
Documents 1609B

Ship movements of 1608-1610 and involvement with Dutch enemies and the Japanese

B1. The westward voyage of the San Francisco in 1608

Letter from interim Governor Rodrigo de Vivero, dated Manila 8 July 1608.

Sources: AGI 67-6-1; copy in TNL Manila; mentioned by Robertson in Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan in 1915.

[He talks about his arrival at Cavite on 13 July 1608].

B2. Notes from the ship captain, Juan Cevicos, who later became a priest

Source: RAH Jesuit Papers, tome 84 (modern ms. 9/3657)¹ in the middle of which is a printed booklet of 20 folios, printed at Madrid in March 1628, entitled as follows.

Discourse of Doctor Don Juan Cevicos, Commissioner of the Holy Office, regarding a letter to His Holiness which was printed in Latin, and came to light in Madrid at the beginning of this year of 1628, dated at Omura, a city in Japan, on 20 January 1624, about which

¹ Ed. note: This bundle in RAH is said to cover the period 1617-1630s; before 1760, it was in the Jesuit College at Seville. A previous owner of some of the material therein, specially the old missals of 1517 and 1595, was Fr. Jacob de Hermenegildo of that college. The documents in it are generally in poor condition.

there is an affidavit to the effect that it was written by Father Fray Luis de Sotelo, a religious of the Order of St. Francis, while he was a prisoner and very near his glorious martyrdom, which in fact he suffered a few days later for having taught and preached the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

...

Before going into the censure of what this letter contains, in order for me to bring out what I may know about what it says, it seemed to me appropriate to make a brief summary of my voyages and of a few circumstances that are necessary for the purpose.

I was born in Cantalapiedra, and I went to New Spain as a lay person in the year of 1604. From New Spain I went to the Philippines as captain and master of the flagship galleon **San Francisco** in 1608.¹ And, while returning in that [same] capacity from the Philippines to New Spain in 1609,² I was lost in Japan on the last day of September of the said year, near the city of Yendo which is in its eastern part.³ In order to board a ship in Nangasaqui, on the west side of Japan, I crossed almost the whole of that kingdom, passing by the said city of Yendo, Surunga⁴, Meaco, Fugime [Fushima], Usaca, Sacay, and Nangasaqui, which are its main cities.

In Yendo, I had communication with the said Father Fray Pedro Baptista, who is now [1628] at San Gil, and, in Surunga I met with Father Fray Luis Sotelo, and in the other cities other religious of St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Augustine, and of the Society of Jesus. For the half a year that I was in that kingdom I observed and noted with some care the things that are in it. During that time the first Dutch ships came to the port of Firando [Hirado], near Nangasaqui, and founded a factory; also in the port of Nangasaqui, the Japanese burned the Portuguese galleon from Macao. These two things had much to do with the persecution that a few years later took place against our religious.

I embarked in Japan for Manila at the end of March 1610 but the Dutch picked me up on the coast of the Philippines. However, as a result of the victory that Governor Juan de Silva had against them, I recovered my freedom. When I got to Manila, I studied and had me ordained as a priest. I became the treasurer of the cathedral of that

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- 1 Ed. note: The General of the 1608 westbound galleon is said (elsewhere) to have been Suarez de Cevallos.
 - 2 Ed. note: In the Jesuit relation of 1609-10 by Fr. Gregorio Lopez (B&R 17:123), it is said that the commander of the **San Francisco** was then Juan de Ezquerria. However, ex-Governor Vivero (see next document) does refer to Cevicos as being the captain of the ship. Hence, Ezquerria was General and ex-Governor Vivero a notable passenger. In a memorial, dated Madrid, 20 Dec 1627, Cevicos repeats that he was captain and master of the **San Francisco** in 1609 (see B&R 22:169).
 - 3 Ed. note: See the next document for the full story of this shipwreck. Yendo was Yedo or Edo, now Tokyo.
 - 4 Ed. note: Now called Shizuoka.

city and procurator of that archdiocese; as such, I left the Philippines to attend to the business of my church at this court at the end of August 1622. I arrived in Spain in 1623 and was in Rome during the Holy Year of 1625.

...
[The shipwreck of the San Francisco and the Japanese ship San Buenaventura]

This [planned] embassy¹ by Fr. Sotelo was badly and seriously viewed at Manila, since he had been heard of there for having, in the year of 1608, approached the Pilot Guillermo Pérez, a Spaniard, for the purpose of guiding it from Japan to New Spain. And in 1609 he had been the prime mover behind the project to obtain a ship that the emperor of Japan had had built in the European style² for Don Rodrigo de Vivero, [now] Count of Orizabal, who was coming back from governing the Philippines [for a year] when he was lost on Japan with the said galleon **San Francisco**, so that he would pursue his voyage from there to New Spain. This did take place [in 1610].

...
 [More about Father Sotelo and the Japanese embassy to Rome later on. As for the Japanese crew of the **San Buenaventura**, they were brought back to Japan by Sebastian Vizcaino, aboard a Spanish ship which, by coincidence, was also called **San Francisco**.]

B3. Relation of 1609-1610 by Father Gregorio Lopez, S.J., dated Manila 1 July 1610

Sources: Ventura del Arco Mss. in the Ayer Collection in the Newberry Library in Chicago, vol. i, pp. 273-340; translated in B&R 13, pp. 132 et sequitur.

Three ships left here in July of 1609 for New Spain, and all of them were exposed to dangers and storms. The ship **San Andrés**, which was the *almiranta*, and the only one to reach New Spain, encountered such terrific storms that its bow was under water during most of the voyage, and they were in such a great danger that the pilot vowed never to embark again—a very rare thing.³

The ship **Santa Ana**, almost entirely dismantled by the violent winds and heavy seas, reached Japan, and its arrival there was through not a little of God's mercy. Although it remained 13 days aground in a port of the kingdom of Bungo,⁴ still it did not go to

1 Ed. note: Sponsored by Date Masamune, the daimyo of Voxu, or Oshu, the former name of the Sendai region of Japan.

2 Ed. note: Actually, it was the Shogun, not the Emperor, who had paid for a ship built by William Adams. The Spanish re-named this small ship the **San Buenaventura**.

3 Ed. note: This ship must have been repaired because it made the westward voyage in 1610.

4 The modern province of Bungo is located on the eastern side of the island of Kyushu, on the Bungo Channel.

pieces. On the contrary, it was able to refit, and intends to prosecute its voyage this June of 1610.

The ship **San Francisco** of the said two ships [that failed to reach New Spain] encountered a greater storm. From the first it gave the passengers plenty of fear, both because of its dangerous leaks and a poor helm, and because of the disservices to the Divine Majesty which were committed. To narrate all its misfortunes would be long, so I shall content myself by referring to some of them.

...

During the first gale the ship, at the beginning, because of obeying its helm poorly, was struck head on. The sails pulled with such force on the masts that, as the captain dared not take them in, they were blown into shreds. The pilots began to throw overboard whatever was above decks, until nothing was left on them. They threw overboard the boat, and the crates and bales of merchandise. On that account the sailors lost their poor possessions, and some of the passengers lost a goodly amount. The ship tossed and rolled frightfully, and dipped below the water on both sides. Consequently, it shipped so much water that it was generally waist high above the deck. The waves were furious and high, and so great that the fore and aft cabins shipped water. One wave carried away a considerable portion of the stern gallery, together with four little slave girls who were in it. In this way they passed one night, almost in despair of seeing the morrow. But day came, and they repaired the ship by bending other sails that were carried for that purpose. After this storm the ship was very crank, and even in fair weather its sides were under water, although it had a high freeboard. Consequently, it shipped so much water that the waves washed over the decks with great noise and uproar, and entered the berths where the better-class passengers are generally quartered. The rigging had to be repaired piecemeal. Consequently, for those reasons, and as the vessel lacked other necessities, some tried to make them turn back to Manila. However, this was without effect, and they proceeded on their way with some storms; and in the last, which was frightful, the people had no safety, even inside the boat, for the waves tore them from it, and drew men after them. The ship leaked very badly, and consequently it was necessary to work the pumps continually. All, seeing the danger before their face, helped in this; even Don Rodrigo de Vivero, who had just completed his office as president of the Audiencia and governor and captain-general, assisted in his turn, as did Father Pedro de Montes and the other religious.

Finally, at the end of this struggle, they were wrecked on the coast of the kingdom of Quantu [Kanto], at the head of Japan, in almost its extreme east. That coast extends from that kingdom to the district of Ximo, where the port of Nangasaqui is located and from where many vessels sail yearly to Manila, which is farther west.

Almost 400 persons went ashore—that is, all except some 25 or 30, who were drowned in the course of the voyage. After a time the sea washed ashore some pieces of grogram, satin and velvet. Those who had gotten away with less clothing wrapped these about their bodies, while they made sandals from bits of silk, like those of leather

worn by shepherds in Spain, because of the sharp rocks upon which they were walking barefoot.

They found two Japanese in some fields, and were greatly comforted thereby; for they [had] imagined that land to be a desert islet without any food, upon which fortune had cast them to die. However, they would have had not a little clemency from God if they had been able to die after confessing at leisure. The Japanese guided them to a town nearby, where they were given some rice for their support. There most of them were kept carefully guarded for many days. The chief Japanese continued to take charge of all the silk that could be saved, but did not give it up until an edict therefor was granted to the Spaniards by the king. Consequently, some of it was given to them; but the Japanese rebought it at what prices they wished, paying for it with very impure silver. Consequently, the Spaniards were scarcely able to get 50,000 pesos in current Castilian money for it; although it is regarded as certain that if all that could have been saved had been delivered to the Spaniards, and they had sold it at a just price, they would have received 500,000 pesos beyond all doubt.

Although General Juan de Ezquerro tried to negotiate with the king for the return of some 40 boxes which were held by one of the Japanese lords, he failed to do so. On the contrary, the counselors advised him to be content with what had been returned, unless he wished to keep nothing. In short, they are pagans who believe in only the law of might and do not keep faith and friendship more than they think advisable. Governor Rodrigo de Vivero visited the King [i.e. Ieyasu] at his court at Suronga. The king received him and treated him with great honor, and gave him 1,000 taels as a concession. Each tael is worth 10 reals when made into [Spanish] money. The General gave this money to the people to provide for their journey to Nangasaqui, whence many have come to this city [i.e. Manila].

Don Rodrigo de Vivero and Father Montes continued their voyage in the ship **Santa Ana** which was in Bungo.¹ The Japanese came very near attacking it, but they say that they did not do so because such action was not expedient; for they had injured their trade with Macao by attacking the galleon en route from that city to Japan with silk, until they had to burn it, with the loss of 800,000 taels; and they would curtail their trade with this country and suffer great lack of silk.

...
I have endeavored to make this relation very faithful for the greater glory of God our Lord. May He preserve your Paternity² for the welfare of the whole Society.

Manila, 1 July 1610.

Gregorio Lopez.

1 Ed. note: Vivero did not go back to Manila aboard the Santa Ana but went straight to Acapulco aboard a ship loaned by the Shogun of Japan.

2 This phrase, the usual epithet of the general of the Jesuit order, would indicate that Lopez was addressing that official—who was then Claudio Aquaviva; he died on January 31, 1615.

B4. The westward voyage of an unnamed ship in 1609

Sources: Fr. Aduarte's History of 1640, chapter 67; translated in B&R 31:279-280.

On the 11th of April in this year [i.e. 1609]¹ there arrived at Manila some [Dominican] religious from the number of those who were brought from Spain to this province by Father Fray Gabriel de Quiroga. He died on the voyage before he reached Mexico, and most of the others were scattered, and remained in New Spain... Of all those who came with him, only 8 [out of 30] completed the voyage which they had begun.

1 Ed. note: The ship arrived early that year, because it brought the proprietary governor, Juan de Silva.