
Document 1610C

Letter from Governor Silva to the King, dated Cavite September 1610

Sources: AGI 67-6-20; translated in B&R 17: 144-150.

Ships that sailed to Acapulco in 1610

Sire:

In the flagship **San Juan Bautista**, which sailed from this port on the 12th of July last, I gave your Majesty an account of everything that had occurred up to that time; I likewise did so by the [captured] Dutch *almiranta*, which left 4 days later. But as it was not so good a sailing ship as the flagship, and did not weather the storms so well, it was delayed several days, without being able to get outside the island of Fortun. I ordered it to return thence to this port, as it appeared that it was not fit for a freight ship, and because it was necessary for the service of your Majesty, owing to new developments, which I shall here detail. A fortnight after the ships were despatched, and when the *almiranta* was about to put out to sea, there arrived here a frigate belonging to your Majesty, which came from Goa, and had sailed from Ternate for India, loaded with cloves. It brought me a despatch from the viceroy, Ruy Lorenço de Tabora, in which he informed me of his arrival in that kingdom...

The day after the arrival of this frigate, there entered this port a Dutch patache, which had been taken by Captain Pedro de Avellaneda, with the galley **San Christobal**, close to the island of Tidore, after a fight of 3 hours; and in it were General Pablo Bancaorden [i.e. van Caerden], 20 others, and 5 Dutch. This general is the one who was captured in another galliot by Captain Pedro de Heredia...¹

I have already informed your Majesty that the Dutch, our enemy, are masters of all the Molucca Islands and Banda, and how important this is... Nothing has remained for

¹ Ed. note: This letter made it reasonably fast to Spain, because in his answer to Silva, dated Madrid 20 November 1611, the King orders him to release van Caerden and his men, "as they have not given any provocation for their second capture."

your Majesty throughout all these islands, except the fort of Ternate. All the natives are with the Dutch...

I have also informed your Majesty that the emperor of Japan has assigned two ports and factories in his kingdom to the Dutch, and the latter are making strenuous efforts to secure one in China. If they succeed in this, and trade in silks, gold, quicksilver and other riches from that great kingdom to Japan, and Europe, it will be worth to them every year more than the spice trade, in which case (God forbid!) this country and India would be ruined.

...
In this port I have ordered the outfitting of the flagship and the *almiranta* which were taken from the enemy, the ship **Espiritu Santo** and the **San Andres**,¹ 2 pataches, and 3 galleys; and I am busy providing everything necessary for food, artillery, and supplies. Thus when the vessels of Don Diego de Vasconcelos arrive here [from Goa], which I think will be at the end of November, they may start on the voyage toward Ternate...

I shall try to send information as early as possible of all that happens there, by way of New Spain, and other advices via the Strait of Sunda, or that of Bali, and the Cape of Good Hope.

...
For so costly an expedition, this royal treasury is in great need, for of the 200,000 pesos that the viceroy of New Spain sent here, there were taken to Macao 50,000 to buy quicksilver; 26,000 for provisions, powder, and other munitions and supplies; 35,000 paid to the fund of probated estates, and to citizens who had lent money the year past for the support of the fleet...

We shall have to get along as best we can, until the viceroy of New Spain provides for us.

May our Lord protect the Catholic person of your Majesty for many years, according to the needs of Christendom.

Cavite, 9 [or 5] September 1610.

Your Majesty's humble vassal and servant,
Don Juan de Silva.²

1 Ed. note: This mention of the San Andres is the proof that San Andres was the name of the ship that returned from Acapulco in 1610.

2 Ed. note: This letter was sent 2 months after the departure of the San Juan Bautista, either aboard one of the small vessels that had taken part in the Battle of Playa Honda (San Ildefonso, San Pedro, San Pedro y San Pablo, or the Santiago), or, more probably, aboard the **Santa Ana** that had diverted to Japan the previous year.