
Document 1590C

The semi-fictitious voyage of Ordoñez de Cevallos aboard the San Pedro

Sources: Licentiate Pedro Ordoñez de Cevallos, Viage del mundo hecho y compuesto por el Licenciado Pedro Ordoñez de Cevallos (3 books in 1 volume, Madrid, 1614); re-edited Madrid 1691 with a new title: Historia, y viage del mundo del clérigo agradecido Don Pedro Ordoñez de Zevallos.

Preliminary note: From the titles of the two editions of his book, it would appear that Ordoñez was a lawyer, perhaps of Canon law. He claims to have been a soldier of fortune and to have been ordained a priest in Bogota, before completing a voyage around the world back to his home province of Jaen in Spain. My translation below is from a copy of the first edition in BN Paris (G.6485). His story is so full of inaccuracies and embellishments that one is finally led to believe that most of it cannot possibly be true. It is nevertheless worth reproducing here for the impact it had on contemporary readers.

Voyage around the world by Licentiate Pedro Ordoñez de Cevallos, via Guam

...

[The story begins with Ordoñez fighting rebellious Indians in southern Columbia]

Once the war was finished we went to Popayan, where I was received with great demonstrations of joy, for the victory won, and very solemn processions were made to give thanks to God our Lord, with other feasts organized by the city. They made me a present of some things of value, which, upon receiving them, I give them to Pedro de Lomelin¹, and in addition one set of my clothes, on account of him deserving it also. A few days later, I set free General Pixao [the rebel leader], with signed agreements to the effect that he had to accept a Spanish settlement in his land, whenever the royal Audiencia of Santa Fé of Bogota would decide, and that he would no longer have butchers openly selling human flesh, and other things with which peace was established. I stayed with that government for a few days, and afterward, as the officially-appointed governor had arrived, I returned to Santa Fé, where I determined to change my condition

1 Ed. note; The military commander of the expedition against the Indians.

and become a priest, as I will narrate in the second book. Glory be to the Lord of everything.

Book 2, in which the grateful priest deals with various events that happened to him, and the trip he made around the world. Composed by the said Licentiate Pedro Ordoñez de Cevallos.

Prologue.

Because distinction is the cause of clarity, as Aristotle, the prince of philosophy, says, that is why it seemed to me [appropriate] to divide this history into a second book, in which are dealt with various and diverse events that happened to me, after I was ordained a priest, given that my conditions through the course of my life have been two; hence, I have decided to lay it all down into as many books. In this second one, then, appears everything related to this second condition, the matter being divided as in the first one into chapters. I humbly beg the Lord, that it be for His glory and honor, and for the pleasure and approval of the discrete and prudent reader.

Chapter I. Where is mentioned how I was ordained, and the happiness received by the Archbishop of Santa Fe about it.

There have been a variety of opinions as to the meaning of the word priest...

...

[Ordoñez travels from Bogota to Quito]

As the see was vacant on account of the death of the lord Bishop Fray Pedro de la Peña, they provided [to replace him] Fray Miguel de San Miguel, Bishop of Chile, but having come as far as Riobamba, he died there. He was given a most sumptuous burial the like of which I had never seen before, since it had 330 crosses and as many standards from the Indian villages in the vicinity of Quito. There were all the convents and priests, the fraternities, the Audiencia and the municipal delegations in mourning. He was much regretted, because he was held to be a great saint; he was a Franciscan friar. There was left as vicar-general the Archdean Don Francisco Galavis, who is one of the captives who were freed and with whom I made the voyage to Jerusalem, as I have said earlier. He asked me to go to Spain with the property of the dead lord Bishop, because he remained as testamentary executor, and on the way I was to visit the Vicar of Guayaquil, and two other priests, and the Vicar of Manta. He fixed my daily salary at four ducats. He turned over to me 35,000 ducats, and 4,000 of his. I myself had at that time as much as 4,000 ducats.¹

I went to Quayaquil², which is 100 leagues overland from Quito, with one river [to cross], and many mosquitoes and mud. I visited the vicars and priests; I gained 1,000

1 Ed. note: He was soon to lose the whole of it, over 40,000 ducats.

2 Ed. note: As far as I can figure out from later statements, this is supposed to have taken place in the fall of 1588.

V I A G E
D E L M V N D O.

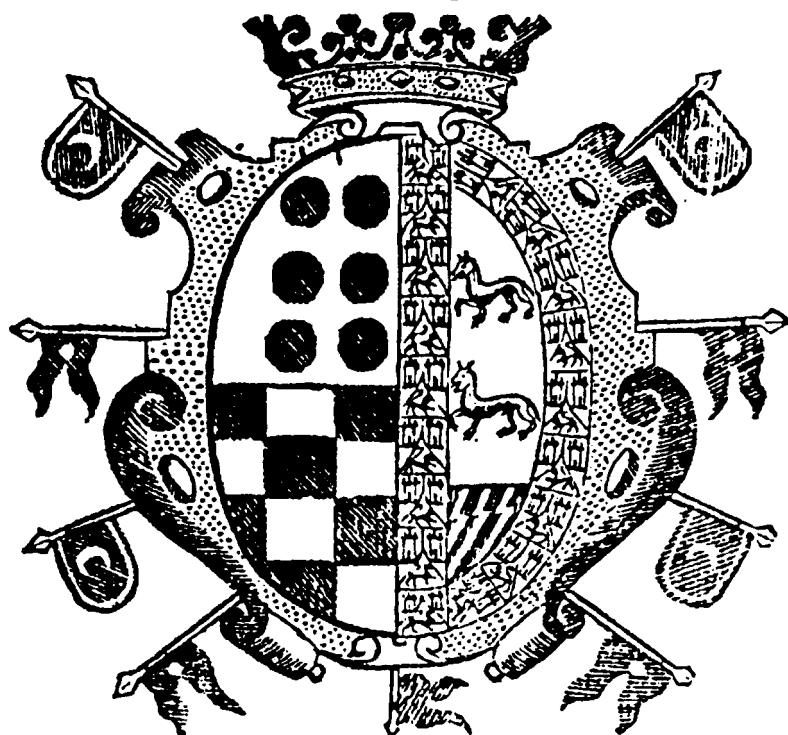
HECHO Y COMPVESTO POR EL

Licenciado Pedro Ordoñez de Cevallos, natural de
la insigne ciudad de Iacn.

CONTIENE TRES LIBROS.

DIRIGIDO A DON ANTONIO DAVILA

y Toledo, sucessor y mayorazgo en la casa de Velada.



CON PRIVILEGIO.

En Madrid, Por Luis Sanchez impresor del Rey N.S.

Año M. DC. XIII.

Title page of the first edition of Ordoñez' Voyage.

HISTORIA, Y VIAGE
DEL MUNDO
DEL CLERIGO AGRADECIDO
DON PEDRO
ORDOÑEZ DE
ZEVALLOS,
NATURAL DE LA
INSIGNE CIUDAD DE JAEN,
à las cinco partes de la Europa, Africa,
Asia, America, y Magalanica, con
el Itinerario de todo
el.

CONTIENE TRES LIBROS.

CON LICENCIA.

En Madrid: Por JUAN GARCIA IZABARDO,
Año de 1691.

Acosta de Joseph Vascones, Mercader de libros,
vendese en las Gradas de San Felipe.

Title page of the second edition of Ordoñez' Voyage.

ducats. I travelled 35 leagues to Puna. From there to Manta, which is 20 leagues further, and we spent twenty days at sea to reach Panama, a distance of 600 leagues. In Panama, I was much in a hurry, because I received news that the galleons were leaving. I went out by Chagre [River] and in three days on the water and one on land, I arrived at Nombre de Dios, twenty leagues. We left for Cartagena, another 80 leagues, and there I found the power of attorney from the Archdean Vicar-general of Quito, and provisions from the royal Audiencias, to the effect that I was to deliver the money of the dead lord Bishop and that it be for the account of his Majesty. I was paid my salaries.

[Treasure lost on the Florida coast]

We left from there to go to Havana, 250 leagues. A very great misfortune happened to me there, as I found myself without any money, not only mine, but also that of others. It happened this way. As the Cape of San Antonio was sighted, the ship sank so that it became impossible to manage it until it broke into pieces. God willed that the people did not perish and returned to Havana with not a few hardships and calamities which I will not mention so as not to sadden the readers. I left aboard a frigate by way of New Spain; I arrived, after many storms and torment on account of the little money, at San Juan de Lua [Veracruz], 500 leagues.

Chapter V. How I arrived at Mexico, and its grandeur, and about a great storm we had in the South Sea.

Since I have arrived at this place, and have touched at Mexico, it has seemed to me [appropriate] (although in passing) to mention its grandeur and abundance of everything. Well, this city is the most populated in the Indies. The settlement covers a very large district, since its Spanish population is 30,000 men and 22,000 women. It has 100,000 Indian men with as many Indian women. There would be in it 20,000 negro men and 15,000 negro women. I witnessed an auto-da-fé of the holy Inquisition, in the central square, and in the streets 35 coaches, large and small. There is a viceroy, also a royal Audiencia, court-appointed judges, a district officer and [his] lieutenant, an Archbishop, and the Holy Office [of the Inquisition]. There is such an abundance that one chicken costs one real; six one-pound loaves of bread cost one real each; a sheep five reals; a cow three ducats; a hog, no matter how big, as many ducats; and at this [kind of] price is sold the rest of the food. There is great trade in silk and in other things that ennoble it.

After I had enjoyed a few of them, I left for Los Angeles [i.e. Puebla] which is 25 leagues distant. This city is such that, when compared to Mexico, it is the cheapest in all the Indies, so cheap in fact that everything is brought from here to Mexico. There are some plains thereabout that are most famous for wheat. Each *fanega* was then worth three reals, and a capon three-quarters of one, a rabbit one-quarter, a partridge half a real. At this city, I began to recover my loss; thus, I found here some of my creditors, from whom I received 2,000 ducats.

I passed to Guatemala, a distance of 350 leagues, where there are nine Spanish towns. From Guatemala, I went out to the dye works, and visited the whole of that kingdom as far as the port of Santiago, a total of 329 leagues. I made a great use of indigo to earn many ducats, then I crossed over to Vera Paz, a distance of 270 leagues. The priests who go around this land are very favored and dedicated, because the great Marquis Martín Cortés honors them a lot, and for this reason the whole of that land has become evangelized.

[Ordoñez, the priest, buys a small ship]

I went back toward Acapulco, 112 leagues, in order to return to Quito. I went by Alcazar, then Puebla. I did not find any ship for Guayaquil and I had to buy a small galleon of 280 tons, a strong one, from Martín de Noruega. It cost me 8,000 pesos cash, and 3,000 on credit. I bought five [artillery] pieces from the big ship owned by the one who sold it to me. I took on food and other supplies, and was left owing a total of 8,000 pesos. I selected 30 seamen, 25 deck hands, a Captain, a Master, a boatswain, a boatswain's mate, a steward, a clerk, and 20 cabin boys. There arrived at this time my good friend Pedro de Lomelin, Marcos Ortiz, Delgado, and Matoso; they came looking for me. I arranged for Pedro de Lomelin to be named Captain of the infantry, and for Diego de Lomelin to be [his] lieutenant. I embarked these men, in all 12 soldiers, as well as two lay Franciscan brothers who were going to Peru. I loaded the ship with things for Guayaquil, canvas for sails, rigging for ships, and up to nine merchants finished by loading it up, so that we ended up with 108 people aboard.

[Departure from Acapulco in October 1589]

We departed with a prosperous voyage, and sailed for seven days and one Sunday three sails were sighted, reason for which we put ourselves on a war footing, and they did the same. They were ships from Peru, and so we all passed with great joy. There was a terrible calm, and that night the wind came back, and on Thursday morning we had so much of it that we would have rather fight enemies than the inclement sea, because it was such that it wanted to swallow us. We ran for two days with the storm, during which time the ship must have covered 300 leagues. On Friday night, it abated; but on Saturday at daybreak it returned as a hurricane, so much so that we thought we would perish. We threw many bundles overboard, and all the heavy things. The storm lasted for 15 days during which we must have travelled a thousand leagues, and we arrived at such a high latitude that all our gums became swollen with the cold and all the supplies we had on hand became spoiled. It improved for 8 days, and the pilot took the latitude and said that we were in 30°, and we found ourselves 1,300 leagues from Acapulco and 1,800 leagues from Guayaquil. Two persons died on us as they could not eat, although we had little to eat. We returned to our voyage for 16 days.

That afternoon the wind freshened, we sailed toward Peru for three days, then another storm returned with such a force that it was something surprising. It lasted for 12 days. We gained latitude and the gum disease returned. Three persons died. It abated on the twelfth day but then there was no strength left in anyone; it took us another 13 days before it improved completely. We found ourselves so far off that the pilot was

saying, along with other seamen who understood it well, that we were over 1,500 leagues from Guayaquil.

[Two Manila galleons supposedly sighted in the North Pacific]

On a Friday, we sighted two merchant ships coming from the Philippines, and it was a pity to see them.¹ Because the winds were very brisk and contrary, and we were sailing so far off course, I had the ship inspected all over. We had food for one month. Water, we had very little. We were all together that way for 12 days and what we would cover in four, or five, toward Guayaquil, in one during which we had contrary wind we would go back.

[The fictitious story about an island peopled with Spaniards]

On a clear day their flagship discovered land and fired one shot. It was a great joy for all. It was very high, with very great rocks and mountains. Nobody knew of it. We went near and saw some stone houses, and at some places crosses; this made us very content. On the higher part of the mountain, there must have been over 30,000 Indians fighting with those of the houses. We heard our Spanish language being spoken by one of them. There were about a hundred stone houses, and on the peaks made by the mountain two very strong fortresses, and above the houses in those crags many caves, which was something to see.

Pedro de Lomelin stepped ashore and brought [back] a mulatto who, upon arriving at the ship knelt down and kissed my hands and feet more than a hundred times. He narrated to me the following story in brief words, as he had heard it from his parents and it is as follows.

[The story of a lost ship, ca. 1549]

Years ago a Spanish ship took port in that island, and broke into pieces. They settled down, and as they had no women, they would go out and kidnap them from among those of the land. They had many wars with the Indians, and every summer they had them with a terrible enmity, until there were not more than three left alive. They were all baptized Christians; they prayed and commended themselves to God. He asked me to shoot at those Indians, because all the islands had joined together and there they were about to finish them off; they had been surrounded for four moons. He asked me for something to eat, which was for me something very painful. We shot six, or eight pieces at the mountains, and there was not one Indian who did not flee. They had their sort of town and church where they were buried.

We landed and talked with everyone. One of the Spaniards was Viceroy and the other two were ordinary mayors in perpetuity and captains. They told us that 40 years ago 160 persons had arrived there, and only one woman who was still alive and 100 years

1 Ed. note: This is a puzzle. If the year is indeed 1589, as Ordoñez says below, there is no record of **two ships crossing together** from Manila to Acapulco, and no ship crossed from Acapulco that year. However, in 1590, the **Santiago** and the **San Ildefonso** crossed together from Manila. It is interesting to note that Fr. Juan de la Concepción in his *Historia* (tome 2, chapter 24) says that a priest came from Mexico to the Philippines in 1591. If so, Ordoñez himself has made an error of 1 year in his narrative.

old, and must have up to 350 descendants from all of them, almost all male. They would have over 300 local Indian women, on account of their having multiplied, and they had women in sufficient quantity. I myself had brought six bags of flour; I made hosts with the irons that I had brought, and I said mass in that church. Thirty-three years had passed since the death of two friars who had been saying mass there. I heard the confessions of all those people, by working as much as possible, and I spent there the Christmas of the year of 1589. It had been a little over one year before that I had left Quito, and over two months since departing the port of Acapulco.

In the meantime, our people went out, along with them, and they brought back much meat from the bush, corn, and other things. The two lay brothers stayed here, because they came sick. I preached to them, and I instructed them in our faith because a few already were not completely [Christian], and I recommended strongly to the friars to get busy to look after their salvation.

After having spent 18 days there, and having made provision of what there is in that land, we embarked. I promised to try and have some people sent to them to settle those islands, and that I would give an account of it to the Viceroy. We took the degrees, capes, and sailing directions so that whoever would come afterward would not become lost. We left there with a prosperous wind, and with enough gold, because there is much in that land.¹ We sailed together with good weather for 8 days, and on Candlemas Day [2 February] of 1590, the storm hit us in the same neighborhood and everything that had been taken from the island became rotten. The other ships, on account of their not sailing toward that latitude, returned to the same course and it appeared to us that they were going back to the same island. As for us, we were working to go toward Peru, or to New Spain, and thus food became scarce.

We agreed to take once again the direction of the island, and in four days we sighted it again, and we saw one ship at anchor, and the other beating to get in. Because it was late, we did not make port that night.

[Arrival at the Ladrones]

At daybreak, a southwesterly hit us so badly that within one hour we could no longer see the land. So, for three days we ran and we discovered another island which was recognized as the island of Ladrones, on the way to the Philippines. Many paddling canoes, [sailing] canoes and rafts² came and the only thing they were carrying was bananas, potatoes, and other roots, and they were asking us for sea-biscuit. They are very tall Indians and they have at the tip of their moustache a wick of hair, and all the rest they remove. When we went away, they threw arrows at us, and they wounded a negro and the Captain of the ship. We left there intending to go to Luçon, and from there to China.

We almost sighted the [Philippine] islands three times and as many times we had storms. We were perishing from hunger, because there were given only a small cup of

1 Ed. note: Thus adding fuel to the existence of the mysterious island of gold called Rica de Oro.

2 Ed. note: Rafts were never used in Micronesia, a clear sign of a bogus story.

corn, two bananas and one potato or yucca. Since we could not touch at any of the Philippine Islands, we determined to go to China, to Macao. Hunger became so intense that we were eating all the things made of leather aboard the ship, and we were giving out as ration a piece of cow leather that one of the merchants was carrying there. It had been three months since we had taken port anywhere and, as what we had taken in at the island of Spaniards had become rotten as well as what we were given at the Ladrões, all we had left to do was to die. It was a great sorrow for me to see a negro woman die of hunger, and a small cabin boy who also died of it.

On Easter Day, 14 April [1590], we touched at a small island, and took some water there, mallows and beets, and we did not recognize anything else that was edible. We almost filled the ship with those vegetables. As we had an abundance of water, we ate them cooked with a piece of leather and 30 grains of corn.

God was served that we sighted the Island of the Name of Jesus in the Pintados [i.e. Visayas]¹ and the port of Cebu. In that city I found Cristobal de Espinosa de los Monteros, a native of Jaen, a great soldier, who, since his life and deeds will be mentioned in a book on the grandeurs of Jaen, I omit what happened there, in order to include it overthere.² We left Cebu bound for China, as will be said in the next chapter.

Chapter VI. How we arrived at Macao. Of the government existing at Canton, with other things that happened to me there.

After so many shipwrecks and hardships, as I have said, on the day of the apostles St. Philip and St. James, we arrived at Macao, and it seemed to us that we had arrived where we could rest. His Lordship received us with great pleasure, and the Captain and Superior Judge did the same. We were there two months. We stocked up on food supplies. There is little to drink, because there is no wine, so much so that a jar was then worth 40 pesos, and this I took to say mass. We loaded on palm wine, and oil from the same source. We took a safe-conduct and one day after the feast of Our Lady in August 1590, we left for Canton.

...
 There I paid off the soldiers and seamen; that cost me 11,000 pesos in gold...
 ...³

1 Ed. note: It is impossible to reach Cebu without first running into many other islands. Also, it is not probable that a Spanish ship would go from Cebu to Macao without a stop at Manila.

2 Ed. note: There indeed existed a Cristobal Espinosa in Cebu at the time. He is mentioned on a list of *encomiendas*, dated May 1591, as an *encomendero* for the island of Limasawa and Payta (B&R 8:132).

3 Ed. note: In Book 3 of the story, the preceding events are synopsized. A comparison of some points in the story is interesting.

Book 3, Chapter VIII. Of the voyage from the port of Acapulco, until the arrival at Canton in China.

I said in the last chapter how the port of Acapulco is in 19° of latitude in the South Sea. It is a town and is populated by Spaniards and Indians. There is a Mayor there and a Captain of the port. My voyage, as narrated in the history, was about leaving Peru to go to Spain, with my papers and pretensions, how I got lost at the Cape of San Antón, went over to this port of Acapulco, after having first made the rounds of most of New Spain, and wishing to return to Guayaquil, a city in Peru, given that this is how one goes to the province and city of Quito, and how I did not find passage there, as there was no ship to pursue that voyage, I was forced to buy one there, which was called the galleon **San Pedro**. It was organized with seamen, infantry soldiers, as previously mentioned.

We left from there bound for the said Guayaquil but with storms we lost our way and we had great storms and great fights with enemies. We went by different latitudes, even as far as 53° , with so much cold that our gums would fall to pieces, and the food supplies became rotten (as was mentioned) and so the voyage was different from the one intended by a direct route, as one must go down as far as 12° and $1/2$, for the islands of the Sails, or **Ladrones**, which are the same, and has to sail to the southwest, and because we discovered other islands that were unknown, which we named the islands of the Spaniards, as we found there a generation issued from Spaniards.

From there we headed for the islands of the Ladrones. Our voyage was very long, over 3,000 leagues, until arriving and sighting the island called **Charpan** [Sarpana or Rota?] which is the first one there, out of seven or eight. The people there are white, and completely naked in the flesh, and with strong limbs, a great strength. It is said that they have only small chiefs, and they make war among themselves. They are gentiles, offering sacrifices to the devil. Their weapons are slings, spears, lances, and very hard leather shields. They are very great thieves and for that they are called Thieves' Islands. The last island, which is where we arrived, is called **Yguam** [Guam]. It seems to me that they would be easy to conquer, because the people are without law and because they much fear the arquebuses, although they are valiant people and with such big bodies that they seem like giants.

From there we sailed another 18 days, and we sighted the Philippine Islands but on account of the storms we could never touch at them, because the way is due west and we could never go directly. There would be 200 leagues to the mouth of Espiritu Santo, a distance that some have covered in 6 days, but we took 18 days. There are there so many islands that it is one of the greatest archipelagoes existing in the whole sea, all inhabited with people, and almost half of them conquered by Spaniards. The main one is called Luçonia, or Luçon, and all of them bear the name of our Catholic King, Don Philip III.

From the mouth of Espiritu Santo to Manila, which is the main city, there are over 80 leagues. There are there a Governor and Bishop, some dignitaries and canons. This island is in 14° and $1/4$, and there are so many islands next to it that between them run

what look like some narrow rivers, or parts of lagoons. They are so numerous that they almost go as far as Malacca, next to the strait of Singapore, and overthere to the Molucca Islands.