George Bryan Souza and Jeffrey Scott Turley, eds.

The Boxer Codex: Transcription and Translation of an Illustrated Late Sixteenth-Century Spanish Manuscript Concerning the Geography, History and Ethnography of the Pacific, South-East and East Asia. Leiden: Brill, 2016. Pp. xxxvi + 771. Hb, 199 euros.

This first ever publication of the complete *Boxer Codex* in the original Spanish and in English translation represents a major contribution to multidisciplinary scholarship on sixteenth-century contacts between European and Asia Pacific native societies.

Its editors, George Bryan Souza and Jeffrey Scott Turley, describe it as “a collection of accounts, narratives, descriptions and illustrations concerning the geography, ethnography and history of people, politics and societies in the western Pacific and major segments of maritime and continental South-east Asia and East Asia that were written in Spanish or translated from Portuguese to Spanish between 1574 and 1591 and compiled soon after at Manila” (1). The codex consists of 612 pages—314 with texts, 97 with hand-drawn illustrations, four missing and 197 blank; hence, the editors’ hypothesis regarding its unfinished state. Its twenty-two sections of which five have known authors contain narratives, short captions and illustrations about places, peoples and customs. Among them are sections of varying length on Cagayan, Visayans, Moros, Tagalogs in the Philippines as well as on Brunei, Aceh, Patani, Siam, New Guinea, and China. The illustrations, unfortunately not reproduced in color, depict people of diverse status or occupation from places discussed as well as Chinese deities and animals, both real and mythical.

This manuscript currently housed in Indiana University’s Lilly Library takes its name after its previous owner, Charles Ralph Boxer, British Army officer turned historian and book collector. Boxer first wrote about this rare manuscript in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain* (no. 1/2, 1950) and subsequently shared it with various scholars. Hence the codex has been often referenced with some sections translated and some illustrations reproduced especially in William Henry Scott’s *Barangay* (1994), that information and illustrations from these fragments have become commonplace in both scholarly and popular literature.

However, this Souza-Turley edition does not only offer the unpublished sections or more carefully rendered transcriptions and translations of the entire codex but also a critical apparatus consisting of (i) a comprehensive introduction, (ii) a glossary of Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Malay, and Tagalog terms

used in the codex, and (iii) extensive footnotes in the translation providing technical information and critical explanation.

In their introduction, the editors point out some inadequacies in existing transcriptions and translations, either due to poor textual copies or insufficient technical expertise. With no scholarly benefit to having the Spanish text and its English translation side-by-side, separating the original and the translation provides a more readable format. Turley's English translation reads fluently without losing the historical flavor of the text. Thus Souza and Turley provide a complete transcription using consistent and systematic norms as well as "a holistic English version unified by a single stylistic voice" (14).

Furthermore, their introduction includes detailed technical information on the provenance of the manuscript as a whole and its individual sections. Based on both internal textual evidence and earlier studies, they engage crucial issues regarding the historical circumstances surrounding the codex during its writing and compilation in Manila and its transmission to Spain. In particular, its overall nature, form, and purpose as well as the identities of its final compiler/s, authors of individual sections and its intended reader/s are carefully discussed, and the editors' views on these issues clearly argued.

Among several possible compilers including Jesuit Pedro de Chirino (1557–1635), author of *Relación de las Islas Filipinas* (1604), Souza and Turley conclude that Antonio de Morga Sanchez Garay (1559–1636), author of the well-known *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (1609), probably compiled the codex. They see him as best fitting the compiler's traits inferred from internal evidence and related studies: "an intelligent, well-educated and ambitious layman who was a colonial officer of the first order" (26), and who "serv[ing] in the Crown's colonial administration in the Philippines (1595 to 1604) [...] held such a position of power and trust that he had access to the governor's and colonial administration's archives, and most probably, the initiative to compile the Codex whether by request or to fulfill orders" (27).

In the end, this magisterial edition does not only sharpen the discussion on these critical issues regarding the *Boxer Codex*. It opens up horizons for greater in-depth understanding of early contacts between European and Asia Pacific native societies as well as for more comprehensive and comparative analysis of these native societies. Despite having only a single reference to early Jesuit mission (527–28), the codex remains valuable for Jesuit studies for its description of the native societies that Jesuits encountered and for possible comparisons with similar Jesuit sources such as Chirino's *Relación* mentioned above and Francisco Ignacio Alcina's *Historia de las islas e indios de Bisaya* (1668).

For all this, Souza and Turley deserve no less than great recognition for their contribution.

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