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Translation of the fifth of the Queirós' Presentation memorials

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My Lord

I, Captain Pedro Fernández de Quirós, have submitted eight memorials (including this one) to Y.M., regarding the manner of populating the lands that Y.M. has commanded me to discover in the unknown Southern hemisphere, on which so far no decision was taken about my person, nor any response given, nor a hope regarding the certainty of my dispatch, having spent fourteen months at this Court and fourteen years fighting for this cause without pay, and without having been given any reward, I continue on my own, with infinite contradictions I have covered twenty thousand leagues by land and sea, and spent all my assets, upset my person, and suffered so many and such terrible things that I find them incredible myself, and all of this has been in order not to abandon this deed of such piety and mercy, in whose name and for all the love of God, I very humbly implore Y.M. not to desert me and all of my continuous travails and vigils, and with such a notable and well founded persistence I will not be able to reap the benefits that I very much wish and aspire to, being as much as they are to the honour and glory of God, the service of Y.M. and unnumbered benefits for as long as the world lasts and for eternity.

The bigness of the newly discovered lands, according to what I saw, and to what Captain Luis Váez de Torres – the Admiral under my charge – informed Y.M. with good reason is such that its

longitude is as much as that of the whole of Europe, Asia Minor, to the Caspian Sea and Persia with all the Mediterranean Islands and Ocean that fall within its contour, including England and Ireland, that hidden part is a fourth of the whole Planet, so large that in it there could be twice as many Kingdoms and provinces as Y.M. is currently the master of, all of it without bordering with Turks, Moors or any other nation that is used to worry and to disturb others. All the lands seen fall within the Torrid Zone, and part of them touches the Equinoctial, whose latitude can be ninety degrees, and in some cases a little less, and if they rise up as it appears to be, they can be on the Antipodes of Africa, the whole of Europe, and of most of Asia. I notify that the lands I saw at fifteen degrees are better than Spain – as shall be seen later – than others opposed in altitude, which must be in themselves a Paradise on earth.

There are many people in those lands; their colours are white, dark brown, mulatto and indigenous, as well as a mix of one and the others. Some of them have black, long and loose hair; others have frizzy and curly hair; others are fair and thin and their differences are signs of big businesses and competition. For that reason, because of the goodness of their lands, the lack of fire sources to kill each other, and also because they do not work in silver mines, and for many other reasons, it is to be believed that there is a fairly large number of people about whom we do not know any major or minor art, any walls, any armed forces, any Kings or law. They are no more than a number of simple gentiles divided into factions and not very friendly between them. Their weapons are ordinary bows and arrows, truncheons, staffs, spears and wooden darts. These people cover their private parts, are clean, happy, rational and very pleasant – as I have experienced in person. Considering all of this, it can be expected – with God's Divine help – that they will be easy to pacify, to indoctrinate and to please – three conditions that are very necessary on principle, so that they can be directed towards all those holy purposes that have to be aspired to at the very least and at the very most, with the utmost of truths. Their houses are made of timber and covered with palm leaves. They use earthenware pots, have looms, fishing nets and

other netting. They carve granite flute, drums and varnished wooden spoons. They have oratories and funerals, and their farms are reasonably set up and fenced. They make the most of mother-of-pearl shells and use them to make chisels, gouges, saws, hooks and patens – both big and small – and wear them around their neck. Islanders have well crafted boats, in enough quantity to navigate from one island to the other, and all of this indicates that these peoples perform some policing, and it is not less to castrate boars and chickens.

The bread they have consists of three different roots that exist in abundance, and need no more work than to roast and to cook them. They are tasty, healthy, provide good sustenance, and last long. They are a yard long and half a yard thick. Fruits are abundant and there are six kinds of banana, a great number of almonds of four kinds, large *obos*, which is a fruit almost the size and the taste of peaches. There are many earth nuts, oranges and lemons that the Indians do not eat, and other extremely big fruit, and others that are not less good, which we saw and tasted, together with many tall sweet canes, and notice of apples. There are infinite palms that can be turned into pipes which can be used to make wine, vinegar, honey and solutions, and hearts of palms are very good. Coconuts are the fruit from these very same palms. When they are green, they are useful for combing and their flesh can be used as cream; when they are mature, they can be used as food and drink on land and at sea; when they become old, they are a source of lighting oil, as well as healing balm, and as food when they are new. Their husks make good drinking vessels and bottles. Their cocoons can be used as oakum to caulk the ships, to make ropes and riggings, ordinary and arquebus strings. The best leaves are used as sails for small boats, and as fine mattings, as well as for sleeping mats that are used as floors and to cover houses that are made of straight and high tree logs. They can also be used to make planks and spears, as well as other weapons and oars, and many more things for ordinary use. It must be noted that these palm groves are perennial, can be harvested all year round and do not need any tending, thus making it unnecessary to spend money or time. The vegetables that we saw are pumpkins, plenty of very big

amaranths, pigweed, and we heard about the existence of broad beans. Meat can be obtained from domesticated pigs like ours, hens, capons, earth partridges, peacocks, turtledoves, wood pigeons and goats that were spotted by the other Captain. The Indians reported the existence of cows or buffalos. When it comes to fish, there are many red snappers, king fish, mullets, soles, red mullets, shads, dogfish, pompanos, sardines, rays, harvest-fish, viejas, eels, hogfish, cowfish, red river fish, clams, shrimps, and other kinds whose name I cannot remember. There must be a lot more because these were captured near the ships. If we consider all of the above, apart from so many excellent supplies, it is possible to enjoy many great gifts such as marzipans and preserves from different sources, all of them without bringing anything from other sources. To store aboard, apart from what was mentioned before, there will be no shortage of legs of pork, bacon and earthenware jugs full of lard, and the rest – which can be obtained from large pigs – without lacking agricultural produce or spices. It should be noted that many of these goods are similar to ours, and that there could be many more, and from this point of view the earth appears to be favourable to grow all the others that are produced in Europe.

Wealth comes as silver and pearls that I have seen, and gold that the other Captain saw, as he says in his report, which are the three richest commodities from nature. There are several spice nuts, pepper and ginger that both of us have seen. We have heard there is cinnamon, and there could be clove because there are other spices and more, for those are parallel lands with only a small difference from Terrenate and Bachan. There is more to make silk, pita thread sugar and indigo with. There is good ebony and infinite other timbers to make as many ships as one wishes, with all their sails and riggings in three materials: one very similar to our hemp, and with coconut oil it is possible to make the galagala that would make it unnecessary to use pitch. We also spotted a certain resin that the Indians use to tar their canoes. Since there are goats and possibly cows, there may be cordovans, hides, candle fat and plenty of meat. Bees were also spotted, so there may be honey and wax. Apart from these riches, the news is quite certain of others, and the

location and disposition of the lands – which together with industrial production, considering there is so much gear apart from your things to create ours – the ones that I later want to take together with the better and more profitable products from Perú and New Spain, it seems that everything put together will make the land so rich that it will be able to sustain itself, and together with that of South America, it will make Spain greater and richer – exactly as I have demonstrated, if I am well and truly helped to make it happen. Because of what we have seen, given the fact that this is all on the shores, I say, My Lord, that from the inland we must expect so many greatnesses and riches and good things as those we have sampled. It is to be noted that my main attempt was only that of finding such a great land as the one I found, and that because of my diseases and other causes I do not talk about, I was not able to see as much as I would have wanted to, nor were we able to see in one month – considering that there are twelve in a year – to see the qualities and the fruits produced by all the lands that were created, and that the Indians living in them should not be judged from the point of view of our needs, tastes, greed and estimation of things, but as men who aspire to do as little work as possible in order to spend their lives without exhausting themselves in the same way as we do.

The comfort and good life is as much as can be seen in such cultivated, joyous and fresh land – black and rich and with enough potential, with heavy clay deposits that can later be used to make pottery, bricks and tiles, as well as any other product that can be made from it, and in all the very many nearby marble quarries that can be used to erect sumptuous and curious buildings, and in all those all-purpose timbers, and in that location full of plains, valleys, hills, ravines, and redoubled highlands, and in those steady trickle rivers and springs where there could very easily be windmills, olive oil presses, sugar mills and irrigation work. In the saltwater estuaries and reed beds that bear witness to the fertility of the soil, whose canes can reach approximately five and six spans and thick in proportion, with a smooth-faced thin and hard edge, and flints are as good as those in Madrid. The Bay of San Felipe (St. Phillip) and Santiago (St. James) has a twenty-league

long coastline which is all clear and free to sail in and out during the day and at nighttime. There are several settlements around it, and during the day one can see plenty of smoke, and during the night there are plenty of bonfires. Its port of Veracruz is so large that it offers enough space for a thousand anchored ships. Its bottom is clean black sand; no shipworm was found; it can possibly surge at any depth (from forty to half a fathom between two rivers, one of them as wide as the Guadalquivir in Seville, with an over two-fathom sandbank) where large frigates and flat-bottom boats can sail through, and from them we can obtain water, which is absolutely beautiful everywhere. The quay is a three-league beach that mainly consists of a small extension covered in black pebbles, which would make excellent ballast. The beach sports no ruins or breaks and looks green: it is understood that the vegetation on the coast has not been beaten by the seas, and all the trees grow straight, without any damage or breakage, thus leading us to believe that there are probably no big storms. Apart from being such a spacious port, it boasts another advantage for recreation, for since daybreak in the nearby forest there is a great harmony of different birds – some of them seem to be nightingales, blackbirds, calandra larks, goldfinches and countless swallows; I have seen small parakeets and a large parrot, and leaving these aside there are many species of birds. The crickets and cicadas sing loudly, and every morning we would enjoy the soft perfumes coming from so many different flowers, such as orange blossom and basil. For all of this, as well as other beneficial effects, we concluded that the weather is benign and that nature keeps its order. This port and its bay owe their excellence to the proximity of so many good islands, in particular seven of them that cover two hundred leagues: one of them is very fertile and populated, has an extension of fifty leagues and is at a distance of twelve leagues. To sum up, My Lord, I say that in this fifteen-degree bay and port, a third higher than the Antarctic Pole, it will be possible to build a big and populated city, and its inhabitants will enjoy all the riches and benefits mentioned before, and those that my limited understanding cannot point out plus those that will be discovered and that time will tell, and which will be connected to the provinces of Chile, Perú,

Panamá, Nicaragua, Guatemala, New Spain, Terrenat and the Philippines – all of them Y.M.'s possessions. If Y.M. were to become King of these others that I am offering and that I deem so important that more than becoming the key to those I have mentioned before, in all their curiosity and benefit, I leave the greatness of China and Japan, and more provinces from that coast of Asia with their islands, which would be an understatement on my part, I believe, and I can prove it in front of a gathering of mathematicians. I do not think I exaggerate by saying that these territories can house and sustain two hundred thousand Spaniards. Briefly, My Lord, that is the world where Spain is the centre, and it should be noted that its body is the nail.

My Lord, the air is exactly as good as can be seen in what I stated above, and considering that all of us are foreigners there, nobody fell sick with so much work, sweat and drenching, never forgetting to drink water before breakfast and at odd times nor going without the fruits of the earth, under the Moon and the Sun, which was not very hot during the day. Woollens were tolerable, and considering that the natives are burly and strong, and some of them very old, and since they live in houses built directly on the soil, which suggests good health, for if the soil were sick, the natives would not build their houses on it as it is done in the Philippines and other locations I have been to. Consequently, fish and meat cured with salt would last more than two days, and the fruit that we brought from there – in the same way as these two I have here with me – is well preserved even after being picked from the trees. We did not see sandy spots, or giant cacti, or thorny trees, or uprooted trees, or easily flooded mangroves, or marshes, or snow on the highlands, or crocodiles in the rivers, or venomous bugs in the mountains, or ants that damage houses, or chigoes, or ticks, or mosquitoes – a number of positive facts above all other positive facts to suit our wishes, which cannot be underestimated considering that there are areas in the Indies that have been rendered uninhabitable by such pests, and other where there is so much suffering for this reason, as far as I have witnessed.

My Lord, these are the greatnesses and the benefits of the lands that I have discovered and of which I took possession in your name, under your Royal standard, as it is stated in the documents in my possession. In the first place, My Lord, a cross was erected and the Church of Our Lady of the Oreto was built; twenty masses were said; the Jubilee granted on Whitsunday was reached and there was a solemn procession on the day of Corpus Christi, in other words, the Holy Sacrament, marked by your Royal Standard to honour those unknown lands where I hoisted three flags, and in the top ones I showed the two columns by your Royal Arms – with this I can say that Plus Ultra has ended here, and in the continent ahead and behind. I have done all this and more as a loyal vassal to Y.M. and so that Y.M. can later add the title of Australia of the Holy Spirit with all its greatness, for the glory of God that took me there and showed it to me, and brought me to Y.M.'s presence, in which I stand with the same good will that I have always had for this cause that I created, and for your highness who deserves so much and I love infinitely.

I believe in Y.M.'s sensible counsel, greatness of spirit and Christian piety, the great care that you will certainly give to the population in those lands as much as it is convenient, being the main reason for not leaving them empty, and in that way making the name of Our Lord known, believed, adored and served instead of that of the Devil. Moreover, this will be the gateway for so many peoples in Y.M.'s care to receive all His goodness and remedy, as well as the extra care that should be given if enemies of the Roman Church were to saw their false doctrines and to convert all the good I represent in greater evils, and to call themselves lords of the Indies and ruin them all. I also believe that Y.M. must be aware that such pernicious damage or any other disaster – should it happen in the present or future – would cost millions in gold and thousands of men of dubious remedy. Go ahead, Y.M., because with only a small sum of money spent in Perú once, you will be able to win Heaven, eternal fame and that new world with all its promise. And since there is nobody who asks Y.M. for the gift of such a great gift from God, saved for your blessed time, I request them, and for them I request to be sent off; the galleons are ready, and there is plenty

that I have to chase, to sort out and to do, and there is plenty in the Spiritual and Temporal that is lost every hour and that will never be recovered.

If Christopher Columbus became stubborn through his suspicions, what I have seen and touched makes me so annoying, and I offer to tell Y.M. that of all the means available, I am aware of one that will aid the achievement of what I suggest, and I promise I will give entire satisfaction in everything.

My Lord, this is a great deed, for the Devil wages deadly war, and it is not fair that he should be so powerful when Y.M. is its defender.