
Document 1619C

Jesuit annual report for 1618-1619

Sources: RAH Jesuit Tome 84, n° 8 (badly dilapidated) & Tome 112, n° 55 (new n° 9/3685); translated in B&R 18: 204-234.

Relation of events from July 1618 to July 1619, dated Manila 12 July 1619

These Philippine Islands are surrounded by so many and various neighboring countries that they are like the center of a very beautiful circumference composed of cities, kingdoms and provinces... All that is written here is taken from relations and letters which our Fathers have sent from various places, and from what I have seen this year in this country.

...
[The author goes on to relate the state of affairs in India, China, Cochinchina, Japan, Mindanao, Moluccas, as well as those of Manila proper. A few excerpts follow.]

Of Great China.

In China, within recent years, a very severe persecution of Christians broke out; and on account of the enmity of a mandarin, who was the cause of this storm, four Fathers were ejected from the residences of Sanguin and Paquin...¹

They write that they found, in one of the many provinces of that extensive realm, a people who worship the holy cross, and who are called Christians, although they are so only in name, for they are in truth heathen.² They also found a synagogue of more than 12,000 Jews who live under the law of Moses.

1 Ed. note: Nanking and Peking. One of those Jesuits was Fr. Pantoja who had founded the Peking mission with Father Mateo Ricci. He died soon after he arrived at Macao, in January 1618. In August 1618, the Manchus began their drive to expel the Mings from China, which they completed many years later.

2 Ed. note: They were the remnants of early Nestorian Christians. Traces of the Jewish religion were also found in China. Both had been cut off from their roots from over 1,000 years.

...

Of Japan.

In treating of the affairs in Japan one would wish to begin with the coming of Fray Luis Sotelo, who, as soon as he arrived here [in 1618], began to attempt so many things that he succeeded with none. He said to the Bishop of Cebu (who is governor of this archbishopric)¹ that he had secured bulls from his Holiness authorizing him to be bishop of half of Japan, but as they remained in the Council they were worthless. They even say (about which I am not certain) that he attempted to consecrate himself here, but he did not succeed. Then he planned to establish a seminary of Japanese [in Manila], and had many of them ordained, with what right or authority we do not know. Over this matter there was much contention. He had a church built for this seminary, and also took possession of various places, particularly in a suburb of this city. One day, he quietly took possession of a house, placed a bell upon it, and said mass. Soon the Governor and the Bishop came and asked him what he might be doing. He responded that a smith puts his forge wherever he can in order to work at his trade, and that he was doing likewise. They drove him away from there, and now he is in one of his [i.e. Franciscan] convents.

...

This year in Japan a great number of supernatural occurrences have been noted, particularly in the city of Yendo [i.e. Edo], which is the court of the emperor. First, in the river at Yendo they saw some very beautiful ships sailing against the current, a thing never seen there before, for the river is small, and navigable only by very small boats. Second, in the courtyard of the palace, one day there was seen an animal larger than an ox and smaller than an elephant, whose species none could tell, as they had never seen such an animal before. They tried to kill it with arquebuses and arrows, but it disappeared. Third, in a hall of the same palace a large greyhound was found howling pitifully. This the Japanese took for a bad sign. They asked who had brought such a dog there, but no-one could find out, because the guards had been at the door all the time. They tried to catch the animal and put it out, but it became invisible to them. Fourth, in the quarter where the *daimyos* live while at court, there was heard a great clatter of arms, just as if a very bloody civil war were going on. They called to arms in the city, and every one responded. They went to the quarter in question, but found everything perfectly quiet. Fifth, on the top of a hill nearby the city they discovered some flags in the trees. They went to see what they were, but found nothing. Finally, when the emperor was about to go to Meaco, a **comet** like a handled *catana*, with a very beautiful

1 Ed. note: Fr. Pedro Arce, O.S.A.

cross in its head, appeared above his fortress at Yendo. This caused him so much fear and consternation that he gave up his journey entirely.¹ Many of these things will not be readily believed. Some of them I did not see, but credible persons from where they occurred report them as well authenticated.

The persecution of Christians in Japan is more bloody than it has ever been before, and has become as bad as could be imagined. It will suffice to say that in the city of Nangasaqui 30 bars of silver, each one containing about 4 ducats, are publicly offered to whomever may discover a religious... During the last year, more than 50 Japanese have nobly given their lives to the service of Jesus Christ... These Fathers, like good pilots, have not been dismayed by this very great tempest. On the contrary, there have been 32 members [of the Society] distributed throughout Japan² holding fast to the helm of this little craft...

Some religious (although only a few) from the orders of St. Dominic, St. Francis, and St. Augustine, are also working laudably in the vineyard of the Lord.

...

Last year I wrote how one of the ships which were despatched from this city to aid the Moluccas resorted to treason, and took possession of everything. Thenceforth, as is well known, it went from one country to another and from one place to another. Finally, it sailed, almost shipwrecked, to an island of Japan. When the Portuguese commandant³ learned of this, he sent to the ruler of the island to demand those robbers who had mutinied on one of the king's ships. The ruler sent to the commandant, proposing to hang them; but some religious forbade it, whereupon he sent them prisoners to Macao, where, they say, the mutineers were punished.

...

Of the Philippine Islands.

On 11 November 1618 [Gregorian calendar], at 3 a.m., a **comet** was seen from this city of Manila. It had a tail, was silver-colored, with a slighty ashen tinge, and had an extraordinary form. At first it was like a trumpet, and then lide a *catana* (which is a weapon peculiar to Japan, resembling a cutlass), with the edge toward the southwest; and at the end it appeared palm-shaped. The declination of the southwestern end was 20° south. At first its length was equal to the whole of the sign of Libra, with which it rose. Eight days afterward, the declination of the southwestern end was 24° 30' south, and the lower point, or end of the tail, 8° from the star called Spica Virginis... On 24 November, another tailed comet appeared, even more beautiful and resplendent than

1 Ed. note: At least this event that impressed the shogun Iemitsu had a natural origin. Richard Cocks in his diary reported that a first comet became visible to the naked eye on the night of 2-3 November and lasted until 21 November 1618 [Old Style dates]. It was brightest on 9 November. A second comet lasted from 19 November to 23 December. Both of these were also observed at Manila (see below).

2 Ed. note: See the map by Fr. Cardim in Doc. 1609A.

3 Ed. note: The Captain Major of the yearly galleon from Macao.

the first. At its head was a burning star. It appeared in the east. It had a declination of 8° and it pointed southwestward to the sign of Scorpio, which is the sign of Manila. These two comets lasted some 3 months. They write from Japan, the Moluccas, and India that they were seen in those places.

...

[The Dutch threat of 1618-19]

The Hollanders came to these islands with their fleet of 5 galleons to plunder the Chinese ships, as they have done in former years. The fleet entered the bay of Manila on 12 October 1618, and afterward continued coming and going. It went back and forth on these seas just as if it were at home. But its appearance caused so little disturbance that everything remained as quiet as before, which illustrates the force of habit; for being accustomed to seeing the fleet every year has brought it to pass that its advent now causes no uneasiness. Nevertheless, sentinels were placed on all the coasts, and the country was very well prepared.¹ Thus there was nothing to fear; besides, the enemy does not wish to have us at to close range. **On our side, only 3 galleons and 4 galleys were ready for use in the port of Cavite**, because not more than two years ago two of our finest galleons went to the bottom in this sea in a furious storm. What caused more anxiety was the shipyard² where other galleons were being built. It was feared lest the enemy should go there to burn them. To prevent this, a little fort was constructed, and a large force of good infantry and heavy artillery was placed to guard the construction. Therefore they said that there was no need to fear anything, or to doubt that if the enemy should come to the shipyard he would fail in his design to burn the ships. He did not attempt it, perhaps because he knew of the thorough preparations that had been taken.

Early in November, when the enemy was in the mouth of the bay, a Japanese ship came. When it reached Ilocos, a port of the island of Manila, it learned that the enemy was in the passage through which it must go to reach this city. But as it carried a *chapa*, or licence, from the Japanese emperor it feared nothing. For the Hollanders respect the emperor's licence insofar as it concerns them, and they give free passage in every part of these seas to all Japanese ships bearing it. So the ship continued on its way here till it met the Hollander, with whom it remained two or three days. The Hollander inquired if it carried munitions, which would be contrary to his wish. Although in fact the ship had on board a large quantity of munitions underneath a great number of sacks of flour, the question was answered in the negative. Thereupon the general allowed it to pass, and gave it an arrogant message for the governor. In this he said that his Lordship might well be preparing his fleet little by little, which he [the Dutch general] would await a long time; that he just now had learned that galleons were being built in the shipyards, but that the governor should not be disturbed; that, indeed, if it were necessary, he

1 Ed. note: I have myself seen the ruins of a few watch-towers built along the coast of Ilocos during that period.

2 Ed. note: Located near Arevalo, Panay Island, as will be mentioned below.

would go with his men to aid in finishing and launching them, just for the opportunity of fighting them; that this was what he most desired, as he had strong hopes of victory, which would be glorious in proportion to his Lordship's nobility; and that he therefore would welcome the governor's coming. This message the Hollanders sent with the Japanese ship.

Later on, another Japanese ship came along; and, as it carried a *chapa*, it was able to enter. Then a Spanish ship, which, likewise came from Japan, arrived; but, as it carried no licence, it came by a different route to avoid falling into the enemy's hands, and took shelter in another port of the islands before coming to the city. A Portuguese ship coming from Macao did the same, and thus the enemy captured nothing.

...
In the shipyard feverish efforts were made to finish at least one vessel in time for service this year. Nearly 3,000 men—Spaniards, Indians, Chinese, and others—were employed in this construction. From this may be gathered what our missions must have suffered in the Pintados [i.e. Visayas] Islands, in the midst of which the ship was being built, since almost all the Indians who worked there were from our parishes. So large was the equipment, and so great was the zeal shown in the work that, early in March [1619] a very beautiful galleon¹ was finished, which would mount 40 guns. Then the difficulty arose, where they could enter to join the other galleons and galleys in the port of Cavite, for the enemy remained stubbornly in the mouth of the bay. But as soon as he drew aside a little, notice was quickly given in order that they might bring in the galleon, and it entered on 25 April, with 4 galleys which had gone out to accompany it in.

On another occasion, two other [Dutch and/or English] ships came to the enemy with provisions from the kingdom of Japan. They also carried a goodly number of Japanese, who left their country secretly. They say that if they [the Japanese authorities?] had known about it they would have killed these men, because they came to attack us in company with the Hollanders. These now found themselves with 7 warships, or rather with 6, since they left one outside in order to plunder any ship that might come along. They entered this bay with great ostentation and pomp on the 1st of March, the second day of the Easter festival. The Governor ordered that the galleys and the three galleons which were there (the fourth, the one from the shipyard, had not yet arrived) should with many pennants and streamers draw a little apart from the fort of Cavite. When the Hollanders turned about to go out he noticed that our fleet was at hand, with all this bravery. Then he also displayed many pennants, and came again, signalling that he wished to fight, and then slowly departed. He went toward the coast of Ilocos, the place to which they come to attack the ships on their way from China. Now the galleon from the shipyard entered the bay, and the preparations of the entire fleet was completed. It consisted of 4 galleys very well manned, and 4 very handsome galleons. The

1 Ed. note: By other evidence, her name was **San Nicolás**.

flagship mounted more than 40 guns, the *almiranta* more than 30, the third galleon an equal number, and the fourth as many as 20.¹ In addition to these there were 2 pataches, each with as many as a dozen small pieces.

While our fleet, thus prepared, was daily in readiness to set sail, the Governor sent out in two directions to reconnoiter the enemy. The news brought back by the speed was that the Hollanders had reached a village of Indians on the coast of Ilocos. They entered the church and committed a thousand sacrileges, particularly that of cutting off the nose of a figure of Christ. They found a large quantity of wine, delivered themselves up to it, and became veritable wine-sacks. They say that if 20 soldiers had been there at the time, they might have played grand havoc with the enemy. The Hollanders finally set fire to the place and withdrew to their ships. Only one remained on shore to sleep off his intoxication. When he awakened and saw that the ships had already set sail, he cast himself into the water—of which he had need, in order to water the great quantity of wine he had cast into his stomach. He saw that the ships were far away, and in order not to drown he was forced to return to land. Here the Indians caught him and took him to Manila. The Dutch ships put to sea and never again appeared.

...

It may be considered as certain that the enemy lost a large vessel with people and cargo in a severe storm. The foundation for this opinion is the fact that some days ago a mass of wreckage, such as main top-sails, rigging, masts, etc., was found in the place where the Hollanders had been.

A ship came from China and reported that one day, after having left that country, it encountered four ships which pursued it; and that early in the evening one of them was gaining on it. The Chinese captain, who knew of some shoals nearby, steered toward them, in order to go around them. The Hollanders, thinking that the captain was trying to escape to leeward, also steered in that direction, and at nightfall ran aground on the shoals. The Chinese heard many guns fired; but, without seeing or knowing more, came to the Philippines and gave the news.

Dated at Manila, 12 July 1619.

1 Ed. not: Their names are not given, but either the third or fourth galleon was the ex-Japanese ship **Date Maru**.