
Document 1568E

Mendaña expedition—Narrative of Captain Pedro Sarmiento

Sources: AGI Patronato 18-1-1 (N° 10, R° 4); RAH Colección Muñoz, tome 10, fol. 199-212; Col. de Indias, Vol. 5, pp. 221 et seq.; translated in Amsherst & Thomson, Vol. 1, pp. 81-94.

Note: What is reproduced below is an extract from a longer narrative by Sarmiento to be found in AGI 18-1-1/10 R° 8 and in RAH Col. Muñoz, t. 37, fol. 266-283. In this short version¹, the islands of Micronesia are unfortunately not mentioned.

A short account collected from the Papers which they found in the City of La Plata concerning the voyage and discovery of the Western Islands, in the Southern Ocean, commonly called the Isles of Solomon

In the year of 1567 one Pedro Sarmiento gave to the Licentiate Castro, Governor of Peru, information concerning many islands and continents which he said existed in the Southern Ocean, and offered personally to discover them in the name of his Majesty, and with the intention he had collected proofs and made charts.

The Licentiate Castro having heard his account, ordered two ships of war to be equipped for this discovery.

...
Others said that they ought to go to seek the land of which Sarmiento had spoken when they started. Sarmiento gave his opinion that they should settle there, saying that they had plenty of men and ammunition, and he always urged that they should observe and comply with the instructions of His Majesty and the Governor Castro.

Pedro Sarmiento and the pilots then gave their opinion regarding the course which they should take, and Pedro Sarmiento gave the course of the ships, with all the bear-

¹ Ed. note: According to Jack-Hinton, op. cit., p. 349, this was an anonymous account of the expedition, which Amherst attributed to Sarmiento, and which Forsyth identified as the concluding part of the Barros report, would appear in fact to be the work of Sarmiento.

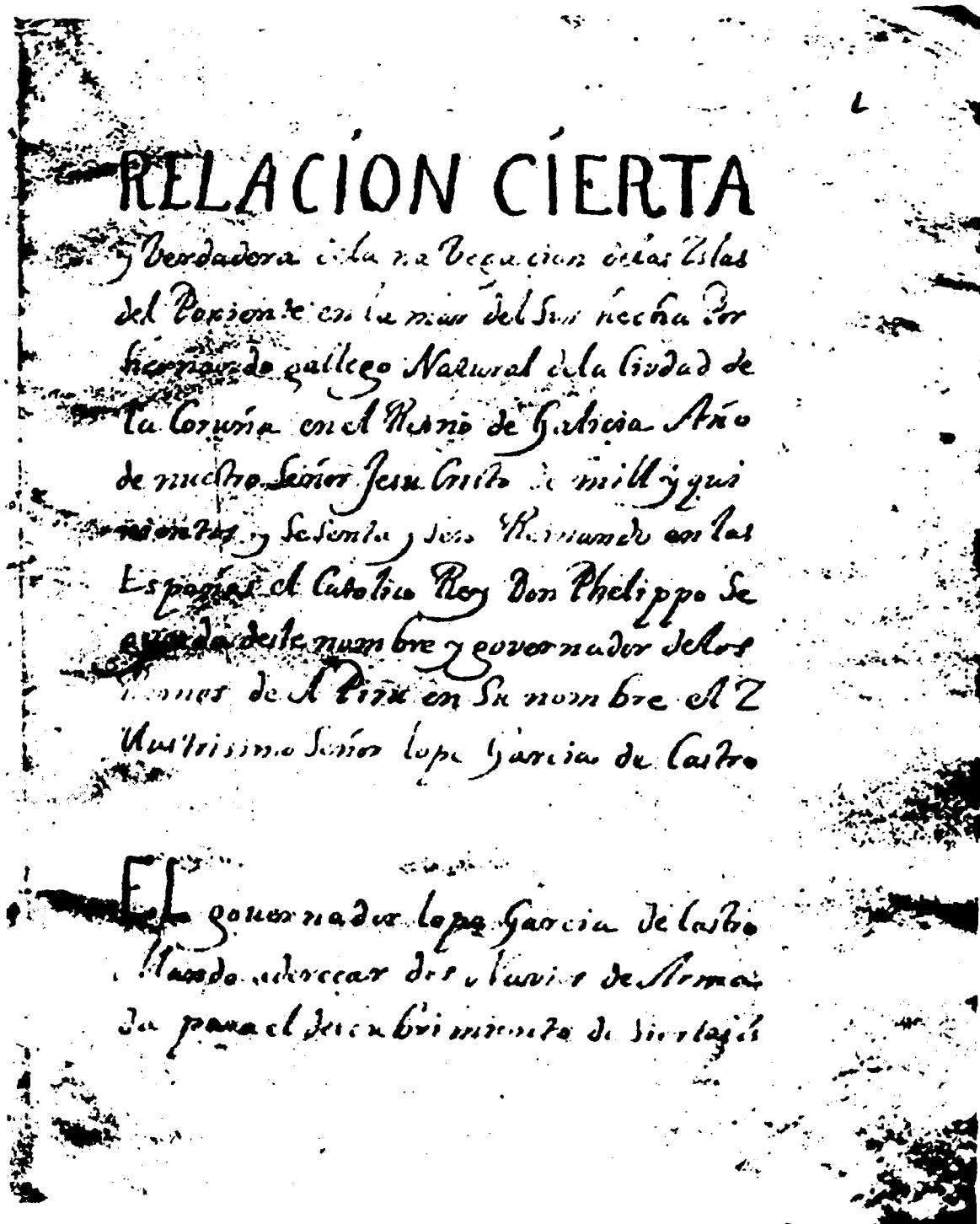
ings, and stated his opinion that they should follow a south-west [-east?] course in search of the other land which he wished to discover at the beginning, lying opposite Chile. The three pilots were of his opinion. Gallego, although he also said that he should do so, did not perform what he had promised, but steered instead for New Spain, in defiance of the resolution, and it was a miracle that they escaped, for they suffered from hunger, thirst and soreness in the gums, and some of them died.¹

In 33 degrees [N] the General left the *almiranta*, in which went Captain Sarmiento, who followed his proper course; and if it had not been for him, under God's providence, they would have been lost.

They reached the city of Colima in New Spain with the flagship, where, because Pedro Sarmiento had evidence to lay before His Majesty, they seized and harassed him; and from thence they came to Realejo, where the General left Pedro Sarmiento, and went [back] to Peru.

They could not gain much information about the country, because neither had they sufficient time, nor did the General wish to examine it, nor to take possession of it. The good land for trading for gold may be gathered from this account as being on the left hand towards the south, opposite Chile.

1 Between 30 and 40, according to the ms. in BNP.



First page of Hernán Gallego's manuscript. (From Lord Amherst of Hackney & Thomson's *The Discovery of the Solomon Islands*, London, 1901)