

APOCRYPHAL VOYAGES TO THE
NORTHWEST COAST OF AMERICA

BY HENRY R. WAGNER

FOREWORD

The opportunity afforded me to publish the present article, which might appropriately be called *More Imaginary California Geography*, allows me to make a few corrections and amplifications to *Some Imaginary California Geography*, published in the PROCEEDINGS for April, 1926.

On page 21 of that article in referring to Juan de Fuca a statement is made about the abortive expedition of 1589 or 1590 financed by Hernando de Sanctotis in which Fuca perhaps took part. There was an expedition of about 1589 or 1590 financed by Sanctotis but it was not the abortive one to which Fuca refers. This took place in late 1593 or early 1594 and was financed by Sebastian Vizcaino's company. On page 48 the date of Father Benavides' memorial is incorrectly given as 1632 instead of 1630.

Since 1926 a map of Guillaume Bleau has been unearthed which is believed by Dr. F. A. Wieder to have been made in 1648. A reproduction of it was published in Vol. 3 of the *Monumenta Cartographica*. If the date assigned to the map by Dr. Wieder is correct it is probably the earliest one of Briggs' type with corrections. I have lately received from Mr. G. R. G. Conway in Mexico City a photograph of a manuscript map in *Tomo X* of the Muñoz documents in the Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid. It is not dated nor is the *Derrotero* which it precedes. The place names on the northwest coast are different from those on the Briggs map and the arrangement of them is also different. At the north end of the island of California, however, is the name Talago, an addition to the Bleau map, and a Cabo de Tortugas in place of the Cabo de Gato of that map. There are several names on the mainland to the east of the "Mediterranean Sea of California," as it was described by Father Ascension, but these are illegible. They do not seem, however, to be the same as those on the Briggs map. In other words, the map is an independent performance, not copied from any now known map. The text of the *Derrotero* does not comprehend any part of California, but begins

near the present Culiacan. What is obviously intended to be the Mississippi River is also made into a strait with the entrance from the Atlantic Ocean nearly opposite Cabo Mendocino, thus making another island out of what the Spaniards were accustomed to call Florida. If it were not for the incorrect way in which the few Vizcaino names are placed on the northwest coast I should suspect that the map had been copied from one made by Father Ascension, a man full of fantastic ideas.

Where no authorities are given in the footnotes for facts stated it must be understood that these are my own books, *Some Imaginary California Geography*, *Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast of America*, San Francisco 1929, and *Pearl Fishing Enterprises in the Gulf of Mexico* (*Hispanic American Historical Review* for May, 1930). The sixteenth century maps referred to will also be found reproduced in those works, except the Ortelius map of 1564 which appeared in 1926 in *Sir Francis Drake's Voyage Around the World*. The resumé of Spanish explorations of the coast from 1789 to 1792 has been taken from the original documents preserved in the archives in Mexico, with the exception of that regarding Malaspina which was published in Madrid in 1884. I had hoped to be able to publish a full account of those in the Strait of Juan de Fuca before now, but a delay has occurred through the difficulty of securing photographs of some needed maps.

The literature about the Delisle-Buache cartography is extensive, too extensive in fact to describe in an article like this, devoted as it is to reprinting the accounts of the apocryphal voyages and to an investigation of the sources from which they were derived. A number of controversial pamphlets were issued, some of which are now almost impossible to find, but their loss is no great calamity judging from those I have seen. The Delisle manuscripts in the Archives de la Marine in Paris would perhaps throw some light on the origin of the "Mer de l'Ouest," but I found none in a most interesting volume of Buache manuscripts in the Provincial Archives in Victoria which I had the privilege of inspecting last summer.

INTRODUCTION

THE lack of definite geographical knowledge in the middle ages gave occasion for the circulation of many stories about the unknown portions of the earth. After the discovery of the Pacific the myth makers and the imaginary geographers turned their attention largely to that region and in time the north Pacific

became dotted with numerous islands and bordered by shores which had no real existence. Numerous legends arose to entertain the credulous, frequently nothing but distortions of some historical or geographical fact. Among them is one which began to be current about 1530 or 1540 of some voyage of the Portuguese from Lisbon to China and back through a passage north of America. Just when or how the tale arose I have not been able to discover. The references to it hardly antedate 1540 but the passage itself exists on a globe of Gemma Frisius made some five years or so earlier. Frisius attached a legend to his strait to the effect that the Portuguese had attempted to reach China through it, referring either to the voyages of the Cortereals or of some other early Portuguese navigator. On Battista Agnese's early maps a strait appears which was probably copied from that of Frisius, first without any legend attached to it and then, about 1538, with one indicating that the French had sailed through it to China, no doubt some distorted version of the voyage of Jacques Cartier.¹

By the end of the sixteenth century numerous accounts of voyages through the Northwest Passage were in circulation. Sir Humphrey Gilbert in 1576, in his *Discourse*, perhaps gives the most complete summary of them. He was interested in promoting a voyage to discover the passage and it was no doubt as a result of his efforts that Martin Frobisher was sent out on the errand in 1576. The English kept up a persistent search for it for nearly, if not quite, half a century but the only discoveries of any importance were made by Frobisher, John Davis, Henry Hudson, and William Baffin. Although all that these then amounted to was the discovery of a network of waterways in the northeastern part of America they were always just sufficient to lure on new aspirants for the honor of reaching China.

¹See the writer's *Manuscript Atlases of Battista Agnese* in Vol. XXV of the *Bibliographical Society's Papers* for an account of the Frisius globe and of the Agnese maps.

As an outcome of these numerous legends the Strait of Anian was invented. This discovery, or invention, because there was no real discovery of it, is now generally attributed to Giacomo Gastaldi. His views on the subject were announced in a pamphlet published in Venice in 1562. The only fact which he had to go on was in one of Marco Polo's stories, but Polo made no mention of a strait, only the "Anian" part of it can be credited to him. Gastaldi probably issued a map to illustrate his theory but no copy of it is now known earlier than 1566, when Bolognino Zaltieri inserted the Strait of Anian on his map of *Nova Franza*. The peculiarity of this strait was its narrowness and crookedness. It connected the Pacific with the Polar Ocean which in turn was connected with the Atlantic by another comparatively short strait. This was perhaps the earliest appearance of a strait between the Pacific and the Polar Ocean.

The theory that Asia was separated from America in this quarter by some body of water dates back almost to the discovery of the Pacific itself, perhaps even further. In 1564 Abraham Ortelius had published a map of the world of obvious Italian origin in which this covered about twenty degrees of longitude. His map was used by several promoters of northwest voyages including Gilbert himself. The idea however of a narrow passage seems to have been more attractive to the public than a wide one so the Strait of Anian gradually became accepted as a fact and as such continued to figure on the maps for some 200 years, although not always located in the same place. Some cartographers imagined it to be much farther east than others, the difference resulting largely from the length ascribed by them to the northwest coast of America. The old Strait of Bacalaos fathered by Münster and Mercator, simply a long strait running nearly east and west north of America, also came improperly to be called the Strait of Anian. Out of this latter conception grew the mythical voyage of Juan de Fuca, and out of that of Zaltieri grew that of Lorenzo

Ferrer Maldonado, both brought forward by promoters of northwest voyages. The story of the voyage of Bartholomew de Fonte seems to me to have been written as a hoax, or at least as a romance with just enough borrowed real geography to give it a semblance of truth.

The voyages of Fuca, Fonte and Maldonado were not by any means all that were alleged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to have taken place through the Northwest Passage. They merely received a wide circulation for reasons somewhat extraneous to their credibility. It is a curious fact that not one of them received general approval when it first appeared; this was reserved until after the discovery by Vitus Bering in 1728 of the strait between Asia and America which now bears his name. Although Maldonado was the only one whose strait could by any stretch of the imagination be supposed to have been Bering's Strait, Bering's discovery, perhaps simply by a process of reasoning by analogy, seems to have brought to the front those of Fuca and Fonte. Maldonado's never received any serious consideration, either when it was first written or when it unexpectedly came to light at the close of the eighteenth century. Its career was brief; nearly everyone who read it stamped it at once as fictitious. A few writers have arisen to express an opinion, tentatively and timidly, that there may be some truth in his narrative, especially since Roald Amundson succeeded in sailing across the Polar Ocean. Indeed, although Maldonado himself certainly never made such a voyage, yet that he was repeating a story of some voyage by an earlier navigator might receive some consideration if it were not for the total dissimilarity between his Strait of Anian and the present Bering Strait. No one who had ever seen Bering Strait would by any possibility have described it as Maldonado did his Strait of Anian.

Although Maldonado's *Relacion* begins with a title in which it is stated that he made such a voyage in 1588, and therefore antedating that ascribed to Juan

de Fuca of 1592, we shall consider it after the others because it was the last of them to come to light. As the voyage never took place it is more convenient also to accept the date of writing it, namely 1609, instead of 1588 as that of the alleged voyage. Michael Lok had spread his story of Juan de Fuca about England as early as 1596. Probably Maldonado heard of it and adopted 1588 as that of his voyage so as to antedate it by a few years. I am sure he had very good information regarding the English voyages for many years before he wrote. Although his voyage was fictitious, he himself was real, just as Juan de Fuca was real. Fonte was the only fictitious character in this story.

FUCA: JUAN DE

A Note made by me MICHAEL LOK the elder, touching the Strait of Sea, commonly called Fretum Anian, in the South Sea, through the North-west passage of Meta incognita.

When I was at *Venice*, in April 1596. happily arrived there an old man, about threecore yeares of age, called commonly *Iuan de Fuca* but named properly *Apostolos Valerianos*, of Nation a *Greeke*, borne in the Iland *Cefalonia*, of profession a Mariner, and an ancient Pilot of Shippes. This man being come lately out of *Spaine*, arrived first at *Ligorno*, and went thence to *Florence* in *Italie*, where he found one *Iohn Dowglas*, an *Englifthman*, a famous Mariner, ready comming for *Venice*, to be Pilot of a *Venetian* Ship, named *Ragafona* for *England*, in whose company they came both together to *Venice*. And *Iohn Dowglas* being well acquainted with me before, he gaue me knowledge of this *Greeke* Pilot, and brought him to my speech: and in long talke and conference betweene vs, in presence of *Iohn Dowglas*: this *Greeke* Pilot declared in the *Italian* and *Spanish* languages, thus much in effect as followeth.

First he said, that he had bin in the West *Indies* of *Spaine* by the space of fortie yeeres, and had failed to and from many places thereof, as Mariner and Pilot, in the seruice of the *Spaniards*.

Also he said, that he was in the *Spanish* Shippe, which in returning from the Ilands, *Philippinas* and *China*, towards *Noua Spania*, was robbed and taken at the Cape *California*, by Captaine *Candish Englifthman*, whereby he lost fixtie thousand Duckets, of his owne goods.

Also he said, that he was Pilot of three small Ships which the

Vizeroy of *Mexico* sent from *Mexico*, armed with one hundred men, Souldiers, vnder a Captain, *Spaniards*, to discover the Straits of *Anian*, along the coast of the South-Sea, and to fortifie in that Strait, to refit the passage and proceedings of the *English Nation*, which were feared to passe through those Straits into the South Sea. And that by reason of a mutinie which happened among the Souldiers, for the Sodomie of their Captaine, that Voyage was ouerthrowne, and the Ships returned backe from *California* coast to *Noua Spania*, without any effect of thing done in that Voyage. And that after their returne, the Captaine was at *Mexico* punished by iustice.

Alfo he said, that shortly after the said Voyage was so ill ended, the said Viceroy of *Mexico*, sent him out againe Anno 1592. with a small *Carauela*, and a Pinnace, armed with Mariners onely, to follow the said Voyage, for discovery of the same Straits of *Anian*, and the passage thereof, into the Sea which they call the North Sea, which is our North-west Sea. And that he followed his course in that Voyage West and North-west in the South Sea, all alongst the coast of *Noua Spania*, and *California*, and the *Indies*, now called *North America* (all which Voyage hee signified to me in a great Map, and a Sea-card of mine owne, which I laied before him) vntill hee came to the Latitude of fortie feuen degrees, and that there finding that the Land trended North and North-east, with a broad Inlet of Sea, betweene 47. and 48. degrees of Latitude: hee entred thereinto, sayling therein more then twentie dayes, and found that Land trending fittill sometime North-west and North-east, and North, and also East and South-eastward and very much broader Sea then was at the said entrance, and that he passed by diuers Ilands in that sayling. And that at the entrance of this said Strait, there is on the North-west coast thereof, a great Hedland or Iland, with an exceeding high Pinacle, or spired Rocke, like a piller thereupon.

Alfo he said, that he went on Land in diuers places, and that he saw some people on Land, clad in Beasts skins: and that the Land is very fruitfull, and rich of gold, Siluer, Pearle, and other things, like *Noua Spania*.

And also he said, that he being entred thus farre into the said Strait, and being come into the North Sea already, and finding the Sea wide enough euery where, and to be about thirtie or fortie leagues wide in the mouth of the Straits, where hee entred; hee thought he had now well discharged his office, and done the thing which he was sent to doe: and that hee not being armed to resist the force of the Saluage people that might happen, hee therefore set sayle and returned homewards againe towards *Noua Spania*, where hee arriued at *Acapulco*, Anno

1592. hoping to be rewarded greatly of the Viceroy, for this seruice done in this said Voyage.

Alfo he said, that after his comming to *Mexico*, hee was greatly welcommed by the Viceroy, and had great promifes of great reward, but that hauing fued there two yeares time, and obtained nothing to his content, the Viceroy told him, that he fhould be rewarded in *Spaine* of the King himfelfe very greatly, and willed him therefore to goe into *Spaine*, which Voyage hee did performe.

Alfo he said, that when he was come into *Spaine*, he was greatly welcommed there at the Kings Court, in wordes after the *Spanifh* manner, but after long time of fuite there alfo, hee could not get any reward there neither to his content. And that therefore at the length he ftole away out of *Spaine*, and came into *Italie*, to goe home againe and liue among his owne Kindred and Countrimen, he being very old.

Alfo he said, that hee thought the caufe of his ill reward had of the *Spaniards*, to bee for that they did vnderftand very well, that the *Englifh* Nation had now giuen ouer all their voyages for difcouerie of the North-weft paffage, wherefore they need not feare them any more to come that way into the South Sea, and therefore they needed not his seruice therein any more.

Alfo he said, that in regard of this ill reward had of the *Spaniards*, and vnderftanding of the noble minde of the Queene of *England*, and of her warres maintayned fo valiantly againft the *Spaniards*, and hoping that her Maieftie would doe him iuftice for his goods loft by Captaine *Candifh*, he would bee content to goe into *England*, and ferue her Maieftie in that voyage for the difcouerie perfectly of the North-weft paffage into the South Sea, and would put his life into her Maiefties hands to performe the fame, if fhee would furnifh him with onely one fhip of fortie tunnes burden and a Pinnaffe, and that he would performe it in thirtie dayes time, from one end to the other of the Streights. And he willed me fo to write into *England*.

And vpon this conference had twife with the said *Greeke* Pilot, I did write thereof accordingly into *England* vnto the right honourable the old Lord Treafurer *Cecill*, and to Sir *Walter Raleigh*, and to Mafter *Richard Hakluyt* that famous Cosmographer, certifying them hereof by my Letters. And in the behalfe of the said *Greeke* Pilot, I prayed them to difburfe one hundred pounds of money, to bring him into *England* with my felfe, for that my owne purfe would not ftretch fo wide at that time. And I had anfwere hereof by Letters of friends, that this action was very well liked, and greatly defired in *England* to bee effected; but the money was not readie, and therefore this action dyed at that time, though the said *Greeke* Pilot

perchance liueth ftill this day at home in his owne Countrie in *Cefalonia*, towards the which place he went from me within a fortnight after this conference had at *Venice*.

And in the meanetime, while I followed my owne bufineffe in *Venice*, being in Law fuit againft the Companie of Merchants of *Turkie*, and Sir *Iohn Spencer* their Gouvernour in *London*, to recouer my penfion due for my office of being their Confull at *Aleppo* in *Turkie*, which they held from me wrongfully. And when I was (as I thought) in a readineffe to returne home into *England*, for that it pleased the Lords of her Maiefties honourable Priue Counfell in *England*, to looke into this Caufe of my Law fuit for my reliefe; I thought that I fhould be able of my owne purfe to take with me into *England* the faid *Greeke Pilot*. And therefore I wrote vnto him from *Venice* a Letter, dated in July 1596. which is copied here-vnder.¹

How much of this story is Fuca's and how much is Lok's we can never know. Michael Lok in the latter part of the sixteenth century was the outstanding promoter in England of expeditions to the northwest coast. He was a merchant and originally had some means, a good part of which he must have lost in backing his opinions. He was especially zealous and instrumental in organizing the expeditions of Martin Frobisher and in spite of the failure of these and the subsequent ones of John Davis ten years later he did not lose his abounding faith in the existence of a passage. Whatever may have been the information he obtained from Fuca in Venice the fact is that he attempted in 1598 to organize a fresh expedition which Fuca as pilot was to accompany. Unsuccessful in his efforts he returned to England in 1602 and shortly thereafter learned that Fuca was either dead or about to die. Fuca must have been a real individual and I am certain that he was in Mexico from 1588 to 1594. Writing in 1610 Sir William Monson tells a story about a Greek having related to Lok in Italy not only the particulars of a voyage but what happened after Cavendish put him on shore at Cabo San Lucas after capturing the *Santa Ana*, the Manila galleon, November 14, 1587.² Now this accords very well with the

¹From the *Pilgrimes* of Samuel Purchas, London, 1625, Vol. III, pages 849-851.

²In his *Naval Tracts* which were not published until 1704 when they appeared among Churchill's *Voyages*.

account of Cavendish's voyage written by Thomas Pretty. He tells us that on April 27, 1587, Cavendish captured a small bark while on his way from Valparaiso to the north. On board was a Greek pilot named George. Cavendish took him along, but Pretty never mentions what became of him. Among Fuca's tales reported by Lok was one that he had been captured on the *Santa Ana* and robbed by Cavendish of 60,000 *pesos* in gold. This the records of the *Santa Ana* show could not have been the case; he had either lied to Lok, or else Lok, or possibly Purchas when he printed the story, got it mixed.

It can be no mere coincidence that December 5, 1577, Sir Francis Drake on his voyage around the world, had seized a small vessel in the harbor of Valparaiso in Chile on which he found a Greek pilot named Juan. Drake found some 24,000 *pesos* in gold on the vessel and probably much more, but there is no reason to suppose that any but a small fraction of it belonged to the pilot. Drake carried him along to act as pilot until after he had passed Callao, when he put him on one of his captured vessels on turning her adrift. It was no doubt from the loss of this gold that the story came of the 60,000 *pesos*, which according to Lok, George lost on the *Santa Ana*, as I feel certain that this was the same man as Cavendish's Greek pilot. That Fuca was in Mexico from 1588 to probably 1594 is apparent from his account of the expedition to California in which he did not take part. The circumstances attending this voyage and the outcome of it were precisely those detailed by Lok and could hardly have been known to anyone outside of Mexico. Given the facts then that Fuca was in Mexico, even possibly on the west coast, from 1588 to 1593 or 1594, and that no expedition to the north such as he mentioned is known to have taken place, how can we account for the story?

The years 1588 to 1596 were notable in the annals of maritime enterprise in Mexico for the schemes of

Hernando de Sanctotis, Sebastian Vizcaino and others to set up a pearl-fishing business on the Peninsula of California. Sanctotis' company managed to send out by 1592 one ship, or possibly more, of which no account remains. Vizcaino, by dint of persuasion and large promises, succeeded in getting the concession away from him and early in 1594 sent out one, the details of which we also lack. We only know that the captain, Sebastian Perez del Castillo, was brought back and subsequently tried in Mexico by a special judge, Antonio de Morga, for an unnatural crime, just as related by Fuca. Vizcaino himself went to the peninsula in 1596. During all this period there was more or less loud talk about discovering the Strait of Anian. One of Vizcaino's special offers was to find out whether the Gulf of California had another entrance to the ocean or reached New Mexico. During the same period the voyage of Pedro de Unamuno from the Philippines to Acapulco took place and much activity was displayed by the viceroy in fostering another which finally eventuated in that of Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeño in 1595. The Strait of Anian bulks rather large in the correspondence and memorials of the day and seems to have been considered in Mexico at the time to have been identical with the Strait of Bacalaos, which, on such maps as show it, had its western opening from the Pacific, in the neighborhood of 48° to 50°. Fuca's knowledge of this strait was about equal to that of Juan Fernandez Ladrillero who in 1574 told all about it in Guadalajara, but who had to admit that he had never seen it and was unable to do more than repeat various legends about it which were then in circulation and to which I have previously referred. All that Fuca knew was something about a voyage up the Gulf of California. I think that Michael Lok did the rest, as when we come to compare Fuca's story with Lok's map published by Richard Hakluyt in his *Divers Voyages* in 1582, we find that Fuca's voyage must have been made through Lok's strait

located between about 47° and 50°. Only a part of the northern coast extending from west to east for about twelve degrees of longitude is laid down on this and the strait then opens into the Polar Ocean. We may do Lok an injustice in thinking that he fabricated this part of the narrative; he was looking for information to verify his theory of a Northwest Passage and possibly the Greek was quite willing to supply it and thus gain employment.

The history of the Fuca legend is rather interesting. Lok naturally related Fuca's story in England as soon as he heard it and we have in fact reasons to believe that it began to circulate in London shortly after 1596. Lok was thoroughly discredited at this time, too much money had been lost searching for such a passage by the merchants and adventurers and some fresh stimulus had to be supplied to whip them into further contributions; perhaps this was it. Whether the unimportant expeditions sent out from 1602 to 1607 were instigated by Lok or encouraged by his story is not known, but nothing more appears regarding the alleged voyage until it was printed in 1625 by Samuel Purchas in his *Pilgrimes*, Vol. III, page 849. Even then it evoked little comment. In the middle of the following century an industrious writer named Samuel Engel asserted that he had not seen in all that time any mention of the voyage. It was reserved for two French geographers, Joseph Nicolas Delisle and Philippe Buache, to bring it forward in 1750 in support of the tale of Bartholomew de Fonte, perhaps I should better say, in connection with it, as in reality there is no visible connection between the two and one could not support the other. This phase therefore must be examined in connection with that of the Fonte story.

Fonte: BARTHOLOMEW DE
Memoirs for the Curious

*A Letter from Admiral Bartholomew de Fonte, then
Admiral of New Spain and Peru, and now Prince of*

Chili; giving an Account of the most material Transactions in a Journal of his from the Calo of Lima in Peru, on his Discoveries to find out if there was any North West Passage from the Atlantick Ocean into the South and Tartarian Sea.

The Viceroy of *New Spain* and *Peru*, having advice from the Court of *Spain*, that the several Attempts of the *English*, both in the Reigns of *Queen Elizabeth*, *King James*, and of *Capt. Hudson* and *Capt. James*, in the 2d, 3d and 4th Years of *King Charles*, was in the 14th Year of the said *King Charles*, A. D. 1639, undertaken from some Industrious Navigators from *Boston* in *New England*, upon which I Admiral *de Fonte* received Orders from *Spain* and the Viceroy to Equip four Ships of Force, and being ready we put to Sea the 3d of *April* 1640. from the Calo of *Lima*, I Admiral *Bartholmew de Fonte* in the Ship *St Spiritus*, the Vice-Admiral *Don Diego Penneloffa*, in the Ship *St Lucia*, *Pedro de Bonarda*, in the Ship *Rofaria*, *Philip de Ronquillo* in the *King Philip*. The 7th of *April* at 5 in the Afternoon, we had the length of *St Helen*, two hundred Leagues on the North side of the Bay of *Guajaquil*, in 2 Degrees of *South Lat.* and anchor'd in the Port *St Helena*, within the Cape, where each Ship's Company took in a quantity of *Betumen*, called vulgarly *Tar*, of a dark colour with a cast of Green, an excellent Remedy against the Scurvy and Dropfie, and is used as *Tar* for Shipping, but we took it in for Medicine; it Boils out of the Earth, and is there plenty. The 10th we pass'd the Equinoctial by *Cape del Passao*, the 11th *Cape St Francisco*, in one Degree and seven Minutes of Latitude North from the Equator, and anchor'd in the Mouth of the River *St Jago*, where with a Sea-Net we catch'd abundance of good Fish; and several of each Ship's Company went ashore, and kill'd some Goats and Swine, which are there wild and in plenty; and others bought of some Natives, 20 dozen of *Turkey* Cocks and Hens, Ducks, and much excellent Fruit, at a Village two *Spanish* Leagues, six Mile and a half, up the River *St Jago*, on the Larboard side or the Left hand. The River is Navigable for small Vessels from the Sea, about 14 *Spanish* Leagues *South East*, about half way to the fair City of *Quita*, in 22 Minutes of *South* Latitude, a City that is very Rich. The 16th of *April* we sailed from the River *St. Jago* to the Port and Town *Raleo*, 320 Leagues W. N. W. a little Westery, in about 11 Degrees 14 Min. of N. Latitude, leaving Mount *St Miguel* on the Larboard side, and Point *Cazamina* on the Starboard side. The Port of *Raleo* is a safe Port, is covered from the Sea by the Islands *Ampallo* and *Mangreza*, both well

inhabited with Native *Indians*, and 3 other small Ilands. *Raleo* is but 4 Miles over Land from the head of the Lake *Nigaragua*, that falls into the North Sea in 12 Degrees of North Latitude, near the Corn or Pearl Ilands. Here at the Town of *Raleo*, where is abundance of excellent close grain'd Timber, a reddish Cedar, and all Materials for building Shipping; we bought 4 long well fail'd Shallops, built exprefs for failing and riding at Anchor and rowing, about 12 Tuns each, of 32 foot Keel. The 26th, we failed from *Raleo* for the Port of *Saragua*, or rather of *Salagua*, within the Ilands and Shoals of *Chamily*, and the Port is often call'd by the *Spaniards* after that Name; in 17 Degrees 31 Minutes of North Latitude, 480 Leagues North West and by West, a little Westerly from *Raleo*. From the Town of *Saragua*, a little East of *Chamily* at *Saragua*, and from *Compostilo* in the Neighbourhood of this Port, we took in a Master and six Mariners accustomed to Trade with the Natives on the East side of *California* for Pearl; the Natives catch'd on a Bank in 19 Degrees of Latitude North from the Baxos St. *Juan*, in 24 Degrees of North Latitude 20 Leagues N. N. E. from Cape St. *Lucas*, the South East point of *California*. The Master Admiral *de Fonte* had hir'd, with his Vessel and Mariners, who had informed the Adral, that 200 Leagues North from Cape St *Lucas*, a Flood from the North, met the South Flood, and that he was sure it must be an Iland, and *Don Diego Penneloffa* (Sifters Son of *Don Lewis de Haro*) a young Nobleman of great Knowledge and Adrefs in Cosmography and Navigation, and undertook to discover whether *California* was an Iland or not; for before it was not known whether it was an Iland or a *Peninsula*; with his Ship and the 4 Shallops they brought at *Raleo*, and the Master and Mariners they hir'd at *Salagua*, but Admiral *de Fonte* with the other 3 Ships failed from them within the Ilands *Chamily* the 10th of *May* 1640, and having the length of Cape *Abel*, on the W. S. W. side of *California* in 26 Degrees of N. Latitude, 160 Leagues N. W. and W. from the Isles *Chamily*; the Wind sprung up at S. S. E. a steady Gale, that from the 26th of *May* to the 14th of *June*, he had fail'd to the River *los Reyes* in 53 Degrees of N. Latitude, not having occasion to lower a Topfail, in failing 866 Leagues N. N. W. 410 Leagues from Port *Abel* to Cape Blanco, 456 Leagues to *Riolo Reyes*, all the time most pleasant Weather, and failed about 260 Leagues in crooked Channels, amongst Ilands named the *Archipelagus de St Lazarus*; where his Ships Boats always fail'd a mile a head, founding to see what Water, Rocks and Sands there was. The 22d of *June*, Admiral *Fonte* dispatch'd one of his Captains to *Pedro de Barnarda*, to sail up a fair River, a gentle Stream and deep Water, went first N. and N. E. N. and N. W. into a large Lake full of Ilands, and

one very large *Peninsula* full of Inhabitants, a Friendly honest People in this Lake; he named Lake *Valasco*, where Capt. *Barnarda* left his Ship; nor all up the River was less than 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 Fathom Water, both the Rivers and Lakes abounding with Salmon Trouts, and very large white Pearch, some of two foot long; and with 3 large *Indian* Boats, by them called *Periagos*, made of two large Trees 50 and 60 foot long. Capt. *Barnarda* first failed from his Ships in the Lake *Valasco*, one hundred and forty Leagues West, and then 436 E. N. E. to 77¹ Degrees of Latitude. Admiral *de Fonte*, after he had dispatch'd Captain *Barnada* on the Discovery of the North and East part of the *Tartarian* Sea, the Admiral sail'd up a very Navigable River, which he named *Riolo Reyes*, that run nearest North East, but on several Points of the Compass 60 Leagues at low Water, in a fair Navigable Channel, not less than 4 or 5 Fathom Water. It flow'd in both Rivers near the same Water, in the River *los Reyes*, 24 foot Full and Change of the Moon; a S. S. E. Moon made high Water. It flow'd in the River *de Haro* 22 foot and a half Full and Change. They had two Jesuits with them that had been on their Mission to the 66 Degrees of North Latitude, and had made curious Observations. The Admiral *de Fonte* received a Letter from Captain *Barnarda*, dated the 27th of *June*, 1640. that he had left his Ship in the Lake *Valasco*, betwixt the Island *Barnarda* and the Peninsula *Conihaffet*, a very safe Port; it went down a River from the Lake, 3 falls, 80 Leagues, and fell into the *Tartarian* Sea in 61 Degrees, with the Pater Jesuits and 36 Natives in three of their Boats, and 20 of his *Spanish* Seamen; that the Land trended a way North East; that they should want no Provisions, the Country abounding with Venison of 3 sorts, and the Sea and Rivers with excellent Fish (Bread, Salt, Oyl and Brandy they carry'd with them) that he should do what was possible. The Admiral, when he received the Letter from Captain *Barnarda*, was arrived at an Indian Town called *Conoffet*, on the South-side the Lake *Belle*, where the two Pater Jesuits on their Mission had been two Years; a peasant Place. The Admiral with his two Ships, enter'd the Lake the 22d of *June*, an Hour before high Water, and there was no Fall or Contract, and 4 or 5 Fathom Water, and 6 and 7 Fathom generally in the the Lake *Belle*, there is a little fall of Water till half Flood, and an Hour and quarter before high Water the Flood begins to set gently into the Lake *Belle*; the River is fresh at 20 Leagues distance from the Mouth, or Entrance of the River *los Reyes*. The River and Lake abounds with Salmon, Salmon-Trouts, Pikes, Perch and Mulletts, and two

¹First figure erased, but probably a 7.

other forts of Fifth peculiar to that River, admirable good, and Lake *Belle*; also abounds with all those forts of Fifth large and delicate: And Admiral *de Fonte* says, the Mulletts catch'd in *Rios Reyes* and Lake *Belle*, are much delicater than are to be found, he believes, in any part of the World.

The rest shall be inserted in our next.

F I N I S.

The Remainder of Admiral Bartholomew de Fonte's Letter; giving an Account of the most material Transactions in a Journal of his from the Calo of Lima in Peru, on his Discoveries to find out if there was any North West Passage from the Atlantick Ocean into the South and Tartarian Sea; which for want of Room we could not possibly avoid postponing.

We concluded with giving an Account of a Letter from Capt. *Barnarda*, dated the 27th of *June*, 1640. on his Discovery in the Lake *Valasco*. The first of *July* 1640, Admiral *de Fonte* failed from the rest of his Ships in the Lake *Belle*, in a good Port cover'd by a fine Island, before the Town *Conoffet* from thence to a River I named *Parmentiers*, in honour of my industrious Judicious Comrade, Mr *Parmentiers*, who had most exactly mark'd every thing in and about that River; we pass'd 8 Falls, in all 32 foot, perpendicular from its Source out of *Belle*; it falls into the large Lake I named Lake *de Fonte*, at which place we arriv'd the 6th of *July*. This Lake is 160 Leagues long and 60 broad, the length is E. N. E. and W. S. W. to 20 or 30, in some places 60 Fathom deep; the Lake abounds with excellent Cod and Ling, very large and well fed, there are several very large Islands and 10 small ones; they are covered with shrubby Woods, the Moss grows 6 or 7 foot long, with which the Moose, a very large sort of Deer, are fat with in the Winter, and other lesser Deer, as Fallow, &c. There are abundance of wild Cherries, Strawberries, Hurtle-berries, and wild Currants, and also of wild Fowl, Heath Cocks and Hens, likewise Partridges and Turkeys, and Sea Fowl in great plenty on the South side: The Lake is a very large fruitful Island, had a great many Inhabitants, and very excellent Timber, as Oaks, Ashes, Elm and Fur-Trees, very large and tall.

The 14th of *July* we failed out of the E. N. E. end of the Lake *de Fonte*, and pass'd a Lake I named *Estricho de Ronquillo*, 34 Leagues long, 2 or 3 Leagues broad, 20, 26, and 28 Fathom of Water; we pass'd this strait in 10 hours, having a stout Gale of Wind and whole Ebb. As we failed more Easterly, the Country grew very sensibly worse, as it is in the

North and South parts of *America*, from 36 to the extrem Parts North or South, the West differs not only in Fertility but in Temperature of Air, at least 10 Degrees, and it is warmer on the West side than on the East, as the best *Spanish* Discoverers found it, whose business it was in the time of the Emperor *Charles* the V. to *Philip* the III. as is noted by *Aloares* and a *Costa* and *Mariana*, &c.

The 17th we came to an *Indian* Town, and the *Indians* told our Interpreter Mr *Parmentiers*, that a little way from us lay a great Ship where there had never been one before; we failed to them, and found only one Man advanced in years, and a Youth; the Man was the greatest Man in the Mechanical Parts of the Mathematicks I had ever met with; my second Mate was an *English* Man, an excellent Seaman, as was my Gunner, who had been taken Prisoners at *Campechy*, as well as the Master's Son; they told me the Ship was of *New England*, from a Town called *Boston*. The Owner and the whole Ships Company came on board the 30th, and the Navigator of the Ship, Capt. *Shapley*, told me, his Owner was a fine Gentleman, and Major General of the largest Colony in *New England*, called the *Massachusetts*; so I received him like a Gentleman, and told him, my Commission was to make Prize of any People seeking a North West or West Passage into the South Sea, but I would look upon them as Merchants trading with the Natives for Bevers, Otters, and other Furs and Skins, and so for a small Present of Provisions I had no need on, I gave him my Diamond Ring, which cost me 1200 Pieces of Eight, (which the modest Gentleman received with difficulty) and having given the brave Navigator, Capt. *Shapley* for his fine Charts and Journals 1000 Pieces of Eight, and the Owner of the Ship, *Scimor Gibbons* a quarter Cask of good *Peruan* Wine, and the 10 Seamen each 20 Pieces of Eight, the 6th of *August*, with as much Wind as we could fly before, and a Currant, we arrived at the first Fall of the River *Parmentiers*, the 11th of *August*, 86 Leagues, and was on the South side of the *Lake Belle* on board our Ships the 16th of *August*, before the fine Town *Conoffet*, where we found all things well; and the honest Natives of *Conoffet* had in our absence treated our People with great humanity, and Capt. *de Ronquillo* answer'd their Civility and Justice.

The 20th of *August* an *Indian* brought me a Letter to *Conoffet* on the *Lake Belle*, from Capt. *Barnarda*, dated the 11th of *August*, where he sent me word he was returned from his Cold Expedition, and did assure me there was no Communication out of the *Spanish* or *Atlantick* Sea, by *Davis* Strait; for the Natives had conducted one of his Seamen to the head of *Davis* Strait, which terminated in a fresh Lake of about 30

Mile in circumference, in the 80th Degree of North Latitude; and that there was prodigious Mountains North of it, besides the North West from that Lake, the Ice was so fix'd, that from the Shore to 100 Fathom Water, for ought he knew from the Creation; for Mankind knew little of the wonderful Works of God, especially near the North and South Poles; he writ further, that he had sailed from *Baffet* Island North East, and East North East, and North East and by East, to the 79th Degree of Latitude, and then the Land trended North, and the Ice rested on the Land. I received afterwards a second Letter from Capt. *Barnada*, dated from *Minhanfet*, informing me, that he made the Port of *Arena*, 20 Leagues up the River *los Reyes* the 29th of *August*, where he waited my Commands. I having store of good Salt Provisions, of Venifon and Fish, that Capt. *de Ronquillo* had failed (by my order) in my absence and 100 Hogheads of *Indian* Wheat or Mais, failed the 2d of *September* 1640. accompanied with many of the honest Natives of *Conoffet*, and the 5th of *September* in the Morning about 8, was at an Anchor betwixt *Arena* and *Mynhanfet*, in the River *los Reyes*, sailing down that River to the North East part of the South Sea; after that returned home, having found that there was no Passage into the South Sea by that they call the North West Passage. The Chart will make this much more demonstrable.

Tho the Style of the foregoing Piece is not altogether so Polite, (being writ like a Man, whose livelihood depended on another way) but with abundance of Experience and a Traveller, yet there are so many Curious, and hitherto unknown Discoveries, that it was thought worthy a place in these Memoirs; and 'tis humbly presum'd it will not be unacceptable to those who have either been in those Parts, or will give themselves the trouble of reviewing the Chart.

FINIS.

The authorship of this apocryphal voyage which made a great stir in Europe in after years, is now generally attributed to James Petiver, the editor or owner of a London magazine entitled *Monthly Miscellany or Memoirs for the Curious*. It appeared in the numbers for April and June, 1708. Arthur Dobbs in 1749 wrote that Petiver had obtained the manuscript in Lisbon. The letter purports to give an account of a voyage to the northwest coast in 1640, and the discovery of a passage from the Pacific to the

Atlantic. It is full of circumstantial details of the voyage which give it an air of reality, but, needless to say, there is no record of any such voyage to the northwest coast, leaving aside the obvious untruth about finding a passage to the Atlantic. At the very first glance the apocryphal nature of the tale will be apparent to anyone who has more than the slightest knowledge of Spanish-American history and the Spanish method of governing the American colonies. There never was any admiral or vice-admiral of Peru and Mexico; further, no expedition from Lima was ever sent out to explore the northwest coast of America nor ever could have been. That part of the world constituted at the time a part of New Spain and consequently could only have been explored by expeditions sent out from that country or from the Philippines, which were also under the rule of the viceroy of that country. As Fonte is not a Spanish name believers in him generally assumed that his real name was Fuentes and some wrote elaborate genealogical accounts of the Spanish family of that name. A critical examination of this tale would have no present value except perhaps to serve as a study of the ingenuity of the human mind displayed in explaining its inconsistencies and absurdities by believers in it. The fact that the Spaniards themselves had no knowledge of the voyage was ingeniously accounted for by one writer who suggested that the original account might have been seized after 1640 in Lisbon in some Spanish ship by the Portuguese as the fact that the Spaniards had lost possession of Portugal in that year might not have been known on the ship.

The only confirmation of the authenticity of the narrative came from Antonio de Ulloa, the famous Spanish naval commander who had been in the South Sea about 1742. Ulloa was applied to to see if he could give any information on the subject. He had been in Paris about 1746 and had no doubt made various acquaintances there. To some of these he

wrote a letter June 18, 1753, in which he said he had a vague remembrance of having seen some such story while in the South Sea but he did not remember the name of the author but thought it was Bartholome de Fuentes. He said that a captain of a ship on which he was traveling from Panama to Callao showed him a copy of it which he had copied and afterwards had lost.¹ January 10, 1792, Ulloa, in answer to a request addressed to him by Martin Fernandez de Navarrete, had something more to say on the subject but quite different from what he had said in 1753. This time his story was that the viceroy of New Spain having heard that a Spanish vessel had found a foreign one, presumably European, in a large bay which trended towards the east to the north of California, sent an advice of this to the king who ordered two war vessels to be sent from Peru to explore the coast by sea and an expedition by land to be sent from New Spain. Neither of these expeditions found the reported bay and returned assured that the captain of the Spanish ship had not told the truth.² Ulloa was then an old man and his memory may not have been very good. I cannot but think that what he saw was a copy of the original Fonte letter which had been sent to Spain when it was first published. Such a proceeding was one quite in keeping with the methods of the Spanish diplomatic service whose business it was, especially in England, to take note of all expeditions, present or projected, into the Pacific. It is barely possible however that what Ulloa saw was some account of a pearl fishing voyage into the Gulf of California, or one of the memorials presented by various seekers after pearl fishing concessions. The most persistent of these was Pedro Porter y Casanate. One of his promises was to

¹Ulloa had been captured by an English vessel and was detained in England in 1746; when released he left most of his papers. In 1776 the author of *Summary Observations and Facts . . .* a pamphlet devoted to showing the practicability of discovering the Northwest Passage, asserted that this document was still in the Admiralty office in London.

²Printed in Madrid in 1848 in a posthumous work of Martin Fernandez de Navarrete, entitled *Examen histórico-crítico, de los viajes y descubrimientos apócrifos del Capitan Lorenzo Ferrer Maldonado, de Juan de Fuca, y del Almirante Bartolomé de Fonte*, pages 264-267.

find the Strait of Anian if given a concession, and in order to furnish some support to his request he filed a memorial in 1636 in which he set forth what was then known to him on that subject.¹ In 1640 he received such a concession but he never made any search for the Strait of Anian, confining himself to the more promising business of obtaining pearls in the Gulf of California.

Among the tales brought forward to sustain the story was one by Francisco de Seyxas y Lovera, published in Madrid, 1688, in his work entitled *Theatro Naval Hydrographico*. According to this, one Thomas Peche, an Englishman, after having made a number of voyages to the East fitted out a ship of 500 tons in Bristol in 1673 and departed for the Moluccas having two light frigates in company. Having reached his destination and thinking that he could proceed from the Philippines to England by the Strait of Anian in less time than by the other longer route, he determined to take this course. Having sailed 120 leagues in the Strait of Anian he decided to return because the season was so late and the currents in the strait were so strong that he feared he would perish if he remained, so he came back, coasted along California and returned to England in 1677 by the Strait of Magellan, having thrown overboard 120 dead men and thirty live ones as he had nothing to give them to eat, and had found out that they wanted to mutiny and carry off his ships and the riches he had obtained from a Spanish vessel he had captured on the coast of Luzon. This voyage Seyxas says was printed in 1679 in French and English in many places in Holland, France and England.² He even states that he knew this Englishman in Holland in the years 1682, 1683, and 1684.

An ingenious argument was advanced by Arthur Dobbs that places, Salagua especially, mentioned in

¹*Examen histórico-crítico, de los viajes y descubrimientos apócrifos del Capitan Lorenzo Ferrer Maldonado, de Juan de Fuca, y del Almirante Bartolomé de Fonte*, pages 215-227. There are numerous documents relating to these enterprises of Porter, both in printed form and in manuscript in the archives in Seville.

²No one has ever found these books.

the first part of the narrative were not known in England until 1712, when they appeared on a map in Edward Cooke's *Voyage to the South Sea* which was supposed to have been copied, in that part at least, from one found on the Manila ship captured off Cabo San Lucas in 1710 by the *Duke* and *Dutchess*. The port of Salagua, one of the small ports in the Bahia de Manzanillo in Mexico, had been well known since the middle of the sixteenth century; in later years it was usually called Santiago, although this in reality was another small port in the same bay. Speilbergern had landed there in 1615 and a sailing-course in which a description of the place was given had been captured by Captain Bartholomew Sharp in 1681 and brought to England. This formed the basis of William Hack's famous *Buccaneer's Atlas*¹, of which a number of copies made in 1684 must have been in circulation; no doubt all the buccaneers in the Pacific after that date carried one of them. There are frequent references in Captain William Dampier's *New Voyage*, first published in 1697, to a Spanish Pilot Book. All the place names found in the early part of the Fonte narrative except Cape Abel and San Juan occur in Dampier's book and on his map, but usually spelled somewhat differently. Thus on the map and in the text the I de Chametly, as Dampier calls the Islas de Chamela, are put in front of Salagua although they do not belong there but off the Bahia de Chamela, north of Navidad. Rea Lejo, as he calls Realejo, was not located by him behind the islands named Mangera and Amapalla, as stated in the Fonte story, but anyone who carelessly reads his narrative might think it was. Dampier even tells of the bituminous spring near St. Helena and speaks of taking fowl and swine from the Indian

¹There are copies of this in the British Museum, the Huntington Library and in the possession of Maggs Bros., London. In the Huntington Library there is a *Derrotero*, dated Panama, 1669, which is not the original but a very good copy made by an Englishman. A comparison with Hack's work shows that he utilized it to a great extent. No opportunity has presented itself to compare it with the Sloane MS, 239, in the British Museum which is possibly the one captured by Sharp.

settlement nearby. He does not mention, however, the value of this tar for dropsy and scurvy, a story the author of the Fonte narrative obtained from another source. The Cape Abel referred to in 26° on the west coast of the Peninsula of California was possibly the Bahia de San Abad or Abad as it was usually known, a name given by Francisco de Ulloa to what is now called the Bahia de Magdalena. The name was frequently corrupted on the maps and probably the author of the letter had seen one on which it was written Abel. San Juan appears on Hack's manuscript chart of 1687.¹

It may be noticed that one of the individuals whose names occur in the Fonte narrative, Diego de Peñalosa, or Pennelossa as he is referred to in that document, was real; furthermore he was also known in England. Peñalosa, an adventurer, born in Peru, had gone to New Spain and in 1660 was appointed governor of New Mexico. In 1664 he returned to Mexico City, where he fell into the hands of the Inquisition and was condemned to go out in the *auto de fe* of February 3, 1668. Leaving Mexico he went to London by way of the Canaries and here we find him in 1671 and there he remained until 1673, endeavoring to enlist the English government in various schemes to seize Spanish ports in the West Indies. He then went to France and attempted to gain the support of the French government in a plan to send an expedition to take possession of the northern part of New Spain, where he claimed there were very rich mines. Later he advocated an expedition to take possession of New Mexico. There is little doubt that it was this proposal which led to the La Salle enterprise. He was still in Paris in 1684.² So far as known Barnarda and Ronquillo are not historic characters of the period but a Ronquillo had been

¹This map, which is in the British Museum, is the finest English chart of the South Sea of this period.

²The best account of Peñalosa was written by C. Fernandez Duro in his *Don Diego de Peñalosa*, Madrid, 1882. John G. Shea published *The Expedition of Don Diego Dionisio de Peñalosa* in New York almost simultaneously.

governor of the Philippines in the sixteenth century. The Haro mentioned was no doubt Luis Mendez de Haro who was a minister of Spain from 1644 to 1661. The statement that he was a great minister of Spain is contained in a marginal note, the inference being that this was added by the translator or editor of the letter when it was printed in 1708. It therefore affords very little indication as to the date of the original narrative, supposing that there had ever been one.

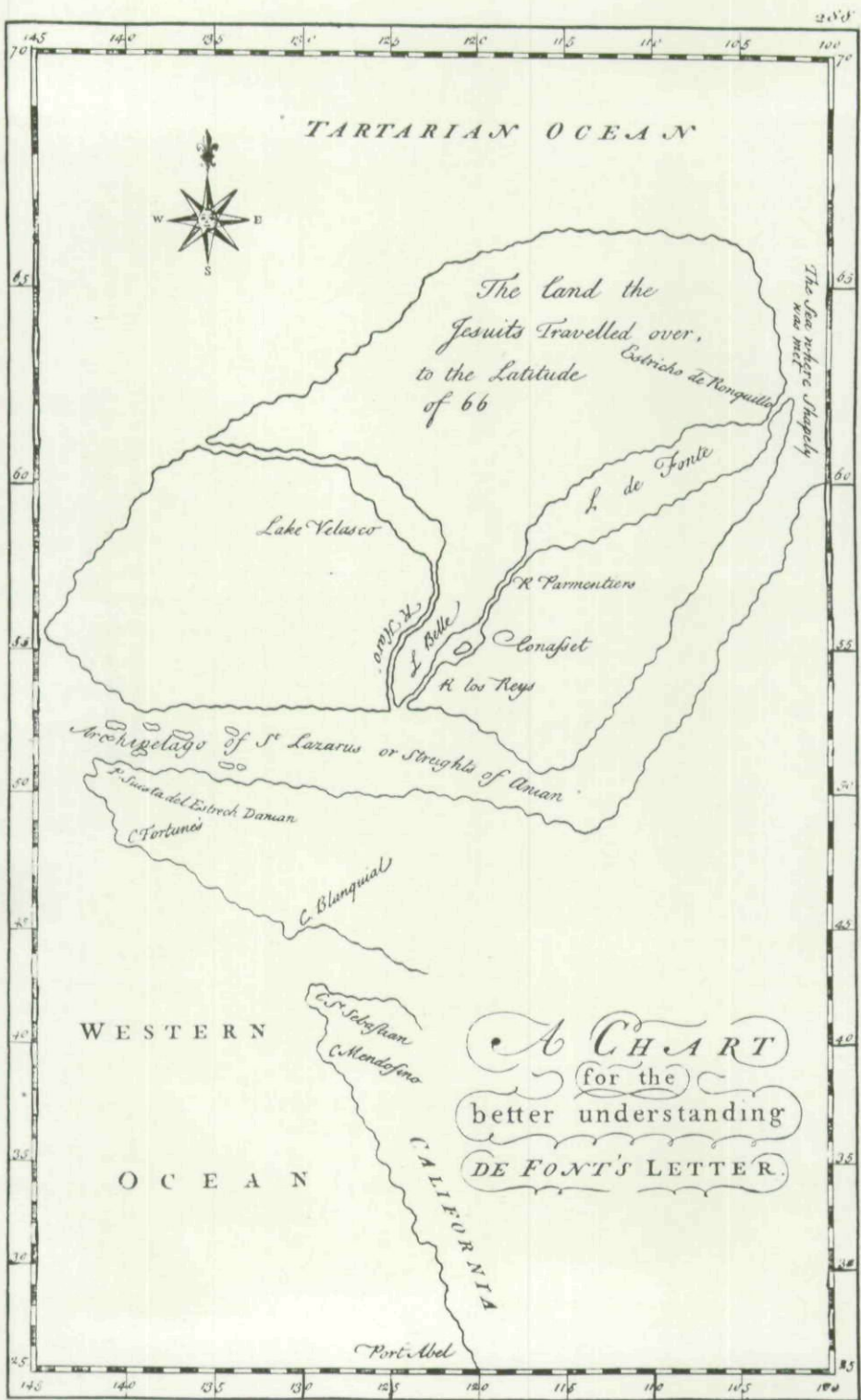
Leaving aside the manifest errors in the text of the Fonte letter it may be conceded that there was nothing particularly incredible about the existence of a series of waterways in the western part of America similar to those in the eastern part, and this no doubt accounts for the partial acceptance which the story received. No one can compare the account in Dampier's book with it without reaching the conclusion that the author obtained his slender array of facts about the early part of the voyage from that work. Dampier even discusses slightly the question whether or not California was an island, thus giving the opportunity to insert in the Fonte narrative the digression on that subject. The fact that the place names on the coast of Mexico and Central America were obtained from Dampier's book, Hack's *Buccaneer's Atlas* or his manuscript map of 1687 places the composition of this part of the letter much later than 1640 when the expedition was supposed to have taken place. I cannot escape the suspicion that Peñalosa was connected in some way with the story. Perhaps among the memorials which he must have presented to the English government while in London may have been some fantastic tale of discovery in the north which was afterwards utilized in this letter. Several of his memorials presented to the French government are extant but none that I have seen makes any mention of any waterway north of his Quivira except the Strait of Anian. To sum up, it seems certain that the man who wrote the story did so about the time it was

published and inserted the name of Peñalosa because he at least knew something about him and had probably heard that he had been in New Mexico. After all the piece is nothing but a skit, somewhat in the style of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. It may in fact have been written by Swift, but I think it more likely that Daniel Defoe was the real author as he afterwards wrote a number of pieces of somewhat similar nature. On account of its appearance in such a somewhat casual publication it probably did not at first attract any particular attention.

The first person who seems to have been impressed with the story was an Irishman named Arthur Dobbs, a writer on economic subjects. He became interested in the search for a Northwest Passage and in 1730 and 1731 endeavored to enlist the support of the South Sea Company, which at this time was engaged in the whale fishery in Davis Strait. Unsuccessful in this effort and unsatisfied with the results achieved in 1737 by Captain Christopher Middleton, who explored Hudson Bay for the Hudson's Bay Company, Dobbs took up the matter with the government. Largely as a result of his insistence two small vessels were sent out in 1741, again under the command of Middleton. After the return of this expedition Dobbs published *An Account of the countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay* in which he inserted an abstract of the Fonte letter. He announced himself as a believer in it although with some reservations, and even stated that the discoveries were probably not part of America. Yet in spite of this he complained bitterly because Middleton had not explored two or three inlets in the western part of Hudson Bay which he professed to believe might connect with some of Fonte's discoveries. He charged Middleton with neglect of his duty in this respect, alleging that he had been acting in the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company which did not wish the passage to be found as it would interfere with its monopoly. He printed in the book a narrative of the adventures of

Joseph la France, a French half-breed who had traveled in the Hudson Bay country from 1739 to 1742, and a map which purports to have been made by him. On this map we see Lahontan's lake, entitled "Tahuglauk," not far from the Pacific coast near Cape Blanco which is shown in 43°. From this cape a dotted line entitled "An Unknown Coast" extends in a general northeasterly direction to Rankin's Inlet in the northern portion of Hudson Bay. None of the alleged discoveries of Fonte are shown on it. In La France's narrative there is a story told by an Indian who said that with thirty warriors he had gone to fight the Flat-head Indians. They reached the sea on the western coast and leaving their families came to a strait running east and west which they passed in canoes and then followed the shore for nearly three months. Then they left their canoes and passed inland to a river where they found their enemies. They lost the fight and the survivors took the back track, dying one by one until he alone regained his home.

In 1745 a bill passed Parliament authorizing the payment of a reward of 20,000 pounds sterling to the discoverer of the passage. As a result of this, and to a certain extent also of the charges made by Dobbs, another expedition was sent out in 1746 by a new company to explore the inlets which Middleton had neglected to examine. Full accounts of this expedition were published in 1748 by Henry Ellis, and by Theodore Swaine Drage, the clerk of the *California*, and each of them published a map. The western section of the Ellis map differs considerably from the one published by Dobbs in 1744; the line of an "Unknown Coast" is not drawn on it and the Lahontan geography is not the same. Ellis laid no great stress on Fonte's story, in fact he only made an incidental allusion to it in speaking of his investigation about Captain Shapely and Seymour Gibbons. He discovered that men with such names had been in Massachusetts about that time, but no account could be



Drawn by Edward Holding 1748

THE "DRAGE" MAP

found of any expedition in which they had taken part although he professed to believe one might have taken place. Ellis, however, repeated a new story which he said had come to hand not many months before from Portugal to the effect that a man had been wrecked on California and found that it was an island at high tide and an isthmus at low tide. Drage presented in his book a resumé of Fonte's alleged discoveries largely taken from Dobbs' book and an argument in favor of their authenticity. He inserted a *Chart for the better understanding De Font's Letter*, which was reproduced in 1753 by Delisle in his *Nouvelles Cartes*. In 1749 Dobbs issued a small pamphlet in which he reiterated his belief in the Fonte narrative even more strongly and identified Fuca's Sea with Fonte's Lake Fonte, but it is generally believed that news having reached England in the following year that the hitherto unexplored inlets in Hudson Bay had been found by the Company employees to be closed, he lost his interest in the matter. He took a prominent part in the movement to take away the exclusive charter of the Hudson's Bay Company, which was agitated for several years, and was an enterprising man of considerable ability. He is entitled to whatever credit may be due for having first brought the Fonte narrative to the attention of the public in a forceful manner.

The most interesting part of the story is, however, yet to be told. Two well-known French geographers, Joseph Nicholas Delisle and Philippe Buache, drew from the accounts of Fonte and Fuca one of the most astonishing examples of imaginary geography which has ever appeared. Delisle was the younger brother and Buache was the son-in-law of Guillaume Delisle. Buache, in the service of the Department of Marine, had already achieved a well-deserved reputation as a map maker, but Delisle had been in Russia from 1726 to 1747 in the employ of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg and was little known in France. He was

a brother of Louis Delisle de la Croyère who had accompanied Chirikof in the Bering expedition of 1741 and who died just as the *St. Paul* reached port on the return. On April 8, 1750, Delisle read an article before the Academy of Sciences in Paris largely devoted to an account of the discoveries of Bering in 1728 and Chirikof in 1741. To this he added a short account of the alleged expedition of Fonte. With the memoir a manuscript map was submitted drawn by Buache, and printed by Delisle with his *Explication* in June, 1752, as *Carte des Nouvelles Découvertes au nord de la Mer du Sud*. In its later published form this map is dated November, 1752, and entitled *Carte Générale des Découvertes de l'Amiral de Fonte et autres Navigateurs Espagnols, Anglois et Russes, pour la recherche du Passage a la Mer du Sud*. It is usually found in his *Nouvelles Cartes des découvertes de l'Amiral de Fonte* dated 1753 and is the one referred to hereafter. Just what Delisle thought the discoveries of the Russians had to do with the alleged voyages of Fonte and Fuca I have never been able to discover.

One of the first things which strikes the eye in examining this map of Delisle's is a vast "Mer de l'Ouest decouv[erte] et parcourüe par J. de Fuca en 1592." This, "Sea of the West," in spite of the legend found on it was not, I think, derived from the Fuca relation but had an entirely different source. Delisle was accustomed to allege that his brother Guillaume had originated this idea as early as 1695 and had made a map to show it, which he would not publish because he feared that some injury might thereby result to the interests of France. The younger Delisle even inserted among the *Nouvelles Cartes* a *Carte d'une partie de l'Amerique Septentrionale* which he claimed to have copied from a manuscript of his brother made in 1695. This does not correspond to any known map of Guillaume Delisle, but I have found in the Provincial Archives at Victoria a *Mappe-Monde Geo-Hydrographique*, published in Amsterdam by Pierre Mortier,

CARTE GÉNÉRALE

DES DÉCOUVERTES De l'Amiral de Fonte

Et autres Navigateurs Espagnols, Anglois et Russes, pour la recherche du Passage à la MER DU SUD.

Par M^r De l'Isle de l'Academie Royale des Sciences et Professeur de Mathématique au Collège Royal
à Paris Septembre 1752

Dediee A M. ROUILLE Chevalier Comte de Jouy &c.
Secrétaire d'Etat ayant le Département de la Marine

Echelle de Lieues Maritimes de France, et d'Angleterre de 20 au Degré

Echelle de Lieues d'Espagne de 17 1/2 au Degré

Grande Terre découverte en 1723 ou s'engage les Tzuzzy lorsqu'ils sont poursuivis par les Russes qui ne les ont pas encore soumis

Decouvertes

et de

Polaire

LAC VALASCO

Terres vues par les Russes en 1741 ou le Capitaine Tchirikow perdit sa Chaloupe armée de 10 hommes

Il y a dans cette entrée une Isle avec une haute Montagne en forme de Colonne

Entrée découverte par Jean de Fuca en 1592

Entrée découverte par Martin d'Aguilar en 1540

Cap Blanc de St. Sébastien

MER DE L'OUEST

Decouverte par J. de Fuca et parcourue en 1592

CALIFORNIE

NOUVEAU MEXIQUE

Longitude du premier Meridien de l'Isle de Fer

1ere Carte



which also contains a "Mer de l'Ouest." Mortier's map is undated and unsigned. It purports to be one of Jaillot's Sanson maps, but the northwest coast is of Delisle type and it was plainly issued in the early part of the eighteenth century. The origin of this part of it can probably be learned from reading the younger Delisle's remarks in the Introduction to his *Nouvelles Cartes* where he discusses this "Mer de l'Ouest." According to this, Guillaume had represented it on a manuscript globe he gave to the chancellor Boucherat some time before September 2, 1699. Jean Baptiste Nolin, at that time the geographer of the brother of the king, obtained possession of this manuscript and published a new *Mappe-Monde* in 1700. Guillaume accused Nolin of plagiarism and in July, 1706, obtained an order of council to seize and destroy his plates and to confiscate all the printed examples of the map. I have no doubt that the Mortier map is a pirated copy of Nolin's map, whether made before the date of the suppression in Paris or not is uncertain. I have never found any copy of the original Nolin map, and even only one of the Mortier map, but it could not have been entirely unknown because in 1755 Joseph Nicholas Bellin, in his *Remarques* on his own map of that year, stated that this "Mer de l'Ouest" had appeared on a map fifty years before.

The question at once arises: Where did Guillaume Delisle obtain the idea? Was it from reading Michael Lok's story of Juan de Fuca? On the Mortier map there is a legend in the "Mer de l'Ouest" to the effect that it was only known to the savages. On Nicolas Delisle's purported copy of Guillaume Delisle's map of 1695, also issued in the *Nouvelles Cartes*, there is a somewhat similar legend to the effect that the sea was not yet discovered but authenticated from the reports of many savages who assure its existence. Other legends on the land to the north of the sea indicate that the information referred to in this legend had been obtained by some of the French explorers by land to the west of

Lake Superior. A "Destroit de Anian" is a marked feature of the Mortier map. This does not begin west of C. Mendocin but about ten degrees to the east of it, somewhat resembling in this respect the suppositious Strait of Anian on Map No. 2 of Buache's *Considerations Géographiques* and the line of "An Unknown Coast" on the Dobbs map. It runs in a somewhat northeasterly direction to above the Arctic Circle but there is a junction with the north end of Hudson Bay at about that point. The "Mer de l'Ouest" covers nearly five degrees of latitude (in some places more) and almost thirty of longitude east of the opening of the Strait of Anian. The eastern end of it is almost on the meridian of Mexico City. The entrance from the Pacific on the south side begins just north of C. Mendocin, which is located in about $44\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ with the "Terres d'Anian" north of the entrance in about 49° .

One is inclined to attribute the Guillaume Delisle "Mer de l'Ouest" to some knowledge of the stories of Baron Lahontan, in part at least. Lahontan's book¹ with his map was not published until 1703 but his explorations were supposed to have taken place in 1688 and 1689. In the year 1703 Delisle displayed on his map of Canada Lahontan's story about the Rivière Longue and the Mozeemlek Indians. The Salt Lake of this tale, named "Tahuglauk," is also shown extending from north to south between latitudes $41\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ and almost 48° with a legend that it is 300 leagues in circumference. It has no connection with the Pacific but is removed from it quite some distance. In this type the lake almost always appears with the river running into it from the east, strictly in accord with the Indian story as related by Lahontan. Obviously it is not the same as the "Mer de l'Ouest" of the Mortier map. In time the lake became involved in the Fuca legend and disappears finally in the "Mer de l'Ouest," which was then characterized by also having a river running

¹*Nouveaux Voyages de Mr. Le Baron de Lahontan dans l'Amerique Septentrionale*, Le Haye, 1703.

CARTE

*DRESSÉE PAR M. GUILLAUME DEL'ISLE
Au commencement de ce Siecle, pour servir à ses
Conjectures sur l'Existence de la Mer de l'Ouest
Publiée par M^r. Joseph Nicolas Del'Isle Novemb 1752*



THE "SKETCH MAP"

CARTE
 D'UNE PARTIE DE
 L'AMERIQUE SEPTENTRIONALE
 Tirée des Manuscrits de M. Guill. Del'Isle
 ou l'on voit son Systeme en 1695. sur les
 Pais situés au Nord Ouest
 Publiée par M. Del'Isle
 Professeur Royal et de l'Academie
 Royale des Sciences &c.^a
 Novembre 1752



*On pourroit croire sur des conjectures assez
 fortes que le Détroit d'Anien fait en ce lieu
 la jonction de ces deux Mers*

*Prairies et Campagnes immenses
 à l'Ouest et au Nord Ouest
 les Peuples Nadoucassis*

*Peuples allies des Peuples Nadoucassis dont ils
 sont éloignés d'environ 500 lieues vers l'Ouest.*

*MER DE L'OUEST,
 pas encore découverte, mais
 autorisée par le rapport de plusieurs
 sauvages qui assurent y avoir été.*

Mer Navigable au Nord du Nouveau Mexique et de Quivira

MER DU SUD

3^e Carte

into it from the east. It would be a matter of great interest to find the Guillaume Delisle map which his brother said had been drawn in 1699, and which according to him was in the Depot des Cartes de la Marine in 1750. I went over the collection of the manuscript charts in that department in 1923, and Dr. L. C. Karpinski more recently, without discovering this map. Until this is found one is entitled to express some doubts about the map published by the younger Delisle in 1753 and dated November, 1752, being an exact copy of it. This map, with the exception of the "Mer de l'Ouest," contains a representation of the northwest coast of America as developed by the elder brother in 1700. What Dr. Karpinski did find was an apparently unique set of globe gores published by Delisle in 1700. This has nothing on it above Cap Mendocin and nothing west of that cape for a long distance. No Strait of Anian is shown and no imaginary geography can be found on the northwest coast except an opening from the Pacific into the Gulf of California where the great Bahia de Sebastian Vizcaino is located east of Isla de Cedros. It is therefore difficult to believe that Delisle could have put a "Mer de l'Ouest" on another map at about the same time.

The "Mer de l'Ouest" on the sketch map in the *Nouvelles Cartes* differs materially from that shown on the *Carte d'une partie de l'Amerique Septentrionale*. No Strait of Anian is shown on it and the "Mer" opens to the east immediately north of C. Blanc and widens out to a balloon shape but is not closed at the north. The eastern end of it occupies much the same relative position to the Great Lakes, as it does on the *Carte d'une partie* but C. Blanc on the sketch is apparently moved twenty degrees of longitude farther east. In other words, the California coast is made to trend almost properly instead of northwest as it does on the *Carte d'une partie*.

The *Carte Générale* of Delisle contains another novelty. Besides the Entrée de Jean de Fuca in about

47° there is another Entrée just north of Cap Blanc which does duty as one of the outlets of the "Mer de l'Ouest." Attached to the Entrée is a legend that it was discovered by Martin de Aguilar in 1603. It corresponds in latitude to the entrance on the Guillaume Delisle sketch map on which, however, nothing is said about Aguilar. The provision of two outlets to the "Mer" made it necessary to make an island of the land between them and this duly appears on Delisle's map. A curious oversight was committed, however, by Delisle in making this Entrée one of the outlets of a salt sea as Fuca's was, in view of the fact that Torquemada referred to it as a swift-flowing river. Aguilar was a member of the Vizcaino expedition and discovered a river which he said was in about 43° and which was named "Santa Inez." Some account of his movements is contained in the *Relacion* of Father Antonio de la Ascension published by Juan de Torquemada in 1615 in his *Monarchia Indiana*. Father Ascension particularly stated in his manuscript account that this river could not by any possibility be the Strait of Anian or any entrance to it, but this was omitted by Torquemada.¹ Both the younger Delisle and Buache inserted in their pamphlets of 1753 an article entitled *Conjectures sur l'existence d'un Mer dans la partie Occidental de Canada & du Mississippi*, containing an extract from Torquemada's book about the discovery by Martin de Aguilar. The younger Delisle permits us to infer that the *Conjectures* was written in 1695 by his brother Guillaume, consequently when Guillaume was only twenty years of age. No trace of Aguilar, however, appears on Guillaume's maps so far as I can discover until 1722, when the Entrée d'Aguilar is found on his *Carte d'Amerique*. In view of the extraordinary rarity of the first edition of Torquemada's book, evidenced by the fact that no other known reference to it occurs before 1723, when it was reprinted,

¹Father Ascension's manuscript was translated in full in the writer's *Spanish Voyages*.

the natural inference would be, but for the map of 1722, that the *Conjectures* had been written after Delisle saw the widely circulated reprint. Thus we are presented with a dilemma. If Delisle knew of Aguilar's discovery in 1695 or even 1700 why did he wait until 1722 to put it on his map? If he only saw it in the second edition of Torquemada, which probably did not reach Paris until the end of 1724 or early in 1725,¹ how could he put it on a map dated 1722? The only answer I can suggest is that this addition was made on the plate after that date, something quite possible as the plate was in use for a long time. I admit the solution is not very satisfactory as there is contemporary evidence that Delisle issued his map in 1722. Copies should exist therefore without the addition and perhaps they do but I have not found them. It may be unfair to both Buache and the younger Delisle, but I cannot but express grave doubts about the invention of the "Sea of the West" attributed by them to the elder Delisle as far back as 1695, nor escape the impression that they were trying to make capital out of the reputation of their predecessor.

North of the "Mer de l'Ouest" will be found the imaginary Fonte geography as interpreted by Delisle. Farther west we find his idea about the Russian discoveries, which, considering the fact that he had been in Russia, is singularly inaccurate. One would judge from looking at his map that he knew nothing about the movements of Captain Bering in the *St. Peter* in 1741, certainly nothing that Bering saw on that voyage appears on the map. Thus we see a huge island in the middle of the north Pacific with a legend at the south of it that this coast was seen by Chirikof and Delisle, and another on the north side that this coast had been seen by Captain Bering in 1728. The great Alaska Peninsula which had been discovered by Bering in 1741 is totally lacking. It is therefore not to

¹The book could not have been issued until 1724 in spite of the imprint on the title page, as it was not *tasado* until October 27 of that year.

be wondered at that as soon as the map appeared it was attacked from all sides.

One of the most outspoken critics of Delisle was the author of a *Lettre d'un officier de la Marine Russe*, published in 1752. Delisle had stated that the Fonte narrative had been sent to him in Russia by an English gentleman in 1739, and in the letter he is criticized severely for not having made it known before he left Russia. The author naturally assailed Delisle for omitting the voyage of the *St. Peter* in 1741, and was especially hard on Delisle's brother Louis who had lost his life during the expedition. The inference one would gain from reading the letter is that Delisle occupied only an unimportant post in St. Petersburg and that his maps were largely taken from Russian maps with the making of which he had nothing to do. The most destructive criticism, however, leveled at Delisle's theory and maps at the time was published in London by John Green in 1753. Thomas Jefferys was publishing *A new chart of North and South America* in six large sheets, the work of Green, and Green's remarks in support of the chart were issued to accompany it. From this it appears that on the map which Delisle issued in June, 1752, with his *Explication*, the reputed Rio de los Reyes of Fonte was placed in 63° instead of in the 53° mentioned in the narrative. Green justly asserts that the undoubted reason for this was to make a place for the vast "Mer de l'Ouest," which extended north on the map as far as 65° [really 60°]. To make the matter worse the map he says had been printed with the proper latitude of the river given as 53° and this had been changed by a pen to 63°. In September of the same year Delisle issued a new map (*Carte générale* of his *Nouvelles Cartes*) in which the Rio de los Reyes is placed in about 53° and the northern end of the Mer de l'Ouest is reduced to 55°, thus tacitly acknowledging the correctness of Green's remarks. Green also stamped as fictitious or forgeries both the stories of Fuca and Fonte and made some caustic

criticisms on both of them.¹ The most extended attack on the theory was written by Father Andrés Marcos Burriel, published in Madrid in 1757 in *Tomo 3* of the *Noticia de la California*. He included a Spanish translation of Fonte's letter, and by reason of his knowledge of Spanish cartography and the system of government in vogue in Spanish colonies was able to point out many of its inconsistencies.

The position of Buache in this matter is not easy to fathom. He drew the first map in 1750 and also the one issued in June, 1752. When the September map was issued Delisle pretended to excuse himself for the errors in the June map by asserting that Buache had not followed his instructions. This I take it was sufficient to cause some friction between the two men. Possibly also Buache did not relish the purely minor part that he had played in the business up to that time. He even claimed to have made a map of his own as early as 1750. In 1753 he came out with a work entitled *Considerations géographiques et physiques sur les nouvelles découvertes au nord de la grand mer*. This is divided into three parts and is the most exhaustive published on the subject. It contains five plates and eleven maps, one of which, Buache's general map of the new discoveries, differs from that of Delisle although it also is dated 1752. In general he accepted the Fonte narrative as genuine and became from that time on its leading exponent in the geographical field. Delisle died in 1768 and Buache in 1773.²

The extraordinary vogue attained by the Delisle-Buache maps seems to have been principally due to two causes: first, the immense reputation which Guillaume Delisle enjoyed during the eighteenth century, and second, the increased interest in the search for a Northwest Passage aroused by Dobbs'

¹The title of his work is *Remarks in support of the new chart of North and South America*. The map of 1750 was reproduced by Count Paul Teleki in his *Atlas zur Geschichte der Cartographie der Japanischen Inseln*, Budapest, 1909.

²Buache's later maps are those most commonly found, a new edition of the *Considerations* having been issued by Dezauche in 1781.

activities. The great cartographer Guillaume Delisle was born in 1675 and was therefore only twenty-five years of age when he began in 1700 his publication of a series of great maps. That he was under the influence of J. D. Cassini, the famous Italian director of the Paris observatory, is almost certain. Cassini had rectified to a notable extent the longitude of many parts of the earth and thus enabled Delisle to improve considerably on the Sanson maps then in general use. No discoveries on the northwest coast had come to light since the days of Sanson or, in fact, since the Vizcaino voyage of 1602-3. The Sanson maps were of the Briggs type as modified by Guillaume Bleau. Delisle now put out a new one with a mixture of old names with those of Vizcaino. The interesting feature is the addition of several Vizcaino names taken from Robert Dudley's map of 1646, in the *Arcano del Mare*, which were not contained on the Briggs map. He also put some Cabrillo names on the coast taken from Herrera's account of his voyage.¹ In one respect this map shows distinct retrogression; the meridional difference between Cabos San Lucas and Mendocino is about twenty-seven degrees, much larger than on the Briggs type maps then in circulation. Between 1700 and 1706 he issued a series of maps covering the whole world, and these became the standards for the century. Before his death in 1726 he made some improvements on them, especially on the one of America of 1722. It is easy to recognize his influence on other cartographers through the continual repetition of his curious mixture of place names on the northwest coast of America.

The search for a Northwest Passage was suspended for some time after the voyage of 1746 but the subject remained a live one. In spite of Green's criticisms the Delisle-Buache maps had a friendlier reception in England than in France. The leading French geog-

¹The Cabrillo account in the *Historia General* of Antonio de Herrera, published in 1615, had previously been used by Juan de Laet in his maps.

raphers of the day J. B. B. D'Anville, J. N. Bellin and Robert de Vaugondy refused to follow Delisle. Bellin's hydrographical charts were in great demand and his continued refusal to endorse the Fuca and Fonte stories carried great weight. Professional jealousy may have had something to do with the attitude of these cartographers; perhaps they had their critical faculties better developed. Jefferys, the great English cartographer may have adopted the theory, he certainly inserted a map displaying it in a pamphlet published in 1768 which is generally supposed to have been written by Drage.

It is not to be wondered at, that, regardless of the caustic remarks by Father Burriel on both the Fuca and Fonte legends published in the *Noticia de la California*, these should later have received some attention from the Spaniards. The *Noticia* became a kind of handbook for Spanish northwest explorers and the earlier ones had not much more to guide them beyond the maps of Bellin and the *Navegacion Especulativa* of Gonzalez Cabrera Bueno.¹ Bellin, although not a believer in either the Fonte or the Fuca legends, had put on his map of the world of 1755 the "Mer de l'Ouest" with the "Entrée de Jean de Fuca" in about 47° and that of Aguilar in about 44°. His skepticism, however, was displayed by a remark that "here the Mer de l'Ouest might be put." On his *Carte de l'Amerique Septentrionale* of the same year the "Mer de l'Ouest" is simply a name in the ocean with a legend that nothing was known of these parts. On his *Carte reduite de l'Ocean Septentrionale* of 1766 the famous "Mer" has disappeared. We still see, however, on the coast the Entrées of Martin d'Aguilar, of Jean de Fuca in 47½° and a "Prétendue R. de los Reyes de l'Amiral de Fonte en 1640" made familiar by Buache and Delisle. Estéban José Martinez was accustomed to claim that he saw at a distance this Entrée de Fuca in 1774 while returning from the north

¹Published in Manila in 1734.

with the Perez expedition. Nothing more was heard of it however until 1789. In that year he took possession of Nootka for Spain and in his report tells a most amazing tale about this strait. He sent a pilot to verify its existence, as he had no doubt heard from the fur traders that some strait had been discovered. It was in nearly $48\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ but as no other opening had been found where it appeared on the Bellin chart, this must be it.

Presumably all the real information that Martinez had was obtained from the fur traders and the Indians. The latter naturally knew nothing about the Atlantic Ocean or any other great body of water to the east; all they could show him was that the strait had two branches, one to the northwest and the other to the southwest or south. The imagination of Martinez supplied what was lacking. The Indians of course were quite right; the Strait of Juan de Fuca has two branches, one, the Gulf of Georgia, running somewhat west of north, and the other, Puget Sound, running to the south. Martinez, however, conjured up all kinds of possibilities in connection with the latter. He was a little uncertain as to whether it came around and joined the Entrée d'Aguilar, as shown on Bellin's map of 1755, or whether it led off into New Mexico or into the Mississippi. Some exploration to verify these suppositions was clearly necessary. In 1790 and 1791 Spanish expeditions were sent to the strait, each of which discovered a little more than was previously known and finally in 1792 Spanish ships sailed around Vancouver Island by the waterways into Queen Charlotte Sound. Captain George Vancouver was also on the coast in 1792 and had explored Puget Sound before the Spanish expedition reached the strait. He then went on for a while in company with them in a northerly direction. Leaving them in Lewis Channel he emerged into the open water of Queen Charlotte Sound before they did. Little room seemed to be left for further argument on the matter. The careful

examinations of this year had demonstrated that there was no Northwest Passage in that quarter. There still remained the possibility of one in 53° , the "Pretendue Rio de los Reyes" of Fonte, and this had to be also investigated.

When Captain James Colnett departed from Nootka for China in the Spring of 1791 he allowed the commandant to copy a map which he had made and which he said nobody else had ever seen because he was reserving it to present to his sovereign. Colnett, in his previous expedition in the *Prince of Wales*, had been in the neighborhood of Grenville and Douglass Channels late in 1787 or early in 1788. As these were in the neighborhood of 53° , Colnett decided that here was the Strait of Fonte and must have so designated it on his map. When this reached Mexico the viceroy decided to investigate his story and deputed Jacinto Caamaño to undertake the task. Caamaño left Nootka in June, 1792, and after doing some surveying in Bucareli Bay sailed over to the mainland. From July 31 to about August 30, he was anchored near the junction of the two channels. The Indians gave him to understand that the one afterwards named "Grenville," which trended in the wrong direction anyway, ended in the ocean to the north, so he only had the channel now known as "Douglass" explored. The pilot spent some days in this work, quite sufficient to demonstrate that it had no connection with the Atlantic or any other large body of water. And so Colnett's bubble was pricked. Later in the following year Vancouver explored the same coast with naturally the same result.

Although there are some people, as stated previously, who still think that Fonte and Fuca really made some such voyage as each is credited with, the plain unvarnished fact that there are no bodies of water corresponding to those supposed to have been encountered by them has deprived the subject of all practical interest. The case is a little different with

that of Maldonado now to be related. He claimed to have sailed through a strait in the northeast part of America, across a large body of water, and then through another strait into the South Sea. Geographically speaking, such a voyage is now known to have been possible. There is such a strait in the northeast of America, there is another from the Polar Ocean into the South Sea, and between them is a large body of water.

MALDONADO: LORENZO FERRER

Relacion del descubrimiento del Estrecho de Anian, que hice yo el capitan Lorenzo Ferrer Maldonado el año 1588, en la cual está la órden de la Navegacion y la disposicion del sitio y el modo de fortalecerle y asimismo las utilidades de esta Navegacion, y los daños que de no hacerla se siguen.

The original of this relation, which appears to have been written about 1609, was given by a French abbé in 1775 to the Duque de Infantado. It had attached to it three plans of the alleged strait, and two small general maps, one of which shows California as an unnamed peninsula. At the present time I do not know where the original is to be found unless it is still in the possession of the present Duque de Infantado but Juan Bautista Muñoz copied it in 1781 into Tomo 38 of his collection now in the Real Academia de la Historia, and he also copied the plans and the maps. Several contemporary copies seem to have been in circulation, whether all made by Maldonado or not is not known. The Duque de Almodóvar printed it in Tomo IV of his *Historia politica de los establecimientos ultramarinos de las Naciones Europeas*, Madrid, 1788, and the editor seemed to think that the narrative was authentic, although he recognized the fact that nobody had ever found any such passage since Maldonado.

The following translation is from the text of Pedro Novo y Colson, published in 1881, all the preliminary and supplementary material relating to the advantages

of an expedition proposed by Maldonado and the preparations to be made for it being omitted.¹

Account of the discovery of the Strait of Anian made by me Captain Lorenzo Ferrer Maldonado in 1588, and in which is set forth the course of the voyage, the disposition of the site, the method of fortifying it, the benefits of this navigation, and the resulting harm if it be not followed.

You leave from Spain, let us suppose from Lisbon. From there it is advisable to steer northwest for 450 leagues until you reach 60° north latitude where the island of Frislandia,² anciently known as Tyle or Tule, will come into sight. It is an island but little smaller than Ireland. From here you take a westerly course running along the sixtieth parallel for 180 leagues until you reach Labrador, where the Strait of Labrador or Davis Strait³ commences. The entrance of this is more than thirty leagues wide. The country on the Labrador side, which is that to the west, is low, but the opposite side, forming the other side of the strait, is of very high mountains. Here two entrances appear between which are some very high mountains; one trends east-northeast and the other northwest. It is advisable therefore to leave aside the one which trends east-northeast, that is the one on the right hand looking toward the north, because this is formed by Grutlandia⁴ and some islands, where it finally turns to the Sea of Frislandia. Therefore, taking the other entrance you must steer northwest, entering by this strait for eighty leagues until you reach a short 64° of latitude. There the strait takes another bend to the north for 120 leagues until it reaches 72° of latitude. It then turns and makes another bend to the northwest. Through this you have to sail ninety leagues until you reach a little short of 75°. At the end of this you have passed out of the whole Strait of Labrador, which commences at 60° and ends at 75°,⁵ and is 290 leagues long. It makes three very great bends; the first and the last trend northwest-southeast and the one in the middle north-south. In the narrowest place it is twenty leagues wide and in the widest forty. It contains many coves, ports and shelters, which can be of use in any necessity. As far as 73° it seems to be inhabited by some people as in many parts of both coasts

¹Novo y Colson does not make it clear whether he took the text from the document belonging to the Duque de Infantado or the copy in the Real Academia de la Historia. He did not reproduce the maps.

²Iceland.

³From this name, it is evident that Maldonado had knowledge of the discoveries of Davis.

⁴Greenland.

⁵This was the highest point reached by Davis and named by him "Hope Sanderson." Beyond, all was unknown.

smokes were seen. It may seem to some thoughtless people impossible to navigate in such a high latitude. To this it may be answered that the Hanseatics live in 72° , in whose port, San Miguel,¹ and in all that bay of San Nicolas, almost a thousand trading ships enter every year, which necessarily have to go up to 75° in order to round Finmark since they have to pass through the Sea of Flanders.

Having emerged from the Strait of Labrador you commence to fall down from that latitude and, sailing west a quarter southwest for 350 leagues, you will reach 71° . This is where we discovered a very high land on our return voyage without being able to ascertain whether it was mainland or island. However, if it was mainland, it must be the opposite coast² of New Spain. From this land, seen in 71° , you have to sail west-southwest for 440 leagues to fall down to 60° where the Strait of Anian is to be found. In doing this the same course will be followed as I made, at least from Frislandia, because it must be understood that I departed from the Bacalaos for this island as I was in need of supplies. These I obtained in some islands near it called "Gelandillas," only three in number, one inhabited and the other two with pasture for the herds of this people, who are very uncivilized although they seem to be Christian Catholics.³

Returning to our voyage, I say, that in my opinion, it will be wiser, when you emerge from the Strait of Labrador, to follow the whole northern coast of New Spain for two reasons: one, to find out what settlements it may contain, and the other, to search for places in which to stop and obtain refreshment for the fleets which have to sail over this course.

According to the account just given it seems to be 450 leagues from Spain to Frislandia, from there to Labrador 130, to the exit of the strait of that name 290, or altogether 920 leagues. These added to the 790 which we found from the northern exit of the Strait of Labrador to the Strait of Anian make 1710 leagues,⁴ that is, the distance from Spain to the Strait of Anian.

The weather was very severe when we made our exit from the Strait of Labrador, as it was in the beginning of March, having navigated the strait for part of February. Thus we endured

¹Probably the present Archangel in the White Sea although this is only in about 64° of latitude.

²Sp., *Contra costa*.

³This, I fancy, refers to some real expedition which Maldonado had made to Bacalaos after codfish.

⁴A number of critics have called attention to this excessive distance, which as observed, accords better with that to Bering Strait than to the Strait of Anian on Maldonado's own map.

the greatest hardships of darkness, cold and storm. The day was short during all that period and the cold so great that the sea water which dashed against the sides of the ship froze, so that the ship seemed to be made of crystal and made it necessary to chop off the ice, which was growing to such an extent that at times we found it to be more than a palm thick. It is a great error to think that all that sea can freeze. As it is large and the strait itself is one of strong currents, these and the immense waves by reason of their continual movement do not permit the water to freeze. On the banks, however, and in places where the sea is quiet I believe it can freeze, as was made apparent on our ship when the water dashing against it was frozen.¹ It is only known (as was told us by the people in the Gelandillas) that a strait between Frislandia and Gruthlandia is frozen over the greater part of the year, because it is between great mountains and hills, very high on the Frislandia side, which do not allow the rays of the sun to penetrate it. As it is also sheltered by very high mountains there is no play of winds to disturb the water, and thus the continued quietness makes it freeze, as stated, and it cannot be navigated. The same is true in the great bay.² When, however, we returned through the Strait of Labrador in the month of June and part of July we always enjoyed continued light, so much so that when we reached the Arctic Circle in $66\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ we commenced to have perpetual sun. This was never covered by the horizon until we again cut the Circle in the middle of the Strait of Labrador. Thus the continuance of the sun above the horizon heated the air so that it gave us more heat than is found in the hottest place in Spain, although this was not because the rays of the sun were burdensome when we exposed ourselves to them.³ We always had free winds from the north with which exit from the Strait of Labrador was effected easily and quickly. True it is that the great currents there of flux and reflux give much aid in entering and leaving, although the winds may be contrary. On the journey from Spain to Anian it is necessary to take advantage of the tide, because the winds from the north are very continuous. With this account, that of the courses in this navigation and of the methods of conducting it, is concluded.

The strait we discovered in 60° of latitude, 1710 leagues from Spain, appears, according to ancient tradition, to be the one the cosmographers name "Anian" on their maps. If this is true it follows necessarily that the strait is formed on one side

¹This is all in line with the arguments of Davis.

²Although Maldonado uses the word *bahía* he probably meant the Polar Ocean.

³Davis makes the same comparison although he uses the Cape Verde Islands as an example.

by Asia and on the other side by America. This seems to be the case from the following array of facts. After we had disembogued in the Great Sea we went coasting along the American side southeast for more than 100 leagues until we reached 55°. On this coast no settlement was found nor any inlet from the sea, thus furnishing an indication that there was not another strait which could isolate that part by connecting the South Sea with the North Sea. It was therefore concluded that all that coast was America, and that by following along it one could shortly reach Quivira and Cabo Mendocino.¹ We left this part which, as just stated, we understood continued on, and turning towards the west sailed four days with a wind estimated to carry us thirty leagues in a day's journey. Having sailed 120 leagues according to this reckoning and to our estimated positions on the map (although we did not have any of that sea),² we discovered a very great country and grand sierras with a long continuous coastline. We kept away from this, as was advisable in view of our purposes, always giving ourselves plenty of sea room and steering at times northeast at others north-northeast and at others north. From this it seemed to us that this coast on the whole ran northeast-southwest. We were not able to obtain any particular information about it as we were giving it so much room, and therefore I can simply affirm that it contains some settlements to very near the strait, because many smokes were seen to rise in many parts. Thus according to good cosmography it seemed to us to be the country of the Tartars, or Catai, and that a few leagues from that coast must be the great city of Cambalu, the metropolis of the great Tartar.³ Finally, following along this coast, we found ourselves at the entrance of the Strait of Anian itself, from which fifteen days previously we had made our exit into the Great Sea, which we recognized as that of the South Sea, in which are located Japan, China, the Malucas, India, and New Guinea with the discovery of Captain Quiros,⁴ and all the coast of New Spain and Peru.

There is a port at the outlet of the strait into the South Sea on the American side capable of holding 500 ships, although in a certain part it is rough and the anchorage is bad, because of the currents which enter the mouth of it during the tide, which runs from north to south. These beat heavily on a part of the port near the entrance as you enter it on the right side, as it must be understood that the mouth of the port is open to the

¹Quivira on this coast was a feature of maps of the Zaltieri type; Mendocino was a later Ortelius addition.

²I suppose he means they improvised a map.

³A legend attaching to this part of Asia.

⁴The Quiros discoveries took place after his alleged expedition.

north, and the entrance is in the form of a spiral or snail shell. It appeared that this port had never been trodden by human feet, I mean its banks, because in a certain part there is a quiet pool, on the shore of which there was an infinite quantity of shells of the eggs of sea-birds which are accustomed to lay them on the banks of the sea. It appeared that these had been carried there by the currents from the north. They were so numerous that they formed a wall a yard high and eight paces wide. A river of fresh water was found in this port, very large and so deep that we could enter it with our ship to take water in it. It seemed to me that a ship of 500 tons could enter it. The greater part of the port is sandy, particularly where this river enters it and where the currents beat on it, but on the north side it has in some places a shelter of cliff-like rocks, more than two lances high, above which a long and narrow flat place is found. The sea encircles this but leaves a little mainland¹ on the east side where a very large settlement can be made, and at the present time a fort, which will be of much value. The country contiguous to this port is very pleasant and contains some very large plains to the southeast which end in the port. These are covered with a low thicket, in some parts of which rosemary is found. If these plains were cleared they would provide fine fields and gardens, because according to the lay of it the greater part can be irrigated.

It is to be understood that although this country is in 59° of latitude it has a very mild climate, as all that part on the south side, and which is sheltered and defended by the mountains to the north of it, is very temperate. The cold in winter is not excessive but very moderate, as it is always open to the rays of the sun and free from the north wind. When the winds blow they are only from the south. These are always mild and the more so because they come across the sea which is what customarily warms the air. It must be considered that even if this country is in such a high latitude it is not therefore very unfit to be inhabited. There are many other places on this parallel, such as Edinburgh in Scotland, and the beginnings of Suevia, Hapselia, a city of Norway, many parts of Muscovy and other very good countries which are inhabited, traded with and known. Even although they are at a distance from the heat of the coast they are of a bearable degree of cold.² The longest day of summer in this country is eighteen and one-half hours and the longest night in winter is the same; thus the night in summer is five and one-half hours long and the day in winter of the same length. Along the river which enters the port and

¹He means level land.

²This is more *a la* Davis, indeed, Davis mentioned some of these places.

along another farther down to the southeast are numerous and immense trees, most of them of fruits—good fruits—and some similar to those of Spain, such as apples, pears, wild plums and others of different character not known.¹ Therefore, so as not to encounter some great danger (as was possible), I ordered my men not to eat the fruit unless they first found that it had been pecked and eaten by the birds in some part and thus found not to be harmful. Most of this fruit was dried on the trees themselves from the preceding year, because at that season there was no fruit ripe, as the time when we were there was part of April, all of May and part of June. So we knew that the winter could not have been very severe from the fact that the fruit was preserved dried on the trees from one year to another. Some vines of the wild grape and *lechias*², a savory fruit of India always found in temperate lands, were seen in the valley in which the river farther down runs, and which was deep and seemed to be very temperate. Above the port in all that quarter of the compass between the north and the east there are some mountains, not very high but very transitable and abounding with all kinds of game. Here partridges and rabbits, somewhat different from those of Spain were found, deer painted with black and white spots on grey, and with horns like great shovels although some had none. Two kinds of pigs were seen, those which are bred in the Indies and have the umbilical cord on the back, although larger, and the other like the wild boars of Spain, very large indeed. Some buffaloes were found and many other animals but none which was ferocious. The sea is most abounding in fish and in all kinds of shellfish, very good and tasty, although larger than those we know, because some crabs were caught a half yard across, those of our coasts not being larger than the palm of a hand.

The part on the side of Asia and Tartary fronting this contains some very high mountains, so high that in some places at their greatest elevation they carry snow all the year, particularly those which face the north. These are so mountainous, rough and cragged that it seems impossible to traverse them. The greater part of the trees are very high pine trees which grow even down to the banks of the sea. On the same side of Asia in front of the entrance to the port there is a quiet place of sea water where there is a large marsh of reeds which grow out of the water. Near this we found the best fishing in all these parts. Many large fish were caught there, some well known, such as sea-bass, conger-eels, sole and other similar fish, al-

¹This sentence suffices in itself to prove the falsity of the narrative.

²I do not know to what he refers.

though larger than are found here. At times very large fish were seen passing on their way from the South Sea to the North Sea; among them whales, *buffadores*,¹ and other very large monsters were recognized. It appeared that the reason for their making this journey was that they were leaving the warm waters of the South Sea, as it was now the beginning of summer, to enjoy the fresh waters of the North Sea.

The Strait of Anian is fifteen leagues long and you can easily pass through it with a tide, which lasts for six hours, as these tides are exceptionally strong there. In this length it has six bends, and its two mouths of entrance and exit look the one to the other on a north-south line, I mean, one is north-south of the other.² The mouth on the north side, which is the one by which we entered, is less than a quarter of a league wide and on each side has two steep rocks. The one on the side of Asia is higher and steeper than the other, so much so, that it furnishes beneath it such shelter that nothing that falls from the top could strike the foot of it. The outlet to the South Sea close to the port is more than a quarter of a league wide and from there on both the coasts keep on widening and opening out. In the middle of the strait at the end of the third bend there is a great *peñon* or island of steep rock, three *estados*³ high, more or less, and, as it is of a round shape, shows its diameter to be about 200 paces. Looking at it from a distance it seems to be but very little removed from the mainland of Asia but everything is shoals and reefs and cannot be navigated except with boats. That part, however, from the island to the mainland in front of it on the American side is less than one-half of a quarter of a league wide.⁴ Although the channel is so deep that two vessels and even three can pass through it together, towards the banks it has shoals over which two bastions can easily be raised and built, thus narrowing the channel to the width of a musket shot. On the island, or over the shoals which can be raised, and on the coast opposite two bastions can be made as stated, which with artillery can guard and defend the strait very securely. If the currents were not so strong a chain might be put across which would be of great service, although now one could be made with such industry that it could sustain and resist the currents.⁵

¹I do not know what this monster was supposed to be.

²Just like the strait on Sir Leicester Harmsworth's map reproduced in my *Some Imaginary California Geography* only this does not show so many bends.

³The height of an ordinary man.

⁴This narrow place is best shown on the Harmsworth map.

⁵This passage is not very clear; he seems to imply that between the time of his alleged expedition, 1588, and the date of writing his memorial, 1609, some improvement in making cables had been effected.

The strait is so disposed that with three lookouts which can see each other, thirty leagues in the North Sea can be overlooked. If they discover ships they can give notice to the bastions and to the fort at the port with smokes so as to prevent their passage if they should be hostile. Two ships kept ready in the port for similar needs could lie to between the two bastions (for all of which there would be time on the supposition that whoever wished to enter would have to await the tide), and there entertain and embarrass the enemies' ships, while the bastions cannonaded them and sent them to the bottom, because it is to be understood, as stated, that although many enemy vessels may come, no more than two or three can pass through the channel [together]. If it should be advisable to keep a watch on the South Sea, (although I do not think this necessary at present), the strait has two high mountains, one on the side of Asia and one on the side of America which face each other and both face the fort and the sentinels. These overlook both coasts, each the opposite one, and can give notice of all the vessels sighted in the South Sea, so as to enable the precautions mentioned to be taken. Thus this strait will be defended and only the Spaniards can navigate it with entire security and enjoy the great utilities which it promises. Truly, I do not know what place there is in all the discovered world which like this has connection with almost all the lands in the world, as from here you can sail to all of them. It may therefore be presumed that the time will come to make there a very large and rich settlement.

The entrance to the strait on the north side is difficult to recognize because of the coast which trends from east to west, and because one of the two sides which form it covers the other. The entrance and the first bend trend northeast-southwest and cannot be seen from the sea outside. For this reason it is not to be wondered at that those who have searched for it have not found it. When we reached it we did not recognize it for some days and were tacking along the coast, although we had the very good account of Juan Martinez, my pilot, a Portuguese, native of Algarve, a very old man of great experience.¹ The landmarks of those mountains, which I took and have painted in order to make a second voyage, if offered me as I thought it would be, were however lacking. Although we knew we had to find it in 60° of latitude we were in such doubts about it, as that coast extends a long distance from east to west, that it seemed to the pilot that we had not come within 100 leagues of it according to the reckoning of his course. To

¹This would imply that Martinez simply had some account of the strait and had not himself seen it.

me it seemed that we were already off it. Such was the case because, embarking in a shallop to follow the shore, the current itself carried me into the strait and thus it was recognized. The reason why it had seemed to me that we had reached the strait and were off it was the strong currents I found there. These came from land and returned towards it, so strongly that on some occasions, when our ship was standing off and had the sea on the beam, at a long distance from the coast, we soon found ourself close to it, and at other times being close to land we soon found ourselves very far at sea.

Among the mountains close to the strait is an extremely high white rock on a high one on the side of Asia. The rock is steep and inaccessible. On top of it are three very large trees which are very distinct from each other when seen from north to south. On both sides of this very high rock the mountains have the appearance of two large very distinct saddles. A league from the entrance to the strait on the west side is a high bare peak which the sea surrounds. At the time when the tide is lowest it seems to me to be four long pike-lengths from the mainland. On the east side of the entrance there is a large fine river of good water and many trees. Here we took water, because a moderate shelter is furnished by two large rocks on the point. There is another river of good water a league before reaching this but it lacks trees. The mountains which can be seen on the north side of Asia are very high when viewed from the North Sea and are covered with great forests. When near they seem to be all pine forests. The mountains on the American side, however, are lower and have smaller trees, but on neither does there appear to be fruit trees.

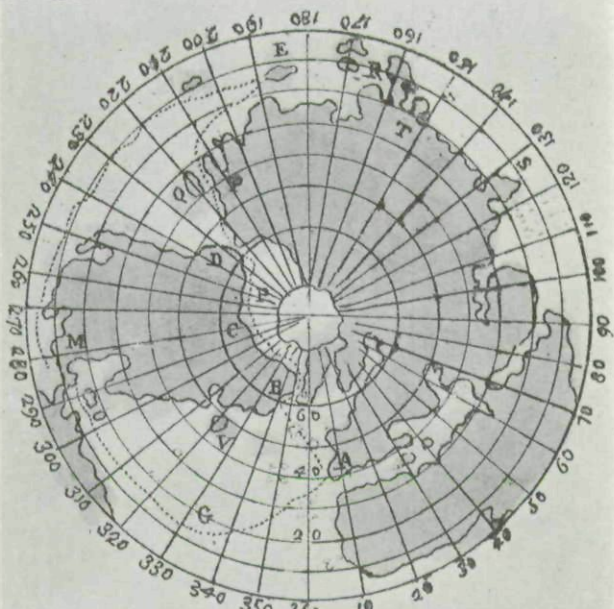
In the port where our ship anchored (which is the one stated to have been at the mouth of the strait on the south side) we remained from the beginning of April to the beginning of June. During this time a great ship of more than 800 tons came to pass from the side of the South Sea into the strait. This caused us to put ourselves under arms, but each party taking on a peaceful attitude their people took pleasure in giving us some of the things they carried for cargo and for trade. This was much; all, or the greater part of it, consisted of things known to be similar to those of China, such as brocades, silks, porcelains, feathers, boxes, stones, pearls and gold. The men appeared to be Hanseatics, those inhabiting the Bahia de San Nicolas or the Puerto de San Miguel.¹ In order to understand them

¹The numerous references to the Hanseatics seem to bear out the statement of Silva y Figueroa that Maldonado had lived in some of their towns. One of the legends of the day was concerned with an alleged voyage of some Germans through some Northwest Passage. The combination of that legend with Maldonado's story adds more certainty to the fact that his own was fictitious.

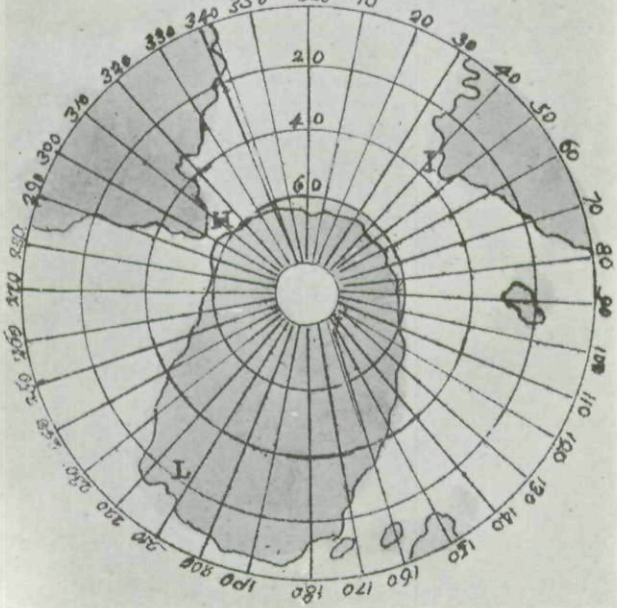
better it was necessary for us to talk Latin, that is those who knew it, as many of them knew how to speak it. They did not seem to be Catholics but Lutherans. They said they came from a large city a little more than 100 leagues from the strait. Although I do not remember its name well, it seems to me they called it "Roba" or some name like that. They said it was a very large port and there was a navigable river, subject to the Great Khan (since they said it was of Tartary), and that they had left another vessel of their own country in the port. We could obtain no more information about these people as they always acted with caution and displayed little confidence, being afraid of our men. For this reason we separated and having left them near the strait in the North Sea we came back in the direction of Spain. It is greatly to be believed that they were Hanseatics, because as these live in 72° of latitude it is easy and fitting for them to make use of this strait and navigation.

The title to the document is misleading. It is not an account of any expedition in the sense that the word *Relacion* was then used, but a memorial in which an extract of an alleged voyage is inserted. As memorials seldom then had titles we may perhaps safely assume that this was added when the copy was made. Several critics have indulged in speculation as to the possible motives of Maldonado in presenting it at the time he did, 1609, twenty-one years after the date of the alleged voyage. He himself states, near the beginning, that in the year 1608 some English vessels had set out to discover the Strait of Anian and that he therefore thought it an opportune time to present his views on the subject. There is no record, I believe, of any English expedition in 1608 to search for the Northwest Passage. Several had taken place just previously and the epochal one of Henry Hudson was to leave in 1610. In 1608, Hudson undertook to find a passage to the northeast; perhaps Maldonado had that one in mind. His real reason, however, was no doubt a desire to take advantage of the current agitation in Spain, growing out of the expedition of Sebastian Vizcaino of 1602-03, to obtain the appointment to command one from Spain to discover the alleged strait. The matter of

T. III.



EQUINOCIAL



MALDONADO'S MAPS FROM AMORETTI'S VIAGGIO

[Explanations of the letters on the plates. Those on the planispheres are omitted as unnecessary.]

TAV. IV, No. 1 VIEW FROM THE NORTH

- A Entrance to the strait
- B River of fresh water with trees and shelter
- C River of fresh water without trees
- D Bare rock encompassed by the sea
- E White peak with three trees
- F Saddle mountains
- G Part of Asia with high mountains and pine trees
- H Part of America with low mountains and trees

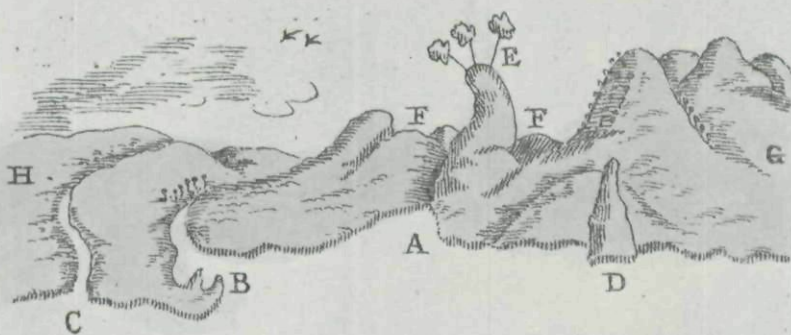
TAV. IV, No. 2 VIEW FROM THE SOUTH

- A Entrance to the strait
- B Port in which we anchored
- C Place to erect a fort
- D River of pure water where to anchor
- E River of pure water with fruit trees
- F Plain over low hills
- G Mountains with much game
- H Canebrake with much fish
- I Part of Asia
- L Part of America
- M Striking of the currents in the port, the bottom of which is sandy
as far as the river

Tav. IV.

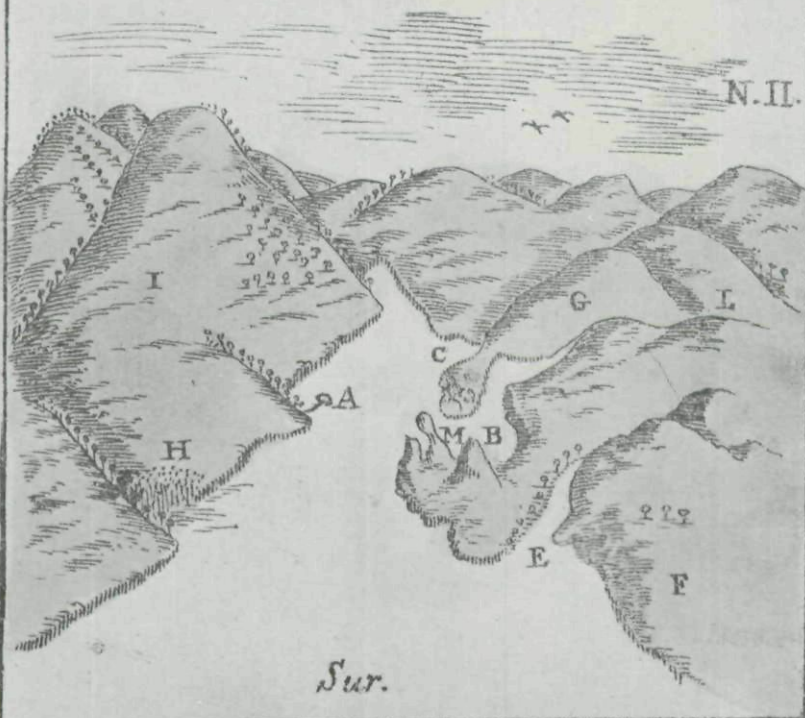
Perspectiva que hace la tierra del Estrecho de Anion.

N.I.



Norte

N.II.



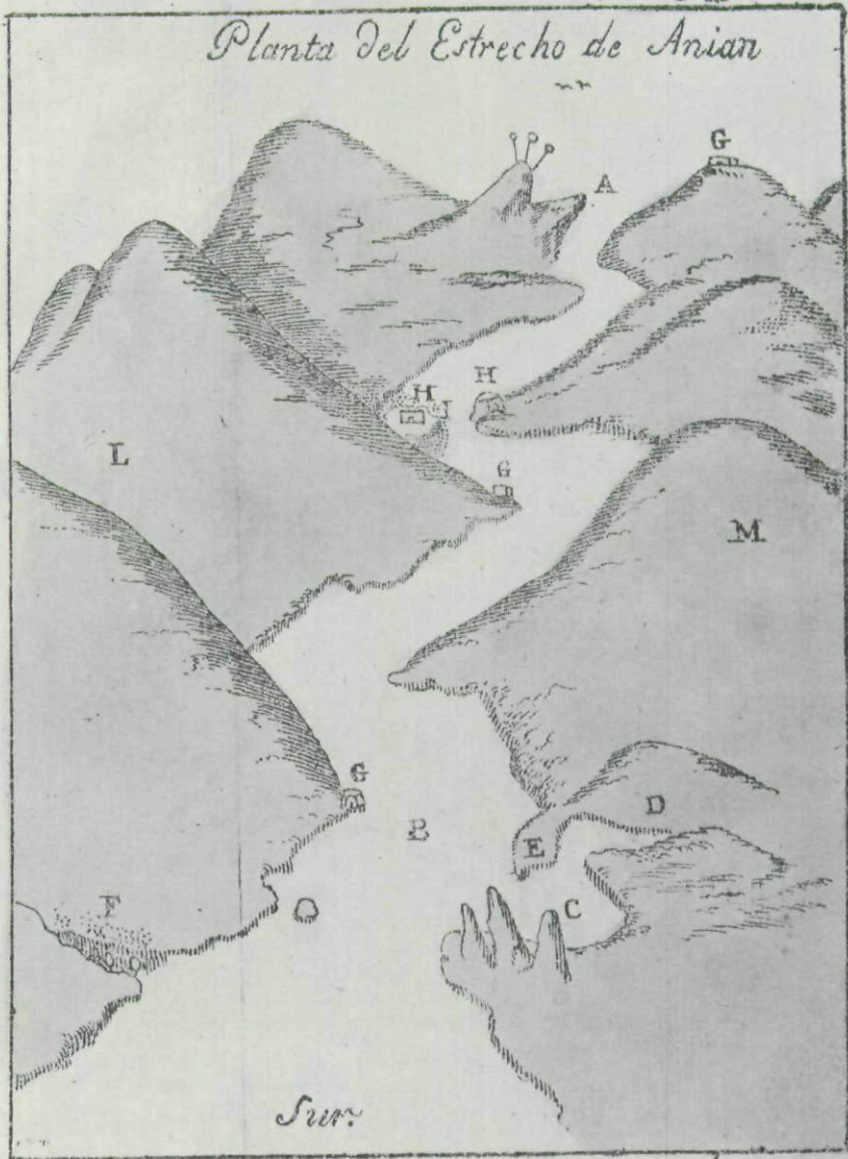
Sur.

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MALDONADO'S VIEWS FROM AMORETTI'S VIAGGIO

Tav. V.

Planta Del Estrecho de Anian



MALDONADO'S VIEW OF THE STRAIT FROM AMORETTI'S VIAGGIO

TAV. V PLAN OF THE STRAIT

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------|
| A | North entrance | F | Canebrake |
| B | South entrance | GGG | Lookouts |
| C | Port | HH | Bastions, one on a small island |
| D | River of pure water with good bottom | I | Low ground [not shown] |
| E | Place to erect a fort | L | Part of Asia |
| | | M | Part of America |

another expedition to the northwest coast was before the Council of the Indies at various times between 1603 and 1609 and finally orders were sent September 27, 1608, to the viceroy in Mexico to send out one to search for the Rica de Oro or the Rica de Plata with the object of utilizing one of them as a stopping place for the Manila galleons on their return voyage to Acapulco. At this time Hernando de Rios Coronel was the *procurador* of the Philippines in Spain. He memorialized the Council and advised sending the expedition from the islands instead of from Acapulco. The Council counselled the king April 9, 1609, to accept his advice, and May 3 an order was issued to the viceroy to that effect. It seems likely therefore that Maldonado presented his memorial about this time.

Perhaps Coronel himself had some hand in the affair. June 27, 1597, he had written a letter to the king from Manila in which he enlarged on the advantages of opening a route to Spain by way of the Strait of Anian. To back up his argument he advanced a story about a voyage made by some Bretons in 1545, who were alleged to have discovered a strait.¹ Mixed up with this was the old one of the Portuguese who had sailed from Lisbon to China and back through some strait which separated China from America. The whole story as given by Coronel bears a striking resemblance to that of Maldonado and seems to indicate that the latter was acquainted with it. That part of Maldonado's narrative relating to the strait at the east bears a similar resemblance to the remarks about it by John Davis in his *Worldes Hydrographical Discription* published in London in 1595. Davis had made three voyages to discover a Northwest Passage and had actually discovered Davis Strait. He claimed that the entrance to it was in 64° and the exit in 75° precisely as set forth by Maldonado. Maldonado however embellished both tales very considerably and must have made use of some map of that part of the

¹Printed in the writer's *Spanish Voyages*, page 177.

world, either the one of Nova Franza issued by Bolognino Zaltieri in 1566 or some derivative of it. The characteristic of these maps was a large Polar Ocean connected with the Pacific on the west by a narrow and crooked strait and with the Atlantic on the east by a wider and straighter one. Attached to his manuscript are some sketches purporting to have been made by him. Among them is a small map of the northern hemisphere on a polar projection to show by dotted lines the much shorter distance from Lisbon to the Philippines by his route than by the usual one by way of Vera Cruz and Acapulco. This is not of the Plancius or Hondius type, then much in favor, far from it, but much closer to that of Zaltieri's; even Japan is left in the relative position to the Strait as on the Zaltieri map. The real position of Japan was well known when Maldonado wrote and we must therefore assume that he was using some old map for some special reasons.

When we examine the memorial carefully we shall see that Maldonado was apparently repeating some story which he permits us to infer he had heard from his pilot, a Portuguese named Juan Martinez. A short memorial by a Juan Martinez dated 1612 was unearthed in the archives in Seville which may have been written by Maldonado's alleged pilot.¹ It has nothing to do with any voyage but relates to some scheme to measure the variation of the compass, one much in vogue just at that moment and one in which Maldonado himself was interested. In fact, Maldonado was what was called in Spain at that time an *arbitrista*, a word which we may translate as "schemer," although this carries with it in English an implication of unworthy motives which the Spanish term does not connote. Don Garcia de Silva y Figueroa in a work written in 1618,² but not published until 1782 at the end of an *Historia del gran Tamorlan*, gives a very

¹Printed in the *Viajes Apócrifos* of Pedro Novo y Colson, 1881.

²*Comentarios de la embajada que de parte del Rey de España D. Felipe III hizo al Rey Jabas de Persia el año de 1618.*

interesting account of an interview in 1609 in Madrid with a man whose name he did not remember but who was undoubtedly Maldonado. Before this, Maldonado had gotten into some trouble in Granada and some of the witnesses testified that he was a man of great genius, that he had composed a very curious book, that he understood many languages, knew how to sing, paint and make figures, and was a great rhetorician, Latinist, and astrologer. He even published in 1626 a geographical work entitled *Imagen del Mundo*, in which he makes no mention whatever of his voyage in 1588 but does recapitulate some of the geographical ideas expressed in the account of that voyage.

By 1790 many voyages had been made in search of a Northwest Passage and the opinion had settled down to the view that even if such a passage existed it was impracticable on account of ice. A voyage such as that related by Maldonado was clearly impossible in such a short time and in such vessels as he could bring to the work. It is therefore but little wonder that no attention was apparently paid to his story when it was first published in 1788. It seems however, that Juan Bautista Muñoz had made two copies of the document in 1781. One of these reached France through the hands of Luis de Mendoza and fell into those of Philippe Buache de la Neuville. Buache was the son of the other Philippe Buache, the Fonte enthusiast, and had either inherited a predisposition to believe incredible tales or else thought that in some way or other Maldonado's story gave some support to that of Fonte. He embraced the occasion with enthusiasm and read a paper on the subject before the Academy of Sciences in Paris, November 13, 1790, in which he assumed the tale to be authentic.¹ This put an entirely different aspect on the case in Spain. Buache was a geographer of great reputation and his opinions were therefore entitled to great weight. The Spanish government at

¹Printed first in Spanish in the *Disertaciones sobre la Navegacion a las Indias Orientales por el norte de la Europa*, by Ciriaco de Zevallos, Isla de Leon, 1798.

once sent an order post-haste to Alejandro Malaspina at Acapulco, Mexico, to proceed to the northwest coast and see if the strait could be found, enclosing with the order a copy of the *Relacion*.

Malaspina was in command of two ships, the *Descubierta* and the *Atrevida* on a general scientific expedition to the South Sea, and was about due at Acapulco. Shortly after his arrival at that place the order reached him and he set sail for the northwest, May 1, 1791. He examined the coast from about Cape Edgecumbe to Middleton Island at the entrance to Prince William Sound, without finding, of course, any sign of a strait. While anchored in Port Mulgrave he had some faint hope that Yakutat Bay might prove to open into the passage, but a boat expedition to the head of it soon dispelled this illusion. He would probably have explored Prince William Sound if this had not been done during the previous year by Salvador Fidalgo. Before Fidalgo's time two other Spanish expeditions had ranged that part of the coast. The long turn of the Alaska Peninsula to the south was an effective barrier to further exploration towards the west. This could only be continued by rounding the end of the peninsula and Captain James Cook's voyage in these waters had sufficiently demonstrated that the strait discovered by Vitus Bering in 1728 was the real connection between the South Sea and the Polar Ocean. The latitude of this, some 66°, did not agree in the slightest with the 60° assigned by Maldonado to his Strait of Anian, and therefore Malaspina justly concluded that the latter did not exist and was a pure figment of Maldonado's imagination. He wrote an exhaustive review of the story and was the first to point out its numerous inconsistencies and errors.¹ The lot fell, however, to one of his subordinates, Ciriaco de Zevallos, to first puncture the bubble in his *Disertaciones* of 1798. Martin Fernandez de Navarrete also paid his respects to Maldonado and his story in

¹Printed in Navarrete's *Examen*, page 228.

the Introduction to the *Viaje de las Goletas Sutil y Mexicana*, issued by the Spanish government in Madrid in 1802. Navarrete later searched the archives to find any documents confirmatory of such a voyage, but without results; he did, however, find some referring to the author which seemed to stamp him as a man entitled to little credit.¹

The subject was revived by the publication in 1811 in Milan of a translation into Italian of a copy of Maldonado's document in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana. Carlo Amoretti, the librarian, was the author of this work.² The document was a copy of the original narrative, probably contemporary, which had belonged to Cardinal Federico Borromeo. Amoretti also published a French translation of the work in Plaisance in 1812, which contains an Appendix answering the objections which had been offered to the credibility of the work. He had the good judgment to append to his translations copies of Maldonado's maps. These consist of two smaller polar projection maps and three views of the strait and the entrances to it with explanatory tables. The views were designed by Maldonado to illustrate what he claimed were the landmarks of the strait, the location of the port and the place where he proposed to build fortifications. Amoretti also inserted some maps to show what the Strait of Anian looked like according to other authors, and a modern polar map on which he marked the course of Maldonado to Bering Strait, which he thus seemed to identify as Maldonado's Strait of Anian. The text is substantially the same as that of the document belonging to the Duque de Infantado. The work is interesting because of Amoretti's cartographical history of the Strait of Anian and the later Russian voyages. He published an extract from a letter of Malaspina dated Acapulco, October 28, 1791.

¹Published in his *Examen*.

²*Viaggio del Mare Atlantico al Pacifico per la via del Nord-Ouest fatto dal Capitano Lorenzo Ferrer Maldonado l'anno MDLXXXVIII.*

The publication by Amoretti brought on another polemical discussion, but without other result than reiteration of the arguments against the credibility of the narrative advanced by Zevallos and Navarrete. In 1848 Navarrete's son published an extended examination of the voyage by his father entitled *Examen del Viaje de Lorenzo Ferrer Maldonado*.¹ In 1881 Pedro de Novo y Colson, then a lieutenant in the Spanish navy, read an article before the Fourth International Congress of Americanists *Sobre los Viages Apocrifos de Juan de Fuca y de Lorenzo Ferrer Maldonado*. He printed the narrative from a copy belonging to the Duque de Infantado, the *Memoir* of Buache, and reprinted part of Navarrete's *Examen*. In the Appendix he inserted some documents relating to Maldonado.

In the nineteenth century persistent efforts were made to cross the Polar Ocean but it was not until 1906 that Roald Amundsen accomplished the feat in a voyage which began in 1903. He passed up Davis Strait and through Lancaster Sound which had been discovered by Bylot and Baffin in 1615. Land exploration in northern British America had however previously demonstrated that America was an island.

¹In this work Navarrete really summed up about all that was known on the subject. Novo y Colson simply added some documents found in the archives since his time which, however, are of only collateral importance. The only account of it in English, besides some notices of Amoretti's work, is to be found in James Burney's *Chronological history of the north-eastern voyages of discovery*, London 1819.

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