
Document 1519A

Letter from the King of Spain to Magellan

Sources: Letter from the King of Spain to Fernando de Magalhães and Ruy Faleiro, dated Barcelona, 19 April 1519. Original in Lisbon, Torre do Tombo Archives: Corpo chron., parte 1ª, maço 24, nº 64. Published in ACL's Alguns documentos, pp. 422-430.

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[From] The King,

[To] Fernando de Magallães and Ruy Faleiro, knights of the Order of Santiago, our captain-generals of the fleet which we have ordered organized to go on a voyage of discovery, and the other individual captains of the said fleet, the pilots, masters, boat-swains, and seamen in the ships of the said fleet:

Inasmuch as I have been assured by those who have actually been there, that the Molucca Islands are rich in spices—the chief article sought by the said fleet—I order you, the said Fernando de Magallães, to pursue a direct course to the above-mentioned islands, exactly as I have told and commanded you. And I order you all individually and collectively that, in the said voyage you heed strictly the opinion and decisions of the said Fernando de Magallães; and that, first and foremost, before sailing elsewhere, you proceed without fail to the said Moluccas, for by doing so you will perform our service. Afterwards you may seek whatever suitable things, in accordance with your orders. And none of you shall act contrary to this our will, in any manner, under penalty of loss of property and life.

Barcelona, April 19th 1519.

I, the King.

By command of the King:

Francisco de los Cobos.