
Document 1567A

Relation of the Islands of the West by Captain Diego de Artieda to the King, undated [ca. 1570]

Sources: 1) Original copy, bearing Artieda's signature, in MN Ms. 19697/1 (formerly MBU 711-20-3/22); 2) copy in AGI Patronato 1-1-1/23, filed out of sequence with Filipinas (1537-1565 period) which is unsigned, has more text than the original copy, and is the version published in Col. Ultramar, iii, doc. 40, pp. 226-243 where it is wrongly attributed to Captain de la Isla; 3) another copy, with 2 pages missing, is in BN Paris, ms. esp. 325, n° 3, fol. 10-13. Coello mentions a transcript (See p. 283, Boletín Soc. Geo. Madrid, 1885), then in the Navy HQ, of a copy that had previously been filed, correctly, at AGI under "Papeles de las Islas del Poniente de 1570 á 1588. A composite version of this document, translated by Alfonso de Salvio, is in B&R 3: 190-208.

Note: Diego Artieda Cherrino was an Army Captain who accompanied Salcedo when he returned to the Philippines in 1567 (See B&R 3:130). He left the Philippines with Fr. Diego de Herrera in 1569 (See B&R 3:51-52). Artieda himself tells us at the end of this relation that he began to write it after he left with Fr. Diego, who was on his first absence from the Philippines. Artieda must have put the finishing touches, or made a clean copy of it for presentation to the King, when he reached Spain, circa 1570.

Preliminary note.

Extract from the Relation of Discoveries, 1569-1576 (B&R 3:130):

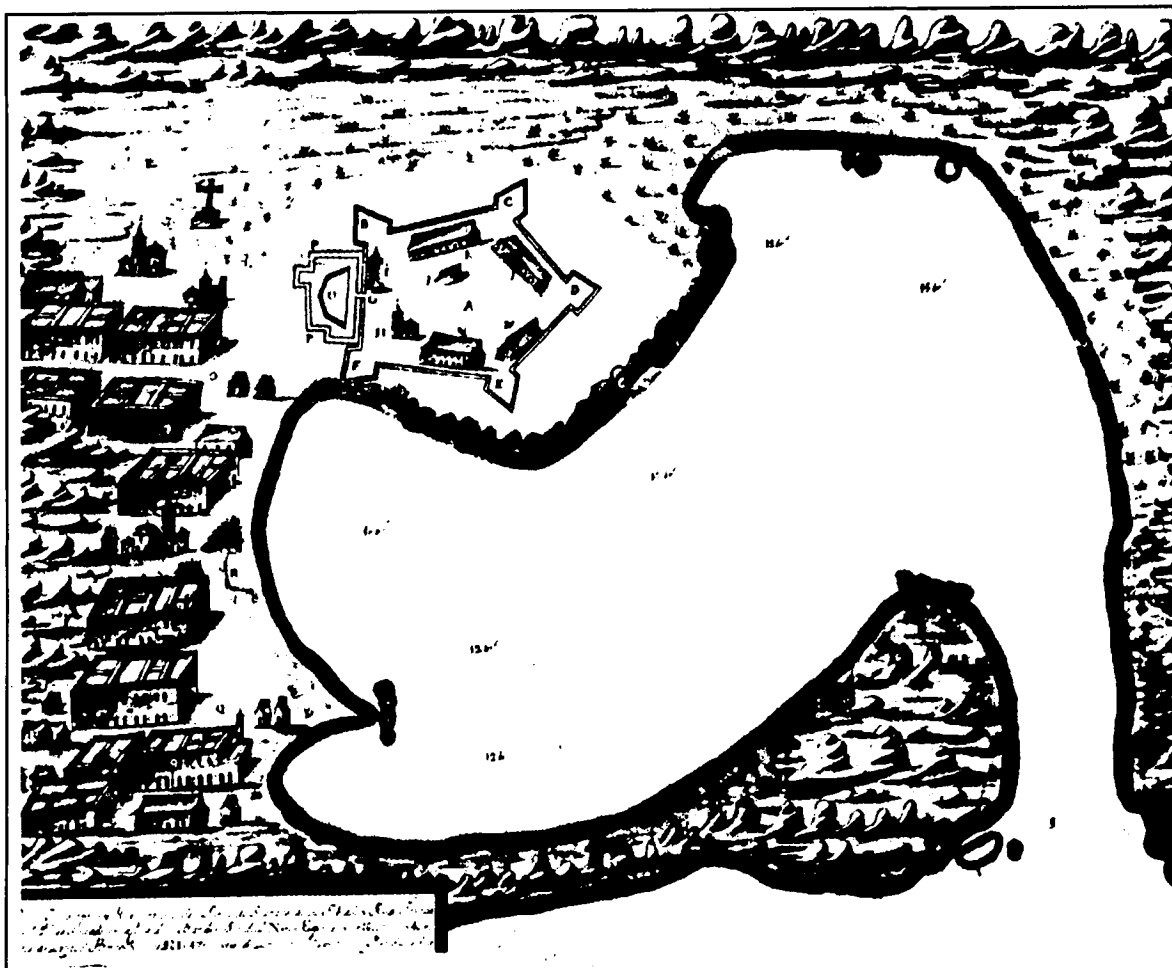
"Felipe de Salcedo as General, **Captain Artieda with a company**, and another company of Juan [López] de Aguirre for Captain [sic] Andrés de Ibarra, set sail in April 1567 with two ships¹ and 300 men, both sailors and soldiers. They reached Çubu on 20 August 1567.

The General Miguel López despatched a ship [i.e. the patache San Juan] commanded by Juan de la Isla. It reached New Spain on 16 November 1567..."²

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- 1 Ed. note: The galleon San Pedro and the patache San Lucas. Captain Artieda had been commissioned in Spain to buy weapons and other supplies and to take them to Legazpi (ref. AGI Patronato 24-18).
 - 2 Ed. note: Captain de la Isla arrived in Spain in June 1568 and the Council authorized an expedition for him, which left Spain in August 1569 and arrived at Veracruz in October 1569; we will see how he crossed the Pacific in 1570.



Juan de Salcedo was only 18 years old in 1567. He was aboard the flagship *San Pedro* when it passed by Guam under the command of his brother Felipe. This other grandson of Legazpi later saved Manila from the Chinese pirate Limahong and conquered many parts of Luzon for the Spanish Crown. He has been called the Cortés of the Philippines. His qualities brought him quick military promotions, but his career was brief, for he died at the age of 27, on 11 March 1576, after drinking too much water while overheated by a long march. He died a poor man, but passed on his landed estate to Filipino natives on his property.



The port of Acapulco soon became the best port on its coast. *It was to replace the port of Navidad as the port closest to Mexico and the best place from which to despatch the galleons to the Philippines. (From AGI)*

Visit to Guam in 1567, by Army Captain Artieda, with the ship San Pedro and the patache San Lucas

Captain Artieda, who went to those islands for the King, wrote this relation.¹

New Spain has two ports in the South Sea. That which is called Acapulco is very good and can give shelter to many ships, no matter how large they may be; it is in 17 and 1/2 degrees of north latitude. The other is called the Port of Navidad; its entrance is shallow, and it can therefore give shelter to small ships only; it is in 19 and 1/3 degrees of north latitude. From whichever of these ports one goes to any of the Isles of the West, the best route is to sail strickly in the latitude in which lies the island that one

¹ Ed. note: This sentence appears only on the Sevilla copy.

wishes to reach, because in the season of the breezes, which is the right time to make the voyage, favorable tail winds are never wanting. The season for the breezes lasts from the end of October to the end of April. From the end of April to the end of October the tradewinds blow, which will be of help on the way back; but let it be remembered that he who wishes to return ought to take a higher degree of latitude, because the winds will not fail him.¹

In view of your Majesty's command and orders from Don Luis de Velasco, Viceroy of New Spain, the expedition commanded by Miguel López de Legazpi has discovered since 24 November 1564 the following islands to the west, in the South Sea:

Barbudos.—NE--SW of the Port of Navidad, in about 10° of north latitude, and at a distance of 1,120 leagues, were found some islands lying E—W. The inhabitants were dressed in a sort of cloth made of thin palm-bark. The men wore long beards, and for that reason the islands received the name of Barbudos.² No weapons were found among them, from which we can infer that they are a peaceful people, and that they had never come into conflict with other men. They live on coconuts, roots, and fish. It was learned that they kept some Castilian fowls. These islands may be about 175 leagues from New Guinea.

Ladrones.—Further west by a distance of 400 leagues lie the islands called Chamurros or Ladrones, which, according to report, number 13 islands. The largest of all is not 40 leagues in circumference. They are all alike in appearance, trade, and food products. **I have seen but the island of Guahan.** Their weapons consist of slings and fire-hardened sticks which they use like lances. They hurl stones to such a great distance with their slings that they are beyond range of the arquebuses. They live on rice, bananas, coconuts, roots, and fish. They have great quantities of ginger.³

...
Zubu.—There is another island, called Zubu, where the camp was established, and remained until broken up by the Portuguese⁴, on account of the excellent harbor formed by it with another island called Mattan which is almost uninhabited, unwholesome and a large part of it covered by swamps; it is here that Magellan was killed. The port has two entrances, opening NE and SW. Through my influence and with⁵ the consent of most of the men, the camp was removed to the island of Panae [i.e. Panay]. I went there by order of the Governor, and drew the plan of a fort, which now⁶ is being built. It has the same people, and trade, and customs as the [Philippines] named above. The center of it is in 10° and almost 2/3 degrees of latitude.

1 Ed. note: In the Pacific, the *brisas* or breezes were winds from the N, NE, or E, whereas the *vendavals* or tradewinds were from the S or SW.

2 Now called the Marshall Islands.

3 Ed. note: The above paragraph on the Ladrones appears in the Sevilla copy. The rest of the relation deals mostly with the Philippines.

4 Ed. note: This probably refers to the lengthy negotiations between Legazpi and Pereira in 1568.

5 Ed. note: The word "with" has been replaced by the word "against" in the Sevilla copy.

6 Ed. note: He refers to the 1569-1570 period.

...
Panae.—North of Buglas [i.e. Negros] is Panae, an island abounding in rice and all kinds of provisions. The camp was moved thither, and, as abovesaid, I drew the plan of the said fort between two arms of a river, because it is impossible to effect an entrance by one arm. In the other and below the fort, 14 gabions were made and 12 large pieces of artillery mounted for the defence of the entrance and passage. The fort is situated 2-1/2 leagues inland, and the ground all the way to the fort is a swamp, covered with deep bush, so that enemies can approach the said fort only through the river, where are planted the above-mentioned gabions and artillery. The position is excellent, and such that it needs only a few men to defend it against many. The bar of the river is not more than one fathom deep; and its coast thereabout, for more than 20 leagues, is very forbidding. Its center lies in 11° and almost 1/3 degrees of latitude.¹

...
Xipon.—Farther north of the aforesaid islands are others, the nearest to Luzon being called Xipon.² We have not seen this island, and what I shall say about it has been related to us by the Moros who carry on trade with that land. It is said that the island possesses silver mines, and that silks and other necessary articles from China are purchased with the silver; for all the people, both men and women, wear clothes and shoes. And because of being so near China, they have acquired the civilization of that country. These people manufacture very good cutlasses, which they call *leques*.³ These are single or double hilts, are very sharp, and are curved like Turkish cutlasses. On the side without any edge, they are about as thick as the finger, but the edge is very sharp. It is said that Theatin religious have gone thither from Portugal; but I do not know the result of their mission. The Portuguese tell me that the natives of that land are considered very warlike. The women are virtuous, modest, and very jealous of the men [a very rare thing for these regions].⁴ The men shave or pluck out the hair from their heads.

Lequios.—A little to the east between these islands and China are the islands of Lequios.⁵ They are said to be rich; but we have been unable to learn much about them, for I have not seen any one who has been there. For this reason, I conclude that they must be small, and that the people are not much given to commerce.

...
 All these islands with more than 250 leagues hereabout, are included in the compact which the sacred Majesty—may he rest in peace—made with the most serene King John of Portugal. Even if they were outside of the compact, if your Majesty does not wish to

1 Ed. note: Near this site evolved the modern towns of Panay and Roxas City.

2 Ed. note: Japan, in the Sevilla version.

3 Ed. note: Since Japanese swords are called "katan", the word "leques" [kris?] may have been the word given to them by his Filipino informants.

4 Ed. note: Additional comment in brackets comes from the Sevilla copy.

5 Ed. note: Riu-kiu or the Okinawa chain of islands, then still independent and about to be conquered by the Daimyo of Satsuma.

continue the spice trade, on account of the great expense and the little profit that it now yields, or will yield in the future, I think that it would be advisable to withdraw the people from the islands, as your Majesty can hope to draw no other profit from this land. I say this as a loyal subject of your Majesty, for it grieves me to see so much money wasted on a land which can be of no profit whatever.

If your Majesty prefers the spices, I think that it would be better to break the agreement, since it is for such a small amount that 350,000 ducats¹ would be gained in two ships going from New Spain to those regions. When this is done, your Majesty's domains will extend as far as the Moluccas, according to what was told me by the Augustinian friar, by name Fray Martín de Rada, a native of Navarra, who was prior at the time when I left the Islands of the West. He is a great arithmetician, geometrician, and astrologer [they say he is one the greatest in the world]. He has measured this, and told me so. He has also written a book on navigation and the measurement of the earth and the sea, east and west. I believe that he will send the book by Fray Diego de Herrera, prior of the aforesaid islands of your Majesty.² Then we shall be able to trade in spices with the whole world; for as I have said before, cloves cannot be found save in the five islands of the Moluccas.

I have written all that can be said on this subject; and I say this because I have seen other accounts both in print and in manuscript, which depart very much from the truth. In order for your Majesty may not be deceived, I sign this account with my name. If your Majesty should desire to know especial details about that land, I will, at your command, give oral information.

1 The amount stipulated in the Treaty of Zaragoza.

2 Ed. note: Father Herrera departed the Philippines a second time in 1572, according to Fr. Pérez' Catálogo, or in 1573, according to the Viceroy of New Spain (See B&R 3:209).