
Document 1637B

Bañuelos y Carrillo's relation of 1638

*Sources: Original pamphlet printed at Mexico in 1638 (no longer extant); translated into French and published by Thévenot in *Relations de divers voyages curieux* (Paris, 1696), tome i, part ii; translated into English in *B&R* 29: 66-85.*

*Note: Bañuelos went to Manila as captain of the **San Juan Bautista** in 1637 and he returned immediately with another patache.*

Relation of the Philippine Islands, by Admiral Don Jerónimo de Bañuelos y Carrillo

...
 The chief cause for the ruin of these islands is the great trade that the Sangleys carry on.¹ The king has permitted the inhabitants of the Manilas to export a portion of their capital to New Spain in the merchandise of that country. The Spanish inhabitants daily lend their names to those Sangleys and to the Portuguese of Macao, so that they may enjoy the freedom of that commerce. These people do not attempt to hide the fact that they are acting as agents for the inhabitants of Mexico; and these last years they sent such a quantity of merchandise to Peru and to New Spain that no sale could be found for it. That is a hindrance to the voyages of the trading fleet. The king of China could build a palace with the **silver bars from Peru** which have been carried to his country because of that traffic, **without their having been registered**, and without the king of Spain having been paid his duties, as has been well shown by [the visitor] Don Pedro de Quiroga y Moya. That silver was sent on the account of influential persons, who do not reside at the Manilas. The two vessels [of 1636] which left in his time paid more duties to the king than all the other ships put together which had made that voyage before; that clearly shows the neglect of the other officials commissioned by his Majesty to receive the duties. They have attempted to conceal the truth, by saying that those ships were richer than the others because Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera had

1 Ed. note: There were about 20,000 Sangley or Chinese merchants then living in the Parian, or Chinatown, outside the walls of Manila.

written, in the preceding year [1635], that he would not send the vessels that year; and that he had even detained and caused the unloading of those that had been on the point of sailing on the voyage to Acapulco. I do not know his reason for doing so, but I know well that he wrote that resolution [upon arriving] at the mouth of the Manila Strait—that is to say, 80 leagues from the city—and that without having consulted the inhabitants of the Manilas. Those of the country are agreed that the postponement has been their ruin; for they all know that they cannot maintain themselves against the Dutch or against the Moros except by means of the regular succor that is sent from New Spain.¹

The Marquis of Cadereita came at that time [1635] to act as viceroy of New Spain. He sent [in 1636] a large reinforcement to the islands very opportunely, under command of General Don Andrés Cottigillo [sic].² The latter brought news that Don Pedro de Quiroga had arrived at Mexico to inform against the officials of his Majesty, and that he would go to Acapulco [at the beginning of 1637] to inspect the ships and regulate the Chinese commerce. The inhabitants of the Manilas and the factors of the Portuguese tried to get back their merchandise that they had already laded on the vessels, being fearful of that news and that name of visitor. But, having finally recovered courage, they laded **the two vessels [in 1636]** that the governor had had detained the preceding year, which **were worth about 5 millions in gold**. Nevertheless, those of the country affirmed [to me in 1637] that they were not so richly laden as those which had sailed before, for one of the chief merchants³ has not put a single box aboard.

...

It will not be more difficult for me to demonstrate the other damages that we suffer in that commerce. The inhabitants of the Manilas have nothing on those vessels; their cargoes belong entirely to the Chinese, to the Portuguese of Macao, or to the Mexican merchants. If the king does not put a stop to it, the Chinese will absorb all the riches of Peru, and the subjects of the king in those islands will be forced to abandon them. I will go on to represent to your Excellency the other disorders in the government of those islands, as far as I have been able to learn them in the short time that I have spent there.

...

Among all those 150 families who are settled at Manila, there are not two who are very rich. My plan would be to allow those inhabitants to export Chinese merchandise to the value of 250,000 escudos [rather pesos], the greater part of which should be raw silk and cotton bolls, so that they could be manufactured in this country [i.e. New Spain]. For there is less [chance for] trickery in that sort of merchandise than in the stuffs manufactured in China, which ought never to be allowed to be taken to Manila.

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- 1 Ed. note: In an 18th-century treatise on commerce, it is said that “in 1637 and for some years later, the subsidy sent to the islands amounted to more than 325,000 pesos in money, and enough goods to make up the [permitted limit of] 500,000 pesos.” (B&R 44:297).
 - 2 Ed. note: Bañuelos is possibly in error here, as the two ships of 1636 are said to have come under the command of P. Almonte and A. Alcoçer (see Doc. 1637A). However, Cottigillo was probably a Mexican, like Bañuelos, who returned immediately to Acapulco.
 - 3 Note in margin: “Bartolomé Tenorio.”

The permission of trade to that sum would also be proportioned to the ability of the Manila merchants; and they would get more than 500,000 escudos [sic] in return for it, for the profits of that trade are exorbitant. **Today even, when there is so much of this merchandise, 400% is gained on the poorest quality exported.** By that means Spaniards [in New Spain] could be employed in manufacturing that silk, the textiles would be better, and they would secure innumerable other advantages. Accordingly, the inhabitants of the Manilas would not charge themselves with the commissions of Mexico, and they would get all the profit derived from those islands, which is now quite universally in the hands of foreigners.

...

I will state here that the inhabitants of the Manilas should be allowed to export as many shiploads as possible of the products of their country—such as wax, gold, perfumes, ivory, and *lampotes*.¹ ...The silver taken to the Manilas would not be exported thence [to China]. I may be told that the king of China does not use that silver to make war on us; but even if it is used only to swell his treasury, it is as lost to us as if it were at the bottom of the sea. Your Excellency should consider that **1-1/2 millions in gold are sent annually to China.**

...

[Last news from Japan]

If the inhabitants of the Manilas had trade with Japan, they would derive great profit from it, but a secret judgment of God has broken the relations that we had with those islanders, and has given them into the hands of the [Dutch] heretics, after having permitted them to destroy our churches there, and their having put to fire and sword all the Spaniards or Japanese Christians there. Hence, we do not believe that a single religious is now left in all the country; and the people are compelled, under pain of death, to come to denounce those whom they know to be Christians. Our religious go there no longer, for it means a certain death to them to go to Japan. The following is the manner in which that persecution was reported.²

...

[The westbound ships of 1637]

In the year 1637, when I was about to set out [from Acapulco] as admiral of the vessels that were to take the reinforcement, I went to the port of Acapulco. There I found the vessel **San Juan Bautista**, which had arrived that year [i.e. earlier in 1637] from those islands, and which had lost its mast on the way. I endeavored to get Don Pedro

1 Ed. note: Ordinary cotton cloth.

2 Ed. note: He goes on to narrate the story of Will Adams and Sebastian Vizcaino, but his information is not first-hand. In a marginal note, however, he says the following about the island of **Rica de Oro**: “Ricca douro is an island which was discovered by a vessel from Macao [Da Gama?]. They landed there in order to repair their portable kitchen firebox, and a week later they perceived that the sand from there had been converted into plates of gold. I suffered a violent tempest in the latitude of that island, as the charts show it; and there are few vessels that sail in that latitude without having trouble.”

de Quiroga to advise the Marquis of Cadereita of the poor condition of the masts and other rigging of the vessel. He refused to permit it, and compelled me to embark, telling me that if we failed to embark by the first day of the month of April, we would run the risk of losing our voyage. While at sea, I asked the boatswain's mate for an inventory of the sails and rigging. I found that there were no spare sails, but one single cable, and one other old cable, which was used to make fast the pieces of artillery that were rolling about the ship. Ordering him to bring me also the inventory of what there was when they left the islands, I found that it had been equipped with three spare sails, five cables, and a quantity of rigging. He answered me that the sea had carried away the sails and that the ship had lost its cables as they left San Bernardino. Without pressing him further, he confessed to me that he had used the money that had been given him for that purpose in buying merchandise, in order to discharge a debt of 3,000 escudos [rather pesos] that he had paid for his post of boatswain, but that he had not found his account in that merchandise. I endeavored to punish him. He appealed to the commander-in-chief, and the latter ordered me not to prosecute him until I should have arrived at the Manilas. At the Manilas, he was excused, because they said that he had paid 3,000 escudos [sic], although he had made the king lose more than 60,000.

Those who furnish the provisions for the crew put in food of poor quality. The pilots cram their room at the stern with merchandise, thus endangering the vessel. Had I encountered a capful of wind during that [westbound] voyage, I could scarcely have finished it. I had to take a capstan at Mariveles to lift my anchor, and to make the port of Cavite, which is three leagues from that place. Thus for the 20,000 escudos that is drawn from the sale of those offices, 30,000 are lost, and the fleet is in danger of being lost—which means, of losing those islands. It is not sufficient to give the offices to sailors who deserve them; it is not at all necessary to compel them to perform the functions of soldiers when they have the inclination for it, or to punish them when they gamble, as is done.

...

[The eastbound ship of 1637]

In the year 1637, when I arrived at the islands, there were no vessels ready for New Spain. They were obliged to send a small vessel of 100 tons to advise the Marquis of Cadereita of their wretched condition, and to entreat him to send the usual reinforcement—notwithstanding the prohibition of the commerce with Peru, and their knowledge that there were no vessels at Acapulco. That showed how important it is to be continually building vessels for the Philippines, and for the governor to be a seaman rather than a soldier [i.e. a veteran] of the Low Countries... It is also important that those sent by the viceroy be men of merit and service, and that they be well treated in the islands.

The observation of all the above points will be of use to us in keeping off the Dutch, who are the most terrible enemy that we have; and who will become absolute masters of the Manilas if they can attain their ends. Spain, by observing those things, will triumph over her enemies. For my part, I will fulfill my duty as a subject by doing my

utmost for the service of my lord, and for the welfare of my country; and at the same time I shall discharge my obligation toward your Excellency of serving you.

