

*Alexandro Malaspina to Fabio Ala Ponzzone*

San Antón, April 11, 1798

Dear Fabio – your note of Dec. 4th '97 has just come into my hands. Let me try to take advantage of the mail that is about to leave, warning you first not to speak about my letter, except to a few and only if necessary. Let us put aside all talk of the vagaries of fortune for a less unhappy time, when there is less distance between us. Never has the world been as full of them as it is today, and never has there been a greater need for a clear conscience and a public demeanour capable of quelling all misunderstanding. My sufferings have been many, but I have been able to endure them, and this is enough: our superior officers can tell you that they will soon be ended. In the hope that I can give you a warrant of our future friendship, I owe it to myself to assure you that my asperity was the effect of love dictated by the obligations of kinship, and of the esteem that provoked agitation in an honourable, tranquil and faithful heart. And for me it is the greatest proof of your honesty to know that this is how you have received my frequent advice and correction. It is not easy for me to face up to what my future might hold, but in any case I shall be much consoled to hear from you and to be able to be of use to you.

Attached is an order to place at your disposal in Mexico three hundred *pesos fuertes*, the balance of an old account of mine.

Translated by Rocío Rangel Macias & John Black