
Document 1581B

The voyage of Father Martin Ignacio de Loyola, O.F.M., around the world, via Guam

Sources: RAH Colección Muñoz¹ N° A-70 [Sig. n° 9/4807], folios 110v-163. Also "Itinerario y epitome de todas las cosas notables que ay desde España, hasta el Reyno de la China, y de la China a España, bolviendo por la India Oriental, despues de aver dado buelta a casi todo el Mundo" edited by Fr. Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza in his "Historia de las cosas mas notables, ritos y costumbres del gran Reyno de la China..." in Madrid, 1586; translated in B&R 6:137-143.

Note: The author of the Itinerary of some Franciscans around the world was a participant, Fr. Martin Ignacio de Loyola, a nephew of St. Ignatius de Loyola who founded the Jesuit order.

Voyage from Mexico to Manila

Departure from the city of Mexico, and journey to the port of Acapulco on the South Sea, whence they embark for the Philippine Islands. The island of the Ladrones is passed, and the condition and rites of the people there are noted. Chapter XI.

From the City of Mexico they set out to embark at the port of Acapulco, a place located on the South Sea in 19° of elevation of the pole, and lying 90 leagues from the City of Mexico, this entire distance being settled with many villages of Indians and Spaniards. At this port they embarked, taking a southeast course until they reached a latitude of 12° and 1/2. They did this in order to find the favorable winds (which in truth they found there), those called by sailors the *brisas*, which are so favorable and steady

¹ Ed. note: Transcript made by Muñoz at Seville ca. 1784 from the original ms. then owned by the Count of Aguila.

that even in the months of November, December, and January, there is seldom any necessity for touching their sails.

From this arises the so easy navigation through this sea. From this fact, and from the few storms here, this sea has been called the *Mar de Damas* ["Ladies' Sea"]. A westerly course is taken, following the sun always, upon setting out from our hemisphere. Journeying through this South Sea for forty days¹ more or less, without seeing land, at the end of that time, the islands of Velas ["Sails"], otherwise called the Ladrões, are sighted, which, seven or eight in number, extend north and south. They are inhabited by many people, as we shall now relate.

Islands of Velas, or Ladrões. These islands lie in 12° of latitude. Opinions differ as to the distance in leagues between them and the port of Acapulco, for up to the present no-one has been enabled to ascertain it with certainty, by navigation from east to west, and no-one has been able to measure the degrees [of longitude]. Some assert the distance of this voyage to be 1,700 leagues, others 1,800. The opinion of the former is held to be more nearly correct. All of these islands are inhabited by light-complexioned people, of pleasing and regular features, like those of Europe; although in their bodies they do not resemble the latter—for they are as tall as giants, and of such a great strength that it has actually happened that one of them, while sitting on the ground, got hold of two Spaniards of good stature, seizing each of them by one foot with his hands, and lifting them thus as easily as if they were two children. Both men and women are naked from head to foot, although some of the women wear bits of deerskin of about half a yard in length, tied about the waist, for decency's sake; but those who wear them are very few compared with those who do not. The weapons used by them consist of slings, and sticks hardened by fire, both of which they throw very deftly. They live on fish, which they catch off the coast, and on wild beasts, which they kill in the mountains, pursuing them afoot.

[Sex customs]

There is in these islands the strangest custom ever seen or heard of anywhere. A time limit is imposed for the youth to marry, in accordance with their custom; and during all this period they are allowed to enter freely into the houses of the married, and to remain with the women, without receiving any punishment therefor, even if the very husbands of the women should see it. These youths carry a club in the hand, and when one enters the house of married people, he leaves this club at the door, in such a position that those arriving may easily see it. This is a sign that no-one may enter until the club is taken away, although it be the husband himself. They observe this custom so strictly that if anyone should violate it, all the others would then put him to death. None of these islands has a king, or recognized ruler, to whom the rest are subject; therefore, each person lives to suit himself.

¹ Ed. note: Muñoz has noted in the margin of his transcript "52 days" instead. At the end of this transcript, he has commented that his marginal notes come from his examination of a Mendoza edition printed at Antwerp in 1596.

Between the inhabitants of certain islands and other islands¹ a state of hostility prevails, whenever occasion offers, as happened while Spaniards were in the port of the said island. At the point where the Spaniards anchored, as many as two hundred small boats filled with natives came to the ships to sell chickens, coconuts, potatoes, and other things of those islands, and to buy in exchange things carried by our men—specially iron, of which they were particularly fond, and glass articles, and other trifles. There was a great contest to see which of the canoes would reach the ship first, and their occupants came to blows, wounding each other as savagely as wild beasts, so that many died in the presence of our men. The matter was not settled until, for the sake of peace, an agreement was made among them, with many outcries that those from one island should do their buying on the port side of the vessel, and those from another island, on the starboard side. Whereupon they subsided, and bought and sold to their hearts' content. Then in payment for this good treatment, when they took their departure from us, they hurled their sticks at the ship, wounding a number of men who were on deck. But they did not boast of this, for our men instantly repaid their daring with shots from their arquebuses.

These people esteem iron more highly than silver or gold. They give in exchange for it, fruits, yams, sweet potatoes, fish, rice, ginger, chickens, and many fine and well-woven mats, and all for almost nothing.

These islands are extremely healthful and fertile, and would be very easy to win over to the faith of Christ, if, on the passage of the vessels to Manila a few religious, together with some soldiers for protection, should be left there until the next year. This would cost but a small sum.

Their rites and ceremonies are not known yet, because no-one understands their language; and it has not been possible to learn it, since no-one has been in these islands longer than while passing. According to all appearances, their language is easy to understand, for it is pronounced very distinctly. Their word for ginger is *asno*² and for "Take away that arquebus" they say *arrepeque*.³ They have no nasal or guttural words. It is understood, from some signs that we saw them make, that they are all pagans; and that they worship idols and the devil, to whom they sacrifice those of their neighbors whom they capture in war. It is believed that they are descended from the Tartars, from certain peculiarities found among them which correspond to those found in that people.

These islands extend north and south with the land of Labrador, which lies near Terra-nova [Newfoundland], and are not a great distance from Japan.⁴ It is quite safe

1 Ed. note: In this paragraph, the word "island(s)" should be interpreted as "village(s)".

2 Ed. note: Recorded as *asinor* by Rodriguez in 1565 (see Doc. 1565Q). The narrator remembered this word, probably because it sounded like the Spanish word for donkey.

3 Ed. note: *Ari pek*, or *Eri pak*, literally "No gun" or "Don't shoot".

4 An expression of the opinion, then current in Europe, that the New World was either an extension of the Asiatic continent, or separated from it only by a narrow sea.

to say that they have intercourse with the Tartars, and that they buy iron to sell it to the latter. The Spaniards who passed these islands called them the islands of Ladrões ["Thieves"]; for in sober truth all these people are thieves, and very bold ones, very deft in stealing; and in this science they might instruct the Gypsies, who wander through Europe. In verification of this, I will recount an occurrence witnessed by many Spaniards, one which caused much wonder. While a sailor was stationed, by the order of the captain, on the port side¹ of the ship, with orders to allow none to come aboard, and while he, sword in hand, was absent-mindedly looking at some of the canoes of the islanders—a sort of little boat all made of one piece, in which they sail—one of the natives plunged under the water and swam to where he was, quite unconscious of anything of the sort, and without his seeing it, snatched the sword from his hand and swam back with it. At the cry of the sailor, proclaiming the trick practiced on him by the islander, several soldiers with their arquebuses were stationed to shoot the native when he should emerge from the water. The islander, on seeing this emerged from the water, holding up his hands, and making signs that he had nothing in them. For this reason those who were on the point of shooting him refrained. After a few moments of rest, the native dived once more, and swam under water until out of range of the arquebuses, where, assured of safety, he took the sword from between his legs where he had hidden it, and commenced to make passes with it, jeering the while at our men whom he had deceived so easily. This theft, as well as many very adroit ones that they committed, has given these people the name of Ladrões, and is the reason for calling all the islands inhabited by them by the same name. This appellation is easily pardoned as long as they find opportunity to exercise their evil inclinations.

Departure from the Ladrões Islands and arrival at those of Luzon, or, as they are called also, Philippines; and the relation of some peculiarities of those islands. Chapter XII.

Island of Luzon, and city of Manila. Navigating almost 200 leagues west of the Ladrone Islands, to the channel called Espiritu Santo, one then enters the archipelago, which consists of innumerable islands, almost all inhabited by natives, and many of them conquered by the Spaniards, through either war or friendship. After sailing for 80 leagues, one reaches the city of Manila, located on the island of Luzon...²

1 Ed. note: Muñoz notes in margin; "at the bow of the ship" instead. This was a more likely place for the guard boat to have been stationed.

2 Ed. note: The remaining chapters of the Itinerary treat of the departure from Cavite for China of 7 discalced Franciscans, 3 other Spaniards and 6 natives, on 21 June 1582, of their reception in China, their imprisonment and deliverance through the intercession of the Portuguese, then the travel of the Franciscans to Lisbon via Malacca and India. Fr. Ignacio came back to Macao in 1586.