
Documents 1565Z

Legazpi—Taking possession of Micronesia for the King of Spain in January 1565

Sources: AGI, formerly under "Escrituras y recaudos tocantes al descubrimiento de las Islas del poniente", now in Patronato 1-1-1/23, n° 17; Col. Ultramar iii, doc. 38, pp. 76-81, 89-90.

Z1. Taking possession of the Marshalls¹

[At the] Island of the Barbudos [Mejit], 9 January 1565.

Aboard the flagship, on the 9th day of the month of January of the year 1565, the most illustrious Sir Miguel López de Legazpi, Governor and Captain General, for His Majesty, of the people and fleet going in his royal service to the discovery of the Islands of the West, while at the Island of the Barbudos, before me, Hernando Riquel, Senior Government Notary of the said islands and of the said fleet, his Lordship declared: that, on account of having seen this island today and in it houses, communal huts and Indians in canoes who fled from the beach, it is proper that possession of this island and of the others that are to be discovered be taken in the name of His Majesty; that his Lordship cannot take it personally at present because the fleet is at sea under sail and he has been unable to anchor; that consequently, in the name of His Majesty, as such is foreseen by law, he was giving and did give his full power to Felipe de Salcedo, his grandson, for him to take and seize the possession of the said island for His Royal Majesty King Philip, our Lord, and in his Royal name, the same as if his Lordship in person had taken and did take it, as fully and completely a power as required for the taking of the said possession which he did himself give and grant to the said Felipe de Salcedo with its incidences, dependencies, annexes and connections in legal form with all the

¹ Villalobos had already taken possession of the Marshall Islands on 1 January 1543 (See Vol. 1, p. 618), but the act of possession fell into the hands of the Portuguese in the Moluccas and was probably destroyed.

usual and customary clauses in similar cases that are deemed to have been stated although they are not specified herewith and, to confirm same he signed it with his name, being witnesses thereof Father Fray Andrés de Urdaneta, religious of the Order of St. Augustine, Captain Juan de la Isla, and Captain Juan Maldonado.

Miguel López passed before me,
Hernando Riquel, Senior Notary.

In the accomplishment of the above-said, his Lordship the General sent to the said island a boat and within it the said Felipe de Salcedo and me, the said notary, and Father Fray Andrés the Urdaneta with a bodyguard of soldiers to whom he ordered not to do any harm nor mistreat any of the Indians and natives of the said island nor take any food supplies nor any other things from their properties but rather he gave them beads and other trade goods to give to the said natives as a sign of peace and friendship and love, while the ships waited for the said boat tacking back and forth.

Hernando Riquel, Senior Notary.

Immediately afterward, on this same above-mentioned day, month and year, the said Felipe de Salcedo, by virtue of the power invested in him by the most illustrious Sir Miguel López de Legazpi, Governor and Captain General, for the taking in the name of His Majesty possession of the said island of Barbudos which is in the latitude of ten degrees, being on foot ashore, before me, the said notary, **he took the said possession of the said island** really and actually in proper legal form, by cutting branches, pulling out grasses and doing other ceremonies of possession, and he went to the houses of the natives of the said island in order to attract them thus peacefully, in the name of His Majesty, and he did not find any person in them until an old Indian man was brought forward, with his wife and children to whom were given a very good treatment, and they were given beads, knives and other things as a sign of friendship and according to the local custom, and they received it with much happiness and contentment and they danced according to the local custom showing much pleasure, and the said possession was taken in peace without contradiction from any person. So that there be proof that the said possession had been taken in the name of His Majesty by the said Felipe de Salcedo, as a person who held the power of the said Governor, the said Felipe de Salcedo asked me for a notarized statement.

I, Hernando Riquel, Senior Government Notary for the Islands of the West for His Majesty, bear witness to the aforesaid for I was present, in company with a large number of soldiers who were also present as witnesses, and in witness whereof I signed it with my usual name and rubric to attest to its truthfulness.

Certified true copy.

Hernando Riquel, Government Notary.

Z2. Taking possession of the Ladrones

[At the] Island of the Ladrones, 26 January 1565.

On the 26th day of the month of January of the year 1565, being on an island of the Ladrones that the native islanders gave us to understand by sign language is called **Guan**, the most illustrious Sir Miguel López de Legazpi, for His Majesty Governor and Captain General of the people and the fleet going in his service to discover the Islands of the West, having disembarked in the cove where watering was done, before me, Hernando Riquel, Senior Notary for the said fleet and for the government of the said Islands of the West, declared: that in the name of His Royal Majesty King Philip, our Lord, and as his Governor and Captain General, was taking and did take possession, and was taking and did take the tenency and physical and actual possession of the said island and of the others dependent islands in the vicinity, and as a token of real possession he took out his sword and cut tree branches, pulled out grasses, threw stones and had crosses cut in the trees, specially in a few coconut palm trees that were near the beach, and he caused masses to be said and celebrated by the religious of the Order of our lord Saint Augustine who are with the said fleet, and he took a stroll from one place to another, and he formally and presently did other formal acts and ceremonies of physical possession as is required in such cases, is usually done and customary to do. The said possession took place quietly and peacefully in the presence of many persons without any contradiction from any person.

As a proof that all the above-said happened thus, he asked me, the said notary, to prepare a certificate and in fulfillment thereof, I, the said Hernando Riquel the above-mentioned notary, bear witness to the aforesaid for I was present, together with his Lordship the said Governor, being witnesses thereof the Most Reverend Father Fray Andrés de Urdaneta, Prior, the Master-of-Camp Mateo del Sanz, the accountant Andrés Cauchela, the factor Andrés de Mirandaola, Lieutenant General Andrés de Ibarra, Gerónimo de Monçón and many other persons. In witness whereof I affixed here my usual signature and rubric to attest to its truthfulness.

Hernando Riquel, Senior Notary.

Certified true copy.

Hernando Riquel, Government Notary.