
Document 1567B

Salcedo's voyage—Spanish soldier almost kidnapped at Guam

Sources: Manuscript copies of Figueroa's History, based on a narrative by Quirós (see Bibliography). The manuscript containing the following editorial matter is Ms. 10.267 (folios 43 et seq.) in BNM.

Secondary account by Figueroa

In the year of '68 [rather 1567] when two companies passed to the Philippines, that of Juan López de Aguirre and that of Lorenzo Chacón [rather Artieda]¹, a few men stepped ashore at this island of Guan [sic] to take on water, and to get some refreshments.

It happened that a Spaniard of almost 20 years of age, wishing to look for some fruits, went off not far from the beach. Upon entering some grove, there appeared before him a certain young savage, about 14 years old. When the foreigner saw such a young naked boy, unarmed, he did not fear him, although he himself was unarmed as it was understood that he was not to leave the spot where the others were. The islander approached the soldier, embraced him and showed blandishments and signs of friendship as if the sight of him was giving him special contentment. He [i.e. the islander] went behind him, showing him where there were bananas and walked with him for a while, apparently safe; however, when they had gone off a good distance from the bodyguards, the savage again embraced the soldier and was carrying him under his arm toward the bush inland. The soldier was not strong enough to get free of him, and he did not dare shout to his companions either because the thief, noticing his fear, did not hurry up his

¹ Ed. note: The exact year must be 1567, as Aguirre and Chacón were together in Guam only in 1572. Aguirre was there 4 or 5 times (1567, 69, perhaps 71, 72 and 74). Since there was a 5-year gap between the two incidents related in this document, they took place either in 1567 and 1572, or in 1569 and 1574. My educated guess is that they took place in 1567 and 1572. However, the two infantry companies that passed by Guam in 1567 were led by Captain Artieda and Captain Aguirre; Captain Chacón was there later, in 1572., it seems.

gait, and also because he acted as if it were a crude joke, laughing as if to make fun [of him], he was taking him where he wanted.

As they were continuing along the trail through the thicket, it happened that four Spaniards were coming along it, and had set up an ambush for the purpose of hunting game. They all stopped. Upon hearing the noise made by the barbarian from among the branches, they pointed their arquebuses in the direction from where it came, thinking it might be some roe deer, or buffalo.¹ Finally, they were not a little put aback when they saw the two, and that their fellow countryman was struggling to free himself. When the savage saw them, he let go of him and fled to hide among the underbrush, leaving the prisoner among his own kind. From them, and afterwards from his captain, he received many reprimands for having separated, alone and unarmed, from his own troop.

[The kidnapper kidnapped, ca. 1572]

Five years after the above event, the Viceroy of Mexico, Don Martín Enriquez, ordered Juan López de Aguirre to capture one or more savage boys when passing by those islands so that, once they had been instructed into the faith and learned the Spanish language, they would (after having learned it and returned to their land) serve as interpreters, and [also] teach both [religion and language] to its natives. The said Captain endeavored to capture some, and he was only able to get his hands on a savage lad whom he took along to Manila, where he was baptized.

By a stroke of his good luck, he turned out to be the same one mentioned above and, one day when he was speaking with the same soldier they came to know each other and became good friends. He confessed (when the matter came up) that his intention had been, once he had him in his hut, to suck up his brains, to drink his flesh once it had been turned to ashes, and to make tapestries out of his bones.²

1 Ed. note: There were no such animals in Guam at that time, but these soldiers did not know that.

2 Ed. note: There is no indication whether or not this Guamanian ever returned home. He probably died in the crossing of the North Pacific, as had happened before to another of his countrymen.