
Document 1565L

Legazpi—Letter from the Audiencia to the King, dated Mexico 12 September 1564

Sources: Col. de Navarrete, t. 17, doc. 6; Col. Ultramar ii, doc. 22, pp. 200-205; summarized in B&R 2:100-101 as follows.

Summary by Robertson

Mexico, 12 September 1564.—A letter from the Royal Audiencia to the King informs the latter of the changes which they have made in the instructions given to Legazpi by Luis de Velasco, who has died. The general and other officers have left for the port of departure, and the fleet will sail some time in October. The first instructions, which were in "accordance with Urdaneta's opinion, were to sail toward New Guinea and coast along its shores in order to discover its products and other things. "It seemed to this Royal Audiencia, discussing and communicating in this regard with persons of experience, who have been in these regions, that, although it be true that the discovery of New Guinea would be important, especially if the riches asserted should be found there, it is not fitting that the voyage thither be made now—both because, as it is new, it has not hitherto been navigated; and because, doing so now, it would be necessary to deviate widely from the course to reach the Western Islands, and the return voyage would be delayed; and it would be running a great risk to navigate in an unknown course." The King's letter of 24 September 1559, is cited in support of the Audiencia's change in route, and they "determined to order the general to sail directly in search of the Philippine Islands, and the other islands contiguous thereto, by the same route taken by Ruy López de Villalobos." The Audiencia do not agree with Urdaneta that the Philippines are in Portugal's demarcation.