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## Documents 1582

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# Voyage of the galleon San Martín to the Philippines

## A1. Crew list of the galleon San Martín, under the command of General Luis de Sahajosa

*Sources: AGI 67-6-6; cited in B&R 53:257.*

The document is entitled: "List of the seamen and passengers going to the Philippines aboard the galleon of his Majesty **San Martín** commanded by General Don Luis de Sahajosa; among the passengers are mentioned the Bishop of the Philippines and Jesuit Antonio Sedeño and his three companions."

## A2. Letter from Fr. Sedeño to the General of the Jesuits, dated 12 June 1582

*Sources: ARSJ 9, 7v; partly transcribed by Fr. Henri Bernard (see Ref. section of the Bibliography), p. 178, as follows.*

At the end of the gulf [i.e. Pacific Ocean] one bumps into some islands that are about 15 or 16 in number, [aligned] north-south 10 to 12 leagues apart, which they call **La-drones**, where the ships anchor and take on the necessary refreshments for the voyage. The people of these islands (at least those of the island we visited which would be about 40 leagues in circumference [i.e. Guam]) are well-proportioned and well-featured, without any tattoos nor other uglinesses, but just as God made them. They are very merry and sociable. They show signs of understanding and of being capable of receiving our holy faith; however, I refer only to those who are at peace. They robbed our hearts and it made us sad to see their perdition and finding ourselves in the impossibility of preaching the gospel. Nevertheless, some day God will show the means of solving this problem.

When they saw us, they came out to receive us over 3 or 4 leagues at sea, aboard some small barks the size of launches with their sails made of woven palm mats (which are not less useful than those made of canvas). They sail with wonderful speed and are

so expert at handling them that, in the time [required] for [reciting] one Creed, they make the poop the prow, and go against the wind, something to marvel about. These people have a great need for things made of iron. So, upon seeing the ship, they all come out to trade for barrel hoops, which the sailors and passengers have turned into a thousand pieces. With these, they fill the ship with a thousand refreshments, such as coconuts, bananas, sweet potatoes, rice, fish, and other land products which are very good succor for whomever has been at sea for two months of sailing. These small barks are in such number that I understand there were over 300 of them that were always around us bartering for their small pieces of iron. Some went and others came, so that the sea was full of them, given that the coming of the ships from New Spain is their fair.

From there [i.e. Manila] to this island, there is about 300 leagues; now, dear Father, you can see where they were settled, but who could have shown them and brought them through this great gulf? There are other islands, even 200 leagues farther back, which are called the **Barbudos** [i.e. Marshalls] because the people there let their beard grow; they are also full of people, right in the center of the ocean.

### A3. Account of Fr. Alonso Sanchez, S.J., companion of Fr. Sedeño

*Sources: "Fritos de las idas...", copy in the Dominican Archives in Manila #64,503; partly transcribed by Fr. Bernard, op. cit., p. 179.*

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53. By the islands of the **Ladrones**, which are very populated and very comfortable in climate and food supplies, there pass each year some religious without any of them remaining there, although I wished to stay there on account of seeing the admirable grace and manner of the people, but everyone judged it to be a crazy thing to want to be where there is no civilian personnel. At the islands they call **Barbudos** also, other religious came but they did not do anything.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ed. note: Fr. Alonso Sanchez, S.J., travelled to China in 1582, soon after this letter was written. He made another trip in 1584.

## **A4. Letter from Fr. Jerónimo de Burgos, O.S.F., to the King, dated Manila 14 June 1582**

*Source: Cited by Fr. Bernard, op. cit., p. 179; original source not given.*

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We stopped there just one day to take on water, and the next day we hurried to leave. It is a pity to see such a barbarian population lacking some Catholic missionaries. Nobody wants to stay there, because these poor people do not possess either gold or silver, nor the other commercial products sought after by Christians... This island has over 100,000 inhabitants, and it is the most robust of Indian races, the most awake, and has the best appearance that I believe exists in any country.<sup>1</sup>

### **Note on the Gregorian calendar.**

The Julian calendar had been in effect since A.D. 325, when the Council of Nice had established it. It was based on wrong astronomical assumptions which amounted to an error of 10 days at the time of its correction in 1582. This was decreed by Pope Gregory XIII in March 1582. He reformed the calendar, directing that the 5th of October in that year be reckoned as the 15th. The vernal equinox, which in the old calendar had receded to March 11, was thus restored to its true place, March 21. This "new style" calendar became known as the Gregorian calendar and is still in use today. The system upon which it is based was calculated by Luigi Lilio Ghiraldi, a learned astronomer of Naples. (From B&R 6:55)

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<sup>1</sup> Ed. note: Fr. Bernard goes on to comment that this Franciscan eyewitness, just like his Jesuit companions, has exaggerated the favorable conditions of Guam, adding that the population of the entire archipelago never exceeded 40,000 or 60,000. Fr. Burgos was coming to the Philippines as a Visitor in 1582. Later that year, he went to China where he suffered severe persecution. In 1583, he returned to Manila by way of Macao. That same year, he returned to China, whence he went later to Malacca, and in 1587 to Spain. In 1588, he retired to the Franciscan convent at Madrid, where he died in 1593 (B&R 53:257).