
Document 1643D

Account of the 1643 voyage by Br. Alonso Perez

Source: RAH 9/3693, doc. n° 74 (formerly Jesuit tome 120, doc. n° 108); cited in B&R 53: 297.

Letter from Brother Alonso Perez to Brother Pedro de Alanuza, dated Manila 22 July 1644

Original text in Spanish.

A mi Hermano Pedro de Alanuza [or Abaunza]

Pax Christi, etc.

A veinte de Julio de 644, recibí una de mi Hermano Pedro de 31 de Agosto de 43 en la qual [yo] experimento el afecto y buena voluntad que mi Hermano Pedro me tiene, aunque se lo é poco merecido pero al fin cada uno hace como quien es, y aunque de mi parte falten meritos, avrá de la de mi Hermano mucha caridad que sobre pasara la cordedad mia, un año antes que esta llegue a los manos de mi Hermano, avia de recibir otra mía, que despaché assi que llegue a estas islas [fin 1643] mas quisó Dios, que de las dos naos, que salen todos los años de este puerto arribasse, la Capitana donde yba nuestro Procurador para España, y juntamente otro P[adr]e para Visitador, de México, podra ser los reciba mi Hermano Pedro juntas despues de tantos naufragios; mi llegada y la de todos fue despues de grandes trabajos, en esta navegación del Sur [de 1643], que si mal se passó en la del Norte por las tormentas, aqui naufragamos con doblado trabajo porque tormentas no faltaron por ser los vientos deste mar del Zur tan fuertes, que nuestra Capitana desarboló a nuestra vista, siendo un galeon nuevo de mas de mil y ochocientos toneladas, y juntamente fortissimos, que de otra suerte no podrian pasar estos mares, llegamos al fin despues de 100 y 20 dias de navegación con muerte de 5 Padres, y caida universal de todos, yo le estuvé dos veces, mas Dios quisó guardarnos para lo que su Magestad sabe.

Llegamos a nuestro Colegio de Manila, emporio y cabeza de todas estas islas donde fuimos recibidos con increíbles muestras de caridad y amor, todos los Padres fueron luego poco a poco desocupando la casa, y ocupando cada uno su puesto de Indios, y

los demas que no aviamos acabado los estudios los estamos acabando en Manila, este año de 44 es el 1º de mi santa theologia. Dios nos la dexe acabar para emplearme en lo que todos estamos con tanto deseo. El Pe. Matias, y el Pe. Avila, Pe. Fontiveros todos estan en sus misiones. quedaron en la Nueva España el Pe. Artiago y el Pe. Vargas, En quanto al natural son muy dociles, conciben bien a el alma de la religion, y tambien de sus ministros, que los sirven al pensamiento. La tierra es de temple húmido y cálido, de suerte que todo el año es un agosto, abunda de oro, perlas, anbar, y mucho de mercadurias, que venian del Japon, China, Malaca, Goa. Agora con los rebeliones de Macan que es de los Portugueses, y poco trato de Japon, que todavia se dura su sequedad, juntamente con la muerte de mas de 30 mil Chinos, de mas de 60 mil que se levantaron el año 40, (a quedado desvista de su antiguo trato que, ora Dios, se vuelva a repuestar, con tiempo) y fueron sugetados de apenas mil Españoles, y 9 mil Indios, entre los quales ay una nación que llaman Panpangos, que son buenos mosqueteros, y sobre todo leal-lissimos, a los quales en dandoles por Capitan un Español les parece que llevan al mundo todo en su amparo, fue Dios servido que con tan poca gente como son mil hombres los mil Españoles y los nueve mil Indios dar una vitoria. Que su perdida lo sería destas islas, y de toda la Cristiandad que avia en ella.

*Avisame, mi Hermano Pedro de los dos expulsos, de Agustino no se me hará(?) de nuevo que no sabía yo, que era tan virtuoso como su ermano, pero sí me asombro Sen-osposa(?), que aviendo escudriñado en nemi [=no sé?] qual sera la causa, no halló otro que algun tropezon de estudios, ó mucho amor de su madre, que me parece tenía la leche muy en los labios; lo que le pido al Hermano Pedro es que las cartas que yo le e encaminado los procure recojer y abrir, porque va una gustosa **relacion del viage** no se pierda, y hacer para que hablo con mi Hermano Pedro en lo que toca a la sustancia, una reliquia va en ella del Pe. Marcelo [Mastrili], de la al Hermano a quien fuera su gusto, a los condiscipulos mios que ay se hallasen, les pedira se diossen tener esta por suya, y avisar me quien tubo(?) conclusiones en Granº (?) y enseq(?) al Pe. Valenzuela, Hermano Reyno, al buen Laredo, y amigo particular Esquivel con el Benigno Cueva, y Munive, mis íntimos, que no se olviden de este pobre apartado por Dios 6 mil leguas, de encomendarle en sus muy fervorosos a su Majestad que guarde a mi Hermano Pedro como puede y deseo.*

Manila y Julio 22 de 644.

A mi Hermano Pedro escojo por mi correspondiente, y al Pe. Romano pidale que no me olvide, y aviseme del puesto que tienen las personas mas conocidas, en especial el Pe. Bernardo de Ocaña, que lo quiero como a mi vida.

Alono Perez.

Translation.

To my dear Brother Pedro de Alanuza [or Abaunza, in Seville]

May the peace of Christ be with you, etc.

On 20 July 1644, I received a letter from my dear Brother Pedro, dated 31 August 1643, in which I experienced the affection and good-will that my Brother Pedro has for

me, although I have not deserved it much, but in the end everyone does what he can, and although there is a lack of merit on my part, this is made up by the great charity of my Brother which surpasses my shortcomings. One year before this letter reaches the hands of my Brother, he is to receive another from me, that I despatched as soon as I arrived at these islands [in 1643] but God willed that, out of the two galleons that leave every year from this port, the flagship returned, upon which our Procurator was going to Spain, along with another Father as Visitor for Mexico. It is possible that my Brother Pedro will receive them together, after so many shipwrecks. My voyage and that of everyone was full of great labors, in this navigation of the Southern Sea; if the voyage across the Northern Sea [i.e. Atlantic] was bad, on account of storms, here we were shipwrecked with twice the labors because of storms that did not fail, because the winds of this southern ocean are so strong that our flagship lost her masts in sight of us,¹ [although] she is a new galleon of over 1,800 tons, a very strong one at that, one which would not be able to cruise other seas.

Finally, after 120 days of navigation with the death of 5 Fathers, and the universal sickness of everyone, I was sick twice, but God willed to preserve us for what his Majesty knows. We arrived at our College in Manila, the emporium and capital of all these islands, where we were received with indredible demonstrations of charity and love. All the Fathers were afterward leaving the house little by little, and each one taking his post among the Indians. The rest of us who had not yet finished our studies were finishing them in Manila; this year of 1644 is my first year in holy theology. May God let us finish them so that we may be all employed in what we long for. Fr. Matias, Fr. Avila,² and Fr. Fontiveros are all gone to their missions. Fr. Artiago and Fr. Vargas have remained in New Spain.³

With regards to the native(s), they are very docile, they have a good conception of the soul of religion, and also of its ministers, who helped them to think. The land is of a damp and warm climate, so that the whole year is like the month of August; it is abundant in gold, pearls, amber, and many merchandise that come from Japan, China, Malacca, Goa. Now with the rebellions at Macau, which belongs to the Portuguese, and the little trade with Japan, where drought [i.e. seclusion] persists, in addition to the death of over 30,000 Chinese, from over 60,000 who rebelled in the year 1640 (their old trade has lost its vigor but, pray God that it may regain it, in time) and they were subjected by hardly 1,000 Spaniards and 9,000 Indians. Among the latter there is a nation called the Pampangos, who are good musketeers, and above all very loyal; if one Spaniard is given to them as their Captain, it seems as if they would be capable of taking the

1 Ed. note: The flagship was the Encarnación. The Jesuits were aboard the almiranta Rosario.

2 Ed. note: This Fr. Juan de Avila was born in Seville in 1615, entered the Jesuit order at the age of 15, and was ordained in 1639. He arrived in the Philippines in 1643, and labored in the Bisayan missions for many years. He died of cancer in the face in Ilog, Negros Island, on 20 June 1706. While serving in Carigara, he is credited with the introduction of the culture of cacao into the Philippines (B&R 47: 219).

3 Ed. note: He refers to his companions from the Province of Andalusia (see page 67).

world by storm. God was pleased to give a victory to those 10,000 men, that is the 1,000 Spaniards and the 9,000 Indians. Had they lost, that would have meant the loss of these Islands, and the whole Christian community established in them.

Let me know, my dear Brother Pedro, what happened to the two who were expelled [from the Order]. About Agustino, there is nothing that I would not already know; he was as virtuous as his brother, but I am indeed saddened by Br. Espinosa(?) who, having [been] scrutinized for I do not know what reason, did not find another [reason] than some faltering in his studies, or the excessive love of his mother, so that it seems to me he still had the taste of her milk on his lips. What I am asking to my Brother Pedro is that he should try and recover and open the letters which I have sent to him, so that a delightful **narrative of the voyage** which they contain will not be lost,¹ and pretend that I am speaking with my Brother Pedro, for the most part. Also enclosed is a relic of Fr. Marcelo [Mastrili]; give it to any Brother you may wish. As for the students in my class, who are still there, please ask them to consider this letter as if written to them, and to let me know who managed to finish in [Gran°] and [enseq?]. As for Fr. Valenzuela, Brother Reyno, the good Laredo, and my special friend Esquivel, with Benigno Cueva, and Munive(?), my intimate friends, they should not forget this poor exile for the love of God, some 6,000 leagues away, and they should commend him in this very zealous prayers to his Majesty, He who may preserve my dear Brother Pedro as much as He can and as I wish.

Manil, 22 July 1644.

[P.S.] I select my dear Brother Pedro as my correspondent. Please ask Fr. Romano not to forget me, and let me know the post given to the persons I know the most, specially Fr. Bernardo de Ocaña whom I love as I do my own life.

Alonso Perez.

1 Ed. note: This narrative is not found in the same file as this letter, and may have become "lost".