
Document 1565B

Legazpi—Letter from the King to the Viceroy of New Spain, dated Valladolid 24 September 1559

Sources: AGI Patronato 1-1-1/23; Col. Ultramar ii, doc. 10, pp. 94-97; summarized in B&R 2:78-79; Col. diarios 5:139-140; translated in FBG 8:1-3.

Letter from Philip II to Luis de Velasco

[From] the King,

[To] Don Luis de Velasco, our Viceroy of New Spain and President of the Royal Audiencia, whose seat is in that City:

I have read what joy you have written about the commission and program we ordered you to send for new discoveries by sea and the opinions from other persons whom you gathered for this purpose; namely, about the manner the ships should be sent and how many, what tonnage they should have, what people and provisions they should take, and what route they should follow. We received also a copy of the Instructions sent to you, with the note you wrote in the margin of each chapter. Having understood everything, with the confidence I have in your person, I have decided to return the same to you in order that, as a person who understands this undertaking, you may do and provide as you see fit to the service to God, our Lord and to us, and with as little expense as possible from our fund.

Therefore, by virtue of the commission sent to you to make the said discoveries by sea, I hereby order you to prepare two ships of the specified tonnage and construction and with the men that are suitable and necessary, which you shall send for the discovery of the Islands of the West in the region of the Moluccas. You shall instruct those who are going in the voyage to do according to the Instructions sent to you, and order them to take some spices as a trial shipment and return to New Spain. Having done this, you shall instruct them what to do to determine whether the return voyage can be



King Philip II of Spain (1556-1598). *His name was first given to the Leyte-Samar Group of islands by Villalobos and later extended to the whole Philippine archipelago.*

ascertained and how much it will cost. You shall also order the men whom you will send in the expedition not to enter by any means the Moluccas Islands in order not to break our agreement with the Most Serene King of Portugal. Nevertheless, they may enter the other islands that are near them, like the Philippine Islands and the other islands that are outside the demarcation line of Portugal but inside ours, which are said to have spices also.

With reference to your suggestions on the artillery, barter goods and other things, proposing that they be sent from here so that the ships you will send for said discovery may be well provided on their outward voyage and return, so that they may be able to defend themselves at sea and on land from those who would attack them, and so that the barter goods they will carry will be better taken care of, I have considered them and have also heard Captain Juan Pablo de Carrión about whom you have written us to the effect that we can trust him in this enterprise. It appears that you should know what is contained in the memorandum. We are sending a copy with this letter, signed by our Secretary, and in such manner we have ordered our officials of the House of Trade in Seville to send you all that you mentioned, which they will comply with according to what has been written to them.

The letter which you suggested written to Fray Andrés de Urdaneta, of the Order of St. Augustine and who is there in that City, requesting him to go in those ships because of his experience and knowledge about the Spice Islands for his having lived there, is enclosed herein together with another for his Provincial, which is requesting the latter to give the proper instructions and to do his best so that his order will be accomplished.

Likewise, we are sending with this the letters which you asked to be sent blank for persons of your choice to go in the expedition and effect the desired end, which you well understand. The important instructions they shall be given is that they should not be detained by trade or barter, but should return soon to New Spain, as what is important in the expedition is to know the return route, inasmuch as the outward route is known and can be made in a short time. You shall give us a report of what has been done.

Undertakings of this sort should not be divulged nor disclosed to many persons, although we understand it has been known that you have been given our permission to make the discoveries you choose. Henceforth, you shall take care to be more reserved in similar things, as [indiscretion] in this kind of enterprise has caused inconveniences.

Valladolid, 24 September 1559.

I, the King.

—Notarized by Eraso.

Assigned by Bribiesca.

Don Juan Vasquez Agreda Jaraba.