
Document 1527E

Saavedra's voyages—Galvão's account

Sources: António Galvão's "Tratado", 1st ed., 1563. Translated by Richard Hakluyt, as "Discoveries of the World", London, 1601.

What Galvão wrote about Saavedra

Neste anno de 27, sabendo Fernam cortez polo petaxo, como frei Garcia de loais era passado ás ilhas de crauo, mandou fazer tres nauios prestes para jrem em sua busca: & descobrir aquele caminho da noua Espanha ate Maluco, & hia por capitán mor delles Aluaro saauedra Cerom seu primo pessoa muyto pera isso, partio dia de todos os sanctos de de Siuantaneio que se agora chama sam Christouam, que está em vinte graos da parte do norte: chegaram ás ilhas que o Magalhães pos nome dos prazeres: & dahi foram ás que Gomez de sequeira descobrira, por nam saberem isto lhe poseram nome dos Reys pellas verem aquelle dia, aqui ficaram a Sayauedra dous nauios, de que nunca mais ouue noua nem recado, & de ilha em ilha foram ter a de Sarangam, onde resgataram dous ou tres Castelhanos por setenta cruzados, da companhia de Loais que se por aly perderam.

No anno de 528 & mes de Março chegou Sayauedra as ylhas de Maluco, & surgio na ciundade [sic] de Grilolo, contaua como achara o mar limpo & vento a popa & sem tormenta, & que lhe parecia auer dali a noua Espanha mil & quinhentas legoas, & neste tempo era ja falecido o capitã Martim minguez de Carquiçano, & aleuantado por capitam Fernão dela torre, que estaua na cidade de Tidore com hum a força feyta, y de crua guerra com dom Iorge de meneses capitam dos Portugueses: & na peleja que teueram a quatro de Mayo, lhe tomou Sayauedra hum a galeota & matou o capitam della Fernam baldaya. E no mes de Julho tornou no seu nauio pera a noua Espanha, & com elle Simão de Brito Patalim, & outros Portugueses, & depois de espancarem o mar alguns meses tornaram a Tidore, onde o Patalim foy degolado, & esquartejados, & enforcados os que com elle hiam...

No anno de .529. & mes de Mayo tornou Sayauedra outra vez pera a noua Espanha, & ouue vista de hum a costa da parte do Sul em dous graos daltura, foy em leste ao longo della mais de quinhentas legoas, te o fim Dagosto: & segundo o que della contauam era limpa & de bõs Surgidouros, & a gente da terra preta, & cabelo reuolto: traziã

da cinta pera baixo, humas faldas de penas, bem feytas, muyto coradas, com que cobriam suas vergonhas, & os Maluqueses chamã a estes homens os Papuas por serem pretos de cabelo frizado, & assi lhe chamam ho Portugueses, pello tomarem delles.

*Alvaro Sayauedra, como hia ao Sul quatro ou cinco graos affastado da linha, tornou a busca, & passado aa outra banda do norte, **descobrio huma ylha**, a que pos nome das Pintadas, por serem homens brancos, todos ferrados, & segundo o que parecia, & sinais que dauam, deuam alli de vir da China, donde sahio hum Parao a elles com grande oufania, acenando que amainassem. Vendo que nam obedeciã, tiroulhes com huma funda, & logo sahio hum golpe de Paraos da ylha a elles, todos fundeyros: & começaram huma peleja com ho nauio, mais soberba & menos perigosa, que a de Reuena: pello que Sayauedra mandou mesurar a vella, & foy esperando sem lhe tirar nem fazer dano, ate que gastaram toda a moniçam que traziam.*

Acima desta ylha em dez ou doze graos daltura, acharam muytas juntas, pequenas & rasas, cheas de palmeiras & verduras: pello que lhe poseram nome bom Iardim, surgiram no meo dellas, onde estiueram alguns dias, os habitantes pareciam na feiçam, & aluura descenderem da China, & pellos largos tempos que aueria que aly estauam, eram tam Barbaros que nam tinham ley, nem ceyta, nem criauam cousa viua. Vestiam panos brancos que faziã deruas, espantaram se do fogo, porque nunca o viram: comiã por pão cocos, que antes que fossem maduros os cascauã, metiã nos debaixo darea, & em certos dias os descobriam: & tanto que lhe o sol daua se abriam. Tambem se mantinhã em peyxe cru, que pescauã em Paraos, que faziam de madeira de pinho, que ali vinha ter em certo tempo, sem saber donde, & pera fazer a tal obra, era a ferramenta de cascas damegias, briguigões, ou hostras.

Vendo Sayavedra que ho tempo era mais a seu proposito, se fez á vela na volta da terra & jsmo da cidade de Penama, por nã ser mais que dezasete dez oyto legoas em largo, ãnde podiã descarregar o crauo & mercadoria que leuaua, & em carretas hiria per câpinas .iiij. legoas, ate o rio Lagre, que dizem ser nauegaue & desemboca no mar do Norte, junto de nõbre de Dios, onde estã naos de Castella, que as podiã levar a elle em mais breue tempo, & caminho menos perigoso que do cabo de boa esperança: porque de Maluco a Penama sempre vam per antre o Tropico em a linha, mas nunca poderam achar vento nem tempo pera cumprir este desejo: pello que se tornerão a Maluco assaz tristes, por Sayauedra ser falecido, do qual diziam que leuaua em proposito de fazer co o Emperador, que mandasse abrir esta terra de Castella do ouro & noua Espanha de mar, a mar, porque se podia fazer por quatro lugares, que he do Golfam de sam Miguel a Uraba, em que ha vinte & cinco legoas de trauesa, ou de Penama ao nome de Dios, que ha dezasete, ou pello Sangra douro de Nicaragua, que começa em huma alagoa tres ou quatro legoas da parte do sul, & vay sair a agoa della ao norte, por onde nauegam barcas, & nauios pequenos. Há outro passo de Tagante[-pec] pera o rio da Vera Cruz: que tambem se podia abrir estreito, & se se fizesse, nauegar se hia das Canarias a Maluco por baixo do zodiaco clima temperada, & em menos tempo & com menos perigo, que pello cabo de Boa esperança nem estreito do Magalhães nem terra

dos corte Reays, ainda que se nella achara estreito ao mar da China, como se ja buscara.

Hakluyt's translation

This yeere 1527, when Cortes vnderstood by the pinnesse aforesaide¹ that Don Garcia de Loaisa was passed by the Streight of Magelan toward the Islands of cloues, he prouided three ships to goe seeke him, and to discover by that way of New Spaine as farre as the Isles of Maluco. There went as gouernour in those ships one Aluaro de Saavedra Ceron, cosen vnto Cortes, a man fit for that purpose. He made saile from Ciuatlanejo, now named S. Christopher² standing in 20 degrees toward the north³, on All Saints day. They arrived at the islands which Magelan named The Pleasures⁴: and from thence sailed to the islands which Gomes de Sequeira had discovered, and not knowing thereof, they named the Islas de los Reyes, that is to say, the Isles of the kings, because they came vnto them on Twelfe day.⁵ In the way Saavedra lost two ships of his company, of which they neuer after heard newes. But from island to island he still sailed and came to the Island of Candiga⁶, where he bought two [or three] Spanyards for 70 ducats, which had beene of the companie of Frier Loaisa, who was lost thereabout.

In the yeere 1528, in March, Saavedra arriued at the Islands of maluco, and came to an anker before the Isle of Gilolo: he found the sea calme and winde at will, without any tempests⁷: and he tooke the distance from thence to Noua Spagna to be 2050

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- 1 Ed. note: The pinnacle in question was the Santiago, Captain Guevara, that ended up at Tehuantepec.
 - 2 Ed. note: When I visited Zihuatanejo in the 20th century, it was still called that, not St. Christopher.
 - 3 Ed. note: More correctly 18 degrees.
 - 4 Ed. note: Magellan did not name any islands "Los Placeres", a name applied later on by somebody else to an atoll in the Marshalls on account of their sandbanks or reefs. The word "placer" could also mean "pleasure", of course, but not in this context; rather, it is used as in the expression "placer mining" in English. Magellan did, however, apply the name Los Ladrones to Guam and Rota.
 - 5 Ed. note: Ulithi, previously discovered by Captain da Rocha and his pilot Sequeira in 1525, and re-discovered by Saavedra on the 12th day after Christmas, or Epiphany, 1528.
 - 6 Ed. note: All Portuguese editions of Galvão say Sarangan. However, Hakluyt is not completely wrong, as Candigar is the name of the second island in the Sarangani Group, off the SE corner of Mindanao.
 - 7 Ed. note: A few words have not been translated which change the meaning. What is meant is that Saavedra reported fine weather on the voyage over from New Spain.

leagues.¹ At this time Martin Yñiguez de Carquiçano died, and Fernando de la Torre was chosen their generall, who then was in the citie of Tidore, who had there erected a gallows and had fierce warre with Don George de Meneses, captaine of the Portugals: and in a fight which they had the fourth of May, Saavedra tooke from him a galiotte and slew the captaine thereof, called Fernando de Baldaya, and in June² he returned [in his ship] towards New Spaine, hauing with him one Simon de Brito Patalin and other Portugals, and hauing beene certaine monethes at sea, he was forced backe vnto Tidore, where Patalin was beheaded [and quartered], and his companions hanged...

In the yeere 1529, in May, Saavedra returned back againe towards New Spaine, and he had sight of a land toward the south in two degrees, and he ran east along by it aboue fīue hundred leagues till the end of August. [According to their account], the coast was cleane and of good ankerage, but the people blacke and of curled haire; from the girdle downward they did weare a certaine thing³ plaited to couer their lower parts. The people of Maluco call them Papuas, because they be blacke and friseled in their hair: and so also do the Portugals call them [as they got the word from them].

[Alvaro] Saavedra hauing sailed 4 or 5 degrees to the south of the line, returned vnto it, and passed the equinoctiall towards the north, and discouered an island which he called Isla de los Pintados, that is to say, The Isle of painted people: for the people thereof be white, and all of them marked with an iron⁴: and [according to their appearance] by the signes which they gaue he conceaued that they were of China. There came vnto them from the shore a kinde of boate full of these men, making tokens of threatnings

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- 1 Ed. note: Galvão says 1,500 leagues. Hakluyt could not resist correcting this figure; his distance is indeed more correct.
 - 2 Ed. note: Galvão said July, wrongly, and Hakluyt has corrected him. There are a few inaccuracies made by Galvão in the rest of this paragraph (See previous documents for the true story).
 - 3 Ed. note: The certain thing that Hakluyt could not translate was "a skirt made of feathers of various colors".
 - 4 Ed. note: Rather, they were completely branded or painted, i.e. tattooed, as we would say today.

to the Spanyards¹ who seeing that the Spanyards would not obey them, they began to skirmish with slinging of stones, but Saavedra would suffer no shot to be shot at them, because their stones were of no strength, and did no harme.²

A little beyond this island, in 10 or 12 degrees, they found many small low islands full of palme trees and grasse, which they called Los Jardines³, and they came to an anker in the middest of them, where they taried certaine daies. The people seemed [from their carriage and complexion] to descend from them of China, but by reason of their long continuance there they become so brutish, that they haue neither law [nor religion] nor yet giue themselves to any honest labour.⁴ They weare white clothing, which they make of grasse.⁵ They stand in maruailous feare of fire, because they neuer saw any.⁶ They eat cocos in steade of bread, breaking them⁷ before they be ripe, and putting them vnder the sand, and then after certaine daies they take them out and lay them in the sunne, and then they will open. They eate fish [raw], which they take in a kinde of boate called a parao, which they make of pine wood, which is driuen thither at certaine times of the yeere, they know not how, nor from whence.⁸ The tooles wherewith they make their boates are of shels of cockles, [clams?] or oysters.

Saavedra perceiuing that the time and weather was then somewhat better for his purpose, made saile towards the firm lande and [isthmus of the] citie of Panama [it being no more than 17 or 18 leagues wide], where he might vnlade the cloues and marchandise which he had, that so in cartes it might be carried [overland] fower [i.e. 4] leagues, to the riuier of Chagre, which they say is nauigable, running out into the North sea not

1 Ed. note: Making signs that they should strike sail.

2 Ed. note: Hakluyt avoided a translation difficulty by paraphrasing the text. What Galvão said is: "Then there came out to them from the island a fleet of proas, all of them with slings. They began a fight with the ship, more haughty but less dangerous than the Battle of Ravenna" (a reference to the 1512 battle at Ravenna, Italy, between the French and the Spanish). "However, Saavedra ordered the sail to be shortened and waited, without doing them any harm, until they had wasted all the ammunition that they had brought."

3 Ed. note: Not grass, but bushes, or greenery in general. Also, if a name was given to Ujelang and/or Eniwetok by Saavedra, it was Buen Jardin (Bom Jardin as Galvão says in Portuguese). We will see later how the name of Los Jardines was applied (or re-applied) by Villalobos to Ujelang in 1542. That must be the name Hakluyt saw on a map of the Pacific in 1600.

4 Ed. note: The translation should have been "nor do they bring up any living thing." They apparently raised neither animals nor crops.

5 Ed. note: Their mat skirts, made of woven pandanus fibers, were pale yellow when newly-made.

6 Ed. note: This is hard to believe. I myself think that there is one word missing in the original text, the word "arms". After all, Nápoles did say that they were afraid of firearms.

7 Ed. note: Rather shelling them, that is removing the coir or outer shell, as it made obvious by what follows.

8 Ed. note: The flotsam pine logs came from the west coast of North America.

far from Nombre de Dios, where the ships ride which come out of Spaine¹: by which way all kinde of goods might be brought vnto them in shorter time, and with lesse danger, then to saile about the Cape of Bona Sperança. For from Maluco vnto Panama they saile continually betweene the Tropickes and the line: but they neuer found winde to serue that course: and therefore they came backe againe to Maluco very sad, because Saavedra died by the way: who, [they say] if he had liued, meant to have [asked the Emperor] to haue opened the land of Castillia de Oro and New Spaine from sea to sea.² Which might have beene done in fower places: namely from the Gulfe of S. Michael to Vraba, which is 25 leagues, or from Panama to Nombre de Dios, being 17 leagues distance: or through Xaquator³, a river of Nicaragua, which springeth out of a lake three or fower leagues from the South sea, and falleth into the North sea; whereupon doe saile great barks and caryers. The other place is from Tecoauntepec through a riuier to Verdadera Cruz in the Bay of Honduras⁴, which also might be opened in a streight. Which if it were done, then they might saile from the Canaries vnto the Malucos vnder the [temperate] climate of the zodiake, in lesse time and with much lesse danger, then to saile about the Cape de Bona Sperança, or by the streight of Magelan, or by the Northwest.⁵ And yet if there might be found a streight there to saile into the sea of China, as it hath beene sought.

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- 1 Ed. note: This is wishful thinking on the part of Galvão, who wrote this after 1555. The Darien settlement was moved to Panama only in 1525 (See Doc. 1513). Saavedra's stated intention before he died was to return to Mexico, not to go to Panama.
 - 2 Ed. note: It is interesting to note that the Spanish had plans for a canal three and a half centuries before one was finally built. The four possible locations for the project were already described as the Columbian canal (from the Gulf of San Miguel to the Gulf of Uraba), the Panama canal (via the River Chagres), the Nicaraguan canal (via Lake Nicaragua and the San Juan River), and the Mexican canal (Gulf of Tehuantepec to the Gulf of Campeche).
 - 3 Ed. note: Rather Sagra de Oro, same as the San Juan River.
 - 4 Ed. note: Galvão did not say "in the Bay of Honduras", because that is a physical impossibility, which Hakluyt thought possible only after he consulted a primitive map, ca. 1600.
 - 5 Ed. note: Literally "by the land of the Corte Reals", i.e. Canada, as discovered by the Corte Real Brothers.