
Document 1565J

Legazpi—Two letters from the Viceroy to the King, dated Mexico 25 February 1564 and 15 June 1564

Sources: Col. de Navarrete, t. 17, doc. 7; Col. Ultramar ii, doc. 19 & 20, pp. 140-145; summarized in B&R 2:88-89.

Summary by Robertson

Mexico, 1564.—The Viceroy writes to Philip II on February 25 and again on June 15, excusing the non-departure of the fleet. In the first letter he says that the delay is due to the proper victualling of the vessels for a two-year voyage, and the non-arrival of certain pieces of artillery, etc., which were coming from Veracruz; the things that were to be sent from the City of Mexico could not be sent until the fleet was launched, as they would spoil if left ashore. Everything will be ready by May.

In the second letter he excuses the delay as, owing to calms and contrary winds, the vessels bearing the “masts, yards, and certain anchors” for the fleet did not arrive at the port of Navidad until June 10. It still remained to step the masts and make the vessels shipshape, and to load the provisions; and they will be ready to sail by September. “Four vessels are being sent, two galleons and two pataches;... they are the best that have been launched on the Southern Sea, and the stoutest and best equipped. They carry 300 Spaniards, half soldiers and half sailors, a chosen lot of men... Six religious of the Order of Saint Augustine go with it, among them Fray Andrés de Urdaneta, who is the most experienced and skilled navigator that can be had in either Old or New Spain.” He encloses a copy of the instructions to Legazpi, in order that the King may assure himself that his commands have been obeyed. The best pilots have been secured. The questions of routes, seasons, and other things have been discussed with Urdaneta and others who have made the voyage before. “I trust... that the expedition will come to a successful end, and that Your Majesty will be very much served therein, and in all that shall hereafter occur in it.” Notice will be given to the King of the departure of the fleet by the first vessel leaving for Spain after that event.