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My Lord

I, Captain Pedro Fernández de Quirós, who on Your Majesty's command went and discovered lands in the unknown Austral part, say that having just arrived from them to this Court, I gave Your Majesty a brief that Your Majesty committed to the Count of Lemos, President of the Council of the Indies, and that appointed Francisco de Tejada, Esq., from the same council, who after granting me all the Audiences I asked him for, and having listened to me with great attention, commanded me to summarise and to put down as I did the second brief that I submitted to Your Majesty, and that was in turn submitted to the very same Count of Lemos, and up until now he has taken no resolution about my case. This delay has made me suffer greatly, and each wait adds a century to each cause, all of which are very just ones and request brevity. I thought that in order to justify myself, I should organise the accompanying brief below. I plead Your Majesty to read it, so that no part of it will remain inadvertently overlooked, and Your Majesty shall see how important my dispatch is, in the form that I have requested it, and I remember that it has been over a year since I stepped into this Court having brought in the most joyous news to this day, with the promise of riches, for there are no more quarters in the whole Globe to be discovered than the one I have discovered myself.

Firstly, since Your Majesty sent me to discover the lands that God had the grace to show me, such enormous and populated fertile zones, and with so many comforts for human life and also of great promise, as can be seen on its coasts in passing, and considering the news that their natives gave on its wealth – gold, silver and pearls, in more abundance and quality than has been seen so far, together with spice nuts, pepper, cinnamon, ginger, sugar, indigo, silkworm, and all the others that your disposition assure – plus the ones that industry can give since there are so many more things that I do not mention, as well as so many kinds of timber which are so necessary in Perú for ships that cost Your Majesty so much. To sum up, these are the kind of lands that can be spoken highly of, redeemed and rested in.

Secondly, since they need a degree or force to be populated by Spaniards before they become so by the enemies of the Church, and since Your Majesty has been informed of their existence, together with all that has been pointed out, including one of the best stopover and ports, fit for inhabiting as well. Your Majesty rules over the provinces of Perú, New Spain, the Philippines and others, in all of which a round trip can be made infinitely. I warn that there is no navigation that can be said to be too far or too difficult for those who look for the best comfort, as has been shown by the English and the Dutch, for without fear of any danger or weather inclemency, they have cut across the Arctic Circle and have come very near the pole, and with thick and costly naval power they have populated islands and outskirts, and have evidently perpetrated what in Your Majesty's service would be deemed totally unsuitable. It could very well be that those and other smaller and poorer nations – if they were to see those land extensions and riches – would not love them as they would deserve, and that for this and other causes, we should set foot in them, as well as protect them with such strength that they will never be taken from Your hands, even though thousands of men and millions in gold are not spared to secure them, and for other reasons that it is not convenient for me to write as I feel them.

Thirdly, and not less strongly, My Lord, if such population were occupied by the very many Spaniards that overpopulate the Indies – especially in Perú – that would cut the thread of certain damage that is feared for a very good reason: because it has been attempted so many times, and I warn that even if it were to take place, the very first thing that would befall is that Spain would lose its millions in gold that came from there,

for one, two and as many years as such damage would last. In the second place, the remedy would not be as costly and impossible as we are led to understand, and I would like to remind you that it is worthwhile to earn with very little expense, once and for all, those new and immensely big lands to keep the Americas safe and to accommodate Spain, because as it appears – according to the present state – that on peace and on war depends their preservation, that the Indies are preserved, and because of this, it is not convenient for Your Majesty to lose such a good opportunity as the one you have within your reach, and allow me remind you that what is looked for and not found counts as a loss that cannot be purchased at a high price, and how little regret and repentance are worth afterwards.

Fourthly, since Your Majesty holds all the rights to those lands for the administration of faith, and in all conscience Your Majesty cannot leave the newly discovered peoples without any ministers of God, for in their absence all those souls will be lost on Your Majesty's account, and even more so because it seems that these are the ones about whom Christ Our Saviour said that there were other sheep that He had who did not belong to His flock, and that it would be convenient to bring them in so that they may hear His Voice, and so that they will become a flock with a shepherd. Since the joyously remembered Roman Pontiff Clement VIII approved of and encouraged said cause on his part, and in order not to lose such glorious triumph for the Catholic Church, if Your Majesty accepts this proposal, considering it is not to His dislike or against His greatness and royal authority to continue a deed of such piety and mercy, and of so many other highnesses and excellencies, to spend some monies once on God's work, such as what God has given in Perú, or wherever the work starts, since God has put it in Your Majesty's hands. May I say that to such mercy and faith we owe all good tidings, and with it all the peoples will confess that even though there would not be such good convenience, there would be more than a million greater difficulties represented by the Devil, and in spite of them, it is Your Majesty's wish to render such great services, whose return is to populate, penetrate and enjoy the benefits of such a good portion of the Globe, and once there, to start up so many beneficial and willing things – as well as others that are so necessary and inescapable – that in the documents granted by Your Majesty it means the highest honour and glory to the Almighty Lord, the salvation of so many millions of souls and so many public benefits, and in short, the avoidance of so many and such immense damages while making such copious profits from the infinite spiritual and temporal benefits that in this case would be contained within the duration of this world, of all which will earn Your Majesty fame on earth and a prize in heaven, and bring uncertainty upon all those who have said that there would be a decline at this time, with God showing that Your Majesty can double the monarchy and add the title of the Indies and part of Australia of the Holy Spirit later.

Fifthly, since it cannot be comprehended within either the Christian or political state – having the possibility to make such a win – to experience such a loss, as well as that of a man of such good will, practical and proven in all the cases related to what I ask for. I have known how to fight and persist trusting only in God, with so very many dangerous and rigorous things that I will not mention. I have been represented in twenty thousand leagues of land and sea, during almost fourteen uninterrupted years, to end the disputes with men's wills – so difficult to win and to reduce – with the sole purpose of liberating forgetfulness and bringing to such good condition as it is part and parcel of such a great cause of which I am not only not the owner, but also I have not received or asked for pay. I should warn that without it I aspire to achieve its due accomplishment with soft and justified methods. And finally, and considering who Your Majesty happens to be, you would be good enough so as to make sure that I receive an order to go back to work in the service of God and of Your Majesty, until the very end of my life.

All that I have referred to regarding greatness, population, riches and goodness of the lands I am informing you about consists of samples and information that I have, as well as of news I received, of speeches that I have made and of those that can be made. Since Captain Luys Báez de Torres wrote to Your Majesty from the Philippines that he contributed to having explored a great number of islands and more than eight hundred leagues of coast that I have also seen with the ship *Almiranta* and with the *Zabra* I am in charge of, having experienced the loss of only one man. In that way, it must be believed that even if that long coast does not extend further than the eye can see, its body must have a shape, triangular, square or any other, and for this reason it must be worth three to four, or more than a thousand leagues, without the islands. And it should be noted that everything that has been said goes from fifteen to less degrees, and that the Captain says that it would take over ten years to explore as much land as he saw along that way only: I say that considering the hidden part so worthy, and for other reasons, it should be believed that there can be twice as much, or even four times as much, and perhaps more land extensions which are within the

confines of the Torrid and Temperate Zones in the Southern Hemisphere, and that they have not been forgotten by their Creator, with all their very many creatures, for when circumstances became dire and I became disconsolate due to the dark dangers in which I found myself, God sent a joyous and important new light in my direction.

I would like to remind Your Majesty that of all the battles that I have won among friends, I have so far only acquired live enemies, continuous hard work and regrets, serving and suffering without pay, my property and life totally spent, and my soul two thousand and seven hundred pesos in debt incurred for supplying all the necessary things to serve Your Majesty, and which I had to pay for because such were the conditions stated in a document issued by Your Majesty that was given to me for such purpose. I never found anybody who wanted to comply with it, and I would not want to be forced to show Your Majesty how laborious my history was, and to make my complaints, with the warning that the most important – that which really itches and hurts me – is to learn how many possessions would be lost while this case takes place, and how little it is that hurts so much to lose.

For all of the above, I implore Your Majesty to inform the Council of the Indies and to take a resolution regarding my case as soon as possible, since I deserve it on account of my patience and constancy, and – apart from this – for the main reason, which is what is due to God and to so many souls, and because Kingdoms, riches and glories do matter to Your Majesty.

And in order to put an end to my demand, I beg Your Majesty to consider what the discoverers of the past were worth and to adjust the prizes that they received for their hard work to what mine is worth, and that I receive what I deserve, and the rest – my industry and my life – I will gladly give without any expectation of reward, and I will surely sign it. I will do more if that is required of me, even though that may involve selling myself for a price: I request a small ship be bought with my part and that it be handed over to me with twelve Capuchin monks, for they are moving, and in the name of those from Barcelona, the friar Father Severo de Tobar has been offered, as stated in a letter that was written on this matter to the Chief Officer of Castile, and another one addressed to me. I will show them the very rich mines of souls I have seen there, and who have been there for such a long time expecting the mercy of God. Otherwise, I beg you to give me the light of all that it is doubted or repairs against what I have asked, so that I can find the way to proceed and reach a solution to this case, of which it is possible to speak and write in such a manner that those alive today or the coming generations will not ask how Your Majesty has left such immense and worthy lands deserted, even more so having me as vassal, because of all I have said and done and I am saying, I intend to act upon with the good intention and wish that so many good souls are won and not lost. Otherwise, I request Your Majesty's permission to write to the Pontiff or to go to Rome in order to implore him to intercede with Your Majesty for the expediency of my dispatch, or tell me clearly what will not be granted, so that I can give up the pain of such denial. If not, I will take it that my case was held in low esteem, and that such a great and bare offer, with everything that I added on my part, so visible, so palpable and so lasting. I was made to endure all of that, having said ten times that I have walked into this Court without a single maravedí¹, but I will go ahead, because all the suffering for such a cause is of very little significance to me, for it is God who in His Divine Majesty will justify and command, and will aid my insufficient strength in the manner that he always has, so that I may reach the same glorious outcome that I wish for Your Majesty's memory.

Lastly, I would like to say that whoever has given as much as he has, and has done as much as he could, and offers whatever it is, and whatever he has, as well as his life, would give millions if he had them.

This is only the truth and I plead for justice.

¹ TN: (From Wikipedia) Maravedí refers to the name of various Iberian coins of gold and then silver between the 11th and 14th centuries and the name of different Iberian accounting units between the 11th and 19th centuries.