
Document 1628A

Jesuit annual report for 1627-1628

Sources: Original in AGI; Ventura del Arco mss. in Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago (vol. i, pp. 523-545), and possibly in RAH Jesuit papers also; translated in B&R 22: 181-212. Another version is in RAH; translated in B&R 22: 212-216.

Relation of 1627-28

Copy of a relation written by a Father of this residence of Manila on the condition of these Philippine Islands, and other surrounding kingdoms and provinces, from the month of July 1627, until that of 1628.

In the port of Cavite, which lies 3 leagues from and opposite the city of Manila, four very fine galleons were being equipped, that in size and strength could compare with the best in the world. For the flagship was the **Concepción**; for *almiranta*, the **Santa Teresa**; while the other two were called **San Ildefonso** and the [Nuestra Señora de] **Peña de Francia**. Besides these there was another smaller ship called the **Rosario**, and two other pataches and two galleys. The work was progressing rapidly; for as soon as the merchant ships that sail to New Spain were despatched [in 1627], our people had to begin their voyage to the island of Hermosa near China, in order to dislodge the Dutch who were fortifying themselves there.¹

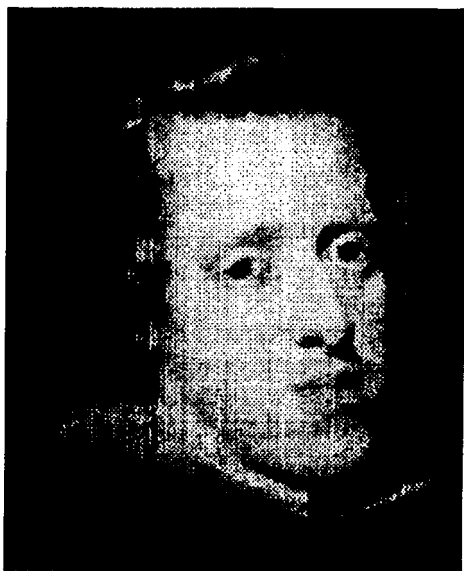
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¹ Ed. note: The Dutch built Fort Zelandia on the western side of Formosa, whereas the Spanish went to build one on an islet in a bay at the northern end, near Keelung today. When the expedition to Formosa left Cavite, the flagship began to leak badly and was left behind. The San Ildefonso became the flagship. The fleet was overtaken by a storm and the Rosario was sent ahead. The others turned back to Cavite in September 1627, but the Rosario made it and came back in February 1628. In another expedition to Macao, the galleons were diverted to the coast of Siam, and returned to Manila after an 8-month voyage full of adventure and hardships.

[Micronesian drift voyage? Unknown visitors to Cebu]

A large hostile *caracoa* was discovered on the coast of the city of Cebu. The Spaniards went out to it and, having overtaken it, its people instead of surrendering and delivering up themselves, received our men with a volley of stones which they cast from certain slings, and showers of spears. When our men saw that the enemy would not easily come to terms, they attacked and killed them. Only six of them were left alive, who with the prize and boat were taken to the said city of Cebu, where the attempt was made to ascertain their purpose and from what land they came. But it was impossible to ascertain anything, for they understood none of the languages spoken here, although there are so many. They were thought to be people who had been blown from some island. They were naked, and had no firearms, nor even weapons of iron. Their ship had no nails, and a chisel that was found was made of bone [sic]. They ate lice with a good grace—by that propensity, being people of good taste. Some thought them to be from an island more distant than Borney; for the inhabitants of that island eat lice, and the fat ones with special liking.

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**Portrait of King Philip IV by Rubens.**

In 1992, this painting which was hanging in the Kunsthau Museum in Zurich was destroyed by fire. It was a criminal act on the part of some vandal who wished to protest environmental pollution. The painting had been valued at \$1.9 million.

Rubens lived from 1577 to 1640. In 1628, he went to Spain and painted many works for the royal family. As for Philip IV, he was King of Spain from 1621 until his death in 1665.