
Document 1565D

Legazpi—Reply from the Viceroy to the King, dated Mexico 28 May 1560

Sources: Col. de Navarrete, t. 17, doc. 7; Col. Ultramar ii, doc. 12, pp. 100-106; summarized in B&R 2:79-81, as follows.

Mexico, 28 May 1560.—Velasco writes to the King in answer to his letter, saying that he will do his utmost to fulfil his commands in regard to the voyage. He says: "it is impossible to go to the Philippine Islands without infringing the contents of the treaty, because the latter are no less within the treaty than are the Moluccas, as Your Majesty can see by the accompanying memorandum, made solely for myself by Fray Andrés de Urdaneta. This latter possesses the most knowledge and experience of all those islands, and in the best and most accurate cosmographer in New Spain." He asks the King to show this memorandum to any living members of the Loaysa expedition in order to verify it. The King should redeem the Spaniards captured by the natives in the Philippines and other islands near the Moluccas. To do this and to resupply the ships would not be in violation of the treaty made with Portugal. In case the ships should depart before the King's answer is received, the Viceroy will order them to act in accordance with the above-mentioned memorandum. The vessels of the expedition will consist of two galleons of 200 and 170 or 180 tons respectively, and a patache. Wood, already fitted, is to be sent in the galleons, with which to make small boats for use among the islands. "The man in charge of the work, writes me that the cables and rigging necessary for these vessels will be all ready, by the spring of '61, at Nicaragua and Realejo, ports in the province of Guatemala where I have ordered these articles made, because they can be made better there than in all the coast of the Southern Sea; and because they can be brought easily from those ports to the Port of Navidad, where the ships must take the sea." The artillery and other articles sent from Spain for the vessels have arrived. The letters written by the King to Urdaneta and the Augustinian Provincial were delivered, and both have concurred with the contents thereof. "It is most fitting that Fray Andrés go on this expedition, because of his experience and knowledge of these islands, and because no-one in those kingdoms or in these understands so thoroughly the required course as he; moreover, he is prudent and discreet in all branches of the business, and

has an excellent judgment." He assures the King that the return voyage to New Spain will be made as quickly as possible.

In a postscript he adds that all due secrecy has been observed in regard to the purpose of the fleet, and it has been given out that it is for the trade with Peru and for coastal defence; however, it is rumored that they are for the voyage westward.



Father Andrés de Urdaneta, O.S.A. *As a young Spanish Army captain, he had taken part in the Loaysa expedition. He became a friar at 55 years of age. In his sixties, he accompanied Legazpi and became the official discoverer of the return route across the North Pacific. (From B&R 2:163, from a painting by Madrazo in the Augustinian College at Valladolid)*