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## Document 1581A

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### Letter from the Viceroy to the King, dated Mexico 1 April 1581

*Source: Cartas de Indias (Madrid, 1877), pp. 336-342.*

#### Letter from the Viceroy of New Spain, Count of Coruña<sup>1</sup> to King Philip II

Sacred Catholic Royal Majesty:

After I wrote to Y.M. by the first advice ship [for Spain], whose duplicate goes aboard this ship, what is worth mentioning to Y.M. will be said herein.

#### [New galleon built in Guatemala]

I have received letters from Licentiate Palacios, who comes here to serve in the post of Court Liaison Officer with this Audiencia, one that Y.M. has favored him with. He has been until now in the port of Realejo [in Guatemala], occupied with the building of the ships that are being made there for the Philippine Island run. He came from there aboard a galleon that has been built, to the port of Guatulco, and from there he went to that of Acapulco where he arrived on the 21st of the last month, in spite of the storms en route which gave him some hardship, according to his letter, and so he brought the galleon. However, it came in great need of repair and preparation, which will be carried out, to make it navigable.<sup>2</sup>

In that port is Don Juan de Guzman as Mayor in Chief; he is a very experienced person with things of the sea and in outfitting ships. He has done it many times before. I have entrusted him with the preparations of those that are there waiting to go on the

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1 Ed. note: The 5th Viceroy of New Spain was Don Lorenzo Juarez de Mendoza, who served from 1580 to 1583.

2 Ed. note: This galleon was probably the **San Martín**, which took a year to finish and sailed for the first time across the Pacific in 1582.

said Philippine run, with the religious who are to go to the Philippines under the supervision of their Bishop, Fray Domingo de Salazar, [O.P.]. To this effect, as I wrote to Y.M. in the first letter, given the death of Cosme del Campo, I have sent there someone who understands what he was doing, as in interim measure, while waiting for what Y.M. will be pleased to order.<sup>1</sup>



**Count Martín Enriquez, Viceroy of New Spain [1568-1580].**

The [previous] Viceroy Don Martín Enriquez has asked me to earmark a ship or two for him, in which he could go to Peru<sup>2</sup> to comply with what Y.M. had ordered him, and I made some diligence about this. Having heard that a ship had arrived [from Peru] at the port of Guatulco, I then sent an advice to the Mayor in Chief there to put an embargo on it and to take it to Acapulco, from which the said Viceroy is due to leave to go on his voyage; the Mayor in Chief did so. It appears that with this ship and with another belonging to Y.M. which was in the said port of Acapulco, he will have sufficient comfort to make the said voyage. As for the other galleon of Y.M. which has been outfitted there, it is being made ready to send to the Philippines, and in case more than this one ship is necessary, another is being made ready to go in company with it.

Having understood that the rigging which is bought here for these ships is what they take off the ships in the port of San Juan de Ulua [i.e. Veracruz] that are condemned as too old to make the return

voyage to Spain. So, this rigging is rotten, worn out, does not last long, and sells very dear; the ships in which it is placed are at risk. It seems to me that, Y.M. will decide, an order could be given to have it brought from there aboard the ships that come in the fleet, and that the quantity should be sufficient for ships up to 400 to 500 tons, which are the capacities of those sailing to those islands, because they would go safely and would last for more voyages; otherwise, every year it is necessary to replace most of it.

<sup>1</sup> Ed. note: The post in question was that of official supplier.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. note: To his new post as Viceroy of Peru.

The ship which usually comes from the Philippine Islands by this time each year has not yet arrived, but it is believed that it will arrive soon.<sup>1</sup>

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I have received letters from the officials who are at the port of Realejo, Province of Guatemala, building **two ships** that have been ordered made there. They say that they are making as much haste as possible. Up to now, they have been sent 30,000 pesos; in this letter they are asking for 40,000 more, but only half of that is being sent, as the royal officials will write to Y.M. about. Care will be taken that the works will not stop and will be completed.

Aboard the ships that will be sent to the Philippines, I am thinking about not sending military personnel, because Don Gonzalo Ronquillo took along [in 1580] those that Y.M. sent to him, and because no news has been received about those who made it there. As soon as he has advised me about it, I will take care of it. I had it advertised that married men who wish to go will be given passage<sup>2</sup> but, not having an order from Y.M. regarding free food for the voyage, I do not know if any will wish to go. If they were given it, they tell me that there would be many who would go with their wives, and once there, if necessary, they would be as good soldiers as those sent from here with their wages and food allowance. May Y.M. make provision for what seems appropriate to your service, and I will in turn advise about what here is understood to be necessary.

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From Mexico, 1st of April 1581.

Sacred Catholic Royal Majesty, the royal hands of Y.M., servant of Y.M.

The Count of Coruña.

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1 Ed. note: This is probably a reference to the **Nuestra Señora de la Cinta** which was sent by a new southern route, via New Guinea, but was forced back to Manila.

2 Ed. note: That is, free passage to their family.