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## Document 1527A

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# Saavedra's voyages, 1527-29 —Introductory chapter

*Sources:* One whole book has already been published in English on these voyages by Ione Stuessy Wright: "Voyages of Alvaro de Saavedra Cerón 1527-1529", N° 11 of the University of Miami Hispanic-American Studies, Coral Gables, Florida, 1951; 11 primary documents, mostly from AGI, have already been published in Spanish by Navarrete: "Colección de los viages", Madrid, 1837, Vol. V, pp. 440-486; Navarrete's direct sources were the Muñoz transcripts, specially those made by him at Simancas in May 1793, copied from the Legajo called "Relaciones y descripciones". Other primary and secondary accounts, some of which are listed below. Wagner says that the originals of most of the pertinent documents are now in AGI 1-2-1/10.

## Chronological list of primary sources regarding Saavedra's voyages

**A1. Royal Order dated 20 June 1526 to Hernando Cortés, Captain General of New Spain, to send a fleet to the Moluccas from the west coast of New Spain, in order to find the whereabouts of the survivors of the Magellan, Loaysa and Cabot<sup>1</sup> expeditions.**

*Ref. AGI Patronato 43, Ramo 1, Doc. 2 (3 pages); transcript in RAH; Navarrete Doc. XXVII.*

**A2. Letter from Cortés to the King, dated 3 September 1526.**

*Summary: Cortés offers to send his newly-built fleet to the Moluccas. The fleet was built at the port of Zacatula, near the port of Zihuatanejo from which the fleet was to depart on 31 October 1527.<sup>2</sup>*

**A3. General instructions given by Cortés to Saavedra, dated Temusticán 26 May 1527.**

*Ref. AGI Patronato, formerly Legajo 6; Navarrete Doc. XXX.*

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- 1 Ed. note: Sebastian Caboto was the son of Juan Caboto (John Cabot) who explored Newfoundland in 1494. Sebastian's voyages almost always ended in failure. In 1526, he was placed in charge of a fleet sent to the Moluccas, but he stopped in Argentina. After a series of misfortunes, he returned to Spain only in 1530.
  - 2 Ed. note: Both Zacatula and Zihuatanejo are west of Acapulco.

**A4. Instructions given by Cortés to Saavedra as Inspector General of the fleet, dated 27 May 1527.**

*Ref. AGI Patronato 43, Ramo 5, Doc. 2 (38 pages), formerly Legajo 6; Navarrete Doc. XXVIII.*

**A5. Instruction given by Cortés to Antonio Guiral as Treasurer of the fleet, dated 27 May 1527.**

*Ref. AGI Patronato, formerly Legajo 6; Navarrete Doc. XXIX.*

**A6. Letter from Cortés to the King of the island or land which the Saavedra expedition might reach, dated 28 May 1527.**

*Ref. AGI Patronato, formerly Legajo 6; Navarrete Doc. XXXIII.*

**A7. Letter from Cortés to the King of Cebu, dated 28 May 1527.**

*Ref. AGI Patronato, formerly Legajo 6; Navarrete Doc. XXXIV, pp. 461-462. Translated in B&R II, pp. 39-41.*

**A8. Letter from Cortés to the King of Tidore, thanking him for his good reception of the Magellan expedition, dated 28 May 1527.**

*Ref. AGI Patronato, formerly Legajo 6; Navarrete Doc. XXXV, pp. 463-464.*

**A9. Narrative of the voyage, probably by Saavedra himself, copied from the record book of the clerk Francisco Granado.**

*Ref. Library of the Escorial, Misc. 2 & 7, fol. 373-381; Navarrete Doc. XXXVI, pp. 465-475. See translation in Doc. 1527B below.*

**A10. Narrative by Vicente de Nápoles, dated Madrid 1534.**

*Ref. AGI Legajo 1 of the papers about the Moluccas from 1519 to 1547; Navarrete Doc. XXXVII, pp. 476-486; also in slightly different format in "Colección ... de Indias", Pacheco et al. (eds.), Vol. V, pp. 68-96.*

Note: The latter version has been translated by Markham and by Wright. See my own translation in Doc. 1527D below.

**A11. Official account of the expedition sent by Cortés to the King in 1534.**

*Ref. AGI Patronato 43, Ramo 9, Doc. 2 (15 pages); is it in Gayangos' "Relaciones de Hernan Cortés", Paris, 1866?*

**A12. Second official report by Cortés to the King, dated Mexico 1534.**

*Ref. AGI Patronato 43, Ramo 11, Doc. 2 (27 pages); in Gayangos?*

**A13. Narrative by Urdaneta, dated Valladolid 26 February 1537.**

*Ref. "Colección de Indias", V, pp. 29 et seq. See translation in Doc. 1527C below.*

**A14. Testimony of a member of the Saavedra expedition, dated Mexico ...**

*Ref. AGI Patronato 43, Ramo 10, Doc. 2: a fragment only (2 pages).*

**A15. Claim made by Francisco Granado, clerk in one of Saavedra's ships, dated ... 1538.**

*Ref. AGI Patronato 43, Ramo 12, Doc. 2 (4 pages).*

## Some secondary sources about the Saavedra expedition

**A16. Galvão's narrative (See Doc 1527E below).**

Note: This was the first narrative published, in Portuguese, in 1563.

**A17. Oviedo's narrative, derived from eyewitness reports by Urdaneta and Islares, dated Santo Domingo 1539 (See Doc 1527F below).**

*Ref. "Historia general...", Madrid, RAH, 1851-55; see Lib. XX, Caps. XXIX-XXXI.*

**A18. Herrera's narrative.**

*Ref. "Historia general...", Madrid, 1601-1615; see Decade IV, Lib. I, Cap. VI, also Lib. III, Cap. VI and Lib. V, Cap. VI.*

## Organization of Saavedra's fleet, 1527.

Ship name	Crew	Captain
1. Florida	50	Alvaro de Saavedra
2. Santiago	45	Luis de Cárdenas <sup>1</sup>
3. Espiritu Santo	15	Pedro (de) Fuentes <sup>2</sup>

The flagship **Florida** is the only one that left records. It sighted an island on 29 Dec 1527 (probably Guam), spent a few days at Los Reyes (probably Ulithi) and, by way of the Sarangani Is. reached Tidore on the last day of March 1528. At least 45 men were alive when the ship reached Tidore. On two return attempts, in 1528 and in 1529, the ship followed the northern coast of New Guinea, then headed northeasterly sighting island groups on both occasions, before turning back to the Moluccas. The islands in question are in the eastern Carolines and/or the Marshalls, for sure, but they cannot be identified with certainty, because of the lack of an accurate logbook, or even a reliable narrative.

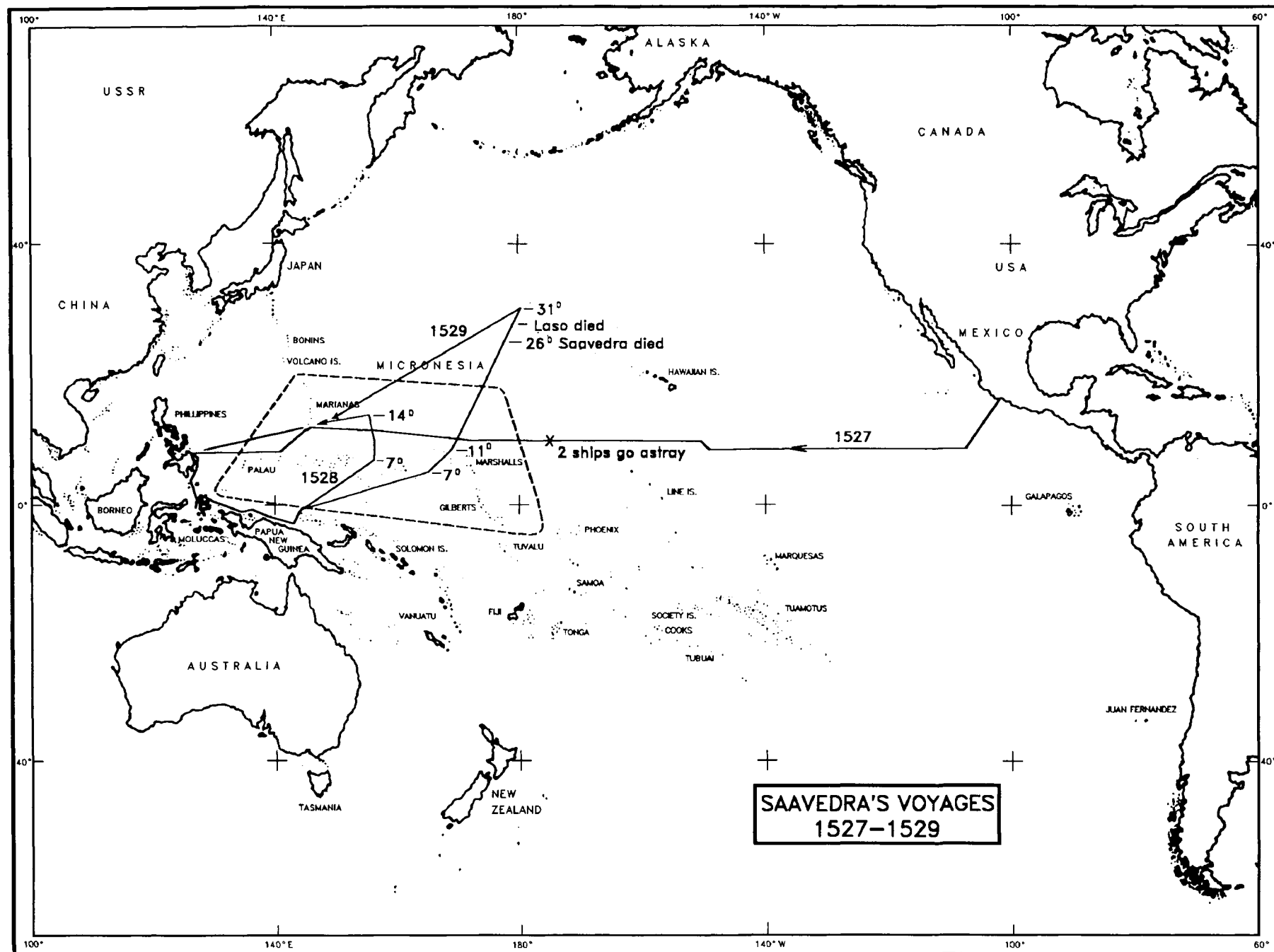
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- 1 Ed. note: Disappeared during the Pacific crossing, near the Marshalls, on 4 December, and was never heard of again. This was a replacement for the ship with the same name, the so-called galleon of Loaysa that diverted to Mexico.
- 2 Ed. note: Also disappeared during the Pacific crossing, without any trace.

## Re-constructed summary logbook of the forward voyage

Ref. From Doc. 1527B and Navarrete's summary in his Vol. V, adapted from Wright's Appendix A (See also adjoining chart).

Date	Heading	Leagues	Comments
31 Oct	WSW	6	Departure from Zihuatanejo (17°30'N).
1 Nov	"	8	Death of surgeon.
2 Nov	S	10	
3 Nov	SW	14	
4 Nov	"	17	
5 Nov	WSW	25	
6 Nov	"	14	
7 Nov	"	25	
8 Nov	"	17	
9 Nov	"	20	
10 Nov	"	20	
11 Nov	"	20	
12 Nov	"	8	
13 Nov	"	7	Leak in flagship.
14 Nov	W	42	
15 Nov	"	37	Many birds, etc. seen.
16 Nov	"	40	
17 Nov	"	40	
18 Nov	"	35	
19 Nov	"	40	
20 Nov	"	45	
21 Nov	"	30	
22 Nov	"	35	
23 Nov	"	25	
24 Nov	"	35	
25 Nov	"	40	
26 Nov	"	28	
27 Nov	"	8	Becalmed for most of day.
28 Nov	N by W	20	Search for land seen (clouds) <sup>1</sup>
29 Nov	"	20	
30 Nov	W	20	Return to normal heading.
1 Dec	"	20	
2 Dec	"	40	
3 Dec	"	38	
4 Dec	"	47	
5 Dec	"	40	
6 Dec	"	40	
7 Dec	"	18	
8 Dec	"	30	
9 Dec	"	38	

<sup>1</sup> Ed. note: Wright is not right when he writes NW, because the log says N1/4W which is N by W.



10 Dec	"	40	
11 Dec	W by N	28	
12 Dec	"	38	Latitude 11°02'N.
13 Dec	"	18	
14 Dec	"	40	
15 Dec	"	38	Florida stalls by mistake at night and the other two ships sail past.
16 Dec	W	30	
17 Dec	"	22	
18 Dec	"	14	Becalmed all night.
19 Dec	"	18	
20 Dec	"	28	
21 Dec	"	28	Frigate birds seen [Bikar?]
22 Dec	"	20	
23 Dec	"	30	Many birds seen [Eniwetok?]
24 Dec	"	22	With some southwesting.
25 Dec	"	25	
26 Dec	"	28	
27 Dec	"	30	
28 Dec	"	22	
29 Dec	SW	10	Guam sighted dead ahead; day spent coasting it.
30 Dec	SW <sup>1</sup>	6	
31 Dec	"	36	
1 Jan 1528	"	--	Anchored at an islet (Ulithi).
2 Jan	--	--	Remained anchored.
3 Jan	W	4	Anchored at another islet (Ulithi).
4 Jan	--	--	Landed, took latitude 11°N.
5 Jan	--	--	Remained anchored.
6 Jan	--	--	" "
7 Jan	--	--	" "
8 Jan	--	--	Left note for other ships.
9 Jan	WSW <sup>2</sup>	--	Got under way.
10 Jan	"	37	
11 Jan	"	18	
12 Jan	"	13	Saw signs of land [Palau?]
13 Jan	"	15	" " " " "
14 Jan	"	12	" " " " "
15 Jan	"	13	" " " " "
16 Jan	"	16	" " " " "
17 Jan	"	12	Still saw signs of land.
18 Jan	--	--	All sails lowered. Becalmed.
19 Jan	"	15	
20 Jan	"	10	
21 Jan	"	12	
22 Jan	"	8	

1 Ed. note: West is the assumed heading, but a continuation of the SW heading is more likely in view of following events.

2 Again, W is the assumed heading, but this has to be WSW from now on, because they were steadily losing latitude.

23 Jan	--	--	Becalmed; men mutinous.
24 Jan	--	--	" " "
25 Jan	--	10	Death of pilot and blacksmith.
26 Jan	W [sic]	11	
27 Jan	"	18	
28 Jan	"	10	
29 Jan	"	18	Fresh winds.
30 Jan	"	18	" "
31 Jan	"	18	" "
1 Feb	--	--	Saw land (Surigao coast, Mindanao).
2 Feb	--	--	Anchored (Bislig Bay, 8°N). <sup>1</sup>

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1 Ed. note: A total of about 1,923 leagues covered (not in a straight line) between Zihuatanejo and Mindanao, says Wright (that is slightly understated, I think), over an elapsed period of 95 days, of which about 86 were spent cruising. This is an average speed of over 22 leagues (72 nautical miles) per day, almost 3 knots.