
Documents 1598B

Other 1598 documents from Manila

Sources: 1) AGI 67-6-19: Audiencia de Filipinas, 1600-1612; translated in B&R 10:132-140; 2) AGI 68-1-32: Audiencia de Filipinas, 1579-1679; B&R 10:141-158; 3) AGI 68-1-34: Audiencia de Filipinas, 1598-1698; translated in B&R 10:161-167; 4) AGI 67-6-6; translated in B&R 10:168-173.

B1. Reception of the Royal Seal at Manila

This is a good and faithful copy of several instruments drawn in regard to the reception of the royal seal of the royal Audiencia and chancellery, which the king our lord has lately commanded to be re-established in the city of Manila in the Philippine Islands; they are set down in the book wherein is recorded the establishment of the said royal Audiencia, and their tenor is as follows:

In the city of Manila in the Philippine Islands, on the 8th day of the month of June of the year 1598, Don Francisco Tello, knight of the Order of Santiago, governor and captain-general of these islands for the king our lord, and president of the Audiencia and chancellery which was ordered to be established there, said that immediately upon the arrival of the last ships from New Spain in this present year, on which came the honorable auditors whom his Majesty was sending for the said royal Audiencia, the Licentiate Christoval Tellez de Almazan, one of the said honorable auditors,¹ informed him that he had brought and held in his possession the royal seal of the king our lord, which was given to him by the Viceroy of New Spain for this royal Audiencia; and the said auditor directed that an order should be given for the formal reception of it, with the authority and reverence which his Majesty directs and commands by his royal instruction and decrees...

¹ Ed. note: The members of the Audiencia were: Governor Tello, Lieutenant-Governor Morga, Licentiate Tellez de Almazan, Licentiate Alvaro Rodriguez Zambrano, Licentiate Geronimo de Salazar Salcedo, as fiscal, and Licentiate Padilla as reporter and clerk of court. The first auditor, Licentiate Antonio de Ribera Maldonado, had remained behind in Spain.

B2. Letters from the Archbishop of Manila to Philip II (extracts)

Sire:

It pleased our Lord that 3 years after the time when I left Madrid I should arrive at these islands, where I came at the command of your Majesty, with many hardships and so broken in health and strength that I hardly had the vigor to undertake such arduous duties as confront me...

It is only a month since I came to this city of Manila, and so I cannot give your Majesty an account in detail of the many things which must be remedied. But there are going to your court Father Fray Diego de Soria, a Dominican, and a man of much holiness, learning, and very exemplary life, who has had much experience for many years in the affairs of this country, and to whom your Majesty should listen; and likewise Father Fray Marcelo of the Order of St. Francis,¹ who will give a full account of everything; for it is zeal for the honor of God and the service of your Majesty, and the desire for the remedy of these islands, which alone bring them through so many dangers by land and by sea.

... There is little interest in spiritual things and Christianity among the laity... There is not a man in all these Philippine Islands—Spaniard, or of any other nation—save some religious... but they are only moved by their own interests and seek to enrich themselves... From this inordinate greed arises the violation of your Majesty's decrees and mandates, as everyone is a merchant and trader—and none more so than the Governor, who has this year brought ruin upon the country. There comes each year from New Spain a million [pesos] in money, contrary to the mandate of your Majesty, all of which passes on to the heathen of China. From here, in violation of your Majesty's decrees, cargos are loaded for the Peruvians and the merchants of Mexico, without leaving room for those of this country—especially the poor, who are unable to secure any interest therein except for a wretched bundle which is allowed them as cargo.

[Complaints against the Governor]

If I were to go into the multitude of evils which are connected with this, I should have to proceed *ad infinitum*. There are going to your court those who have themselves experienced them; and one of them even, for having preached with Christian zeal, was persecuted by the Governor, who was the cause of this and of great evils. His vices are so many and so low and obscene that if one were to seek faithfully over all of Spain for a man of most debauched conscience, even the vilest and most vicious, to come to this country and corrupt it with his example, there could not be found one more so than he. A priest told me yesterday—Sunday, 21 June—that it was public talk that no woman had escaped from him with her honor, when he could accomplish her ruin; and that further, through his great and scandalous incontinence, he twice ordered the priest to

1 Ed. note: Apparently referring to Fr. Marcelo de Ribadeneira, the author of the *Historia* (Barcelona, 1601).

marry him to his own niece, and used every means with the priest and Father Soria to secure a dispensation, although the latter showed him how little that measure profited.

...
It would be very important for your Majesty to renew the mandate forbidding the governors and auditors to trade, with heavier penalties; for it is not observed, and from its violation there result great inconveniences.

...
Manila, 24 June 1598.
Sire, I kiss the feet of your Majesty.
Your humble chaplain,
Fray Ignacio [de Santibáñez], Archbishop of Manila.¹

Sire:

Although I wrote another letter to your Majesty in which I give an account of the affairs in this country, I am obliged to write this one to give your Majesty an account of my own affairs...

At present I shall only mention a few things [against the Governor]. In the first place your Majesty should not inquire into the particular vices of Don Francisco Tello, but should picture to yourself a universal idea of all vices, brought to the utmost degree and placed in a lawyer; this would be Tello, who is your Majesty's Governor in the Philippines. He is not one of those men who accompany a vice with a virtue, and among many vices follow one virtue; but he has not even an indication of a virtue...

Manila, 26 June '98.
Sire, I kiss the feet of your Majesty.
Your servant and chaplain,
Fray Ignacio, Archbishop of Manila.

B3. Letter from the Bishop of Nueva Segovia [Cagayan] to Philip II (extract)

Sire:

... Your Majesty has a governor here, namely, Don Francisco Tello, who, if a fourth be true of all that is said of him by Christian, learned, and prudent men, and those in office in this community, both ecclesiastic and secular, is one of the worst men whom your Majesty has in all his estates. One thing I can say, and that is that neither on my way from New Spain to here, nor after my arrival, have I heard anything said which would indicate that this man is a good governor; but I have heard and hear every day increasing and innumerable evil acts, evil in the highest degree.

...

1 Ed. note: This archbishop died one month later.

The first matter (of which your Majesty must certainly have information) is, that this man married a woman between whom and himself there were two obstacles—in the first place, consanguinity; and, in the second place, relation by marriage. In her case there was still another obstacle, in that she had taken the vows in a religious order...

Another instance: an affair characterized by covetousness, wrongs, and injustice, which are being perpetrated before the sight of God and all the world. This is the affair. **There is here a vessel which is called Santa Margarita which belonged to Captain Stevan Rodriguez [de Figueroa]. This ship he despatched this year to convey cloth and merchandise from this city to Mexico.** There is a record of what this same ship took last time;¹ and according to the register (which is here and in Mexico) the vessel loaded 250 to 300 tons; but this year there was not allotted among the citizens of the islands more than 160 tons. All the rest, up to the said number of 250 to 300, he has seized upon. This injustice and robbery is terrible, but the circumstance makes it even more remarkable that sin and greed and vices so blind a man that he considers everyone else blind; and thinks that they will not look at this ship and see its size, when it is present here; nor remember that, in this same ship, the same persons with the same merchandise laded ten times as large a cargo; nor does he consider that, at any rate, the registry of this same ship exists.

On the day on which I write this, which is the last of June, when the ships should have sailed days ago for Mexico, because they might encounter a wind which would make it impossible for them to leave this bay for a long time, and the voyage would be lost, or undertaken when the ships would be wrecked—during this time he is entertaining guests and making feasts and gambling.

...

What can I tell your Majesty of the affairs of war? Although we are every moment fearing some movement from Japan, this man will not build a single turret to finish the wall. He considers himself safe with a dark retreat which he built to retire to if the enemy should take the city; but if the enemy should take a single house of the city, he is as well fortified there as are the Spaniards in their retreat, because, with the cheap labor of Chinamen, they have built here so that every house is a fortress.

God has granted to this country a Spaniard of great genius, good birth, and singular virtue, who came with Don Luis Pérez Das Mariñas. This Spaniard cast artillery very ingeniously at this port where I am at present, which is on the river in the middle of Manila... The only remedy is to appoint here the good Don Luis Pérez Dasmariñas, a well-known knight, and proved to be just and discreet, with long experience in these lands—and, above all, with great respect for God and His laws and those of your Majesty...

It seems to me that I have said enough of this.

¹ Ed. note: I have not found any direct reference to a voyage of the Santa Margarita across the Pacific previous to 1598. There is an indirect reference in HM 2:561. It could have been the (unnamed) ship despatched in 1597 under Juan Bautista Justiniano (B&R 10:48).

Manila, the last day of June, 1598.

Fray Miguel [Benavides], Bishop of Nueva Segovia.

B4. Letter from Governor Tello to King Philip II (extract regarding Japan)

Sire:

Last year I wrote your Majesty an account of the state of military affairs. What has happened since then is as follows.

...

There is also a suspicion of Japan, and, according to the advices which I now have, those people desire exceedingly to come here, although it is difficult for them to do so by ship. Consequently, I am, and shall be, well prepared for them, with arms in readiness. Garrisons are always maintained in that part of the country by which they would approach, namely, in the province of Cagayan. I have great hope, God helping, that Japan will be subdued. Several prominent persons there, with whom I have friendship and communication, have written to me. I have replied to them, and sent them presents, as must be done with these people. The one who is most friendly is the General of Coria [Korea], named Gentio¹ who is close in the order of succession in the kingdom to the Conbaco [Kuwambaku]. He wrote me that, although not a Christian himself, he is a friend of Christians. Having this goodwill, he might receive the holy gospel, and I am trying to bring this to pass. This communication is secret, being without the knowledge of the Conbaco, who is very much hated in his kingdom, because of his great tyranny.

The ambassador Don Luis de Navarrete, whom I sent to the Conbaco, arrived there safely with the present which he took with him. The elephant was very well received, and they tell me that on the day when he entered Meaco (where the court of Japan resides), the concourse of people in the plaza was so great—because they had never seen elephants before—that seven persons were suffocated. When the ambassador had ascended to the hall, the king came out to meet him with 30 kings who were his vassals. My letter, a copy of which was sent to your Majesty last year, was then read in public. It was well received, and the king said that he would reply thereto. Then he wished to see the present which had been put in 12 boxes. Greatly excited and enraged by a picture of myself, which represented me armed and with a cane in my hand, he asked in a loud voice whether this were intended as a threat. He was answered in the negative, but that it was a custom of persons who held high offices to send their portraits as tokens of regard and friendship when embassies were despatched. Thereupon he was appeased, and ordered the picture to be placed in a large hall, and directed his wives and children to go and see it. After this the ambassador was invited to dine with him three times, and

¹ Ed. note: This man may have been the same as the regent called Ongoschio elsewhere (B&R 15:198).

was finally dismissed with a present of 12 coats of mail, 30 lances, and 2 horses. The despatch has not yet arrived, but I fear that the ambassador has died, for he was very ill at Nangasaque. The information which I give your Majesty was gained from a letter of his.¹

...

Within this city I have made an impregnable refuge, which is bounded on one side by the sea and on another by the river; while on the land side 1,000 armed men can, if sufficiently supplied, defend it against 100,000.

...

I have found here an invention of the Sangleys for founding artillery. It is easy of accomplishment, and as there is much metal in the royal warehouses I am having 50 pieces of artillery made, which will take a ball of 1 to 3 pounds, the size most needed here. After these are finished, I shall not fail to go to China to attack the Sangleys.²

May our Lord preserve the royal Catholic person of your Majesty as is needed by these kingdoms, and as we your vassals desire.

Manila, 17 June 1598.

Don Francisco Tello.



Sketch of Toyotomi HIDEYOSHI (1536-1598) and his royal seal.

1 Morga states that Navarrete, after sending the letter to Tello, died at Nagasaki.

2 Ed. note: In a report made the following year, it is said that not one out of four cannon cast turned out good. As for the ships that went to China, it was mostly for trade purposes.