
Document 1665A

Certification by Admiral Esteban Ramos about the Ladrone Islands, dated Manila 21 May 1665

Sources: AGI Fil. 82, ramo 2, doc. n° 12 (2 copies: original and duplicate), with another copy in 82-2-22; another copy in Rome in ARSI Phil. 14.

Note: This certification appears attached to at least three documents in the archives: 1) the letter sent by the Archbishop of Manila (see Doc. 1665B); 2) Fr. Sanvitores' proposal to the Queen for a mission, through his father (dated 26, instead of 21, May) (see Doc. 1665C); 3) the copy of the said proposal that went to Rome.

Admiral Ramos gives some information about the Ladrone Islands

Original text in Spanish.

*El Almirante Estevan Ramos vezino de la Ciudad de Manila en las Islas Philipinas. Certifico que por quanto tengo conocimiento y enteligencia de las Islas de los Ladrones por aver estado y vivido en ellas el año pasado de 1638 que naufragó la Nao **Nuestra Señora de la Concepcion** y aver comunicado muy despacio a sus naturales, assi en esta ocasion como en otros muchos viages que e hecho de estas Islas a la Nueva España en espeçial el año pasado de 664 que viniendo de dicha Nueva España en la Nao Capitana **Nuestra Señora de la Limpia Concepcion** de mi cargo rescate a quatro Indios naturales de esta Isla de Manila que avian naufragiado en dicha ocasion, tengo por sin duda, que si tubieran Ministros del Santo Evangelio y algunos Españoles y naturales de estas Islas que las acompañasen para el exemplo, se reduxeran con facilidad a Nra. Sta. Fee Catholica por quanto los dichos Isleños son gente dosil y afable y que no tienen zeta [i.e. secta] ni ritos ni otros vezinos que se las enseñen, y sera empresa de muy poca costa, pues basta que con los Religiosos vayan cantidad de veinte Españoles y otros tantos Indios naturales de estas Islas para que den exemplo de Christianidad, y vean la sumiçion y reverençia que se deve a los Ministros del Santo Evangelio; sin ser menester otra escolta, ni presidio, por ser aquella gente muy pacifica y sin*

*borrachera*¹ y no aver enemigos ni çerca ni lexos, que se pueda temer vengan a dichas Islas, por ser tan pobres y faltas de las conveniençias, que ellos buscan, pues solo ay [la] de la conversion de aquellas almas desamparadas en tanto numero, que ay Isla de los que yo andube, y habite en la ocasion del naufragio, que tendra mas de veinte mill almas, y son diez y siete las Islas pobladas que se an descubierto en aquel parage. No ay duda que sera empresa de gran serviçio de Dios Nro. Señor y muy façil.

*Y assi lo siento, y de pedimiento del Reverendo Padre Diego Luis de San Vitores.*²

Fecho en Manila [a] veynte y uno de Mayo de mill y seis cientos y sesenta y cinco años.

Estevan Ramos.

[Copied by] *Nicolas de Herrera, Escribano Publico.*

Translation, by Fr. Juan Ledesma.

[From] Admiral Esteban Ramos resident of the City of Manila in the Philippine Islands:

According to my knowledge and understanding of the Islands of the Ladrones acquired for having stayed and lived there in the past year of 1638 when the vessel **Nuestra Señora de la Concepción** was shipwrecked, and for having dealt at length with the natives, as much on this occasion as in many other voyages which I made from these Islands to New Spain, especially in the past year of 1664, when sailing from the said New Spain in the flagship **Nuestra Señora de la Limpia Concepción** under my charge, I rescued four natives of this Island of Manila who had been shipwrecked on that occasion [1638], I certify that I have no doubt that if they had Ministers of the holy Gospel and some Spaniards and natives of these [Philippine] Islands who would accompany them and give good example to the natives, those Islanders would easily be converted to our Holy Catholic Faith.

They are a docile and affable people. They have no sects, nor rites, nor other neighbors to instruct them in this matter. And it will be an enterprise of very little cost, for it is enough that with the Religious there go some twenty Spaniards and as many natives from these Islands who would help introduce Christianity by their Christian example, and the submission and reverence that should be given to the ministers of the holy Gospel. No other escort will be needed nor garrison, for these people are most peaceful and of good disposition. And there are no enemies neither close nor far who

1 Ed. note: Instead of “sin borrachera”, the duplicate copy says “bien acondicionada”.

2 Ed. note: The duplicate copy, dated 26 May and attached to Don Geronimo San Vitores, says, instead of Diego de San Vitores, “Reverendo Padre Maestro Francisco Combes, Procurador General de la Comp^a de Jhs por estas Islas a la Corte del Rey Nuestro Señor doy la pressente.”

it might be feared would come to the said Islands, for they are so poor and lacking in the advantages that those enemies would look for.

The only advantage is the conversion of those abandoned souls of which there are so many that of the Islands where I went and lived on the occasion of the shipwreck, there is one that would have more than 20,000 souls,¹ and the inhabited Islands that were discovered in that region are 17 in all.² There is no doubt that this enterprise will be of great service to God our Lord and it is by no means difficult. Such is my belief.

I give the present Certification, done at Manila on 26 May 1665, at the request of the Reverend Fr. Master Francisco Combés, Procurator General of the Society of Jesus for these Islands at the Court of our Lord the King.

[Signed by:] Esteban Ramos in the presence of Nicolás de Herrera, notary public and witnessed by other notaries.³

1 Ed. note: Admiral Ramos here refers to Guam. His population estimate can be expected to be overstated; in any case, it was retained by Fr. Sanvitores in later reports.

2 Ed. note: To make up 17 islands, Ramos must have counted Cocos Island and the three islets of Maug as separate islands.

3 On the back of one copy of this Certification there is written: "It came with the letter of the Archbishop of Manila, dated 20 June 1665."