
Documents 1584A

The voyage of the ship Mora with Governor Santiago de Vera¹

A1. Letter from Dr. Santiago de Vera, dated Acapulco, 3 March 1584

Source: AGI 67-6-18; cited in B&R 53:258.

[This letter says that he was about to leave Acapulco for the Philippines carrying with him the seal of the restored royal Audiencia of Manila.]

A2. Letter from Dr. Santiago de Vera, dated Manila, June 1584

Source: AGI 67-6-18; cited in B&R 53:258.

[This letter says that he spent 3 months to make the voyage from New Spain, that he was almost shipwrecked at the Ladrone Islands, that before he got to Manila he took port in the bay of Ibalon where he learned about the death of Governor Gonzalo Ronquillo and the Manila fire of 1583.² He reports the setting up of the Audiencia and requests war supplies and some religious.]

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- 1 Ed. note: The formal name of this ship was the Santa María de Jesús. Santiago de Vera was Governor of the Philippines for 6 years (1584-90). He had previously been a member of the Audiencias of Hispaniola and Mexico.
 - 2 Ed. note: During the funeral of Governor Ronquillo held at the Augustinian convent, sparks from a lighted candle accidentally set fire to the building, which quickly spread to the greater part of the city.

A3. Letter from Dr. Santiago de Vera to the Archbishop of Mexico¹, dated Manila, 20 June 1585

Source: AGI 67-6-6 (Simancas—Secular, Audiencia de Filipinas, cartas y expedientes del gobernador de Filipinas vistos en el Consejo, años 1567 a 1599).

Most Illustrious Sir:

...

After having written another letter which accompanies this one, I received that of your illustrious Lordship which came in the ship **San Juan**...

Great satisfaction was felt in this country that the ship **Mora** arrived [back] so miraculously at port.² The death of the crew, I assure your Lordship, was not for lack of supplying themselves here with the necessities for the voyage; for although but little time was spent in despatching the ship, I exercised much diligence in seeing that more men and provisions were shipped than is customary. There are things that our Lord permits; since it was His will that they should die, it was an instance of His great clemency.³

...

I appreciate greatly the favor which your illustrious Lordship has done me, by the favorable and prompt despatch of these ships.⁴

...

Although I have tried to despatch the ships here with all haste, I am informed by sailors who understand the matter that it is not safe to send them out until the 20th or 25th of June. The weather is not settled until then, and they usually put into a harbor during the bad weather. Nevertheless, henceforth I will have them sail from here in the middle of June, in order that there shall not be the inconveniences to which your Lordship refers.

...

Your illustrious Lordship commands me to observe the orders given to **Francisco Gali** about the discovery of the route from these ports toward New Spain. I will keep your Lordship's commands to the letter, and will try to advise you soon, although the

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- 1 His name was Pedro de Moya y Contreras who had come to Mexico in 1571 as Chief Inquisitor for the Holy Office; in 1584, he became Viceroy of New Spain for one year, until the arrival of his successor Villamanrique. He returned to Spain in 1586 and died in 1591, while he was President of the Council of the Indies.
 - 2 Ed. note: The port of Acapulco at the end of 1584. Wagner (Spanish Voyages, p. 131) mentions that the full name of this ship was Santa María de Jesús, and Mora was but her nickname. He gives as a reference Archbishop Moya's letter of 8 May 1585, in AGI 60-4-1.
 - 3 Ed. note: Wagner, op. cit. mentions that the Moya crawled into Acapulco on 29 February 1585, after a 7-month voyage, dismasted and having lost her captain, pilot, master, and 56 sailors and passengers, almost all from scurvy. As for the San Martin which had left Manila at the same time, it had reached Acapulco on 15 December 1584.
 - 4 Ed. note: In the spring of 1585, two ships had been despatched from Acapulco: the San Martin, and the San Juan (Bautista).

ship **San Juan** is of no use, as it is worm-eaten and old. I shall have carpenters examine it, and if it will not serve, I shall have them inspect the ships which I have here, to see if any are fit, and to avoid the expense and delay.

...

Although there are facilities in this country for making ships of all kinds, and the best yet built has not exceeded in cost 6,000 pesos—and many private individuals would after this engage in it for the sake of profit if they could maintain the industry—yet the expenses incurred with the necessary complement of sailors and workmen, can be sustained only by the King. The greatest difficulty is in the bringing of the anchors and rigging from Veracruz. Your illustrious Lordship knows from experience what it costs His Majesty to transport sailors to Mexico, from there to these islands, and from here to the port of Acapulco; and the expense of overhauling the ship, and of keeping it there a winter. Therefore, although I wish to aid Captain Esteban Rodriguez [de Figueroa] in the despatch of the ship he has built, I do not know if it can depart hence for lack of men. It is hard to find them; for, although a large number of sailors usually come here from New Spain to bring the ships here, they are all needed on the return. They bring here the frigates and vessels which convey hither aid and means of defence for this land, and take back the provisions and other supplies needed in the King's service. Nevertheless, I shall do everything possible for the said captain.

...

The artillery which I brought [in 1584] returned in the ships **Mora** and **San Martin** [in 1584]; and because the ship **Santa Ana** is of such importance, I ordered three excellent pieces of bronze artillery to be placed on board besides powder and ammunition.¹ In order that we may not suffer from the lack of artillery in giving this, I beseech your illustrious Lordship to have the artillery returned in the same ship **Santa Ana**, as the Japanese have commenced to show signs of hostility, and it is not desirable that they or other pirates should make light of our power.

...

May our Lord watch over the illustrious person of your Lordship and may the prosperity of your house increase as we your servants desire.

Manila, 20 June 1585.

Illustrious Lord,

Your servant and client kisses the hands of your illustrious Lordship.

Doctor Santiago de Vera.

1 Ed. note: The galleon Santa Ana was making her maiden voyage to Acapulco that year, 1585.