

THE JOURNAL OF
JEAN-FRANÇOIS DE
GALAUP DE LA
PÉROUSE, 1785–1788,
VOLUME II

John Dunmore



THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY

ASHGATE EBOOK

The Journal of Jean-François de Galaup de la Pérouse, 1785–1788

Volume II

Edited by
JOHN DUNMORE

ASHGATE

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the publisher.

Published by
Ashgate Publishing Limited
Wey Court East
Union Road
Farnham
Surrey, GU9 7PT
England

Ashgate Publishing Company
Suite 420
101 Cherry Street
Burlington
VT 05401-4405
USA

www.ashgate.com

Founded in 1846, the Hakluyt Society seeks to advance knowledge and education by the publication of scholarly editions of primary records of voyages, travels and other geographical material. In partnership with Ashgate, and using print-on-demand and e-book technology, the Society has made re-available all 290 volumes comprised in Series I and Series II of its publications in both print and digital editions. For a complete listing of titles and more information about these series, visit www.ashgate.com/hakluyt, and for information about the Hakluyt Society visit www.hakluyt.com.

ISBN 978-0-904180-39-8 (hbk)

ISBN 978-1-4094-3261-6 (ebk)

Transferred to Digital Printing 2010



Mixed Sources

Product group from well-managed
forests and other controlled sources
www.fsc.org Cert no. SA-COC-1565
© 1996 Forest Stewardship Council

IV

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
MPG Books Group, UK

WORKS ISSUED BY
THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY

THE JOURNAL OF
JEAN-FRANÇOIS DE GALAUP DE LA PÉROUSE
VOLUME II

SECOND SERIES
NO. 180

HAKLUYT SOCIETY

COUNCIL AND OFFICERS, 1994-95

PRESIDENT

Professor P. E. H. HAIR

VICE-PRESIDENTS

Dr T. E. ARMSTRONG

Professor C. F. BECKINGHAM, FBA

Professor C. R. BOXER, FBA

Professor EILA M. J. CAMPBELL

Professor D. B. QUINN, HON.FBA

Professor GLYNDWR WILLIAMS

SIR HAROLD SMEDLEY, KCMG, MBE

COUNCIL (*with date of election*)

Professor R. C. BRIDGES (1990)

Professor W. E. BUTLER (1992)

TONY CAMPBELL (1990)

Lt. Cdr. A. C. F. DAVID (1990)

S. M. EASTON (co-opted)

A. J. FARRINGTON (1992)

Dr F. F. R. FERNANDEZ-ARMESTO
(1992)

Dr JOHN B. HATTENDORF (1994)

Dr PETER JACKSON (1993)

J. C. H. KING (1991)

Dr ROBIN LAW (1993)

ANTHONY PAYNE (1991)

A. N. RYAN (1991)

Royal Geographical Society

(Mrs DOROTHY MIDDLETON)

Mrs ANN SHIRLEY (1994)

M. F. STRACHAN, CBE, FRSE (1994)

Dr HELEN WALLIS, OBE (1993)

TRUSTEES

Sir GEOFFREY ELLERTON, CMG, MBE

H. H. L. SMITH

G. H. WEBB, CMG, OBE

PROFESSOR GLYNDWR WILLIAMS

HONORARY TREASURER

DAVID DARBYSHIRE

HONORARY SECRETARIES

Dr W. F. RYAN

Warburg Institute, University of London, Woburn Square,

London WC1H 0AB

Mrs SARAH TYACKE

(Keeper of Public Records)

Public Record Office, Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU

HONORARY SECRETARIES FOR OVERSEAS

Australia: Ms MAURA O'CONNOR, Curator of Maps, National Library of Australia,
Canberra, A.C.T. 2601

Canada: Professor J. B. BIRD, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec

New Zealand: J. E. TRAU, Department of Librarianship, Victoria University of
Wellington, P.O. Box 600, Wellington

South Africa: Dr F. R. BRADLOW, 401/402 French Bank Building, 4 Church Square,
Cape Town 8001

U.S.A.: Dr NORMAN FIERING, The John Carter Brown Library, Brown University,
Box 1894, Providence, Rhode Island 02912

Professor NORMAN J. W. THROWER, Department of Geography, University of
California, Los Angeles, 405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90024-
1698

Western Europe: PAUL PUTZ, 54 rue Albert I, 1117 Luxembourg, Luxembourg.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Mrs FIONA EASTON

Postal address only: Hakluyt Society, c/o The Map Library,
The British Library, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG
(to whom queries and application for membership may be made)

Telephone 01986-788359

Fax 01986-788181



View of Petropavlovsk, Kamchatka, by Blondela. SHM 352:23.

The Journal
of
Jean-François de Galaup de la Pérouse
1785–1788

VOLUME II

Translated and edited by
JOHN DUNMORE

THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY
LONDON

1995

© The Hakluyt Society 1995

ISBN 0 904180 39 5

ISSN 0072 9396

Typeset by Waveney Typesetters, Norwich
Printed in Great Britain at
the University Press, Cambridge

SERIES EDITORS

W. F. RYAN and SARAH TYACKE

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library

Acc 9.95

9 161 H.C.

P.

Published by the Hakluyt Society
c/o The Map Library
British Library, Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3DG

CONTENTS

List of Illustrations and Maps	vi
THE JOURNAL (Chapters XIV–XX)	233
Appendices	
I. Selected Correspondence	451
II. The Muster Roll	543
III. The Death of Father Receveur	564
IV. Principal Monuments erected to La Pérouse	570
Sources for the Journal	571
Select Bibliography	577
Index	589

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

View of Petropavlosk	<i>Frontispiece</i>
11. View of Cavite	<i>between pages 250 and 251</i>
12. Chart of Hoapinsu	
13. Chart of part of Quelpaert Island	<i>between pages 264 and 265</i>
14. Charts of the islands of Botol and Kumi	
15. Chart of part of the Korean archipelago	<i>between pages 268 and 269</i>
16. Chart of part of Dagelet Island	
17. Chart of Ternay Bay	<i>between pages 280 and 281</i>
18. La Pérouse and officers with inhabitants of Langle Bay	
19. Chart of Castries Bay	<i>between pages 304 and 305</i>
20. French officers among local tombs	
21. Chart of D'Estaing Bay	<i>between pages 322 and 323</i>
22. Chart of Langle Bay	
23. Navigators archipelago (Samoas)	<i>between pages 387 and 388</i>
24. Chart of part of Maouna	<i>between pages 416 and 417</i>
25. Massacre Cove, Maouna	
26. Map of the Expedition through the Pacific	<i>between pages 448 and 449</i>
27. Map of the Expedition in Alaska	
28. Map of the Expedition in North-East Asia	
29. Proposed route from Botany Bay to the Ile de France (Mauritius)	
30. Presumed route from Botany Bay	

CHAPTER XIV¹

Arrival at Cavite – our reception by the Castilan or King's Lieutenant who is in charge of this place. Our vessels had been seen from Manila and the Governor had sent the Capt'n of the bay to meet us. Mr Boutin, lieutenant de vaisseau is sent to the Governor-General; welcome extended to this officer. Orders issued to Cavite to provide all our needs. Details on this town and its arsenal. Visit by the commanders of the two frigates and several officers to the Governor-General. Description of Manila and district. Its population, disadvantage resulting from the form of government established there; penances witnessed during Holy Week; tax on tobacco; foundation of the new Philippines Company. Reflections of this new development. Details on the southern Philippines which do not recognise Spanish sovereignty. Spain has only one military garrison on Mindanao with 150 men. Constant warfare with the Moors or Moslems of these various islands. Two-day stay in Manila at the home of Mr Sébir, a French merchant; invaluable services rendered by him; his intellect; his plans when he settled in Manila. Excellent services rendered by this colony's administrator. Military situation of the island of Luzon.

We had hardly dropped anchor at the entrance to the port of Cavite when an officer came on behalf of the Commandant of that place to request us not to communicate with the land until instructions were received from the Governor-General to whom the king's lieutenant proposed to send a message as soon as he knew the reasons for our call. We promptly replied that we sought food and permission to repair our frigates in order to continue our voyage as soon as possible, but before this Spanish officer left, the commander of the

¹ This chapter is preceded by the title 'La Pérouse manuscript to form the third volume of his Voyage' It is written by a different hand from earlier chapters. The spelling is more consistent. Annotations in a different handwriting would seem to indicate that the chapter was revised before being sent on to Paris.

bay¹ arrived from Manila from where our ships had been sighted. He told us that our arrival in the China Seas was known there and that letters from the Spanish ambassador had notified the Governor-General several months ago that we were likely to call. This officer added that the season made it possible to anchor in front of Manila, where we would find all the resources and the entertainment the Philippines could provide, but we were at anchor in front of an arsenal within a musket shot from land, and we possibly were discourteous enough to let the officer know that nothing could make up for such advantages. He was good enough to allow Mr Boutin, *lieutenant de vaisseau*, to go in his boat to notify the Governor-General of our arrival and ask him to issue instructions that our various requests should be met not later than 5 April, the later plan of our voyage requiring the two frigates to be under sail before the tenth of that month. Mr de Basco,² brigadier of the naval forces, Governor-General of Manila, extended the warmest welcome to the officers I sent him and gave firm orders that nothing should delay our departure.

He also wrote to the Castilon to allow us to communicate with the town and provide us with all the assistance and facilities at his disposal. Mr Boutin's return with Mr de Basco's despatches made us all citizens of Cavite, as our ships were so close to land that we could go ashore and return whenever we wished. We rented several houses to work on our sails, salt our provisions, build two boats, house our naturalists and our geographer-surveyors, and the kindly commandant lent us his to set up our observatory. We enjoyed as

¹ Marginal note: 'In Spain the commander of the bay is head of customs; he has a military rank: in Manila he has the rank of captain.'

² José de Basco y Vargas was not a nobleman but a *señor*. His commoner background created difficulties for him from the moment he landed in Manila in July 1778. The local Spanish families did not relish the idea of bowing before a former naval captain promoted to governor of the Philippines. The King refused to remove him and they tried to replace him with Don Pedro de Sarrio, *Teniente del Rey*, who had previously acted as interim governor. The coup failed and Vargas then carried out a number of major reforms of the colony's agriculture and administration. He founded in 1781 the *Sociedade económica de amigos del país*. Although La Pérouse criticised the tobacco monopoly he introduced, it helped to reduce imports and stimulated the local industry while increasing local revenues: the downside was administrative corruption. He created a wine monopoly in 1786, reformed the justice system and education and allowed Chinese to settle in the district of Parian. He conquered the Batan Islands and was named 'Conde de la Conquista de las Batanas'. He sailed for Spain in November 1787, was raised to the rank of rear-admiral and appointed governor of Cartagena.

much freedom as if we had been in the countryside, and we could find in the arsenal and the market place the same resources we would have found in one of the best ports in Europe. Cavite,¹ three leagues south-west of Manila, was formerly a fairly important settlement, but in the Philippines as in Europe the great cities suck in so to speak the smaller ones, and all that remains today is the commander of the arsenal and a *contador*, two port lieutenants, the castilon in charge of the establishment with 150 men belonging to the garrison and the officers attached to this soldiery.

All the other residents are of mixed blood or Indians attached to the arsenal, making up, together with their families which ordinarily are very large, a population of some four thousand souls living in the town or in the suburb of St Roch. There are two parishes with three monasteries, each with two religious although thirty could very comfortably live in them. The Jesuits² formerly owned a very fine house here which the New Company took over; mostly one now sees only ruins, the old stone buildings having been abandoned or taken over by the Indians who do not repair them, and Cavite, the second city of the Philippines, capital of a province which bears its name, is today nothing more than a wretched village with no other Spanish than the military officers or administrators, but although the town is only a mass of ruins the same cannot be said of the port where Mr de Bermudès, brigadier in the naval forces, who is in charge, has established an order which makes one regret that his talents are exercised on such a small scene; all his workers are Indians and he has exactly the same workshops as in our European arsenals. This officer who is of the same rank as the governor-general considers no detail to be beneath him and his conversation proved to us that none is beyond his ability. Everything we asked of him was carried out with the utmost graciousness. The forges, the pulley shop, the rope works laboured for several days for our frigates. Mr de Bermudès anticipated our

¹ Cavite's importance was related to its arsenal and shipyards. Manila, on the other hand, had continued to grow as trade and the administrative structure of the Philippines developed. The fortified town of Cavite, dominated by Fort San Felipe, was situated on an island in Cavite Bay, with San Roque on a peninsula further west; Cavite Viejo was a village on the south side of the bay on the Luzon mainland.

² The Jesuits had established themselves in Cavite in 1614, largely at the request of the Archbishop of Manila, in order to minister to the port workers. The church of Nuestra Señora de Loreto was opened in 1632, followed a little later by the Jesuit college which is no doubt the residence mentioned by La Pérouse.

wishes, and his friendship was all the more flattering in that one could tell from his character that he did not offer it easily and that his principles were marked by a certain austerity which possibly had not helped his career in the forces. As we could not hope to find anywhere in the world such a convenient port, Mr de Langle and I decided to have our entire rigging checked and our yards stripped. These precautions did not involve any loss of time because we had to wait at least a month before the various supplies we had requested from the administrator of Manila could arrive on board.

Two days after our arrival at Cavite we went with Mr de Langle and several officers to Manila. The crossing took only two and a half hours in our boats in which we had taken a number of soldiers on account of the Moors who often infest Manila Bay; our first call was on the Governor who kept us to dinner and gave orders to his captain of the guards to lead us to the archbishop, the administrator and the various *oidors*.¹ It was not the least tiring day of our campaign: it was extremely hot and we were walking in a country where the least of the citizens always travels in a carriage, but there were none to be hired, unlike in Batavia, and without Mr Sebir, a French merchant who was by chance told of our arrival and who sent us his coach, we would have been forced to give up the various calls we had planned.

Including its suburbs, the city of Manila is very extensive; its population is estimated at 38 thousand souls, among them fewer than a thousand or twelve hundred Spanish, the others being mixed bloods, Indians or Chinese who apply themselves to every accomplishment and every kind of work. The less wealthy Spanish households have one or more carriages; two of the finest horses available cost thirty piastres, their fodder and the driver's wages six piastres a month, so there is no place where a coach is cheaper to run and at the same time none where one is more necessary. The surroundings of Manila are charming; the finest river runs level with the ground and splits into several channels, the two main ones leading to the famous Laguna or Bay Lake² which is situated seven

¹ An *oidor* was a member of the *audiencia* or Supreme Court whose functions were both administrative and judicial.

² The Pasig River which divided the old town in two has its source in the Laguna de Bay, a large lake south-east of the town. Rebuilt in 1645 following a series of earthquakes, Manila was divided into quarters, Manila proper being on the left bank, Binondo and Tondo on the right bank, various suburbs on the islands of San Miguel and Isleta, and the Chinese quarter set apart at Parian.

leagues inland and lined with more than a hundred Indian villages and the most fertile of soils.

Manila, built along the bay that bears its name, the shore of which stretches for over twenty-five leagues, and at the mouth of a river which is navigable as far as the lake from which it issues, is possibly the most happily situated town in the world. Every type of food grows in the greatest abundance and is extremely cheap, but clothes, European smallwares and furniture fetch excessive prices; the lack of manufactures, the prohibitions and annoyances of every kind that affect trade mean that goods from India and China are at least as expensive as in Europe, and this colony where the various taxes bring nearly eight hundred thousand piastres into the coffers of the Treasury still costs Spain fifteen hundred thousand francs annually, which sum is sent to it from Mexico. The immense possessions of the Spanish in America have not allowed that government to deal with the Philippines; they are still like those lands belonging to great noblemen which remain fallow but could make a fortune for several families.

But I do not hesitate to assert that a very great nation that had no other colony than the Philippines and established there the form of government that was the most appropriate for it could contemplate without any feeling of envy all the European settlements of Africa and America.

Three million people reside in these islands, approximately a third of them in Luzon; these people impressed me as being in no way inferior to those of Europe; they cultivate their lands with intelligence, work as carpenters, joiners, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, spinners, masons. I have travelled to their villages and found them kind, hospitable and courteous, and although the Spanish speak of them and treat them with contempt I noticed that they blamed them for all the shortcomings of the administration they have set up among them; it is known that the greed for gold and the desire for conquests which animated the Spanish and the Portuguese two centuries ago led adventurers from these nations to travel through the various seas and islands of both hemispheres for no other reason than to find that precious metal.

No doubt a few goldbearing rivers and the proximity of spices were at the heart of the first Spanish settlements, but the results did not come up to expectations, and the original avarice was replaced by religious enthusiasm; legions of religious from every order were

sent to preach Christianity, and the harvest was so abundant that soon there were eight or nine hundred thousand Christians in the different islands. Had this zeal been leavened with a little philosophy the system would have guaranteed Spanish supremacy and made these settlements useful to the home country, but the aim was always to make Christians and saints and never citizens. The people were split into parishes subjected to most detailed and outlandish practices; every transgression, every sin, is still punished by the whip – there is a tariff for absences from prayers and mass which is administered to men and to women at the church door by order of the priest; feasts, meetings of confraternities and private devotions take up an inordinate time, and, because in hot countries people get more excited than in more temperate climates, I saw during Holy Week masked penitents dragging chains through the streets, their legs and loins wrapped in a bundle of thorns, being lashed every time they stop in front of all the church porches or chapels, and in a word undergoing penances as harsh as those of Indian fakirs. These practices, more likely to create enthusiasts than truly devout people, have now been banned by the Archbishop of Manila, but they are probably encouraged, if not actually required, by certain confessors.

This monachist regime which excites the soul and over-persuades these people (already lazy as the result of the climate and the lack of necessity) that life is only a transition and that the goods of this world are superfluities, combines with the impossibility of getting a satisfactory price for the fruits of the earth, which could make up for the labour involved; so once the inhabitants have the rice, sugar and vegetables that are necessary for their sustenance the rest loses all value; in such circumstances one has seen sugar selling for less than a *sol*¹ a pound and rice remains unharvested on the soil. I believe that the most knowledgeable group of men would be hard put to conjure up a more absurd form of government than the one which has ruled these colonies for two centuries; the port of Manila which should be free and open to all nations has until recently been closed to Europeans and merely half-opened to a few Moors, Armenians or Portuguese from Goa. The most despotic authority is entrusted to the governor. The *audiencia* that should act as a

¹ A *sol*, or *sou*, was a twentieth of the old French pound, the *livre*, the value of which at the time was considerably lower than the English pound.

moderating influence is powerless before the will of the King's representative; he can not only *de jure* but *de facto* expel or receive or confiscate the goods of foreigners who come to Manila in the hope of some gain and who venture there solely in the expectation of very high profits that are ruinous for the consumers.

There is no freedom; inquisitors and monks watch over consciences, *oidors* over private matters, and the government over the most innocent proceedings; a stroll inland on the island, a conversation, are its business – to sum up, the finest and most delightful country in the world is certainly the last one a free man would want to live in. I saw in Manila that honest and virtuous governor of the Marianas, that Mr Tobias who was too highly praised by the Abbé Rainal for his own good,¹ being persecuted by the monks whose wife they turned against him by depicting him as ungodly; she has asked for a separation in order not to have to live with a reprobate. All the fanatics cheered this decision. Mr Tobias is lieutenant-colonel of the regiment controlling the Manila garrison; he is recognised as one of the best officers in the country, but the governor has ordered that all his pay be handed over to his wife and has left him a mere twenty-six piastres for his subsistence and his son's. This worthy soldier was reduced to despair and waiting for an opportunity to escape from the colony to go and throw himself at the King's feet and beg him for justice. A very wise but unhappily ineffective legislation was supposed to moderate such excessive power – it allows each citizen to lay a complaint against the retiring governor before his successor, but it is in the latter's own interest to overlook everything that his predecessor is reproached for, and a citizen bold enough to complain runs the risk of new and worse vexations.

¹ Guillaume Raynal's *Histoire philosophique et politique du commerce et des établissements européens dans les deux Indes* was published in 1772. In book VI, ch. 22, he outlined the history of Guam and the Marianas which had stagnated until Tobias's arrival; he described him as 'an active man, humane, enlightened, [who] understood at last that the population would not recover, that it would even continue to fall, unless he succeeded in turning his island into an agricultural unit. This worthy idea led him to become himself a farmer. Following his example, the natives cleared the land the ownership of which he had guaranteed them.... May this worthy and respectable Spaniard obtain one day that which would complete his happiness: the consolation of seeing a lessening in the passion these beloved children of his have for coconut wine and an increase in their application to work.' (Abridged edn by Yves Benot, Paris, 1981, pp. 104–5.) The misfortunes that later befell this administrator whose ideals were ahead of his time are due to jealousy, corruption, bigotry and marital troubles.

The most outrageous distinctions are made and maintained with the greatest strictness. The number of horses that may draw each carriage is determined for each social class; coachmen must give way in front of a larger number of horses, and by the mere whim of an *oidor* all the carriages which are unlucky enough to be going in the same direction must line up behind his coach; so many evils in the administration, so many vexations that result from them nevertheless have not altogether destroyed the country's advantages; peasants still have a look of happiness we do not find in our European villages, their homes are admirably neat and shaded by areca palm-trees¹ and other local fruit trees. The tax payable by the head of each family is quite moderate – it is five and a half *reales*, including the tax payable to the Church which is collected by the King, and all the bishops, canons and priests are paid by him but they have instituted a set of fees which make up for the slenderness of their wages.

A terrible and almost unbearable plague has appeared in recent years which militates against this remnant of happiness. It is a tax on tobacco; these people have such an immoderate passion for the smoke of this narcotic that there is not a single moment when an Indian man or woman does not have a *cigaro*² between the lips; children have hardly got out of their crib when they take up the habit. Luzon tobacco was the best in Asia; everyone grew some around his house for his own needs, and the small number of foreign vessels allowed to call at Manila took some to every part of India.

A prohibitory law has just been promulgated. All the tobacco plants belonging to individuals have been pulled up and cultivation restricted to fields where tobacco is grown for the King's profits. The price has been fixed at half a piastre a pound and although consumption has fallen drastically a workman's daily pay is not enough to buy the tobacco his family smokes in one day; everyone agrees that a tax of two piastres added to the capitation tax would have earned the Treasury an amount equal to the proceeds of the

¹ There are several varieties of areca palms in the Philippines, the best known of which is probably the betel-producing *Areca catechu*.

² The term 'cigar' was not widely known in France at the time and Milet-Mureau felt that he needed to enlighten his 1797 readers with a marginal note explaining that it was made with rolled-up tobacco leaves that one then smoked. One finds in France at the time the term *cigale* by association with the word for grasshopper.

tobacco sales and would not have given rise to the same disorders. Serious uprisings have occurred everywhere in the island, soldiers have been called out to quell them, an army of tax collectors is employed to prevent smuggling and compel consumers to apply to the royal offices: several have been murdered but quickly avenged by the tribunals which bother with far fewer formalities when dealing with Indians than with other citizens.

There is still a remnant of discontent which the slightest spark could turn into a very real danger, and there can be no doubt that an enemy country intent on conquest would find an army of Indians placing themselves under its orders the moment it set foot on the island and brought them weapons. This picture of the present state of Manila is quite different from what could be depicted within a few years if the Spanish government at last adopted a better constitution. The soil welcomes the most precious crops and in the island of Luzon nine hundred thousand people of both sexes can be encouraged to till it. This climate enables silk to be harvested ten times a year whereas China's hardly allows one to hope for two crops.

Cotton, indigo, sugar canes and coffee grow wild in the midst of the natives who ignore them; there is every indication that spices would not be inferior to those of the Moluccas. Total free trade for all nations would ensure a certain sale which should then encourage the cultivation of all these plants; a modest duty on all exports would, within a few years, be enough to meet all the government's expenses; religious freedom and a few privileges if granted to the Chinese would attract into the island a hundred thousand inhabitants from the eastern provinces of that empire, whom the tyranny of the mandarins is driving towards the sea, and if the Spanish added to these advantages the conquest of Macao, their settlements in Asia and the benefits their commerce would draw from them would certainly exceed those of the Dutch in the Moluccas and Java. The foundation of the New Company of the Philippines¹

¹ The Real Compañía de Filipinas was founded by King Carlos III in 1785. It was granted the right to trade directly with Spain and to deal with China and the Indian states. Formerly, goods were carried by the galleon which made an annual crossing from Manila to Mexico. As this had ensured a highly lucrative monopoly for certain traders, the arrival of the Royal Company and the prospect of Manila eventually becoming a free port aroused bitter hostility. An attempt back in 1765-77 to establish direct trade links between Spain and the Philippines – the voyage of the *Buen Consejo* – had given rise to the same opposition, but royal support for freer

proves that the government's attention has finally turned towards this part of the world; it has adopted, albeit in part, the plan of Cardinal Alberoni;¹ this minister had felt that Spain, having no manufactures, would do better if her precious metals helped the nations of Asia to become wealthier, instead of those of Europe who were her rivals, whose trade she enriched and whose strength she increased by consuming their industrial products. Accordingly he believed it was his duty to make Manila into a trading centre open to every country, and he wanted to invite shipowners from the various provinces of Spain to go there to obtain the cloth and other material from China and India which the colonies and the metropolis required.

We know that this minister had more intelligence than knowledge. He knew Europe fairly well, but he had not the slightest idea about Asia. The items most in demand in Spain and her colonies are those of the Coromandel coast and Bengal: it is certainly as easy to ship them to Cadiz as to Manila which is a considerable distance away and subject to monsoons that expose such navigation to substantial risks and delays, so that the difference between prices in Manila and in India must be at least fifty per cent, and if to this price one adds the extremely high cost of organising shipping in Spain for such a faraway country, one realises that goods transiting through Manila need to be sold at a very high price in continental Spain, and even more so in Spanish America, and that countries which, like England, Holland and France, trade direct will always be able to engage in smuggling and make great profits. It was nevertheless this ill-conceived plan which lay at the basis of the New Company's programme, but with restrictions and prejudices that make it a hundred times worse than the Italian minister's and such that it seems impossible to me that this company can survive for four years, even though its monopoly has so to speak swallowed up the

trade was now proving a real threat to the old guard; they were saved by the European conflict of 1793-6 which partly isolated the Philippines and seriously affected eastern trade. See on these struggles Manuel Azcarraga y Palmero, *La Libertad del comercio en las islas Filipinas*, Madrid, 1871, M.L. Diaz-Trechuelo Spínola, *La Real Compañía de Filipinas*, Seville, 1965, and W.L. Schurz, *The Manila Galleon*, New York, 1939.

¹ Giulio Alberoni (1664-1752) became Spanish chief minister in 1715. An energetic reformer, he transformed the old administrative structures and took prompt steps to develop Spain's external trade. He was dismissed in 1719.

whole of the nation's trade in its American colonies; the so-called Manila Fair where the New Company is to obtain its supplies is only open to Indian countries, as if one was afraid that sellers might compete with each other and cloth from the coast and Bengal might be available too cheaply.

It has not anyhow been noticed that these supposed Armenian or Goanese flags merely cover English goods, and as these different disguises involve additional costs, the consumers have to pay, and the difference in price between India and Manila is not fifty per cent, but sixty and even eighty.

This flaw is compounded by the company's exclusive right to purchase the products of Luzon where trade is not stimulated by any competition on the part of buyers, so that it will always remain in the state of inertia that has stifled it for two centuries. Enough authors have commented on Manila's civil and military administration, and I felt that I should make the town known in this new context which, following the foundation of the New Company, may be of some interest in a century when everyone who is called upon to hold some position in the state is aware of the theory of commerce.¹

The Spanish have a few settlements on various islands to the south of Luzon, but they are only really on sufferance there and the situation in which their subjects in Luzon are placed in no way commits the inhabitants of other islands to recognise their sovereignty. On the contrary they are constantly at war, and these so-called Moors I have already mentioned, who infest their coastline, make such frequent landings and carry off into slavery Indians of both sexes who have accepted Spanish domination, are inhabitants of Mindanao, Mindoro and Panay who recognise no other authority than that of their local sovereigns who are as incorrectly termed sultans as they themselves are wrongly called Moors. They are in reality Malays and took up Mohammedanism at about the same time as Christianity was first brought to Manila. The Spanish called

¹ La Pérouse's strong support for greater freedom in international trade reflects the ideas of the Physiocrats, a group of French economists led by François Quesnay (1694–1774) who were highly influential in the years leading up to the French Revolution. They favoured free trade and *laissez-faire*, as well as a single tax – a view reflected in La Pérouse's comments on an economic policy for the Philippines. Their belief that all wealth originates in agriculture meant that their influence rapidly waned as the Industrial Revolution began to transform western Europe and give rise to new economic theories.

them Moors and their rulers sultans because they shared the religion of people from Africa with whom they were also at war for so many centuries. The only Spanish military outpost in the southern Philippines is Somboango¹ on Mindanao Island, where they maintain a garrison of 150 men commanded by a military governor appointed by the governor of Manila. On the other islands there are only a few villages defended by some wretched guns that have to be serviced by militias and commanded by *alcaldes* chosen by the Governor General, who can be selected from any class of citizens and who are not soldiers. The real rulers of the various islands where the Spanish villages are situated would have soon destroyed them, had it not been in their own interest to preserve them. These so-called Moors maintain peace in their own territories, but they send out their subjects to carry out piratical raids on the coasts of Luzon, and the *alcaldes* buy a very large number of slaves taken by these pirates, which saves them the trouble of taking them to Batavia where they would get a much lower price for them. These details will give a better picture of the weakness of the Philippines administration than all the arguments of the various travellers; the readers will realise that the Spanish are too weak to protect their subjects and that all the blessings they have brought these people have so far had no other purpose than to ensure their happiness in the next world.

We spent only a few hours in Manila, and as the governor left us after dinner to have his siesta we were free to call on Mr Sébir whose carriages had been placed at our disposal the moment he learned of our arrival and who rendered us the most essential services during our stay in Manila Bay. This French merchant, the most enlightened man of our nation I met in the China Seas, had believed that the New Philippines Company and links with offices in Madrid and Versailles would enable him to extend his speculations which had been cut back following the re-establishment of the Indies Company. Consequently he had wound up his business in Canton and Macao, where he had settled several years previously, and set up a business house in Manila where in addition he had been asked to follow through a very important deal affecting one of his

¹ Zamboanga, in western Mindanao, played an important role during the wars waged in the seventeenth century against the Moors. Abandoned in 1662, the port was reopened in 1718 and had become a major Spanish base in the Sulu Sea.

friends; but he was already coming to the conclusion that prejudices against foreigners and the administration's despotism would present insurmountable obstacles to his plans, and when we arrived he was considering closing down rather than developing his business.

We got back into our boats at six o'clock and were back on board our frigates at eight, but for fear that, while we were busy in Cavite with the repairs to our vessels, the suppliers of biscuit, flour &c might make us endure the usual dilatoriness of their nation's merchants I thought it necessary to order an officer to stay in Manila and pay daily visits to the various suppliers the administrator had referred us to. My choice settled on Mr de Vaujuas, a lieutenant on the *Astrolabe*: but this officer soon advised me that his remaining in Manila was unnecessary, and that Mr de Gonsoles Carvagual,¹ the Philippines' Intendant, was taking so much trouble on our behalf that he went every day to verify personally how the workers dealing with our frigates were progressing and that he was as vigilant as if he had himself been part of the expedition; his attention and his kindness deserve a public acknowledgment. His private natural history collection was available to all our naturalists to whom he showed various specimens belonging to the three kingdoms of nature he had put together, and when I left I received from Mr de Gonsoles the gift of a complete collection, in duplicate, of all the shells that are found in Philippine waters. His courtesy extended to anything which might be of interest to us. A week after our arrival we received a letter from Mr Stokinstron, chief supercargo of the Swedish Company, advising us that he had sold our furs for ten thousand piastres and empowering us to draw this amount on him. I was very anxious to obtain these funds in Manila in order to share them among the crews who, having sailed from Macao without receiving any of this money, were worried that they would never see it. Mr Sebir had no funds to transfer to Macao at this time. We approached Mr Gonsoles who was quite unaccustomed to this kind of transaction, but he used the influence which his friendliness has gained him with the various merchants of Manila to press them to discount our bills of exchange, and the funds thus released were divided among the sailors before we sailed.

The intense heat of Manila began to have its effect on the health of our crews. Several sailors were affected by colics which

¹ More properly Ciriaco Gonzalez Carvajal.

fortunately had no serious consequences. But Messrs de Lamanon and Daigremont who had brought from Macao signs of incipient dysentery, presumably caused by dried up perspiration, far from finding any relief on land, saw their condition worsen to the point where Mr Daigremont was in a hopeless condition on the 23rd day after our arrival and died on the 25th. This was the second death occasioned by sickness on board the *Astrolabe*, and such a misfortune had not overtaken the *Boussolle* although our men possibly were generally in a less healthy state than those of the other frigate. But it must be said that the servant who had died during the crossing from Chile to Easter Island¹ was a consumptive when he was signed on and that Mr de Langle had agreed to his master's request that he be taken on in the belief that the sea air and hot climates would cure him. As for Mr Daigremont, in spite of his doctors and unbeknownst to his comrades and friends, he wanted to cure his sickness with mulled brandy, hot spices and other remedies which the strongest person would have been unable to cope with, and fell victim of the over-optimistic opinion he had of his own constitution.

Nevertheless, as early as 28 March our work in Cavite was completed, our boats built, our sails repaired, the rigging inspected, the frigates entirely caulked and our salt provisions stored in barrels. We had not wanted to leave this work to suppliers in Manila; we knew that the galleons' provisions had never kept for three months, and we had a great faith in Captain Cook's method and consequently we gave each salter a copy of Captain Cook's process² and carried out ourselves this new type of work; we had salt and vinegar on board and merely bought from the Spanish some pigs, the price of which was very moderate.

Communications between Manila and China are so frequent that every week we received news from Macao, and we learned to our great surprise that the vessel *Resolution* commanded by Mr d'antre Casteaux and the frigate *Suptile* under Mr de la Croix de Castries

¹ Jean Foll or Le Fol, Vaujuas's servant, died on 11 August 1786 off the coast of British Columbia, later therefore than La Pérouse states here.

² James Cook described his method in his journal on 23 November 1773: 'in the cool of the evenings, the Hogs were killed and dressed, then cut up the bones taken out and the Meat salted while it was yet hot, the next Morning we gave it a second Salting, packed it in a Cask and put to it a sufficient quantity of Strong Pickle, great care is to be taken that the meat be well covered with pickle other wise it will soon spoil.' Cook, *Journals*, II, p. 296.

had arrived in Canton River.¹ These ships, sailing from Batavia at a time when the N.E. monsoon was at his strongest, had gone north to the east of the Philippines, having coasted New Guinea and crossed reef-strewn seas for which they had no charts, and after a 70-day voyage from Batavia had reached the entrance of the Canton River where they dropped anchor the day after I left it. The astronomical observations made during this voyage will be of considerable help to increase our knowledge of these seas which are always open to ships that have missed the monsoon, and it is certainly surprising that our India Company had chosen a captain who had no knowledge of this route to command its vessel *La Reine*.²

I received a letter from Mr D'antre Casteau in Manila, advising me of the purpose of his voyage, and shortly afterwards the frigate *Suptile* herself came to bring me further letters.

Mr de la Croix de Castries gave us all the news from Europe which had been past the Cape of Good Hope with the *Calipso*, but they were dated April 24th and our curiosity had still a gap of a year to mourn over; furthermore our families and our friends had not seized this opportunity to write to us, and in the then peaceful state of Europe public happenings were of minor interest compared with news of what causes fear and hope in the hearts of every individual. So we had yet another opportunity of sending our letters to France, and the *Suptile* was in a good enough condition to allow Mr de la Croix de Castries to make up the losses we had sustained in America; he gave four men and an officer to each of the frigates. Mr Guyet, *enseigne de vaisseau*, was transferred to the *Boussole* and Mr le Gobien, *garde de la marine*, to the *Astrolabe*. These reinforcements were very necessary: we had eight fewer officers than when we left France, including Mr de St Ceran whose health

¹ Joseph-Antoine Bruny d'Entrecasteaux (1737-93), commander of the French naval station in the Indian Ocean, sailed to Canton in the *Résolution* and the *Subtile* against the prevailing monsoon, a task generally considered to be impossible; he did so successfully and without loss. He was later sent to search for La Pérouse's lost expedition. Anne-Jean-Jacques-Scipion de la Croix de Vagnas, Vicomte de Castries, (1756-1826), had been in command of the *Ariel*, a ship captured by La Pérouse during the American wars when, in August 1784 he was given command of the *Subtile* with orders to sail to the Indian Ocean. He emigrated during the French Revolution, but returned to France in 1803 and served in the navy until 1817.

² The *Reine* left too late from India and was unable to battle her way against the monsoon.

was such that I was forced to send him back to the Isle de France in the *Suptile*, all our surgeons having declared that it was impossible for him to continue on the voyage.

Meanwhile our provisions had been stored on board by the date the Intendant had promised, but Holy Week, which suspends all business in Manila, caused some delays in obtaining our personal supplies, and I was forced to put off my departure until Easter Monday. As the north-east monsoon was still very strong a sacrifice of three or four days could not adversely affect the success of the expedition. We loaded back all our astronomical instruments on April third; Mr D'agelet had not, since our departure from France, found a better place to check the accuracy of No. 19; he verified to his full satisfaction that this chronometer lost 12" a day compared with Paris mean time, a difference close to what had been observed at Macao although the temperature differed by ten degrees. We had set up our observatory in the government's gardens at roughly one hundred and twenty *toises* from our ships. The longitude as determined by a very large number of observations of distances was 118 degrees 50 minutes 40 seconds and the latitude measured with a quadrant with a radius of three feet 14 degrees 29 minutes 9 seconds; if we had wanted the longitude of Cavite in accordance with the daily loss attributed to our No. 19 timekeeper it would have been 118^d 46' 8", i.e. 4' 32" less than the result of our observations of distances. Before we sailed, I felt it our duty to go with Mr de Langle to express our thanks to the Governor General for the speed with which his orders had been carried out, and even more to the Intendant from whom we had received so much attention and so many courtesies. Having carried out these duties we both took advantage of a couple of days spent at Mr Sebir's to visit by carriage or boat all the surroundings of Manila; one comes upon no great houses, parks or gardens, but the countryside is so beautiful that a simple Indian village on a riverbank or a European-style house surrounded by a few trees presents a more picturesque spectacle than any offered by our finest chateaux, and the dulllest imagination can conjure up an image of happiness in this charming simplicity. Almost all the Spanish traditionally leave the city after the Easter celebrations and spend the hot season in the country. They have not tried to beautify a country which has no need of embellishments; a house similar to a presbytery built at the water's edge with very convenient baths, although without a drive or a garden but shel-

tered by a few fruit trees – such is the residence of the wealthiest of them, and it would be one of the most pleasant places to live in anywhere if a milder administration and fewer prejudices allowed more civil freedom to the inhabitants. The city's defences have been added to by the Governor General under the supervision of Mr Sauz,¹ a talented engineer, but the garrison is small indeed: it consists in peacetime of a single infantry regiment of two battalions, each made up of a company of grenadiers and eight of fusiliers, the two battalions making an effective total of thirteen hundred men. This regiment is Mexican, all the soldiers are the colour of mulattoes; people assert that they are in no way inferior in bravery and intelligence to the European troops, two artillery companies of eighty men, each commanded by a lieutenant-colonel and having as officers a captain, a lieutenant, an ensign and a supernumerary, three dragoon companies forming a squadron of 150 horse commanded by the oldest of three captains, and finally a militia battalion of twelve hundred men formerly set up and paid for by a very rich Chinese of mixed blood named Tuasson.² All the soldiers belonging to this corps are part-Chinese; they carry out the same duties in the town as the regular troops and now receive the same pay from the King, but they would be of very little assistance in case of war. Finally, should the need arise, a militia of eight thousand men can be called up very quickly, which is divided in provincial battalions commanded by European or creole officers; each battalion has a company of grenadiers; one of these companies has been trained by a sergeant who had retired from the Regiment, living in Manila, and the Spanish who are more inclined to criticise the bravery and merit of the Indians than to overpraise them claim that this company is in no way inferior to the European regiments.

The small garrison at Somboango on the island of Mindanao is not drawn from that of Luzon, and two corps of 150 men each have been created for the Marianas Islands and Mindanao which are invariably attached to these colonies.

¹ The name is probably a deformation of Souza.

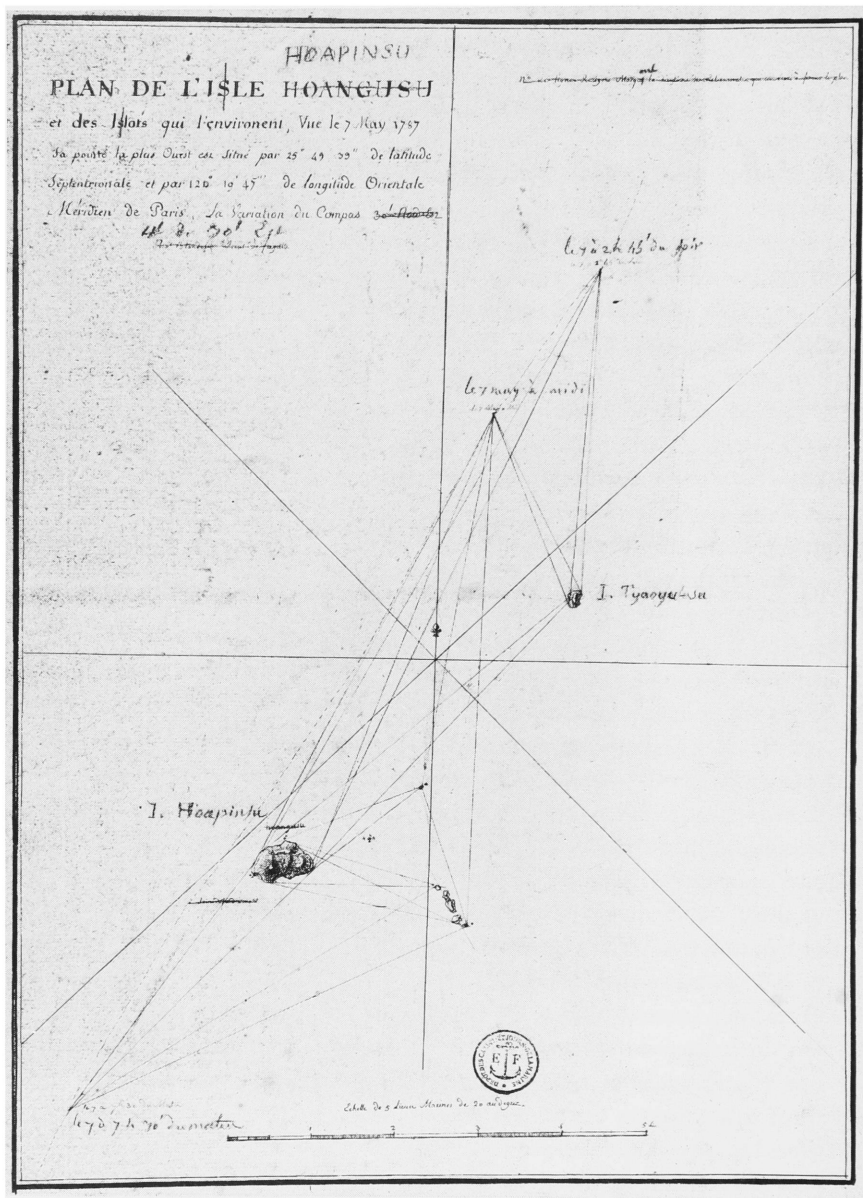
² The Chinese in Manila were in a precarious situation. Seldom made welcome by the authorities and often ill-treated, they had rebelled on several occasions and in 1762 when English forces captured Manila a number supported the invaders. In order to show their loyalty towards the Spanish it was not uncommon for Chinese merchants to adopt a local or a Spanish name.

CHAPTER XV

Departure from Cavite. We go along the island of Luzon towards the north. The monsoon has not yet reversed but the winds are more stubborn in the Formosa Channel than on the Luzon coast where we find changeable winds. We set course to cross the channel, hoping to progress more easily north along the Chinese mainland; we encounter a shoal in the middle of the channel; latitude and longitude of this shoal; we turn back towards Formosa and anchor two leagues from the old fort of Zealand; only one boat dares to come up to the frigate and we can get no information from it about the war we know is in progress between this Chinese colony and the home country. We sail the next day and the same evening come upon the Chinese army in the Piscadorès Channel, making for a large river on Formosa which we cannot approach closer than three leagues on account of the banks found at the rivermouth which extend far out to sea; we are struck by a squall and are forced to weigh anchor before dawn; the Chinese army is scattered, and after making various tacks between Formosa and the Piscadorès we decide to bear away to avoid spending the night in a very narrow channel in such bad weather. We coast the Piscadorès; details on these islands. Rain and thunder herald the monsoonal change. We sight the island of Botol Tabagoxima; it is inhabited; the next day we coast the island of Kumi which forms part of the kingdom of Lixeu; the inhabitants arrive and receive our gifts; they urge us to drop anchor near their village, but we go on our way and during the night come upon two uninhabited islands situated to the east of Formosa's northern headland. We finally enter the Sea of Japan and sail along the coast of China which remains constantly fogbound; we waste a fortnight on this useless navigation during which our horizon never reached half a league, and we finally sail for Quelpaert Island, the first landmark when entering the strait between Korea and Japan. We sail along the coast of Korea and daily make astronomical observations which allow us to rectify errors on the charts. Details on Quelpaert Island, Korea, &c. Discovery of D'agelet Island 20 leagues from Korea where we see shipyards and



11. View of Cavite, Philippines, showing boat with outrigger, by Duché de Vancy. SHM 352:17.



12. Chart of Hoapinsu (Huaping Hsu) and surrounding islets sighted on 7 May 1787. By Blondel. Actual size 34 cm × 47 cm. AN 6 JJ1:39.

boats being built. Latitude and longitude of D'agelet Island. We set our course towards the north-western point of Japan; sighting of Cape Noto and Joolsissima; details on this island, latitude and longitude of this part of Japan. Meeting with several ships belonging to this nation. We return to the coast of Tartary where we land in 42 degrees; we sail along it very close in in spite of the mists, always waiting for the weather to clear so as to leave no gaps on our charts. We put into Ternay Bay; its products, details on the country; we sail after a stay of only three days. Second stay, in Suffren Bay; enormous quantity of cod obtained there. Continuing our northerly route we sight a peak I have named Pic Lamanon; it bore east, and we realise for the first time that we were sailing in a channel we had not noticed because we had hugged the coast of Tartary. We sail towards this island; stay in Baye de Langle; practices and customs of the inhabitants; what they tell us causes us to continue north up to the mouth of the Segalien River; we find the channel between the island and the Tartary mainland obstructed by shoals. Stay in Destiny Bay; salmon in the river still on the newly discovered island, and in Castries Bay on the Tartary coast; practices and customs of the inhabitants who are quite different from the islanders from whom however they are only separated by a very narrow channel; products of the country, shells, birds, fish, &c.

On April ninth according to our style of reckoning and on the tenth according to the Manilans,¹ we sailed with a good N.E. breeze which made us hope that we could round in daylight all the islands of the various passes of Manila Bay. Before sailing, Mr de Langle and I received Mr Bermudès who assured us that the N.E. monsoon would not change for a month and that it would be even later on the coast of Formosa, the Chinese mainland being so to speak the birthplace of the northerly winds that reign for more than nine months of the year over the coasts of that empire, but our impatience did not allow us to listen to the voice of experience; we placed our faith in exceptions: the monsoonal change might occur

¹ Having sailed from east to west, La Pérouse had crossed the date line and should have lost a day. By keeping to his own dates, he was following James Cook's practice who only changed his dates when he reached a European port. The route tables of both the *Boussole* and the *Astrolabe* make it clear that La Pérouse sailed from Cavite on 10 April 1787.

at a different time from year to year, and we took our leave. Slight changes in the wind soon enabled us to reach the north of Luzon. I have already mentioned that the monsoon winds are never felt there within a coastal belt of some twelve or fifteen leagues, and one of the advantages of the Manila trade is that one is able to carry on a coastal trade with China at any time of the year. We had hardly turned Cape Bojador¹ when the N.E. winds settled in with a stubbornness that proved only too well how right Mr de Bermudes had been. I had a slight hope that I might find under the lee of Formosa the same varieties as I had met off Luzon, although I could not ignore the fact that the proximity of the Chinese mainland made this unlikely, but in any case all I could do was wait for the monsoon to reverse, as the poor sailing qualities of our frigates which were timber-bottomed and clouted gave us no hope of progressing north against contrary winds. We sighted this island on 21 April. We came upon very fierce tidal currents in the channel separating it from the island of Luzon; they seem to be caused by a normal tide, as our reckoning was no different from our observations of longitude and latitude.² On 22 April I saw Lumai Island which is off the S.W. point of Formosa bearing E $\frac{1}{4}$ E distant about three leagues.³ The sea was very rough and the appearance of the coast persuaded me that I would gain more easily the north if I could reach the coast of China. The N.N.E. winds allowed me to sail N.W. and thereby gain in latitude, but in the middle of the channel I noticed that the sea had greatly changed; we were then in 22^d 57' of latitude and west of the Cavite meridian, that is to say in 116^d 41' of longitude, Paris meridian; the sounding-line gave twenty-five fathoms, sandy ground, and four minutes later only 19 fathoms; this too rapid change in depth convinced me that this was not a depth associated with China from which we were still thirty leagues away, but that of a shoal not indicated on the charts; I continued to take soundings and soon found only twelve fathoms; I changed course towards Formosa Island and the depth continued to be as irregular as before; I then felt it wise to drop anchor and gave the signal to the *Astrolabe*; the night was fine. At daybreak we

¹ Cape Bojeador is the western cape at the north of Luzon.

² The tidal rips and currents of the Babuyan Channel, to the east of the route being followed by the two frigates, are particularly violent.

³ The reference is probably to rocky islets that lie off the south-west cape, Byobi To.

saw no breakers around us; I gave signal to get under way and set sail N.W. for the Chinese mainland, but at nine o'clock in the morning the sounding-line reporting 21 fathoms and a minute later eleven fathoms, rocky bottom, I felt that I ought not to continue such a dangerous investigation, our boats sailing too badly to be able to take soundings ahead of the frigates and indicate the depths; I therefore decided to get away by the same point of the compass as I had arrived and set course for the SE¼E. We thus covered six leagues over an uneven ground of sand and rocks of from 24 to eleven fathoms; the depth then increased and we lost it completely at 10 p.m. approximately eleven leagues from where we had changed course in the morning; this bank whose extent to the north-west we have not determined but from the centre of the line we followed is in 23 of latitude and 116^d 43 of longitude, Paris meridian and its S.E. extremity in 22^d 52 of latitude and 117^d 3 of longitude may not be dangerous as the smallest depth we found was 11 fathoms, but the nature and unevenness of the bottom makes it very suspect, and it is worth noting that these shoals which are very common in the China seas have nearly all tops at sea level which have been responsible for numerous shipwrecks. Our course brought us back to the Formosa coast near the entrance to the bay of the old fort of Zealand where the town of Thaon, the capital of this island, is situated.¹ I had been advised of the rebellion in the Chinese colony and I knew that an army of twenty thousand men, commanded by the Santoq of Canton, had been despatched against it. I would have liked to obtain news of this event, the north-eastern monsoon which was still strong allowing me to waste a few days without endangering the rest of the campaign. I anchored outside this bay in seventeen fathoms, and our boats found 14 fathoms a league and a half from shore, but I was aware

¹ The Dutch built the fort of Zeelandia in 1624 at the port of Tainan (La Pérouse's Thaon) which rapidly became an important commercial centre. The Spanish meanwhile were setting up their own settlements in the north of the island: at Chilung (San Salvador) in 1626 and Tanshui (San Domingo) in 1629; these fell to the Chinese in 1642. In 1661 Koxinga (Cheng Cheng-Kung) besieged Tainan with 25,000 men and it fell in February of the following year. From that time, Taiwan (still known to Europeans as Formosa) was administered as a Chinese possession, a dependency of Fukien (Fujian) province. Chinese immigration followed, especially after 1683 when the Chinese conquest can be considered as completed; this led to growing unrest and a number of revolts – no fewer than 23 occurred between 1683 and 1895 when the island was ceded to Japan.

that one could not approach close to the island, that there was only a depth of seven feet in Thaon harbour, and that, when the Dutch owned it, their ships were forced to stay in the Piscadorés Islands where there is a very good harbour which they had fortified.¹ These circumstances made me very unsure about sending a boat ashore, which I could not support with my frigates and which in all likelihood would appear suspect in the warlike state of this Chinese colony; the best I could hope for was that it would be sent back without having been allowed to land; if on the other hand it was held, my position would become very embarrassing and a couple of sampans set on fire would be a poor compensation for such a misfortune. Accordingly I decided to try to attract to the ships Chinese boats passing nearby; I showed them piastres which seemed to me to be the most effective magnet for these people, but apparently any communication with foreigners is forbidden them; it was obvious that we did not inspire any fear in them, since they were passing within range of our weapons, but they refused to come alongside, and only one had the courage to do so; we bought his fish at the price he asked so that he might give us a good name among the other boats if he dared admit he had communicated with us. We could not guess the replies these fishermen were making to the questions we asked them – which undoubtedly they could not understand; not only does the language of these people have no links with European languages, but this kind of pantomime language we think is universal was not any more successful and a head movement which means ‘yes’ among us may well have a diametrically opposed meaning with them; this little experience persuaded me even more that my curiosity would not be satisfied even if my boat met with the best of welcomes, and I decided to set sail in the morning with the land breeze. Various fires I saw lit on the coast which I took to be signals made me think that we had caused some alarm, but it was more than probable that the Chinese and the rebel armies were not near Thaiyions where we saw only a very small number of fishing boats which, in a trouble spot, would have made their way elsewhere. What was only a guess became a certainty. The following day, the sea and the land breezes having allowed us to sail ten leagues north, we saw the whole Chinese army at the

¹ The port is Penghu where the Dutchman Jan Pieterszoon Coen built a fort, which however had to be abandoned two years later.

mouth of a large river¹ situated in 23 degrees 25 minutes, but whose bar extends 4 or 5 leagues to sea; we sailed athwart this river in 37 fathoms, muddy ground. We could not count all the vessels; some had their sails up, others were at anchor near the coast and a very large number were inside the river. The admiral ship, covered in a large number of flags, was the furthest away; it dropped anchor at the edge of the sandbank one league to the east of our frigates. As soon as night fell, it placed lights on all its masts to serve as a rallying point for several vessels still to windward which, forced to pass close to our frigates to join their commander, took great care to stay at a wide cannon shot, no doubt not knowing whether we were friend or foe. Moonlight allowed us to observe all this until midnight and never have we wished more ardently for fine weather so that we might see the next day's events. The day before, we had sighted the southern Pescadores islands bearing West $\frac{1}{4}$ North-west. It is likely that the Chinese army having left from Fokien province had gathered on the island of Pombu,² the largest of the Pescadores where there is a very good harbour, and had left there that very day to begin its operations, because at 7 p.m. a large part of this fleet was still in the channel; but the weather became so bad that we could not entertain any other plan than setting sail before dawn in order to save our anchor, which we could not have done if we had put off this task for one hour. The sky darkened; at 4 a.m. a wild gale blew up; the horizon did not permit us to see land; nevertheless, at daybreak I saw the admiral ship running before the wind towards the river with a few other sampans I could still discern through the mist; I made for the open sea, all the main sails reefed; the winds were blowing N.N.E. and I hoped to round the Pescadorés while heading N.W.

But to my great astonishment I saw at nine a.m. several rocks forming part of this group of islands bearing N.N.W. and the weather was so hazy that we had been unable to make them out until we were quite close; the breakers surrounding them were indistinguishable from those caused by the breaking waves. Having never seen such a rough sea in my life, I veered back towards

¹ This is the mouth of the Pei Chiang River.

² There are several large ports in Fujian province from which the expedition could have set out, such as Foochow (Fuzhou), Changchow (Quanzhou) and Amoy (Xiamen). La Pérouse's Pombu is Penghu – the Chinese name of the Pescadores ('Fishermen') Islands is Penghu Liehtao.

Formosa at nine a.m. and at midday the *Astrolabe* which was ahead of us signalled a depth of twelve fathoms as she was changing tack; I at once took soundings and found forty fathoms; therefore in less than a quarter of a league one drops from forty fathoms to twelve, and presumably, soon after, from twelve to two because the *Astrolabe* found only eight while changing course and it was probable that this frigate had not followed this tack for four minutes; which taught us that the channel situated between the islands to the N.E. of the Piscadorès and the Formosa banks is no more than four leagues; this was somewhat narrow to tack at night in frightful weather with an horizon of less than a league, and a sea that was so rough that each time we tacked with a following wind we ran the risk of being swamped by the waves. These various circumstances made me decide to work my way to pass to the east of Formosa; my instructions did not require me to take the channel route, and it was anyhow all too obvious that I could not do so until the monsoon changed, and as this change, which was probably not very far off, is heralded by a very wild gale I felt it wiser to cope with this out at sea, and I set course for the southern Piscadorès Islands which I could see to the west-south-west. Since I was forced to follow this route I wanted at least to survey them as much as the bad weather allowed; we coasted along them at a distance of two leagues and they seem to extend south up to 23^d 12' although Mr D'après' map places them 13 minutes further north. We are not quite so certain about their northern limits; the most northerly stretched out to 23 degrees 25 minutes, but we do not know whether there are any beyond that.

These islands are groups of rocks assuming all kinds of shapes; there is one that exactly resembles the tower of Cordouan which is at the entrance to the Bordeaux river¹ and one could have sworn that this rock was cut by humans, but among these islets we counted five islands of a medium height having the appearance of sand dunes; we saw no trees on them; to be frank, the frightful weather endured on this day makes this a very tentative comment, but these islands must be known from the reports of the Dutch who had fortified Pombo port when they were masters of Formosa,

¹ This famous lighthouse in the Gironde estuary goes back to the ninth century. It was substantially rebuilt in 1586-1611 and further extended in 1788, plans for this work being under discussion just before La Pérouse sailed from France.

and we know that the Chinese still maintain there a garrison of five or six hundred Tartars who are relieved annually.

As the sea had improved within the lee of these islands, we took several soundings and found such an uneven sandy bottom that the *Astrolabe*, which was within musket range, had forty fathoms while our sounding-line reported only twenty-four and soon we lost the depth altogether. Since night was beginning to fall I set course for the S $\frac{1}{4}$ SE and in the morning veered back East S.E. to pass through the channel between Formosa and the Bahee Islands;¹ the next day we were struck by a squall that was as fierce as the day before's, but it only lasted until ten p.m.; it was preceded by heavy rain such as one sees only in the tropics and the sky was afire throughout the night; the fiercest lightning struck every point of the compass, but we heard only one thunder clap. We ran with the wind under the foresail and two topsails, fully reefed, making for the S.E. to round Vella rette² which, according to the bearings we had taken before nightfall of the southern point of Formosa, should have been lying four leagues to the east. The winds stayed north-westerly throughout the night but the clouds were being driven very strongly to the S.W. and only a fog which did not extend a hundred *toises* over our heads was affected by the lower winds. I had noticed this for several days, and this observation was of considerable help in deciding me to make for the open sea during this crisis of Nature, which the full moon helped to confirm. We were totally becalmed for the whole of the following day and halfway through the channel between the Bahée Islands and Bottol Tabagoxima³ the width is sixteen leagues, our observations placing the S.E. headland of Bottol tabagoxima in 21 degrees 57 minutes of latitude and 119 degrees 32 minutes of longitude Paris meridian. The winds allowing me to come within two-thirds of a league of

¹ The Bahée Islands are William Dampier's Bashee Islands, so named by him after a local drink which his men greatly enjoyed, 'very much like our English Beer both in colour and Taste.' Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World*, London, 1703, p. 431. Dampier spent from 6 August to 3 October 1687 among the islands which are the present-day Batan Islands between Formosa and Luzon. The channel itself, through which the French were passing, is still known as the Bashi Channel.

² Vela Rete Rocks, formerly known as Shichesi Seki, is the Chhsing Yen group, in latitude 21°44'N and longitude 120°50'E, some eight miles south of Taiwan.

³ Formerly known as Koto Sho, this island, Hungfou Hsu, lies in latitude 22°3'N and longitude 121°33'E (119°13'E of Paris). The small island close to it is Hsiaohungtou Hsu (known to the Japanese as Shokoto Sho).

this island, I clearly saw three villages on the south coast, and a canoe seemed to be making for us; it would have been rather interesting to visit these settlements which presumably are inhabited by the same people as those of the Bahé Islands whom Dampierre describes as being so good and so hospitable, but the only bay that seemed to promise an anchorage was open to the S.E. winds which seem to blow incessantly because the clouds were being driven strongly from this direction and at around midnight they effectively settled S.E. and enabled me to sail NE. $\frac{1}{4}$ N, a trend given to Formosa Island by Mr D'après as far as 23 degrees 30 minutes. We had sounded several times near Botol tabagoxima and half a league from land without finding ground. Every indication is that if there is an anchorage it is very close to the shore. This island, on which no traveller has landed, has a circumference of roughly four leagues; it is separated by a channel half a league across from an islet or very large rock on which one can see a little greenery with a little scrub, but which is neither inhabited nor habitable.

On the other hand, the island seems to contain a fair number of inhabitants as we counted three villages within a distance of one league; it is wooded from a third of the way up from the shore to the peak which seems to be topped with very large trees. The space between these forests and the beach slopes very rapidly still, but it is of the brightest green, cultivated in several places and cut by ravines formed by torrents coming down from the hills. I think that Botol tabagoxima is visible fifteen leagues off when the weather is clear, but this island is often surrounded by fog and it would appear that Admiral Anson only first saw the islet I mentioned which has not half Botol tabago's height.¹ After rounding this island we sailed

¹ 'The 3rd of November [1742], about three in the afternoon, we saw an Island, which at first we imagined to be Botel Tobago Xima: But on our nearer approach we found it to be much smaller than is usually represented: and about an hour afterwards we saw another Island, five or six miles farther to the westward. As no chart or journal we had seen took notice of any Island to the eastward of Formosa but Botel Tobago Xima, and as we had no observation of our latitude at noon, we were in some perplexity, apprehending that an extraordinary current had driven us into the neighbourhood of the Bashee Islands. We therefore, when night came on, brought to, and continued in that posture till the next morning, which proving dark and cloudy, for some time prolonged our uncertainty; but it clearing up about nine o'clock we again discerned the two Islands above-mentioned; and having now the day before us, we prest forwards to the westward, and by eleven got a sight of the southern part of the Island of Formosa. This satisfied us that the second Island we saw was Botel Tobago Xima, and the first a small islet or rock, lying five or six

N.N.E., being very careful during the night to look out for any land ahead of us; a strong current bearing north did not allow us to know exactly how far we travelled, but bright moonlight and extreme caution made up for the inconvenience of sailing through an archipelago which is known to geographers only through the letter addressed to Mr de lisle by Father Gaubil,¹ a missionary who had obtained some information about the kingdom of Likeu and its 36 islands from an ambassador of the King of Likeu he met in Peckin.

It will be appreciated that determinations of latitude and longitude calculated in this way are insufficient for navigation, but it is always a great advantage to know that there are reefs and islands in the area where one is. On 4 May at one in the morning we sighted a small island bearing from us N.N.E. We spent the rest of the night tacking under short sails and at dawn I set out to pass half a league to the west of it; we sounded several times without finding ground at this distance but soon learned that the island was inhabited; we saw fires in several places and herds of cattle feeding along the shore. When we had at last rounded its western point, which is the most attractive and most populated side of the island, several canoes came out from the coast to observe us; we seemed to inspire them with extreme fear – their curiosity led them to come within musket-shot range and their mistrust made them immediately hurry away; finally our shouts, our gestures, our signs of peace and the sight of some cloth made two of them decide to come alongside; I had a few medals and a length of Nankin cloth² given to each one. It was evident that these islanders had not left the coast

miles due East of it.' Walter Richard (compiler), *A Voyage round the World by George Anson*, London, 1776, p. 346. See also G. William (ed.), *A Voyage round the World* . . . , London, 1984, pp. 310–11.

¹ Antoine de Gaubil (1689–1759), a Jesuit, went to China in 1721, arriving in Pekin in 1723. He supervised the observatory and became a corresponding member of the Paris Académie des Sciences, keeping in touch with a number of European savants. Some of his letters were published in the widely-read *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*. His correspondence has now been collected and published, see R. Simon (ed.), *A. Gaubil: Correspondance de Pékin*, Paris, 1970. The 'de lisle' referred to in the text is the geographer and cartographer Joseph-Nicolas Delisle who devoted a great deal of time and energy to organising scientists in various parts of the world to observe the transit of Venus.

² Nankin cloth, known as nankeen in Britain, was a yellow cotton material imported from China; the terms *nankin* and *nankeen* were only then entering current usage in the two languages.

intending to trade because they had nothing to give us in exchange for our gifts and they tied a bucket of drinking water to a rope, indicating by gestures that they did not consider that this was sufficient to repay us and that they were going to fetch provisions on land, which they told us by placing their hands in their mouths. Before coming up to the frigate, they had placed their hands on their chest and raised their arms towards the sky: we imitated these gestures and they then decided to come on board, but always with a mistrust which their expression never ceased to reveal. They nevertheless invited us to go closer to the shore, telling us that we would lack for nothing there. These islanders are neither Chinese nor Japanese but, placed between these two empires, they seem to have something of both; they wore a shirt and trousers made of cotton cloth, their hair tied back over the top of their heads was twisted around a pin which seemed to be made of gold; each one had a dagger, the point and handle of which were also made of gold; their canoes were simply made of a dug-out tree trunk and they were fairly clumsily manoeuvred. It would have been rather interesting to land on this island, but as we had hove to in order to wait for these canoes and the current was running very strongly north we had dropped to leeward and might have struggled in vain to reach it; moreover we had no time to lose and it was very important for us to leave the Sea of Japan before June, a time of storms and hurricanes which make these waters the most dangerous in the world.

Clearly, ships in need would find supplies of food, water and wood in this island and might even manage some kind of trade, but as it is hardly more than three or four leagues in circumference, it is unlikely that the population exceeds four or five hundred people, and a few gold pins are not evidence of wealth. I have kept the name of Kumi Island which I found on Father Gaubil's chart in a latitude and longitude close to what we observed, having placed it in $24^{\text{d}} 33'$ of latitude and $120^{\text{d}} 56'$ of longitude Paris meridian; Kumi Island forms part of a group of 7 or 8 islands of which it is the westernmost¹ and it is isolated or at least separated from those

¹ La Pérouse was approaching the Sakishima Shoto group east of Taiwan, between the 24th and 25th parallels. The westernmost is Yanogumi Jima in latitude $24^{\circ}27'N$ and longitude $120^{\circ}40'E$ of Paris, which is separated by some 60 km or 6 leagues from the main group. The island of Kume Shima (his 'Kumi') lies further north. The group is linked by an undersea range to the Ryukyus (Nansei Shoto) which are La Pérouse's 'Likeus'.

which one can suspect lie to the east of it by channels 8 or 10 leagues wide, this being the extent of our horizon at the time and we saw no sign of land. From details provided by Father Gaubil on the large island of Likeu, the capital of all these islands east of Formosa, I tend to believe that Europeans would be accepted there and might be able to trade as favourably as in Japan. At one p.m. I crowded on sails and made for the north without waiting for the islanders who had indicated by gestures that they would soon be back with food supplies, but we were still well provided and a most favourable wind was inviting us not to waste such precious time. I continued on this course all sails high and by sunset we had lost sight of Kumi Island although the sky was clear and our horizon seemed to stretch out for ten leagues. I reduced sail during the night and broached to at two a.m. after covering five leagues because I suspected that the currents had borne us ten to twelve miles beyond our reckoning. At daylight I sighted an island bearing N.N.E. and several rocks and islets further east. I set my course to pass west of this island. It was round and well wooded on its western side; I coasted a third of a league off without finding bottom and saw no trace of any houses; it is so steep that I do not even think it is habitable; it may have a diameter of two-thirds of a league or a circumference of two leagues. When we were athwart of it we saw a second island of a similar size, equally wooded and of much the same shape although a little lower; it bore N.N.E. and between these islands there were five groups of rocks around which a great crowd of birds were flying. I have kept the names of Hoapinsu and of Tyaoynsa for the one further north and to the east, which had been given by the same Father Gaubil to islands east of the northern point of Formosa, located much further south on his chart than the latitude we observed; be that as it may, our determinations place the island of Hoapinsu in $25^{\text{d}} 43' 50''$ of latitude and $121^{\text{d}} 14'$ of longitude, and Tyaoynsa in latitude 25 [blank] and longitude [blank] Paris meridian.¹

We had at last left the Likeu archipelago and were about to enter a wider sea between China and Japan where some geographers claim one can always find a depth.² This observation is quite

¹ Huaping Hsu, to the north of Taiwan, lies in $25^{\circ}24'N$ and $121^{\circ}58'E$ of Greenwich ($119^{\circ}38'E$ of Paris). There are two other islands close by: Mienhua Hsu in $25^{\circ}29'N$ and Pengchia Hsu in $25^{\circ}38'$.

² The frigates are now entering the East China Sea, an area which was then largely unknown to European navigators.

correct, but it was only really in $24^{\text{d}} 4'$ that the sounding-line gave seventy fathoms and from that time until we were beyond the Japanese channel we sailed continually on the depth; the China coast is even so flat that in 31 degrees we had only 25 fathoms thirty leagues from land. I had planned when I left Manila to survey the entrance to the Yellow Sea north of Nankin if my navigation left me time to spend some weeks on this, but whatever happened it was essential for the success of my later projects to reach the entrance to the Japanese channel before 20 May and I found on the northern coast of China unfavourable winds which allowed me to progress a mere seven or eight leagues a day; the fogs were as thick and as persistent as on the coast of L'abrador: the breeze which was very weak only veered from N.E. to east; we were often becalmed, compelled to anchor and put out signals to remain at anchor because we were unable to see the *Astrolabe* even though she was within hailing distance, and the currents were so strong that we could not hold the lead on the bottom to check that we were not dragging; the tide, however, was running at no more than one league an hour, but its direction was impossible to estimate – it changed every half hour and boxed the entire compass in the space of twelve hours without a single instant of slack water. In a period of ten or twelve days we had only one fine interval which allowed us to see an islet or rock in $30^{\text{d}} 45'$ latt. and $121^{\text{d}} 26'$ of longitude. It was soon hidden by the fog once more and we do not know whether it is adjacent to or separated from the mainland by a wide channel because we never saw the coast and our smallest depth was twenty fathoms.¹

On 19 May, after a period of calms that had lasted a fortnight with very heavy fogs, the winds settled in the north-west, stormy gale. The weather remained dull and whiteish, but the horizon opened out to several leagues; the sea which had been so fine then became very rough. When this change occurred I was at anchor in 25 fathoms. I gave the signal to leave and without wasting a moment I set course to $\text{NE}\frac{1}{4}\text{E}$ towards Quelpaert Island² which was the first landmark of any interest before we entered the Japanese

¹ All that can be said is that La Pérouse was sailing past the Shengsiqundao group, a mass of islands and rocks to the south-east of Shanghai, in latitude $30^{\circ}40'$ to $45'$

² Quelpaert Island is now more commonly known by its Korean name of Cheju-do. It lies at the entrance to the Korea Strait between the East China Sea and the Sea of Japan.

channel. This island which is only known to Europeans as a result of the wreck of the Dutch vessel *Sparrow-hawk* in 1635¹ was at the time ruled by the King of Korea. We sighted it on 21 May in the finest weather imaginable and in most favourable conditions for observations. We determined the latitude of the south point as 33^d 14' latt. and 124^d 15' of long. I coasted along the whole south-east shore at a distance of two leagues and we surveyed with the utmost care a length of twelve leagues of which Mr Bernizet drew a plan. One would be hard put to find a more pleasing prospect; a peak of approximately 1000 *toises* and which is visible from 18 or 20 leagues rises in the middle of the island and serves probably as its reservoir² from which the houses look as though laid out in an amphitheatre. All the soil seemed to be cultivated up to a considerable height; we could make out with our spyglass the boundaries of the fields; they seem to be very much parcelled out, which suggests a large population, and the various crops which presented a wide range of colours made the appearance of this island even more pleasing. Unhappily, it belongs to people who are forbidden to communicate with strangers and who currently enslave those unfortunate enough to be shipwrecked on their coast; some of the Dutchmen from the vessel *Sparrow-hawk* found a way, after a captivity lasting eighteen years during which they endured several beatings, to capture a boat and make their way to Japan whence they went to Batavia and finally to Amsterdam. This story, of which we had an account before us, was not of a nature to encourage us to send a boat ashore which we had seen two canoes leave, but they never came within a league of us and it is likely that their only purpose was to observe us and possibly spread a warning all along the coast of Korea. I kept to my course until midnight, sailing North-East a quarter East and hove to in order to await the break of day which was dull but without thick fog. We saw the north-east point of Quelpaert Island bearing

¹ The *Sparwer* affair goes back to August 1653 (not 1635 as La Pérouse states) when this Dutch ship was wrecked on Cheju-do while sailing to Nagasaki. The 36 survivors were sent to Seoul in 1654 and forced to join a regiment. Eight of them escaped in 1667 and made their way to Japan. The Dutch had found a compatriot in Cheju-do, a survivor from a 1627 wreck, Jan Welvetree, who had married a Korean woman. The *Sparwer*'s supercargo, Hendrick Hamel, provided in his journal the only information which Europeans were able to obtain for over a century on the closed world of Korea.

² Mt Halla San rises to 1,950 metres or 6,398 ft. 1000 *toises* is an impressively accurate estimate.