevo Mundo: Una interpretación anti-Wallerstein de la España Imperial, *Revista de Historia Económica*, Año II, 2 (1984) 29-57, 41.

⁵⁴ Beginning of Book I under the title Partida de Sevilla hasta la desembocadura del estrecho de Magallanes. A. Pigafetta, Primo Viaggio Intorno al Globo Terracqueo. *La expedición de Magallanes-Elcano 1519-1522*, Madrid, 2016, 15.

⁵⁵ F. López de Gomara, Negociación de Magallanes sobre la Especiería, in *Historia General de la Indias*, Cap. XCI, Alicante, 1999, 137.

⁵⁶ P. Valiere (ed.) in F. Oliveira, *Le voyage de Magellan raconté par un homme qui fut en sa compagnie*, Paris, 1976, 19.

⁵⁷ R. Loureiro, Los años portugueses de Magallanes, in E. Vila Vilar (coord.), *Magallanes y Sevilla*, Sevilla, 2019, 15-36.

⁵⁸ This is stated by the Spanish chronicler Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola in his work *Conquista de las Islas Molucas* of 1609, 6; although, his name does not appear in the records of La Casa de la Reina.

level; this situation gave him access to a small pension or residence.⁵⁹

On March 25, 1505, he embarked with his brother Diogo de Sousa - his two brothers, Diogo and Duarte, used the maternal surname - in the army of D. Francisco de Almeida, who would be the first viceroy of the State of India. Since his arrival in Seville and throughout the trip, his Portuguese origin and disloyalty to that of the king himself generated misgivings among the officials of the House of Trade and part of the crew.

Juan Sebastián Elcano is a native of Getaria, region of Bizkaia, a seaside town with a long tradition in shipbuilding. His life is determined by his relationship with the sea and his way of life, which combines opportunities and uncertainty. He is part of a generation attracted by the development of American adventures and one of the main families of the town, especially by maternal line. Of the eight children that the Elcano/Puerto family had, one was a cleric, two women married in the town and five men dedicated themselves to work related to the sea.⁶⁰

Elcano's role has been questioned on occasions and on other occasions argued by chance inherent with this type of expedition. Pigafetta's text does not quote Elcano on any occasion, and we have no information about him until he joined the Magalhães expedition on January 8, 1519. 'Juan Sabastian del Cano *contramaestre* of the Vitoria ship began to serve Saturday the 8th of January of M.DXIX, he must pay a salary and maintenance M.D per month, he was given a dukedom for the salary of six days; [aside] CCCLXXV.⁶¹

But it is appropriate to mention that he is one of the first sailors hired with some responsibility as boatswain of the Nao Victoria, and that, before leaving Seville, he passed with the position of master to the Nao Concepción. During the months of preparation for the departure, he is mentioned a dozen times in the administrative documents, which allows to deduce a certain responsibility and trust.

Unlike previous explorers, such as Christopher Columbus or Vasco da Gama, this new generation of sailors has a more pragmatic and realistic vision of their travels. They are aware of the commercial possibilities and of their personal enrichment through the creation of commercial circuits between Europe and those lands misplaced on the maps related to the appreciated spices. Even these particular approaches are far from the imperialist and universalist anxieties of the Iberian monarchies of their time. Magalhães' proposal, together with his partner Ruy Falero, was to reach the Moluccas from the west without crossing Portuguese lands; in return, they would receive for a decade the monopoly of exploitation and governance of those lands.

Since its beginning, they were financed significantly by bankers located in the traditional centres of southern Germany and the Mediterranean. The election of Habsburg Carlos I had been supported by the Fugger and Welser with 687,000 florins, and precisely Heinrich Ehinger, one of the main representatives of the Weiser in Spain, bought much of the cargo in spices brought by Elcano.⁶² *La Victoria* arrived with its cellar loaded with 381 bags of cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg and sandalwood weighing 533 quintals. The cargo delivered to the rich merchant of Antwerp, Cristóbal de Haro,

covered the expedition's expenses and reported a profit of 346,000 maravedis.⁶³ The revenue motivation of an emerging capitalism drove merchants and monarchs to replace the Arabs in the trade of those valuable products - such as spices, silk or precious stones - and made them essential players.

The Fernão de Magalhães project needed, in addition to funding, the essential authorisation of a young Spanish monarch to boost the project and allow them to penetrate their possessions. Before the refusal received by the Portuguese court, he decided to seek the necessary support in the neighbouring nation and travelled to Seville, where the factor of the official Casa de Contratación, Juan de Aranda, was interested in the project. Magalhães, Ruy Falero and Juan de Aranda himself travelled to the court and presented their memorial to the court, as reflected in the public deed signed in Valladolid on February 23, 1518. Carlos I, a representative of the political power, acquires the commitment to assembling five ships with their corresponding personnel, supplies and weapons.

Carlos I, in those early years of reign faced misgivings, especially from Castilians, among other reasons, for his ignorance of the customs of the kingdom as the monarch was born in Ghent, his lack of proficiency with the language and the distrust generated by a court perceived as a foreigner. These include the rebellion of Communities in the spring of 1521, a historical fact profusely studied from different historiographical perspectives by different generations of intellectuals in their reflections on the idea of Spain and the Castilian.

The growth of a great authoritarian monarchy is represented in the field of the arts for classroom and persuasive purposes. The official image of Carlos V underwent an evolution that started from medieval approaches towards a classicist root of Renaissance taste. This change is visualised between two political events: the imperial coronation in Bologna (1530) and the conquest of Tunis (1535), with great echo in the Europe of the time. That gave him the nickname of Carolus Africanus. In the Royal Armory of Madrid collections, a shield known as Plus Ultra or Apotheosis of Carlos V is preserved. The work is considered one of the best examples of the Atlantic exaltation of Carlos V and his military conquests, with obvious references to classical mythology.⁶⁴ It allows to identify the new image of the Emperor, until then compared to the classic hero Hercules and the two columns that delimited the known world. The shield shows a new iconography inspired by a Roman ruler, based on the knowledge of classical culture, together with different symbols of his power.⁶⁵ In this way, the columns with the motto *plus ultra*, from the 16th century on, acquired the meaning of a daring transatlantic imperial expansion.⁶⁶

The scene

Half a millennium ago, the rivalry between Spaniards and Portuguese for finding new access routes to the spice lands and the dominance of that trade led to political and economic competition sustained, among other aspects, in the advances of geographical, astronomical or navigation that became true state secrets.

This technical superiority fostered an avidity for obtaining and translating treatises by cosmographers on the mathematical calculations necessary to achieve safe navigation in the open sea. The

⁵⁹ I. Soler, Magallanes y el dibujo del mundo, *Anais de História de Além-Mar*, XX (2019) 17-60, 23.

⁶⁰ The Euskadi Historical Archive preserves Elcano's personal archive, one of the sources used by Francisco de Borja de Aguinalde for his relevant studies on the hero.

⁶¹ Archivo General de Indias, Relación de gastos hechos para la Armada de Fernando de Magallanes, 1518-1519, 3255.

⁶² M. Fernández Álvarez, La España del emperador Carlos V, in R. Menéndez Pidal and J. M. Jover Zamora, *Historia de España*, XX, Madrid, 1982, 178; J. Friede, *Los Weiser en la conquista de Venezuela*, Caracas and Madrid, 1961, 136.

⁶³ E. Martínez Ruiz, *Desvelando horizontes. La circunnavegación de Magallanes y Elcano*, Madrid, 2016, 713.

⁶⁴ I. Soler, Magallanes y el dibujo del mundo, *Anais de História de Além-Mar*, 217-219.

⁶⁵ J. Cañizares-Esguerra, *Iberian science in the renaissance*, 89.

⁶⁶ E. Rosenthal, The Invention of the Columnar Device of Emperor Charles V at the Court of Burgundy in Flanders in 1516, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 36 (1973) 198-230; F. Checa (coord.), *Carolus*, Toledo and Madrid, 2000, 26.

efforts to represent the conquests with the greatest possible precision graphically are also justified by their value as elements of demonstrating the legal rights over the territory. It is essential to conceive and articulate an organisational structure capable of generating the necessary knowledge to conquer the New World. The English sought to imitate the schools for pilots institutionalised in Seville and admired the role of Spanish mathematicians, metallurgists, cosmographers, astronomers, navigators, and hydrographers in the development of empire.⁶⁷ Spanish navigational charts as navigational tools for the pilots of commercial merchant ships and as political tools for rulers asserting imperial power and claims in territorial disputes.⁶⁸ The need for tangible and detailed representations of the acquired lands drove the field of Spanish cosmography, ‘the work of royal cosmographers was science with a mission, deployed solely for the benefit of the state’.⁶⁹ This type of research, based mainly on the contributions of the Spanish intellectuals of the time, state documents from the Casa de Contratación [House of Trade] and the Council of the Indies, show the error made in linking knowledge of the Spanish Empire only with humanities and arts, to demonstrate that early methods of map-making involved a dialogue, not a separation, between the physical and social sciences. The crown’s monopoly on the flow of information for the protection of the State, may help explain its ignorance. The Spanish were concerned about the production of scientific knowledge, and it allowed a ‘new perspective of the historical narrative of the Scientific Revolution on how practitioners of Western science responded to the New World’.⁷⁰

One of the central arguments of contemporary thought dissents from Eurocentric narratives, cultural diffusionist interpretations and the “centre-periphery” binary.⁷¹ It attempts to counteract the vision imposed by the discourse of the colonising countries and interpret modernity and colonialism as two sides of the same coin. Consequently, it is not only a matter of providing scientific answers in the new scenario but also an appropriation of local knowledge in the process of cultural exchange that was silenced.

From the discoveries initiated by Christopher Columbus and continued by other Spanish navigators, the mood to find a strait that allowed to reach the Indian sea and facilitate the trade of spices was increased, without conflict with the agreements adopted with the king of Portugal. ‘The main thing that we send, and commission is, that in no way do you consent to touching, or discovering land or anything else within the limits of the most serene King of Portugal, my very expensive and beloved uncle and brother, nor to his detriment’.⁷²

The Portuguese Vasco de Gama skirted the Cape of Good Hope and crossed the Indian Sea, establishing alliances and commercial agreements that were an alternative to a lucrative business that, until then, had made some states of Italy prosper, especially Venice. As Martín Fernández de Navarrete reminds us in the prologue of his work: ‘Such prosperous events delayed the hopes and plans of both

nations and ignited more rivalries over the extension of their overseas domains, and their respective commercial interests’.⁷³

The mission of finding a strait between the Atlantic and the Pacific was previously entrusted to Captain Juan Díaz de Solís in November 1514. He was about to discover it when he arrived at the Río de la Plata but could not continue with the recognition of the southern coasts. According to the story of Maximiliano Transilvano ‘he was killed and eaten with certain Spaniards of his company by the man-eating called Cannibals’.⁷⁴

There are two remarkable dates in relation to the relationship of Europe with the East and its commercial connections that for various historians, in addition to their real value they also have an obvious symbolic value for Christianity.⁷⁵ We refer to the fall of Acre in 1291, the last great fortress of the Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem; and the loss of Byzantium in 1453, at the hands of the Ottoman Turks. Both events hinder the routes used to date for trade with the East, largely dominated by Genoa and Venice, and propitiate the need to seek new routes to restore relations. This change stimulates the turn from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic undertaken mainly by Spain and Portugal, among other reasons, due to its geographical location and the expertise of its sailors. They would open new routes to India, reach the American continent in their search, and circumnavigate the world for the first time.

Means used

The written word is the capital means to publicise the progress and territorial progress that leads the Empire. These first expeditions incorporate notaries to reflect and remember the facts, leaving in evidence that the written word is the most rigorous and, consequently, appropriate vehicle. Perhaps it is because of the weight of the word in Roman Law and the strength of the written test versus the visual one, the truth is that the shortage of images about the first trips is evident and the concern for incorporating artists into zero crews. Neither in the trips of Columbus, nor in the one of the Elcano images are registered, but the narrations of these trips stimulated the imagination of illustrators and painters who not yet having participated directly in the expeditions began to conceive a visual representation of the New World for the Europeans. The stories about cannibalism, races unknown until then, exotic species and even fantastic beings gave rise to images that reflected the dangers of adventure. Paradoxically, these illustrations alternate with sweet images that show a perfect coexistence between colonisers and indigenous people, who may seek to reassure investors.

Those chroniclers had a clear awareness of the interest and novelty of their writings in the Europe of the moment. This provision is reflected from the beginning, as evidenced by the numerous editions that came from different nations of the *Carta a Luis de Santángel* written by Christopher Columbus in 1493 to one of the main funders of his trip. And the stories of Pietro Martire d’Anghiera, who although never travelled to America, had direct knowledge of many explorers and discoverers. Also noteworthy is the work of Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, author of the *Sumario de la natural historia de las Indias* and appointed by Carlos V First Chronicler of the Indies, which was an inexhaustible source of news and reflections for his contemporaries. In some of its numerous

⁶⁷ J. Cañizares-Esguerra, *Iberian science in the renaissance: Ignored how much longer?*, *Perspectives on Science*, 90.

⁶⁸ A. Sandman, *Mirroring the world: sea charts, navigation, and territorial claims in sixteenth-century Spain*, in P. H. Smith, and P. Findlen, *Merchants & marvels: commerce, science, and art in early modern Europe*, New York and London, 2002, 83–108.

⁶⁹ M. M. Portuondo, *Secret science: Spanish cosmography and the New World*, Chicago, 2013, 3.

⁷⁰ M. M. Portuondo, *Secret science: Spanish cosmography and the New World*, 16.

⁷¹ A. Barahona and K. Raj, *A Historiography of the Life Sciences and Medicine in Latin America in Global Perspective*, in A. Barahona (ed), *Handbook of the Historiography of Latin American Studies on the Life Sciences and Medicine. Historiographies of Science*, Springer, Cham, 2022.

⁷² M. Fernández de Navarrete, *De los viajes y descubrimientos, que hicieron por mar los españoles*, vol. IV, Madrid, 1837, 130–131.

⁷³ M. Fernández de Navarrete, *De los viajes y descubrimientos, que hicieron por mar los españoles*, 3–4.

⁷⁴ M. Fernández de Navarrete, *De los viajes y descubrimientos, que hicieron por mar los españoles*, 354.

⁷⁵ F. Morales, *Historia general de América*, 155 et seq, Madrid, 1962; V. Vázquez de Prada, *Renacimiento, Reforma, Expansión europea*, 455 et seq, Pamplona, 1979.

editions, more than a dozen came from different European printers, and illustrations are shown.

As we mentioned before, in our analysis, we have deepened the works of Antonio Pigafetta, Francisco Albo and Maximilianus Transilvanus. The first two have been chosen as the only two testimonies written by protagonists in the expedition. The third is recognised as the story with the greatest dissemination in its time, and it is an official version of the Court of Carlos V.

Antonio Pigafetta's book, *Primo Viaggio Intorno al Globo Terraqueo* is a fundamental part of the stories of the Spanish expeditions made between the 16th and 17th centuries. Thanks to its detailed and fascinating account of the feat, Pigafetta can be considered the most relevant disseminator of the first circumnavigation trip of the globe; his 'most cosmopolitan propagandist driven, as he himself confesses, for the desire to achieve fame,' although he died without obtaining the desired recognition.⁷⁶ His story shows a great parallel with other texts of contemporary travel and classic authors recovered by the humanistic thinking of the time. It emphasises its religious load as a fundamental ideological element of legitimisation of the conquest, and the construction of the heroic figure of Magalhães as opposed to that of Elcano practically ignored and a symptom of possible animosities. Referring to this issue, it is striking the omission of the existence of the conflict that ended with the arrest of Juan de Cartagena, captain of the San Antonio and responsible for the fleet, being one of the most significant events that occurred during the navigation through the Atlantic. The interest in spreading his work is evident; in Valladolid he delivered a first version, now disappeared, to Carlos V, and he met with kings and influential people of the main European courts of the time.⁷⁷ Between 1522 and 1555, editions of his diary are published in different languages and places.

Pigafetta's diary helps to build a geographical truth from life experience: 'a textbook is a performance of reality; it presents a representation of reality and at the same time makes a reality'.⁷⁸

Pigafetta's way of narrating seeks the fascination of the reader for a strange world by activating the factor of the extraordinary with useful information for political interests. This can be seen in his description of Brazilians: 'Sometimes they eat human flesh, but only that of their enemies, which they do not perform out of desire or pleasure, but out of habit ... These peoples are extremely credulous and kind, and it would be easy to make them embrace Christianity'.⁷⁹

Along with the description, introduce anecdotes and ask questions that seek complicity and blur the barriers between writer and reader: 'The young women often came on board to offer themselves to the sailors in order to obtain a present: one day one of the most beautiful ones also went up, without a doubt with the same object, but having seen a nail the size of a finger and believing that they weren't looking at her, she took it and very quickly placed it between the two lips of her sensual organs. Did she think she was

hiding it? Did she think so to adorn herself? Such was what we could not guess'.⁸⁰

Before his departure for Spain, during his stay in Venice, he lived in a culturally elevated environment related to philosophers of the stature of Mantua Pietro Ponponazzi and was knowledgeable of travel literature through handwritten and printed copies. The systematisation of sources related to Pigafetta allows us to draw a profile that allows us to discard his economic ambition as a motivation to join the expedition, his salary was one of the lowest, and confirm his desire to create a story that will provide the glory.⁸¹ Like the large number of stories written in the 16th century related to sea voyages, Pigafetta adopts the rhetorical models of the Middle Ages, evident in his way of describing wonderful elements in the novel. The giants that he draws bear a certain parallel with the Gargantua created by François Rabelais in 1532:

'One day when we least expected it, a man of gigantic stature appeared to us. He was on the beach almost naked, singing and dancing at the same time and throwing sand on his head / ... / I was also there with several others. When he saw us, he expressed much admiration, and by raising a finger upwards, he undoubtedly wanted to signify to us that he thought we had descended from heaven. This man was so tall that with his head we barely reached his waist'.⁸²

Unlike the newspaper of the Venetian Pigafetta, the Greek Francisco Albo focuses on his nautical issues, with greater geographical precision in his annotations very useful for subsequent expeditions. Albo continues the logbook started by Magalhães, whose title, according to Martín Fernández de Navarrete, was *Diario o derrotero del viaje de Magallanes desde la altura del cabo de San Agustín en la costa de Brasil hasta el regreso a España*. The manuscript of 83 folios is in the General Archive of the Indies, Board 34, Branch 5. Its information is of great relevance to configure new maps and more accurate navigation charts, fundamental aspects to maintain periodic trade routes and claim membership by right of discovery of the territories. Regarding this last aspect, as a propaganda example, it is worth mentioning the creation by the cartographer Nuño García de Torenó of a letter from the Philippine Islands with the data collected on the trip that reaffirmed the Castilian rights against the Portuguese crown and that was given by Carlos V to his sister-in-law Beatriz of Portugal.⁸³

The publicity of the circumnavigation trip had as its main reference in its time the letter written in Latin by the secretary of Emperor Maximilianus Transilvanus. Dated on October 5, 1522, in Valladolid, when only a month had elapsed since the arrival of *La Trinidad*, it demonstrates the court's diligence in communicating the news and represents an official testimony of the success. Addressed to the Archbishop of Salzburg and Bishop of Cartagena Mateo Lang de Wellenburg, chronologically describes in 20 sections the feat using as source the direct testimonies of the sailors who returned, especially 'from the captain of the vessel that came back (known as Miguel del Cano)'.⁸⁴ Maximilianus affirms that the main mission of this letter, written with 'sincere fidelity', is to discard old false beliefs about the unknown territories until that moment thanks to the new knowledge acquired. Regarding the style, the

⁷⁶ E. Martínez Ruíz, *Desvelando horizontes. La circunnavegación de Magallanes y Elcano*, Madrid, 2016, 730.

⁷⁷ E. Martínez Ruíz, *Desvelando horizontes. La circunnavegación de Magallanes y Elcano*, 733.

⁷⁸ J. Law and V. Singleton, *This is not an object*, 1, Centre for Science Studies and the Department of Sociology, Lancaster University, 2000, <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/resources/sociology-online-papers/papers/law-singleton-this-is-not-an-object.pdf>.

⁷⁹ A. Pigafetta, *Primo Viaggio Intorno al Globo Terraqueo. La expedición de Magallanes–Elcano 1519–1522*, 20–22.

⁸⁰ A. Pigafetta, *Primo Viaggio Intorno al Globo Terraqueo. La expedición de Magallanes–Elcano 1519–1522*, 23.

⁸¹ A. Nunziatella, Antonio Pigafetta, cavaleiro do mar oceano. Uma reconstrução biográfica, *Anais de história de além-mar*, XX (2019) 61–80.

⁸² A. Pigafetta, *Primo Viaggio Intorno al Globo Terraqueo. La expedición de Magallanes–Elcano 1519–1522*, 24–25.

⁸³ M. L. Martín–Merás, *Cartografía marítima hispana: la imagen de América*, Madrid, 1993, 87.

⁸⁴ M. Fernández de Navarrete, *De los viajes y descubrimientos, que hicieron por mar los españoles*, 250.

author's identification with the great adventure is reflected in the use of the first person of the plural on several occasions, and although it has an obvious descriptive character, it does not avoid including personal assessments of the events, nor the employment in an epic tone: 'These are actually eighteen sailors who with this ship contributed to Seville more worthy of being put in immortal memory, than those argonauts that with Jason sailed'.⁸⁵

The urgency and political relevance of gathering information about the trip became a matter of state for all European courts. Gasparo Contarini, ambassador of the Venetian Republic, will obtain the handwritten letter from Elcano meant for the Emperor translated into Italian and then send it urgently to Venice. On the same days, the humanist scholar, Maximiliano Transilvano sent his 'epistle' in Latin to the archbishop of Salzburg, which was printed in Cologne in January 1523, in Paris by Pierre Viart, in July of that same year; and in November in Rome by Francesco Miniti Calvi, a copy dedicated to the Datario Gian Matteo Giberti, a confidant of the newly elected Pontiff Clement VII.⁸⁶

Due to its political nature, the Transilvano text acquires great relevance for the present study. It shows the urgency and importance that the court gives to the dissemination of the feat, using Latin, the language of the enlightened and used in European embassies. The message serves the interests of its addressee, since the communication of the feat of the first circumnavigation has been carried out without interfering with the geographical distribution with Portugal, thus avoiding any conflict. Together with the account of the chronicler of the Indies Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, also based on direct interviews with the survivors, they are two of the fundamental pillars of the origin of the Castilian textual tradition on the event.

The printing of the texts of Pigafetta, Transilvano and d'Anghiera allow the public circulation of the discovery throughout Europe. Interest in travel is reflected in the multiple editions of these stories since 1523, with translations into Italian, German or French, languages of other empires that are struggling to become masters of the world. The lack of circulation of these descriptions in Spanish until the end of the 19th century is significant, although it is worth mentioning the interpretations that, among others, the chroniclers, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo or Antonio Herrera, reproduce about them. Giovanni Ramusio brought together these three writings in the *Delle Navigazioni et Viaggi* collection, published between 1550 and 1590 in Venice, the world capital of publishing in the 16th century. Ramusio's work became the reference work on discoveries for 'a reading public that reads or listens, new ways of narrating about geographies hitherto unknown and that proposes new ways of interpreting them'.⁸⁷

Purpose

In the instructions signed by King Carlos, of which the scribe of His Majesty Juan de Sámano gave faith on May 8, 1519, we can appreciate the commercial and diplomatic vision of the expedition without the intention of submitting any people.⁸⁸ In turn, there is no doubt the interest in compiling as accurately as possible the

⁸⁵ M. Fernández de Navarrete. *De los viajes y descubrimientos, que hicieron por mar los españoles* (Vol. IV), 284.

⁸⁶ Aguinalgalde, Juan Sebastián de Elcano y Fernando de Magallanes, dos hombres y un destino. *Ensayo de metodología y uso de las fuentes documentales castellanas y portuguesas*, 158.

⁸⁷ M. J. Benites, Estrecho de Magallanes: viaje, relato y archivo, *Zama*, 17–32 (2019), 26–27, doi.org/10.34096/zama.a11.n11.7339.

⁸⁸ P. Contreras, Magallanes y su proyecto, in E. Martínez Ruiz (dir). *Desvelando horizontes. La circumnavegación de Magallanes y Elcano*, Madrid, 2016, 327–384, 366–384.

maximum possible information of the discovered territories and the freedom to write about them without any censorship; as reflected in the logbook of Francisco Albo, captain of *La Trinidad*, and the newspaper of the chronicler Antonio Pigafetta.

The expedition is equipped to record any event that occurs, and a notary public embarks on each ship to attest. Despite the fact that the crew is mostly illiterate, significant amounts or reams of paper are loaded, ten bound books to keep track of accounts and losses; and significantly, as reflected in the instructions given by the Emperor to Magalhães and Faleiro on May 8, 1519, total 'epistolary freedom' is allowed. Once again, the interest of La Casa de la Contratación and the Court in the information is evident.

From the political communication perspective, we can differentiate two aspects: the demand for information and the dissemination of the feat. The writer Stefan Zweig in his biography about Magalhães written in the thirties of the last century, highlights the relevance of Pigafetta on the trip: 'Well, what does a feat mean if it is not described? A historical fact is not concluded when realised, but only when it is transmitted to posterity'.⁸⁹

The significance of the first circumnavigation in its time is evident, it was reflected in many writings and endures over the centuries. This is how Martín Fernández de Navarrete reminds us in the introduction of his work:

'The importance, the surprise, the admiration caused by Magalhães's, gloriously finished by Juan Sebastián de Elcano, is painted by Juan Bautista Ramusio, a contemporary writer, and the most appreciated collector of the journeys of his time, saying: 'The journey made for the Spaniards in the space of three years around the world it is one of the greatest and most wonderful things that have been executed in our time, and even of the companies that we know of the ancients, because it greatly exceeds all that we know so far'.⁹⁰

Although the main objective was to obtain the information that the Crown considered necessary, as evidenced by the well-known questionnaire of fifty questions by the Cosmographer Juan López de Velasco in 1574, some ambivalence also arises between the true referential, typical of historiography, and certain wonderful events reported that fulfil a social function with a reader 'eager to explore the adventures of some Spaniards in unknown territories and in search of unattainable treasures'.⁹¹

The official Cosmographic generated from La Casa de Contratación de Sevilla, at the Court or at the University of Salamanca related to transoceanic trips allowed the control and organisation of the new territories incorporated into the Crown. It is an official science dominated by a centralised state that seeks to settle disputes and diplomatic controversies favourably. The location by coordinates of a territory takes precedence over its physical discovery. This happened with the Moluccan islands, which were located in an interested way on the Portuguese or Spanish side indistinctly. Jorge Reinel, who accompanied Magalhães to Spain, drew up a map for the trip that would be part of the broad group of 'constructive cartographies'.⁹² Later, in 1522, the cartographer Nuño García de Torenó drew up a letter from the Philippines with the data collected from Elcano on his return from the expedition.

⁸⁹ S. Zweig, Magallanes. *La aventura más audaz de la humanidad*, Valladolid, 2017, 131.

⁹⁰ M. Fernández de Navarrete, *De los viajes y descubrimientos, que hicieron por mar los españoles*, 18–19.

⁹¹ M. J. Benites, Los derroteros teóricos de una categoría heterogénea: los relatos de viajes al Nuevo Mundo (Siglo XVI), *Moderna Språk*, 107, 1 (2013) 31–38, 35.

⁹² See M. Destombes, The Chart of Magellan, *Imago Mundi*, 12 (1955) 65–88.

Toreno's letter constitutes an obvious example of propaganda to reaffirm the rights of Castile before the courts and shows the ability of the maps to maintain or transform the status quo of territorial sovereignty, by representing the Moluccan islands on the Castilian side. This was the first Spanish map of South and Southeast Asia region where the Antimeridian of the Moluccas was drawn.⁹³

Cosmography is not only the material fruit of geographical discoveries, but a complex process of reciprocal influence between human beings in the development of their trades, institutions where science was standardised and politicised, and material objects such as maps through which the scientific policy of the Universal Monarchy can be traced, a policy based on the visual representation of the territorial heritage of the Habsburgs.⁹⁴

Finally, it is worth highlighting, as an ideological objective, the diffusion and expansion of Christianity among the inhabitants of the newly discovered lands. The possibility of starting a new crusade against Islam once the reconquest of the kingdoms that made up the Iberian Peninsula is over, stimulates and serves as a justification for the desire to conquer within the European environment. Carlos I exercised most of the powers attributed to the Church in the Spanish kingdom and, consequently, was responsible for the control and evangelising work in the Indies. In this regard, the Spanish conquest unleashed efforts by the agents of the colonial power to translate and interpret the multiple existing languages of those populations, largely with the objective of religious proselytism.⁹⁵ Although, also, the knowledge of the native languages allowed the explorers to know the territory and its qualities.⁹⁶

Discussion and conclusions

The proposed analysis understands political communication as a deliberate process to substantiate a power decision that seeks to legitimise itself through the generation of a discourse. For the interpretation of this story and its repercussions, from Burke's theoretical proposal, an approach has been sought to understand the meaning of the expedition and the intentions that motivated the different protagonists, aspects that transcend the physical event.

The Burkean perspective has human action as its starting point, especially communicative action, and its study of action focuses on the subjective meaning of the intentionality involved in any act. Communicative action is fundamental in allowing the exchange of symbols and, therefore, in social construction. Imaginaries become truths when accepted and appropriated by a collective. Only then does the story become true.

After examining Pigafetta's text, a mixture of reason and feeling can be appreciated. The reason in its descriptive and explanatory character; the feeling in its attempt to understand a new culture and provoked by the fascination before the discovered geography. The conjunction of both aspects for the construction of the story survives and shows its influence in the works of the romantic travel literature of the 19th century.

The endeavour concluded by Juan Sebastián Elcano is a relevant moment in the context of Spanish expeditions in the fifteenth and

sixteenth centuries. He strengthened the power of the Emperor and the Spanish Monarchy, infused society with a growing dose of confidence in the new emerging capitalist class of bankers and merchants. He meant the social ascent for those adventurers, promoting their material and symbolic recognition.

Clearly, the idea of *soft power* takes on its full meaning in the most advanced postmodern societies and has a direct connection to the importance of public opinion in today's democracies, but still it has some similarities with the ideological will shown in the endeavour and present in the reality of the 16th-century, despite the existence of obvious gaps between elites and popular classes.

Peter Sloterdijk, equates the importance of the feat with the Copernican revolution when speaking of the 'trace of the Magalhães revolution of the world image' by indicating that 'if with Copernicus the Earth revolves around the Sun, with the first circumnavigation trade and money are what will make the Earth revolve around them. The confirmation of the sphericity of the Earth, strengthens its total knowledge and opens the possibility of its total and imperialist possession'.⁹⁷

The study of writing techniques and technologies in relation to the creation of geographic knowledge, understood as its political deployment towards audiences, allows an approach to the relationships between writing, art and commerce.⁹⁸ In the case of Spain, the particularities of its imperial project limit in one way or another what the explorers see and how they represent the New World, in a way they definitely shape the empire of words.⁹⁹ From this perspective, we can consider Pigafetta an antecedent of *soft power*, although sometimes certain appreciations or omissions about the trip place his work near narrative fiction by providing an alternative account to the official discourse.

The endeavour contributes decisively to expanding the Christian religion and the Spanish language that endures actively in our present. As Walter Mignolo reminds us: 'The legacies of the Spanish Empire in the Americas connect the 15th and 16th centuries with the present, be it that of the multilingual and multicultural Andean or Mesoamerican societies in Latin America or the emerging Latin cultures in the United States'.¹⁰⁰

The first circumnavigation made possible a two-way scientific exchange, a collective knowledge production. It produced new interconnections with a diversity of cultures in a vast geographical area. Overcoming previous imperialist visions, it helped to build modern science through cultural exchange, as has happened in the relations between Europeans and civilisations in other areas of the world; although it did not obtain its due recognition as it was generated through appropriations and silencing practices.¹⁰¹

When the power of the Spanish Monarchy declined, especially from the 17th century, Spanish went to the background compared to the languages of modernity -French, English and German-, among other aspects, by losing its power as a language that generated knowledge. It continued to be an ideal language for literary and cultural expression as it was capable of transmitting feelings and emotions, but it lost influence when knowledge began

⁹³ A. Sánchez Martínez, De la 'cartografía oficial' a la 'cartografía jurídica': la querrela de las Molucas reconsiderada, 1479-1529, 12.

⁹⁴ A. Sánchez Martínez, La institucionalización de la cosmografía americana: la Casa de Contratación, el Real y Supremo Consejo de Indias y la Academia de las Matemáticas de Felipe II, *Revista de Indias*, 70, 250 (2010) 715-748, 741.

⁹⁵ R. Valdeón, *Translation and the Spanish empire in the Americas*, Amsterdam, 2014.

⁹⁶ A. R. Novaes, Histórias Escondidas nos Mapeamentos Fronteiriços. Agências Indígenas nos Arquivos do Coronel Percy Harrison Fawcett, *Terra Brasilis (Nova Série)*, 14 (2020).

⁹⁷ P. Sloterdijk, *Esferas II. Globos (Macrosferología)*, Madrid, 2004, 729.

⁹⁸ M. Ogborn, Geographies pen: writing, geography and the arts of commerce, 1660-1760, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 30-2 (2004), 294-315, 294.

⁹⁹ S. Massmann, Geografías del imperio: Utopía y desencanto en las representaciones del Estrecho de Magallanes (1520 y 1620), *Hispanofilia*, vol. 172, diciembre (2014) 25-40, 25.

¹⁰⁰ W. Mignolo, El lado más oscuro del Renacimiento, *Universitas Humanística*, 67 enero-junio (2009) 165-203, 168.

¹⁰¹ K. Raj, *Relocating modern science: circulation and the construction of knowledge in South Asia and Europe, 1650-1900*, Springer, 2007.

to be based on reason and empiricism.¹⁰² This would explain, for example, the little relevance that the historians of the 18th century gave to the research and compilations made by Spanish officials in Spanish America at that time. The Archive of the Indies of Seville contains a series of documents that, following the tradition of collecting information from the Spanish Empire, are highly relevant for understanding the relationship between science, politics and economic objectives in the Spain of the Enlightenment.¹⁰³

The writer Gabriel García Márquez, in his speech given upon receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature, four and a half centuries later, highlights the imagination of the chronicler Antonio Pigafetta: 'this short and fascinating book, in which the germs of our novels are already glimpsed of today'.¹⁰⁴ Consequently, we can say that the chroniclers of the Indies inspired the marvellous and real writing styles.

For some centuries now, for a State to be considered dominant, it must have, among other aspects, the ability to generate science and knowledge recognised by its competitors. In turn, it seems appropriate to mention the significant transformations that occurred

during the time frame of the Magalhães-Elcano expedition 'since the beginning of the 16th century, especially in Renaissance Italy, some artists achieved personal fame'.¹⁰⁵ In this regard, we can identify the knight Pigafetta -so he signed his work-with his curious Renaissance look and his obvious ethnographic and linguistic interest, as a precursor to the enlightened naturalist scientists of the 18th century thirsty for knowledge. From the result of the proposed analysis, we can conclude that there was an obvious interest in knowledge, although the main objective of the trip has an economic character and meant the opening to new commercial exchanges and revolutionised existing geographical conceptions.

Symbols, norms, values, beliefs, myths or ideals guide and give meaning to the behaviour of society concerning its governing institutions and political actors. They are, in part, the engine and allow us to explain their actions and operation.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

¹⁰² W. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, & Colonization*, Michigan, 1995.

¹⁰³ P. Vos, Natural History and the Pursuit of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Spain, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 40, 2 (2007) 209–239.

¹⁰⁴ G. García Márquez, La soledad de América Latina, Discurso de aceptación del Premio Nobel, 1982, in https://cvc.cervantes.es/actcult/garcia_marquez/audios/gm_nobel.htm.

¹⁰⁵ T. Clark, *Arte y Propaganda en el siglo XX. La imagen política en la era de la cultura de masas*, Madrid, 2000, 9.