

Boutin to obtain the information needed for the maintenance of order and safety when the boats went ashore; at the same time our captain also lowered his boats and had them loaded with water casks and weapons; at half past twelve being three-quarters of a league from land on the port tack the 4 boats went to get water in a cove investigated by the Viscount de L'angle to leeward of the one where we had already been and which he had found to be more suitable because it had fewer inhabitants and the watering place was as convenient, but the first one had the advantage over it of a much easier entrance and enough depth for longboats not to run the danger of becoming grounded as happened in the leeward one.

Mr de Langle had even wanted to take command today of the longboat expedition, he invited me although I was still weak and convalescent to accompany him to take a stroll and breathe the land air, he took command of the boat and entrusted the longboat to Mr Gobien. Mr Boutin was in charge of the *Boussole's* longboat, whose boat was under Mr Mouton's orders. Father Receveur and Mr Colinet, both unwell, and Messrs de Lamanon, la Martiniere and Lavo came with us as well as several people from the two frigates. We comprised, including the crews of the two boats, a detachment of six soldiers led by the Master-at-arms, the officers and passengers, thirty-three men from the *Astrolabe*, and the *Boussole's* boats had 28 men; in total 61 people.

When we went we saw with regret that a large proportion of the canoes which had been alongside the ships were following us and coming to the same cove. We also saw along the rocks separating it from the neighbouring bays numerous natives going there from the other villages; when we reached the reef which makes up the watering cove and leaves only a narrow and shallow pass for the boats, we realised that it was low tide and that the longboats could not enter without grounding, and indeed they touched as soon as we got within half a musket shot from the shore which they could only reach by our pushing on the bottom with the oars. The Captain who had himself selected this bay had seen it the day before from a more favourable point of view because the tide was not so far out.

When we arrived the natives lining the coast, numbering seven or eight hundred, threw into the sea several branches of the tree from which South Sea islanders obtain their intoxicating liquor,<sup>1</sup> it

<sup>1</sup> The tree from which the Samoans made kava (*'ava*) was the *Piper methysticum*.

seemed to us that among them this was a symbol of peace and friendship but on which we learned to our cost one can scarcely depend at least here. As we landed, Mr de Langle gave instructions that each boat was to be guarded by an armed soldier, and a sailor while the boat crews saw to the water, protected by a double line formed by the two detachments, going from the longboats to the watering place. We peacefully rolled out, filled and reloaded the water casks, the natives allowing themselves to be fairly well contained by the armed soldiers, there were among them a certain number of women and very young girls who made advances to us in the most indecent fashion, of which several people took advantage. I saw only one or two children there.

Towards the end the number of natives increased and they became more troublesome. This circumstance caused Mr de Langle to give up his earlier intention of buying some provisions, he gave the order to get back at once into the boats. But before then (and this I think is the primary cause of our misfortune) he had given a few beads to some kinds of chiefs who had helped to keep the islanders at a little distance; we were sure however that this pretence at policing was only play-acting, and if these alleged chiefs have any authority it is only over a very small number of men. These gifts being made to five or six individuals aroused the others' displeasure. From that moment a general murmur arose and we were no longer able to control them; however they let us get back into the boats, but a number of them followed us into the water while the others were picking up stones from the shore.<sup>1</sup>

As the longboats had grounded some distance from the beach we had to get into the water up to our waist, and during this wading several soldiers got their weapons wet, it is in this critical situation with the longboats grounded that the most frightful scene of horror began as the last people were getting back on board the longboat. Mr de Langle ordered the grapnel to be raised and to get afloat; several of the strongest islanders tried to prevent this by holding on to the cablet. Seeing this, with the tumult increasing and stones flying, the Captain fired in the air, which far from frightening the natives was for them the signal for a general attack; they hurled at us a hail of stones which they throw with surprising strength. Then

<sup>1</sup> This passage would seem to reinforce the view that the attack on the French had not been premeditated.

those whose muskets were able to be fired killed several of these madmen, but the other Indians paid no attention and continued to club us down. A number of them came up to the longboats while the others, numbering six or seven hundred, assailed us with an unremitting storm of stones.

The moment hostilities broke out I had thrown myself into the sea to get to the *Astrolabe's* boat where I had just noticed there was almost no one and no officer, this circumstance gave me strength enough for the short distance I had to cover in the water and, in spite of my weakness and a few stones that hit me at this moment, I was able to climb unaided into the boat; I saw with a feeling of despair that there was not a single weapon that was not wet and that all I could do was to get it into the water as soon as possible outside the reef. Meanwhile the battle continued and enormous stones thrown by the natives were still wounding a few of us, and as a wounded man fell in the sea he was finished off with paddles or clubs. Mr de Langle was the first victim of the ferocity of these barbarians to whom he had done nothing but good; at the first volley he was knocked over, covered in blood, across the longboat's thwart onto which he had climbed, and had fallen in the water with the Master-at-arms and the head carpenter who were next to him, the fury with which the Captain was set upon saved the latter two who were able to reach the boat. In a flash everyone who was in the longboats suffered the same fate as our unfortunate chief; with the exception of a few sailors who, fleeing, were able to reach the reef from where they swam to the boats. In less than four minutes the natives were masters of the two longboats, and I had the pain of seeing our unhappy companions massacred without being able to help them in any way. The *Astrolabe's* boat was still inside the reef and I expected at any moment that it would suffer the same fate as the longboats but the natives' greed saved us. Most of them had rushed into the longboats and the rest were satisfied with hurling stones at us, several however came into the channel and along the reef to wait for us; but in spite of their stones although many of us were seriously wounded, although there was a fairly strong swell and the wind was against us we managed to leave this dangerous place and join outside Mr Mouton who was in charge of the *Boussolé's* boat which he had lightened by throwing out the casks to make room for the men who were swimming and reaching his boat. In the *Astrolabe's* I had saved Messrs Boutin and Colinet who

were badly wounded and several other people. The unfortunate men who had stayed in the longboats having all been massacred, those who escaped into the boats were more or less seriously wounded, and so the boats were defenceless and it was out of the question to return to a bay from which we were only too lucky to get out in order to face a thousand furious barbarians, it would have meant risking certain death to no useful purpose.

We therefore set our course to return to the two frigates which at three o'clock at the time of the massacre had tacked out to sea, no one on board could imagine that we ran the slightest risk. The breeze was fresh and the frigates far to windward; an unfortunate circumstance for us and especially for those whose wounds urgently required dressing. At 4 o'clock they veered back to land; as soon as we were away from the reef I had the sail raised to get away from the coast, close to the wind on the starboard tack, and I had everything thrown into the sea that might slow the boat which was full of people. Fortunately the islanders who were busy looting the longboats did not follow us, all we had to defend ourselves with was four or five swords and two or three musket shots to fire which by chance were found in a powder-flask, feeble resources against two or three hundred barbarians armed with stones and clubs and who ride on very light canoes in which they keep the distance that suits them; some of these canoes left the bay shortly after we emerged, but they only sailed along the coast from which one of them went out to warn those that had remained by the frigates, they had the effrontery to make threatening gestures as they went past us, having only three musket shots to fire I was forced to delay my revenge, and to keep them to defend ourselves if we were attacked. What is extraordinary is that in spite of the warning several of them nevertheless stayed alongside the *Boussolé*, until the moment when that frigate fired a gun loaded with powder to disperse them.

When we were in the open sea I sailed against the wind towards the frigates which had just tacked towards the land, I had a red handkerchief placed at the top of the mast and as I came near I had the three remaining musket shots fired. Mr Mouton also signalled with two handkerchiefs which was an appeal for help, but we were noticed only when we were close to the ship, then the *Astrolabe* which was the closest sailed towards us; at half-past 4 I passed them those who were the most seriously wounded. Mr Mouton did the

same and we went on immediately on board the *Boussole* where I told the sad news to the commander. His surprise (after the precautions his prudence had inspired him to take and the justified confidence he had in Mr de Langle's caution) was extreme and I can only compare his distress to what I felt myself. This disaster sharply put us in mind of the one suffered on 13 July 1786 at Port des Français and increases the bitterness we feel about this voyage, though still lucky that the greater part of those who went ashore today have escaped, one sixth perished and without doubt none of us would have escaped had the fury of the natives not been stopped or diverted by their eagerness for pillage.

We lost from the *Astrolabe* the captain the Viscount de Langle, Jean Nedelec, Laurent Robin, Yves Hamon, François Ferré, sailors, Jean Giraud, servant, and a Chinese, total eight people, the *Boussole* only lost Mr de Lamanon, naturalist, Talin, master-at-arms, Roth and Joseph Rais, soldiers, total twelve men. Everyone was more or less badly hurt, those who were the most seriously are, on the *Boussole*, Messrs Boutin, Colinet and a soldier; and on the *Astrolabe*, Mr Lavo, the master-at-arms, the coxswain of the longboat and a sailor.<sup>1</sup> But it is confidently hoped that none of these wounds will be fatal. It is impossible to describe the effect this tragic event had on the two frigates, the death of Mr de Langle who had the trust and friendship of his crew caused despair throughout the *Astrolabe*. The islanders from the canoes who were unaware of this happening and who were alongside when I arrived almost became its victims and we had all the trouble in the world to prevent our sailors from sacrificing them to their justifiable resentment. The general sorrow which reigned on board is the finest testimonial to this captain; as for me I have lost a friend much more than a commanding officer, he showed a concern for me which will make me regret him for the rest of my life, I would have been only too happy if I could have proved to him my attachment and my gratitude, but this brave man, more prominently placed than the others, had been the first to fall under the blows of the ferocious beasts assailing us; in the weak state caused by my convalescence I had gone to shore without any

<sup>1</sup> Vaujuas mentions that eight people had been killed, but lists only seven. The omission is Louis David, an assistant gunner. The absence of a reference to Fr Receveur suggests that his injuries were not serious enough to explain his death a few weeks later, although Vaujuas does mention that Fr Receveur went ashore because he was not in good health and needed a break from shipboard life.

weapons and under the protection of the others; all the ammunition was used up or wet by the time I got to the boat where all I could do was to issue orders which unhappily were useless.

I would be unfair to those who like me had the good fortune to escape if I omitted to state that all of them behaved with utmost bravery and coolness. Messrs Boutin and Colinet who in spite of serious wounds kept their presence of mind were good enough to help me with advice I found most useful; I was also excellently helped by Mr de Gobien who was the last to leave the longboat and whose example, daring and words played an important part in reassuring those of the sailors who showed signs of anxiety; the petty officers, sailors and soldiers carried out with all the zeal and precision possible the orders they were given. Mr Mouton similarly had only praise for the *Boussole*'s crew, he had stopped as soon as he got away from the reef in order to throw overboard all his casks and make room for those who, having escaped from the carnage, had not been able to get into the *Astrolabe*'s boat and who consequently owe him their lives.

Everyone who went ashore can testify as I do that no careless action and no violent act on our part preceded the natives' attack, our captain had given the strictest orders in this respect and as no one ignored them I am sure they were carried out. Signed Vaujuas.'

On the morning of 14 December I set sail for the island of Oyolava<sup>1</sup> which we had sighted five days earlier before we reached the anchorage that proved so disastrous. It is the one of which the southern part was identified from a great distance by Mr de Bougainville and which he indicated on the map of this archipelago he provided; it is separated from Mahoua (or Massacre) Island by a strait of approximately 9 leagues, and the island of 'Thaiti can hardly stand comparison with it in respect of its beauty, size, fertility and enormous population; when we got to within 3 leagues of its north-eastern point we were surrounded by numberless canoes loaded with breadfruit, coconuts, bananas, sugar cane, pigeons and sultana hens; but very few pigs. These Indians no doubt assuming that we preferred fruit to them. They were absolutely similar to those of Mahoua Island by whom we had been so

<sup>1</sup> The island is Upolu. The strait is somewhat wider than La Pérouse's estimate of 9 leagues: the distance between Cape Tapaga on south-east Upolu and Taputapu at the western extremity of Tutuila is closer to 40 miles (slightly over 11 leagues).

perfidiously betrayed; their costume, their features, their gigantic size were so much the same that our sailors declared they could identify several of the murderers, and I had great difficulty in preventing them from firing on them, but I was sure that they were blinded by their just anger, and a revenge which I had not felt was permissible against canoes from Mahouana itself, who were alongside my ship when I learned of this awful event, could not be taken four days later in another island 15 leagues from the battlefield. I therefore succeeded in calming this excitement and we carried on our trade but with more tranquility and good faith than at Mahouana Island because we punished the slightest act of injustice with blows or threats and angry words, and the islanders of Mahouana had taken our earlier moderation as a sign of weakness. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon we hove to athwart the largest village of any island of the South Seas,<sup>1</sup> or rather opposite a very wide plain filled with houses from the hilltops down to the edge of the sea; these mountains are situated in roughly the middle of the island where the land slopes down very gently and offers vessels the sight of a superb amphitheatre covered with trees, huts and greenery. One could see the smoke of fires, as in the centre of a large town, and the sea was filled with canoes trying to get near our vessels; several were rowed by men who were led by curiosity, having nothing to sell us, and went round our vessels, seeming to have no other aim than to enjoy the spectacle we provided.

As there were women and children among them it was an almost sure sign that they harboured no evil intentions, but we had strong reasons not to trust in this any longer, and our arrangements were made to repel the slightest hostile act in a way that would have caused these islanders to be fearful of any future navigators. I tend somewhat to believe that we are the first to trade with these people, they had no knowledge of iron, they continually scorned it and they preferred a single bead to an axe or a six-inch nail; in general they looked for nothing in their bartering that might be of any use to them; they are a wealthy people who require only superfluities and luxury items. Among a fairly large number of women I noticed two or three who were very pretty and who one could have

<sup>1</sup> Apia is today the capital of Western Samoa; it grew rapidly in size during the early to mid-nineteenth century, but even in the eighteenth century it was an important settlement.

thought had served as a model for the charming drawing of the Present Bearer of Cook's third voyage,<sup>1</sup> their hair was adorned with flowers and a green ribbon like a head-band plaited with grass and moss, their shape was elegant, their arms rounded and very well proportioned, their eyes, their features, their movements spoke of gentleness whereas those of the men depicted ferocity and surprise. In any one sculptor's study the latter would have been taken for Hercules and the young women for Diana, or her nymphs whose complexion would have been exposed for quite some time to the effects of the open air and the sun.

At nightfall we continued on our way, coasting along the island, and the canoes returned to land where we could see numerous breakers and which offered no shelter to vessels because it was the northern coast which is battered by N.E. winds and a very rough sea; it is more likely that if I had intended to anchor I would have found an excellent shelter in the western part and navigators should almost always seek anchorages to leeward of islands situated between the tropics; I was held in a dead calm throughout the next day. There was a great deal of lightning, thunder and rain; very few canoes came out, which convinced me that they had been told at Oyolava about the events that had befallen us in the island of Mahouana and moral science was not sufficiently advanced among these people for them to know that we would have not wanted any other victims than the murderers themselves; and that they had already on the previous day tested our moderation; since it is possible that the storm and the lightning flashes might have kept the canoes in their harbours, my opinion was only a guess which became much more of a probability on the 17th when we were off the island of Pola<sup>2</sup> which we coasted along much nearer land than we had done with Oyolava and no canoe came up to us; this island, a little smaller than Oyolava but as beautiful, is only separated from it by a channel of about 4 leagues obstructed by two fairly large islands<sup>3</sup> one of

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to an engraving by Francesco Bartolozzi of a drawing by John Webber, entitled *A Young Woman of Oiahitte, bringing a Present*, which appeared in Cook and King, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*, London, 1784, pl. 27. The engraving gives a highly stylised and romanticised image of an island girl.

<sup>2</sup> Pola, which La Pérouse accurately situates between 13°26' and 13°42'S and 174°16' and 174°54' W of Paris, is the island of Savaii. This was a major new discovery, as neither Roggeveen nor Bougainville had sighted it.

<sup>3</sup> Both new discoveries, the islands in Apollima Strait are Manono and Apollima. The latter is of volcanic origin, while Manono consists of basalt and sandy soil.

which, very low lying and very wooded, is certainly inhabited. The north coast of Pola is impracticable for ships as are the other islands of this group, but when we rounded its western point<sup>1</sup> we saw a calm sea and clear of breakers which gave promise of some excellent roadsteads; as I believe the public is owed some detailed information on these islands I shall make it the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XX

*Departure from the island of Mahouana, new details on the customs and practices of these people, their crafts and the country's products. Basis for a belief that they do not all share the same origin, and that the natives of these islands were before the mixing of the two black nations dark and frizzy-haired like the inhabitants of New Guinea and the Hebrides, their form of government maintains their ferocity; we come upon the islands of Cocos and Traitors further east than their location reported by Captain Wallis. We think that they belong to the ten islands which the inhabitants of Mahouana told us comprised their archipelago, the islanders from both islands promptly come on board and offer us coconuts, breadfruit and bananas in exchange for our beads and our iron tools which they did not scorn like the Navigators; a heavy squall which capsizes many of the canoes compels us to put an end to such a satisfactory trade and go on our way towards the Friendly Islands. The islanders of the Cocos and Traitors are not so tall and robust as those of the Navigators Islands, but their canoes and their dress are absolutely similar. We come upon Vavao Island and various adjacent islands forming part of the Friendly Islands which Cap. Cook had known about only from the islanders' reports but which the pilot Morel had sighted before us: precise determination of these islands which he had situated 5 or 6 degrees further east than their true position. Comparison of our longitudes with those of Captain Cook. At the island of Tongataboo they only differed by 6 minutes. The inhabitants of Tongataboo hasten to come on board and trade with us. Quite remarkable difference between the physique of these people and of those we had already seen. The former's size does not differ in any respect from the Europeans' and their behaviour, although noisy, has nothing wild about it. We come upon Pilstard Island which is only a rock less than a mile round and has been badly described by the navigators who have preceded us. We anchor at Norfolk Island, where we find such a rough sea that our boats cannot find a sheltered place to land. Description of this island. Arrival at Botany Bay in New Holland,*

<sup>1</sup> The western point of Savaiti is Cape Pua'a.

where we meet the English fleet commanded by Cap<sup>n</sup> Philip. It had arrived a mere 5 days before us.

We learned from the islanders themselves that the Navigators archipelago consisted of ten islands, Opouna the easternmost, Léoné, Fanfoué, Mahouna, Oyolava, Calinassé, Pola, Shika, Ossano and Ouera.<sup>1</sup>

We are unaware of the last three's position. They placed them (on a map we drew in front of them) to the south of Oyolava, but if they were where they claimed it would be impossible, from Mr de Bougainville's route, that this navigator did not see them and all the patience and sagacity of Mr Blondelas who devoted himself particularly to obtaining some geographical clarification from the islanders did not allow him to hazard any guess on their position, but the remainder of our navigation taught us that two of the three islands were looking for might be the Cocos and Traitors islands which Captain Wallis's observations had placed one degree fifteen minutes too far west.

Apouna, the southernmost and easternmost of these islands, lies in 14<sup>d</sup> 7' of latitude and 189<sup>d</sup> 51' of longitude Paris meridian, the latitude of Pola, the northernmost and westernmost of this archipelago, is in 13 and [blank] of longitude; a glance at the chart will give a better impression of their respective positions, their sizes, their distances relative to each other than any details; one point of each island is shown on the same chart with precise latitude and longitude determinations obtained from several lunar distances which were used to correct the errors of our chronometers.

<sup>1</sup> These names reveal a state of utter confusion. Some are district names, others those of villages, possibly even of local chiefs. The easternmost island is not Opouna, but Tau — this 'Opouna', later spelled Apouna, might be the island of Aunu'u east of Tutuila; Leone is a village and bay in southern Tutuila; Fanfoue seems to indicate Olosega; Mahouna is not the island to which La Pérouse refers, but is the name (Manua) of the group to which Olosega and Tau belong; the position La Pérouse gives for Oyolava is that of Upolu, and he may have picked up from his informants the name of Aolo'au Bay on Tutuila; his Pola is the island of Savaii, but there was a district called Polo'a in Tutuila. Directions tend to be roughly accurate but, as often happens with local informants, distances are much smaller than the Europeans, accustomed to travelling further afield, realised. All this shows how dangerous it is to interpret information provided by natives in a language the visitors did not understand. La Pérouse had encountered similar problems in the Gulf of Tartary.

## PART OF MAOUNA

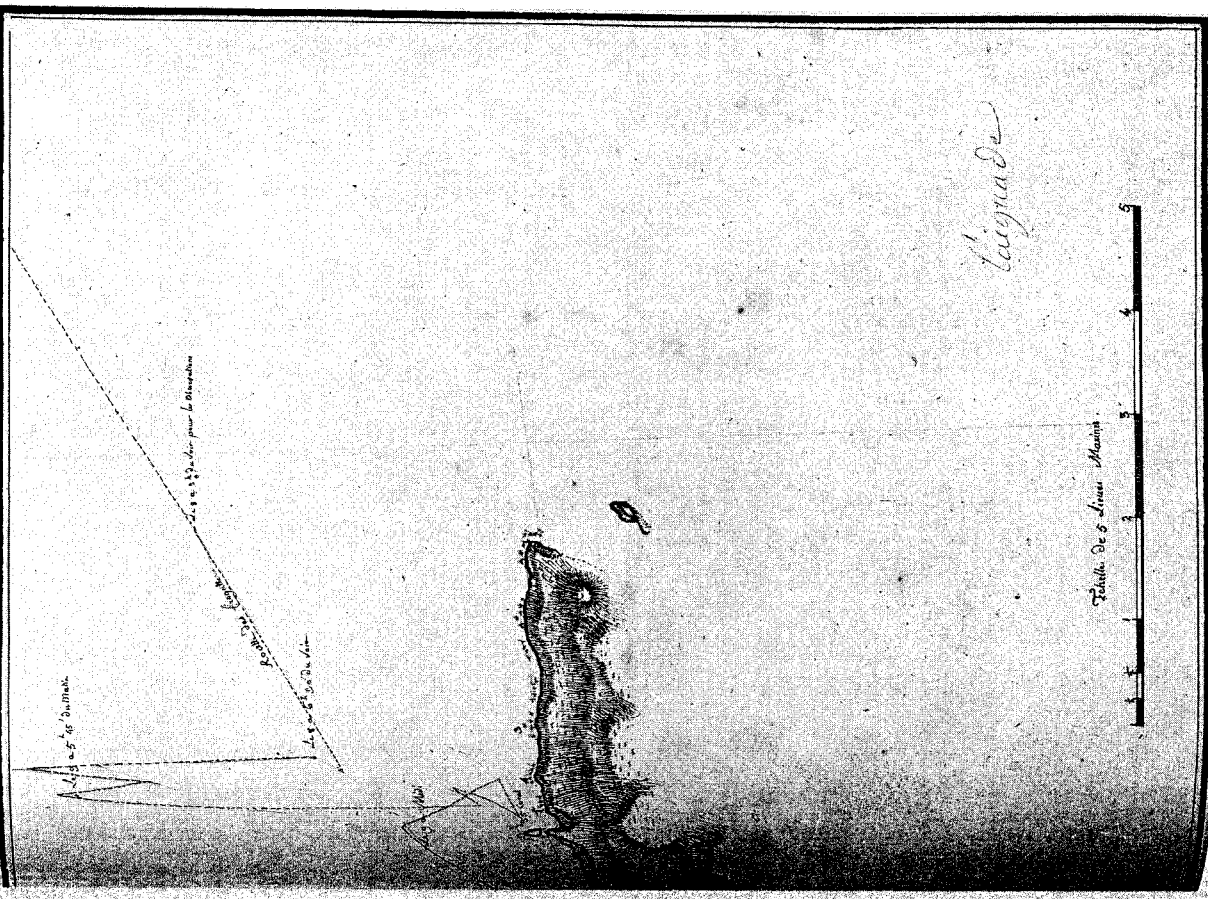
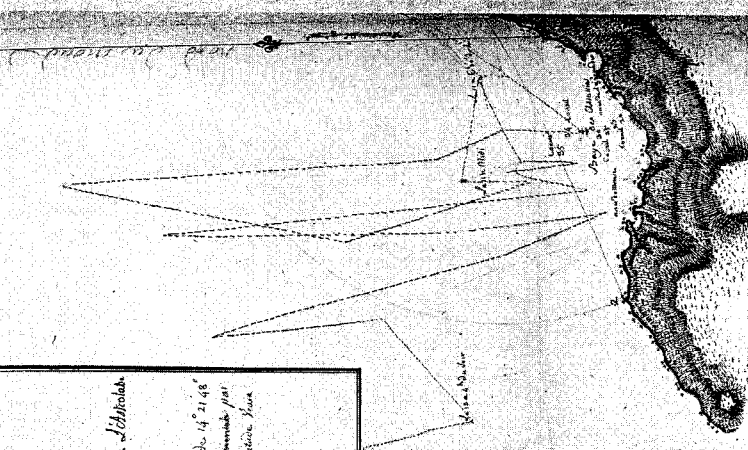
24. Chart of part of Maouna (Tutuila), showing the track of the expedition in December 1787. By Blondela. Actual size 46 cm × 34 cm. AN 6 JJ1:47.

# PLAN D'UNE PARTIE DE L'ÎLE MAOUNA

Vue par les Français français La Boussole et Schickeloh  
en Decembre 1787.

La latitude de Maounga est de 14° 21' 48"  
et la longitude orientale de  
Maounga est de 186° 40' 57" de longitude orientale 181°  
et 18° à l'ouest il faut ajouter encore 22 pour avoir la longitude vraie.

Bouss. 1787

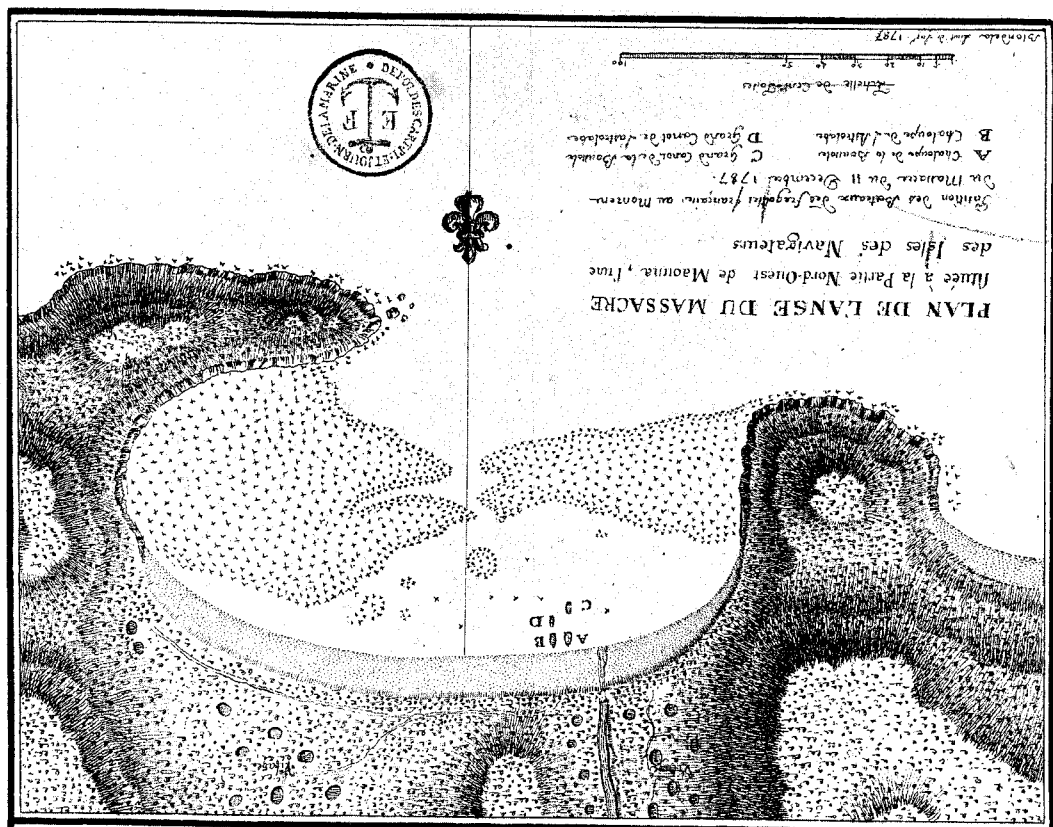


Several geographers attribute this discovery to Rogewin who in 1721 named them Beauman Islands, but neither the historical information on these people nor the geographical location the historian of Rogewin's voyage assigns to these islands coincides with this opinion.

The historical account of Rogewin's voyage reported by Président de Brosses was written in the French language in 1739 by a German born in Mecklenbourg, a sergeant-major of the troops who sailed with Rogewin's fleet<sup>1</sup> 'we discovered, says the sergeant-major, three islands together in the 12th degree of latitude; they seemed of a very pleasant appearance, we found them covered with fine fruit trees and all kinds of grasses, vegetables and plants. The islanders who came to meet our vessels offered us all kinds of fish, coconuts, bananas, and other excellent fruit, these islands must be well populated, since when we arrived the shore was lined with several thousand men and women. Most of the former carried bows and arrows. All those who inhabit these islands are white and differ from Europeans in no other respect than that they are sunburned; they seemed to be good people, lively, and merry in their conversation, gentle and humane towards each other and there was no sign of savagery in their manners, nor did they have their bodies painted like those of the islands we had discovered earlier, they were dressed from the waist to their heels with a fringed cloth of artistically woven silk, their heads were covered with a similar very fine and very large hat to protect them from the fierceness of the sun; some of these islands had a circumference of ten, fourteen and up to twenty miles. We called them Beauman Islands after the

<sup>1</sup> Jacob Roggeveen (1659-1729) sailed from Texel on 1 August 1721 with the *Arend*, the *Thienhoven* and the *Afrikaansche Galey*, entered the Pacific through the Strait of Le Maire and discovered Easter Island on 5 April 1722; in June he discovered the Manua group, Tutuila and Upolu. Tutuila was called Thienhoven and Upolu Groeningen. When he reached the Dutch East Indies, his remaining two ships were seized on the grounds that the voyage infringed the Dutch East Indies Company's monopoly. Cornelis Bouman was captain of the *Thienhoven*, and the Manua group was named after him. The historian in question was Carl Friedrich Behrens, a native of Mecklenburg who took part in the expedition and wrote *Reise durch Süd-Länder und um die Welt*, Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1737, which contains a number of inaccuracies and exaggerations; it was translated into French and widely read under the title *Histoire de l'expédition de trois vaisseaux envoyés par la Compagnie des Indes occidentales des Provinces-Unies aux terres australes en MDCCXXI*. The Hague, 1739. La Pérouse underlined in this paragraph the parts which he considered to be totally at variance with what he had found when he sailed off Tau, Olosega and the rest of the Samoas.

25. Massacre Cove, Maouna (Tutuila), showing the position of the longboats (near the shore) and the supporting boats on 11 December 1787. By Blondela. AN 6 III:46.





captain of the ship *Tienhoven* who had been the first to sight them; it must be said, adds the author, that it is the most humanised and the most honest nation we found in the South Seas; the entire coastline of these islands provide good anchorages, one can anchor in between 13 and 20 fathoms of water.<sup>1</sup>

The remainder of this chapter will prove that these details have almost no connection with those we have to give on the people of the Navigators Islands, and since the geographical position is no more applicable to them (there is a German map on which Roge-win's route is traced and which situates it in 15 degrees which is not correct) I believe Beauman's islands not to be the same as those to which Mr de Bougainville gave the name of Navigators and which it seems to me to be necessary to retain for fear of introducing into geography a confusion of names that would be very harmful to the progress of that science. These islands situated between the 13th and the 14th degrees of latitude and the 18th and [blank] of longitude Paris meridian, comprise one of the finest archipelagos anywhere in the South Seas, as interesting for its crafts, its products and its population as those of the Society or Friendly islands which the English navigators have made so well known to us;<sup>1</sup> although we remained only a moment among these people, our misfortunes enabled us to analyse their character better than if frightened by our weapons fear had made them hide, and the most cruel experience taught us that it is futile to try to obtain through good turns the goodwill of these ferocious souls which can only be held back by fear.

The people of these islands are the tallest and most robustly built we have met. Their quite normal size is 5 feet 9, 10 or 11 inches, but they are less surprising by their height than by the colossal proportions of their bodies; our curiosity which led us to take quite frequent measurements enabled them to compare their physical strength to ours, which was not in our favour, and we may owe our misfortunes to the idea of superiority which they gained from these various trials; their expression often seemed to me to indicate

<sup>1</sup> The English navigators are, for the Society Islands, Samuel Wallis and James Cook, but La Pérouse could have mentioned his compatriot Louis de Bougainville's immensely popular account. As far as the Friendly Islands (the Tongan group) are concerned, the English navigators are also Wallis and Cook, but the first European visitors were Dutch: Schouten and Le Maire in 1616 and Abel Tasman in 1643. The name Friendly Archipelago was bestowed on them by Cook.

a feeling of scorn towards us, which I thought I could dispel by ordering our weapons to be used in front of them, my purpose would have been met only if I had had them aimed at victims, anyhow they looked upon the noise as a diversion and a joke.

A very small number of these islanders are below the size I have mentioned, and I had some measured at 5 feet 4 inches, but they are this country's dwarves, and the latter's strong and sinewy arms, their wide chest, their legs and their thighs are very differently proportioned to ours; it can be stated that they are to Europeans what Danish horses are to those of our various provinces.

The men are painted or tattooed in such a way that one could almost believe they are clothed although they are always absolutely naked, having only a belt of seaweed around the waist and down to the knees which makes them look like these rivers that the fable has personified and our painters adorned with reeds. Their hair is very long, they often tie it up over their heads and thereby increase the ferocity of their features; they always display either surprise or anger, the slightest dispute that arises among them is followed by blows, with sticks, clubs or paddles, which can often cost them their lives, and they are all either wounded or covered with scars that must be the result of these private fights. The women also are very tall and before their springtime has ended they have lost the shapes and that gentle expression, which Nature has never withheld from these uncivilised people but which it seems to leave with them for only an instant and reluctantly. Among a very large number of women I found only three who were very pretty; the rough impudent expression of the others, their indecent gestures, the off-putting way they offered their favours, everything made them in our eyes seem worthy of being the wives or the mothers of the ferocious beings surrounding us. As the story of our voyage can add a few pages to that of mankind I will not omit pictures that might shock in any other kind of book and I shall mention that the very small number of young and pretty island girls I referred to soon attracted the attention of a few Frenchmen who in spite of my orders endeavoured to establish links of intimacy with them; since our Frenchmen's eyes revealed their desires they were soon discovered; some old women negotiated the transaction, an altar was set up in the most prominent hut, all the blinds were lowered, inquisitive spectators were driven off; the victim was placed within the arms of an old man who exhorted her to moderate her sorrow,

for she was weeping; the matrons sang and howled during the ceremony,<sup>1</sup> and the sacrifice was consummated in the presence of the women and the old man who was acting as altar and priest. All the village's women and children were around and outside the house, lightly raising the blinds and seeking the slightest gaps between the mats to enjoy this spectacle. Whatever navigators who preceded us might say, I am convinced that at least in the Navigators Islands girls are mistresses of their own favours before marriage, their complaisance casts no dishonour on them, and it is more than likely that when they marry they are under no obligation to account of their past behaviour. But I have no doubt that they are required to show more restraint when they are married.

Some of their crafts are also very advanced, I have already mentioned the elegant shape of their houses, and they rightfully rejected all our iron tools, since they managed so well all their wood working with axes made of a very fine and very compact basalt shaped into adzes; and they sold us for a few glass beads wooden dishes affixed to three feet holding them up like a tripod and which seemed to be painted with the finest varnish, a good European worker would have needed several days to carry out such a task which on account of their lack of tools must take them several months of work;<sup>2</sup> they set almost no value on it because their time has none, trees and roots of [blank] and haro<sup>3</sup> growing wild ensure their subsistence, that of their pigs, their dogs, their hens, and they spend their days in idleness or engaged in tasks that have no other purpose than their clothing and their luxury; they know and they make some paper-cloth similar to that of the Society and Friendly Islands; they sold us several lengths of a single reddish-brown colour. It seems that they do not prize it very much and have little use for it, the women prefer mats that are extremely well plaited and I saw only two or three men whom I took to be chiefs who had instead of a grass skirt a length of material wrapped around them like a skirt, this cloth is woven with a true thread drawn no doubt

<sup>1</sup> This may be the wedding chant or *tigi*.

<sup>2</sup> La Pérouse is presumably referring to the dishes used in kava ceremonies, some of which are very ornate.

<sup>3</sup> Miller-Mureau, presumably perplexed by the word 'haro', omitted it from the printed account of the voyage. It is an error for taro (in Samoan *talo*), the *Colocasia antiquorum* which is widespread throughout Polynesia.

from some ligneous plant, like a nettle or flax,<sup>1</sup> it is made without a shuttle and the threads are woven through absolutely as with the mats, this cloth has both the suppleness and the strength of our own, is very suitable for their canoe sails and cannot be compared in respect of its advantages to the paper cloth of the other islands which they also manufacture but seem to disdain.

At first we had found no similarity of language with our vocabularies from the Society and Friendly Islands but more careful study convinced us that they speak a dialect of the same tongue;<sup>2</sup> which adds further confirmation of the view held by the English on these people's origin; that is because a young servant from Manila who was born in Cagayan province north of Manila could understand and explain to us the greater part of the islanders' words; it is known that Coyayon, Talgale<sup>3</sup> and in general all the languages of the Philippines are derived from Malay, which language more widely spread than Greek or Latin is used by the innumerable peoples who live in the South Sea in the islands of both hemispheres; I consider it proved that these various nations are merely Malay colonies which in very remote periods conquered these islands, and the so-called antiquity of the Chinese and Egyptians, the reigns of Sesotris &c may well be recent events compared with these which I would not be rash enough to give a date for, but I am convinced that the indigenous people of the Philippines, of Formosa, New Guinea, New Britain, the Hebrides, the Friendly Isles &c in the southern hemisphere: and of the Carolines, the Marianas, the Sandwich Islands in the northern hemisphere were these frizzy-haired men who still live deep in the interior of the Luzon islands and of Formosa, whom it was impossible to subjugate in New Guinea, New Britain and the Hebrides and who, defeated in the islands further east, which were too small for them to find a refuge

<sup>1</sup> The leaves of the *ti* (*Cordyline terminalis*) were normally used for this. La Pérouse may be referring to the '*ie itu pupu'u*, a high-quality loin-cloth reserved for chiefs. See on this Te Rangī Hiroa, *Samoan Material Culture*, Honolulu, 1930, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> In fact, Samoan can be considered as one of the purer forms of the Polynesian language. A number of specialists consider the Samoan Islands to have been the cradle of Polynesia, from where migrating parties left for the Marquesas and other archipelagos within the Polynesian triangle. However, allowance must be made for the natural evolution of a language throughout the centuries in a closed environment, even if one sees it as the mother tongue from which different dialects developed.

<sup>3</sup> 'Talgale' is Tagalog, the major native language of the Philippines. 'Coyayon' is a mis-spelling for Cagayan in northern Luzon where several dialects still subsist.

in the centre of these said islands, intermarried with the conquering people and gave rise to that very dark race of men whose colour retains ten shades more than the skin of those families presumably distinguished in their countries who made it a point of honour not to marry beneath them. We were particularly impressed by these two very distinct races in the Navigators Islands and I do not attribute any other origin to this.<sup>1</sup> These people have acquired in these islands a vigour, a strength, a size and proportions which they did not inherit from their fathers and no doubt owe to the abundance of food and the ease with which it is obtained, to the mildness of the climate and to various physical causes that generally influence all living beings after a great number of generations. The crafts they may have brought with them have been lost on account of the lack of the appropriate raw materials, and so they no longer have any knowledge of iron or shuttles; their marine soon reduced to canoes has not enabled them to make long voyages, they became isolated, and forgot an origin about which it would be foolish to speculate if the similarity of language did not provide in this labyrinth the Oriane's thread<sup>2</sup> that enables all the twists and turns to be followed. The feudal form of government has also been kept here and it still

exists in all its force in the motherland.<sup>1</sup> This form of government which minor tyrants might regret, which tarnished Europe for some centuries and whose remnants still complicate our laws, and are the tokens of our former barbarousness, this government is the one most likely to preserve the ferocity of daily life, because the slightest interests lead to warfare between one village and the next and these kinds of wars are fought without magnanimity, without courage, sudden attacks and treachery being used in turn, and in these unfortunate countries instead of noble warriors one finds only murderers. The Malays are still today the most perfidious nation in Asia and their children have not degenerated because the same motivations have retained and produced the same results. It will be argued perhaps that it must have been very difficult for the Malays to travel from west to east to reach these various islands, but in the neighbourhood of the equator within a belt of seven or eight degrees north and south the westerly winds are at least as frequent as those from the east and they are so variable among these different islands that it is hardly more difficult to sail towards the east as to go down to the west; moreover these conquests did not occur at the same period, they spread from one group to the next and everywhere introduced this form of government which still exists in the Malay peninsula, in Java, Sumatra, Borneo and in all the countries that are under the sway of that barbarous nation.

Among the fifteen or eighteen hundred islanders we had the opportunity of observing at least thirty declared themselves to be chiefs, they exercised a form of policing and doled out great blows with their sticks, but the order they seemed intent on maintaining was upset in less than a minute, never were sovereigns less obeyed, and never were insubordination and anarchy more tumultuous.

Mr de Bougainville was quite justified in naming them the Navigators; all their travel is made by canoe and they never walk from one village to another. These villages are all situated in coves at the water's edge and tracks are all they have to penetrate into the interior of the island which is covered up to the hilltops with fruit-laden trees where the most charming birds are perched, such as wood-pigeons, turtles-doves, green, pink or of various other

<sup>1</sup> The reference to feudalism surviving in the motherland, i.e. France, was naturally deleted from the printed edition which was published in 1797 after the French Revolution had swept away most of the old privileges of the aristocracy.

<sup>1</sup> This lengthy analysis indicates that La Pérouse and no doubt his officers with him thought at length about the origins of the peoples of the South Seas. He notices the presence of two different races, the Polynesians and the Melanians, but also the wide range of features and skin shades which made it difficult for scientists and ethnologists to establish clear dividing lines. The French show an awareness of the influence of the physical and cultural environment in which people live and, long before the theories blossomed into Darwinism, speculate on evolution. He is clearly of the view that migrations, in successive waves, occurred in distant times, disagreeing with those who held the view that it was a cohesive movement of relatively recent date. Current theories are that, after a slow and progressive advance along the Indonesian chain and from East Asia, skirting the more southerly lands earlier occupied by the Melanians' Austronesian ancestors, a new race emerged, centred on the Tongan-Samoan archipelagos, which some four or thousand years ago developed a culture adapted to its island environment and in time spread to other distant island groups. The question cannot easily be resolved and differing views are still strongly defended. A number are discussed in recent works, such as P. Bellwood, *Man's Conquest of the Pacific*, Auckland, 1978; R. & M.E. Shulter, *Oceanic Prehistory*, Menlo Park, 1975; and K.R. Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, Sydney, 1984, especially his pp. 5-24 and his useful detailed bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> 'Oriane' is Ariadne, daughter of King Minos of Crete, who enabled Theseus to escape from the Minotaur's labyrinth by providing him with a ball of string he unwound as he entered and wound up again to retrace his steps. The reference to canoes making long voyages impossible is not quite correct. Travel to distant islands was possible, but apart from migrations due to overpopulation the incentive for long voyages, e.g. for trade, did not exist.

colours; charming parakeets, a type of blackbird, we even saw some partridges<sup>1</sup> and they sold us more than three hundred sultan hens with the finest plumage; they relieve the boredom caused by their idleness by taming these birds, their houses were filled with these doves I mentioned earlier which they bartered by the hundred and which seemed to eat only when fed by hand.

Their canoes are fitted with an outrigger<sup>2</sup> and are very small although they can take up to 14 people but most only take five or six; they did not seem to us to deserve the praise the travellers lavished on their speed; I do not believe it exceeds seven knots under sail, and with the paddles they were unable to keep up with us when we were doing four miles an hour. These Indians are such good swimmers that they use their canoes only to rest in, since they get swamped with the slightest movement they are forced time and again to jump into the sea, hold them up on their shoulders and empty them; they sometimes join two of these canoes together by means of a wooden crosspiece<sup>3</sup> in which they make a mast-hole, in this way they capsize less frequently and they can keep their supplies for long voyages; their sails made of mats or plaited cloth are spritsails and do not warrant any special description.

They only fish with a line or with a cast-net; they sold us nets and fish-hooks that were very artistically fashioned out of mother-of-pearl or of a white shell in the shape of a flying fish concealing a hook made of a turtle shell that was strong enough to hold a tunny fish, a bonito or a dorado.<sup>4</sup> They bartered the largest fish for a few glass beads and we could see they were not worried about any food shortage.

These islands are of volcanic origin and all the stones along the shore were only pieces of lava and smoothed basalt or of the coral which surrounds the whole island and on which the sea breaks with

<sup>1</sup> The blackbird is probably the *Tutumatili* (*Turdus paliocephalus samoensis*) which is a black bird with a yellow beak. There were no partridges in the Samoas: La Pérouse presumably saw a *ve'a* (*Rallus philippensis goodsoni*) a small bird with parallel brown and whitish stripes, or some *puna'e* (*Pareudiastes pacificus*), formerly widespread in Tutuila and Savaii, but now extinct.

<sup>2</sup> Samoan canoes were of different sizes and types. They ranged from the simple hollowed-out tree-trunk, the *paopao*, to the double-outrigger *va'ala*, and the double decked *taumu'ala*.

<sup>3</sup> The double canoe, *'alia*, was used for inter-island voyaging. The sail was of a quadrangular shape, suspended from a large crosspiece and lashed to the mast.

<sup>4</sup> The bonito hooks were known as *pa'atu*; their shape and composition varied according to the specific fishing requirements and often from district to district.

a fury that sends the waves up to a height of more than 50 feet; this coral leaves in the middle of almost all the coves a narrow pass for canoes or even boats and longboats and thus creates very adequate small harbours for the islanders who never leave their canoes in the water; when they arrive they store them near their houses as we do with our carriages: they place them in the shade under the trees and they are so light that two men can carry them on their shoulders. The liveliest imagination could hardly conjure up more agreeable sites than those where their villages are located: under trees laden with fruit that retain a delicious coolness, on the banks of a stream trickling down from the hills, along which they have made for half a league into the interior a small path lined with houses; all their architectural style is designed to preserve them from the heat and I have already stated that they have not overlooked the need for elegance; the houses are surrounded by roll-up blinds which they raise up on the side of the breeze and lower on the sunny side; they are large enough for several families; they sleep on very fine and very clean mats laid on the soil which has been raised up at least two feet above ground level, and quite protected from the damp; we saw no *morai* and we cannot report anything on their religious ceremonies.

Pigs, dogs,<sup>1</sup> hens, birds, fish abound in these islands which are covered with coconut trees, breadfruit trees,<sup>2</sup> guava, grapefruit, bananas and another tree which produces a large almond one eats cooked and which we found tasted like chestnuts. Sugar canes grow wild along the riverbanks<sup>3</sup> with plants whose roots are very similar to those of yams or camagons;<sup>4</sup> the sugar canes are watery

<sup>1</sup> The Samoan dog, the *'ufi*, was small and had pointed ears.

<sup>2</sup> La Pérouse uses the term *rimas* which so puzzled Milet-Mureau that he left it out of the printed version. Rima was a vernacular term for the breadfruit tree in use in the Philippines. It appears in P. Sonnerat, *Voyage à la Nouvelle-Guinée*, Paris, 1776, which La Pérouse no doubt had on board and which includes a section on the Philippines. The term had a very limited use.

<sup>3</sup> Sugar cane, or *tolo*, was used as food, but more for roofing. Among other products mentioned, the coconut is the *cocos nucifera*, which was very widespread in the Samoas and later formed the basis for a substantial copra industry; the banana is the *'fa'i*, now one of Samoa's major exports; the grapefruit is the *citrus maximus* - La Pérouse uses the term *pomples moussiers* which Milet-Mureau could not identify and left out of the printed edition: the French name *pamplemousse* is now in general use and comes from the Dutch term *pompelmoes*.

<sup>4</sup> Yams or *ufi* (*Dioscorea*) were widespread in the islands. La Pérouse may also have seen the masoa (*Tacca pinnatifida*), sometimes called the Polynesian arrowroot.

and less sweet than those of our colonies, no doubt because they grow in the shade on too heavy a land that has never been worked over. Dangerous though it was to venture into the interior of the island, Mr de la Martiniere and Colignon obeyed more the impulses of their zeal than the rules of caution, they collected several plants and Mr de la Martiniere who was attacked with stones swam towards our boats keeping his bag on his back. The Indians wanted one glass bead for every plant he picked up and threatened to knock him down with their stones if he refused to pay; until the 11th we saw no other weapons than clubs or *patow patow*, but Mr Boutin assured me he had seen that afternoon several bundles of arrows without any bow.<sup>1</sup> I am rather inclined to think that these arrows were spears used for fishing, and they would be a hundred times less dangerous than the stones weighing two or three pounds they throw with extreme skill and the power of a sling. These islands are very extensive and extremely fertile, and I believe they have a very considerable population; the eastern ones, Opouna, Léoné, Fan-foué, are small, the last two especially have a circumference of scarcely five miles, but Mahouana where we suffered such a great misfortune, Oyolava in particular and Pola must be reckoned among the largest and the finest in the South Sea. There is nothing in the various navigators' accounts to compare with the beauty and the great size of the village to leeward of which we hove to on the northern coast of Oyolava; it was a little late, however the sea was filled with canoes which the desire of seeing us or of trading with us brought out from their harbour; several brought nothing and were simply coming to enjoy the spectacle we provided; some were very small, containing only one man, the latter were highly decorated with at the end of every peg a shell of the porcelain variety,<sup>2</sup> since they were going around the ships without attempting any barter we called them the gigs — they had their drawbacks, at any moment the slightest choc from other canoes caused them to capsize; we had no intercourse with the large and superb island of

<sup>1</sup> The observation is correct. Samoans did have arrows (and bows) which they used mainly for fishing in rivers or lagoons. The bow or *aifana* was made with the wood of the *fisoa* (*Columbrina asiatica*); the arrows were made by fixing two or three slivers of hardwood to a reed or bamboo stalk, and their length was variable.

<sup>2</sup> These decorations were often signs of rank or wealth. The white shell of the *pule* (*Ovulium*) was quite scarce and consequently most valuable and sought after as an indication of status.

Pola which we hauled along very close in, which made me suspect that the news of our disaster had reached them; rounding the western extremity of this latter island we saw a calm sea that seemed to offer a promise of good anchoring places at least when the winds were north to south by east; the tension among our crews was still too great for me to decide to anchor there; it was impossible to send them ashore after what had happened to us, without arming each man with a musket and each boat with a swivel-gun and everything the islanders did would have seemed an unjust action which they would have repressed with musket shots, which could have been fatal to both sides; moreover in these mediocre anchoring places a ship always runs the risk of destruction when there is no boat capable of carrying an anchor which one can use for warping the ship, and I had taken the firm decision to anchor only in Botany Bay where I planned to build a new longboat for which we had the material on board, but I had decided to sail through this labyrinth of islands along routes which might make me discover islands for the advancement of geography, and I planned to trade with these people while hove to near their islands. On the evening of 17 December we rounded the western coast of Pola Island and lost sight of land; there were only three islands missing which the islanders had called Shika, Ossamo, Ouera, and which they had located to the south of Oyolava; I endeavoured to sail south-south-east. The E.S.E. winds at first were unfavourable, they were very weak and we were making only eight or ten leagues a day; they finally veered north and then north-west, which enabled me to progress toward the east and to sight on the 20th a round island precisely to the south of Oyolava but at a distance of almost 40 leagues. Mr de Bougainville who had sailed between the two islands did not see it because he was a few leagues too far north; the lack of wind did not allow me to approach it the same day, but on the morrow I came to within two leagues and I saw two other small islands south of the first one, which I identified easily as the islands of Cocos and Traitors of Schouten or of Boscawoent and Kepel of Wallis, the island of Boscawoent or Cocos is only a very steep sugarloaf covered right up to the top in trees, of a diameter not exceeding one league, separated from Traitors Island which is flat and low lying and has only a fairly high hill in the centre, by a strait of three miles approximately, which is even blocked by an tiny islet which we sighted off the north-east

point of Traitors Island, but we had the opportunity of checking and of being certain that the latter is divided in two by a small channel 150 toises wide which neither Schouten nor Walis had a chance to see because one needs to be absolutely in line with this strait's opening and we would not even have suspected its existence if we had not coasted along the island very close in this area. We had no further doubt that these three islands which have to be counted as merely two were those of Shika and Ossamo of the Navigators group. As there was a strong N. W. gale, it was late and the weather looked bad,<sup>1</sup> we were not really surprised not to see any canoes coming up to us and I decided to spend the night on short tacks in order to examine these islands more closely the next day, trade with these people and obtain some refreshments; the weather was squally and the winds varied only between N. W. to N. N. W. I had seen a few breakers on the N. W. point of Traitors Island, which caused me to tack out a little to sea. At daylight I sailed closer to this latter island, which being much flatter and larger than Cocos Island seemed to have more inhabitants<sup>2</sup> and at 8 a. m. I hove to two miles W. S. W. of a large sandy bay on the western side of the large Traitors Island where I did not doubt there was an anchorage but in fact impracticable with the north-westerlies blowing at that moment but well sheltered from the east,<sup>3</sup> twenty to twenty-two canoes came out at once from the coast and came up

<sup>1</sup> Bougainville had encountered bad weather in these waters, 'Cloudy stormy weather with rain at intervals... Never was there a darker night.' Journal entry of 6-7 May 1768, *Taillémite, Bougainville*, I, p. 338. Cocos Island was discovered by the expedition of Willem Schouten and Jacob Le Maire; on 10 May 1616 a high island was seen, with a longer and lower one to the south of it. They stopped at the former, but were attacked by the inhabitants of the other island which they accordingly named Verraders (Traitors). Cocos is the island of Tafahi, a volcanic island some 2,000 ft in height; Verraders is Niuaotupapu, about five miles from Tafahi. They are outliers of the Tongan group, lying some 150 miles north from Vavau. Samuel Wallis reached them on 16 August 1767 and named them Keppel (Niuaotupapu) and Boscawen (Tafahi). Their position is 15° 57' S and 173° 46' W. It is probable that a third expedition sighted them, on 12 August 1772, that of the *Mascarin* and the *Marquis de Castries*, led by Le Jar du Clesmeur following the death of the commander, Marion du Fresne, in New Zealand. See A. M. Rochon (ed.) *Nouveau Voyage à la Mer du Sud commencé sous les ordres de M. Marion*, Paris, 1783, p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> This assumption is correct: only 60 or so people live on Tafahi, but Niuaotupapu has a population of close on 1,500.

<sup>3</sup> La Pérouse was wise not to waste time on seeking a better anchorage: the island does not offer much shelter for larger vessels. The anchorage on the west of the island is not good, but it has long been a convenient calling point for Tongan vessels travelling to and from the Samoas.

to the frigates to barter with us; several had come from the strait which separates the two islands from Traitors, they had only coconuts, the finest I had yet seen, a very small quantity of bananas, a few yams and a dozen *chadags* or grapefruit,<sup>1</sup> only one had a small pig and three or four hens. It was noticeable that these Indians had already seen or heard about Europeans, they came up without any fear, traded fairly honestly, never refused as those from the Navigators had done to hand over their fruit before receiving payment; they accepted pieces of iron and nails as enthusiastically as beads; moreover they spoke the same language, had the same clothes, the same tattoos and differed only in that they all had the two joints of their left-hand little finger cut off,<sup>2</sup> and I had seen only two individuals in the Navigators Islands who had been operated on in this way. Furthermore one could have no doubt that they were the same people, same language, same canoes, same ferocious expression, they were simply not so tall and less gigantic in their build, no doubt because these islands are less fertile, and the soil there is less suitable for the growth of the human race, which becomes much more dependent on the influence of the soil and its productions and on the climate as it moves further from the civilised condition than the nations of Europe whose institutions have no doubt greatly reduced their physical strength, but this loss is a thousand times compensated for by their arts and moral character. Every island we saw reminded us of one aspect of the islanders' treachery. Roggeveen's men had been attacked and stoned at Refreshment Island,<sup>3</sup> east of the Navigators, Schouten's at Traitors Island<sup>4</sup> which was

<sup>1</sup> No doubt again puzzled by an unfamiliar word, Millet-Mureau omitted it from the printed version of the voyage. The term is 'shaddock' and refers to the pummelo (*Citrus grandis*) which is considered the parent of the modern grapefruit (*Citrus paradisi* and other varieties). Shaddock is understood to be the name of the English captain who introduced the plant to the West Indies and thereby the fruit to England.

<sup>2</sup> The amputation of one or two finger joints was a sacrifice addressed to the gods to plead for a sick relative. Called *tutuima* ('hand cut'), this practice was widespread in the Tongas.

<sup>3</sup> On 2 June 1722 Roggeveen called at Makatea which he named 'Verquickling' - Refreshment Island. The Dutch obtained a supply of anti-scorbutic plants; hoping to get some more they returned the next day, but ventured into the higher bush, possibly close to some village, and were attacked. Two of Roggeveen's men were wounded. A Sharp (ed.), *The Journal of Jacob Roggeveen*, Oxford, 1970, pp. 137-40.

<sup>4</sup> Willem Schouten was attacked in May 1616. A chief had come on board with his followers and gifts were exchanged, but after he left the islanders attacked the *Endracht* and the Dutch expounded with grapeshot.

before us and south of Mahouana where we had ourselves been so shamefully murdered in such cowardly fashion; these thoughts altered our behaviour towards the Indians; we struck out with sticks at the slightest theft and unfair treatment, we showed our muskets to indicate that flight would not save them from our resentment, we refused to allow them on board and made them clearly understand that we would punish with the death penalty those who would be bold enough to climb up in spite of our orders. These attitudes were a hundred times better than our former moderation, and we only regretted having arrived among these people with principles of moderation and patience which the philosophers may well preach but which navigators must not adopt unless they are to forsake their own safety; common sense and reason tell us that one has every right over a man whose well planned intention would be to kill you if fear did not hold him back.

At midday on the 23rd while we were trading for coconuts with the Indians a strong W.N.W. squall assailed us which dispersed the canoes, several capsized and after being righted they all hastened back to land; the weather was threatening, nevertheless we sailed until four in the afternoon around Traitors Island to see all its features and draw up a precise chart. Mr D'agelet had carried out some very good observations of the latitude at midday, and of the longitude during the morning which enabled him to correct the position assigned to these islands by Captain Walis who places them 1 degree 15 minutes too far west, and at four o'clock I gave the signal to sail S.S.E. towards the Friendly archipelago, whose islands I proposed to survey, which according to Captain Cook's narrative must be north of Inahomooka<sup>1</sup> and which he did not have the opportunity of exploring.

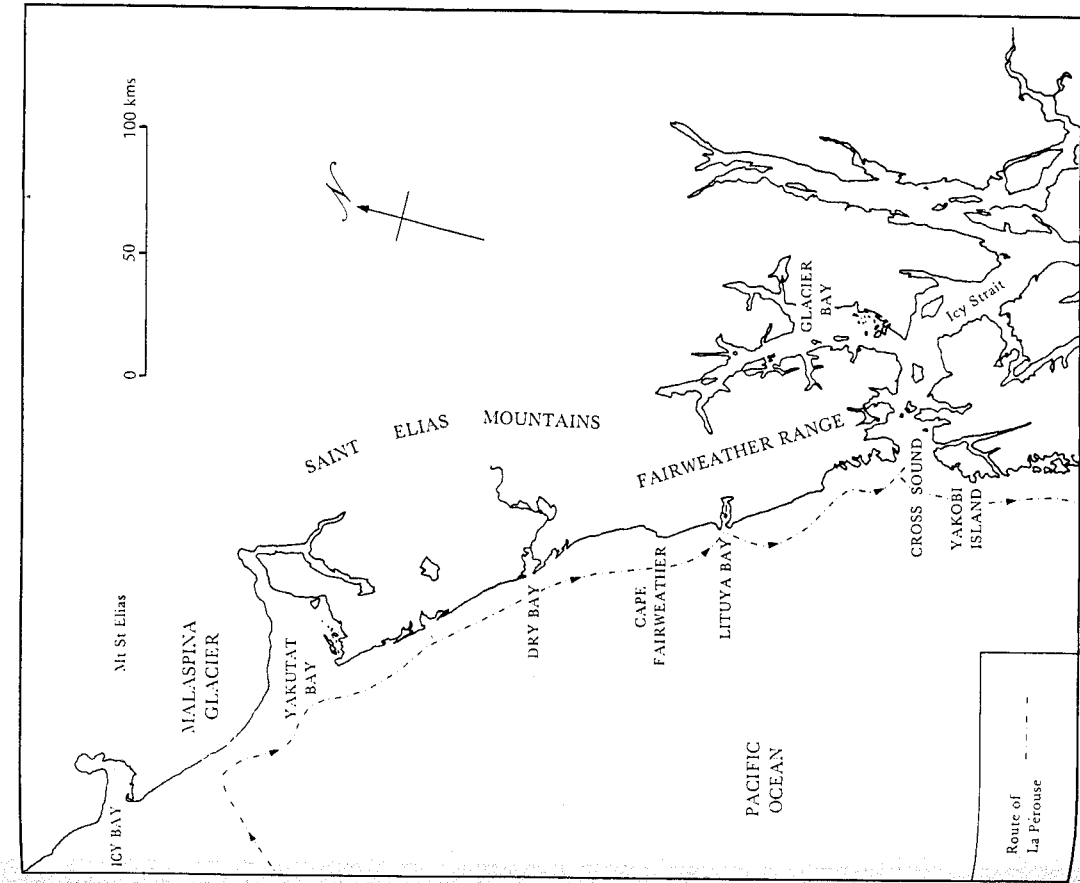
The first night after our departure from Traitors Island was frightful, the winds veered west, wild stormy gale with heavy rain;

<sup>1</sup> The island is Nomuka, discovered by Tasman in 1643 and shown as Anamooka on the expedition's charts but actually named Rotterdam by him. Cook used the name Anamooka; he visited the main Tongan group during his second and third voyages, sending parties ashore and setting up observatories. The translation follows the logic of the argument rather than the holograph text: La Pérouse wrote 'doivent être au nord Dinahomooka' ('must be in the north Dinahomooka') which seems to be not merely a strange mis-spelling of Anamooka but makes nonsense of his argument. Nomuka is not one of the northern islands of the Tongan archipelago but in the centre; the Vava'u group in the north was indeed an area which Cook did not explore on his visit to the widespread Tongan archipelago.

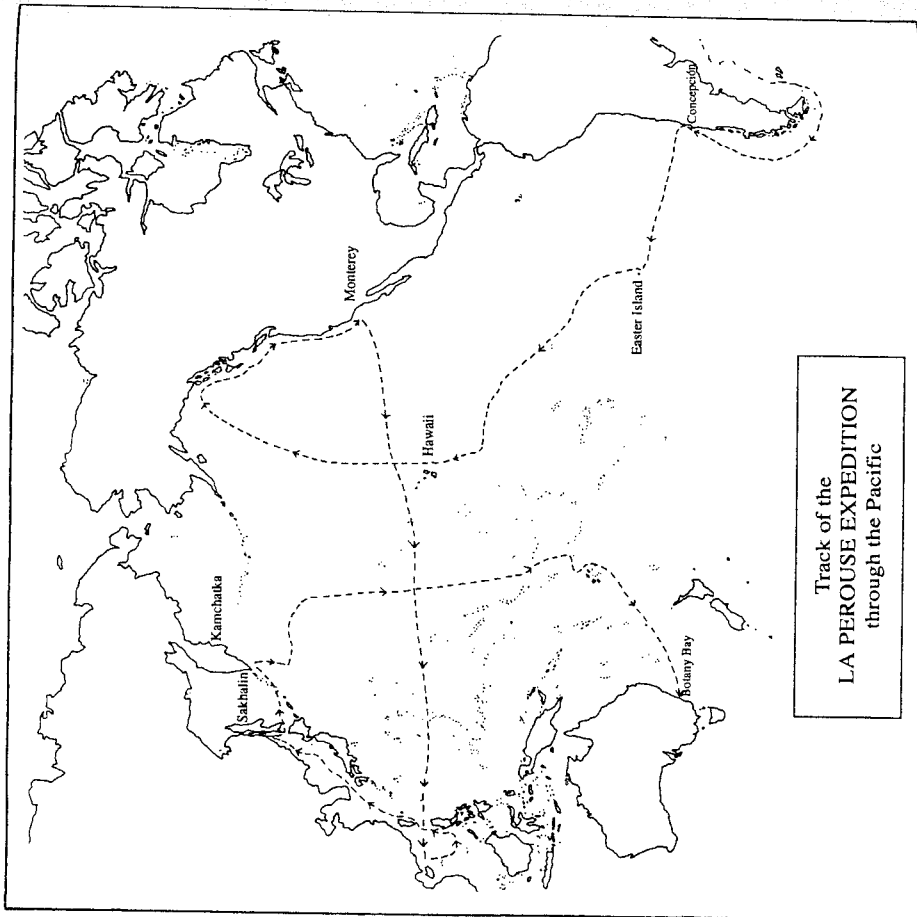
as we had not had one league of visibility at sunset, I stayed afloat until dawn head on to S.S.W. The westerlies continued to blow, they were fairly strong and especially accompanied with much rain; all those who showed the slightest symptoms of scurvy suffered greatly from this humidity, and it is somewhat remarkable that none of the crew was attacked by this sickness, but the officers and especially our servants felt its onset; I attribute this to the shortage of fresh food which was not an unusual situation for our sailors to be in but the servants who had never been to sea were not accustomed to this deprivation. David, the officers' cook, died on the 10th of scorbutic dropsy.<sup>1</sup> This is the first man since we sailed from Brest who has died of natural causes on the *Boussole* and if we had done nothing more than an ordinary circumnavigation we would have returned to Europe without losing a single man; in fact the last months are the most difficult as the body weakens and the food begins to go bad, but, if the length of voyages of discovery has limits one cannot exceed, it is very important to assess what they are and I believe that when we reach Europe the experiment will be completed. Out of all the preventives I believe molasses and Prussian beer<sup>2</sup> were the most successful. Our crews did not cease drinking it in hot climates and every day they received a bottle of it with half a pint of wine and a small tot of brandy well diluted with water, which make them feel that the other provisions were bearable; the abundance of coconuts and pigs at Mahouana was only a

<sup>1</sup> Although advances were being made in understanding and treating scurvy, medical knowledge of this condition was still sketchy. Furthermore, dropsy was a broad term covering a number of conditions. Poor diet could lead to dropsy – the term 'starvation oedema' has been used. A vitamin deficiency, causing scurvy, could lead to an oedematous condition and lead to cardiac or respiratory failure. In the case of David, the officers' cook whom one might normally have expected not to suffer as badly as others from inadequate food, one should note La Pérouse's comment that officers and their servants showed signs of scurvy whereas the crews seemed to be in better condition; he saw in it a consequence of some difference in diet: one could also argue that the element of stress, which was often a complicating factor, may have affected the officers to a greater extent. Finally, 'David was affected by alcoholic cirrhosis', Taveau, F., and Kernéis, J.P., 'Les Médecins de Lapérouse au cours du grand voyage', in *Colloque Lapérouse Albi 1985*, p. 332.

<sup>2</sup> Prussian beer, corrected by Milet-Murcau to *sprucebeer* in the printed edition, was a term properly used by La Pérouse. Spruce was an archaic word for Prussia or 'Spruce-land', and spruce beer basically means beer from Prussia. James Cook made it from a recipe he had obtained in Newfoundland; it is an extract from the leaves and branches of the spruce fir to which are added molasses and the sap of pine trees; Cook and his officers further improved it by adding a liberal dose of rum. La Pérouse wisely followed Cook's recipe, but favouring brandy over rum.

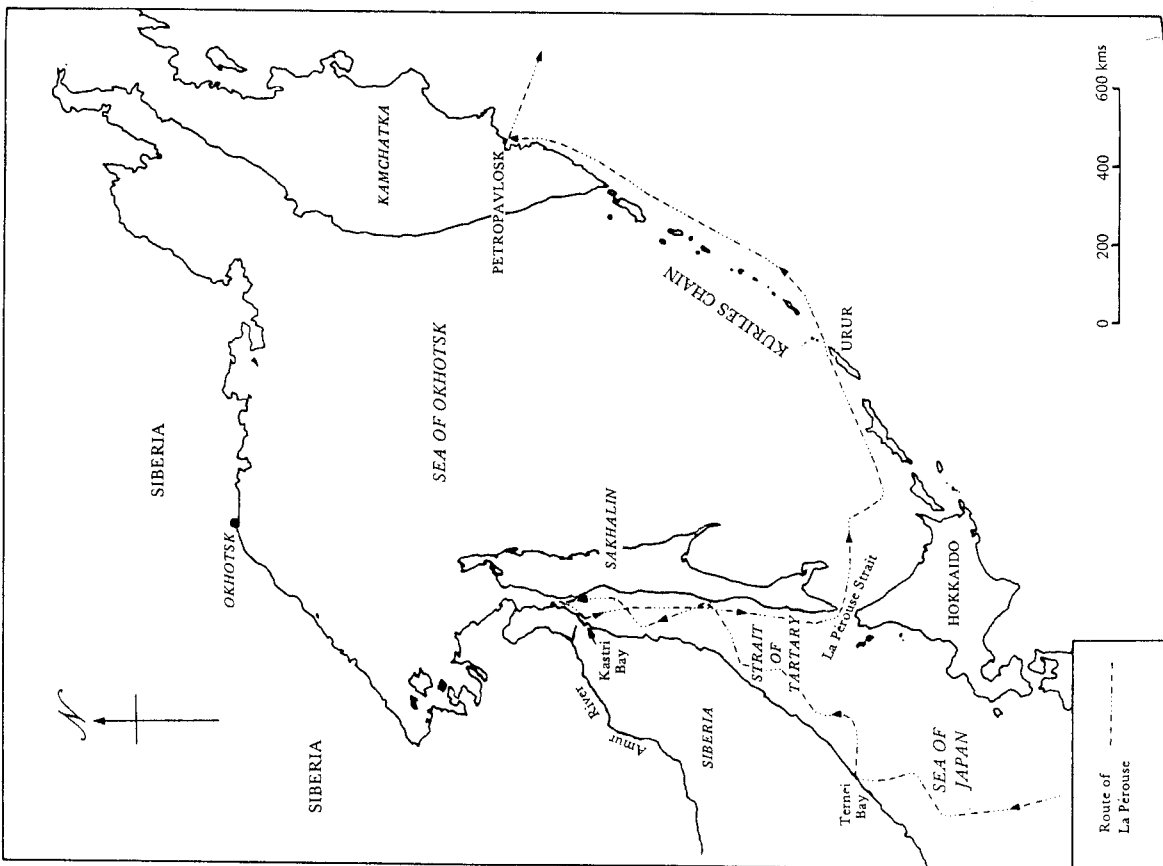
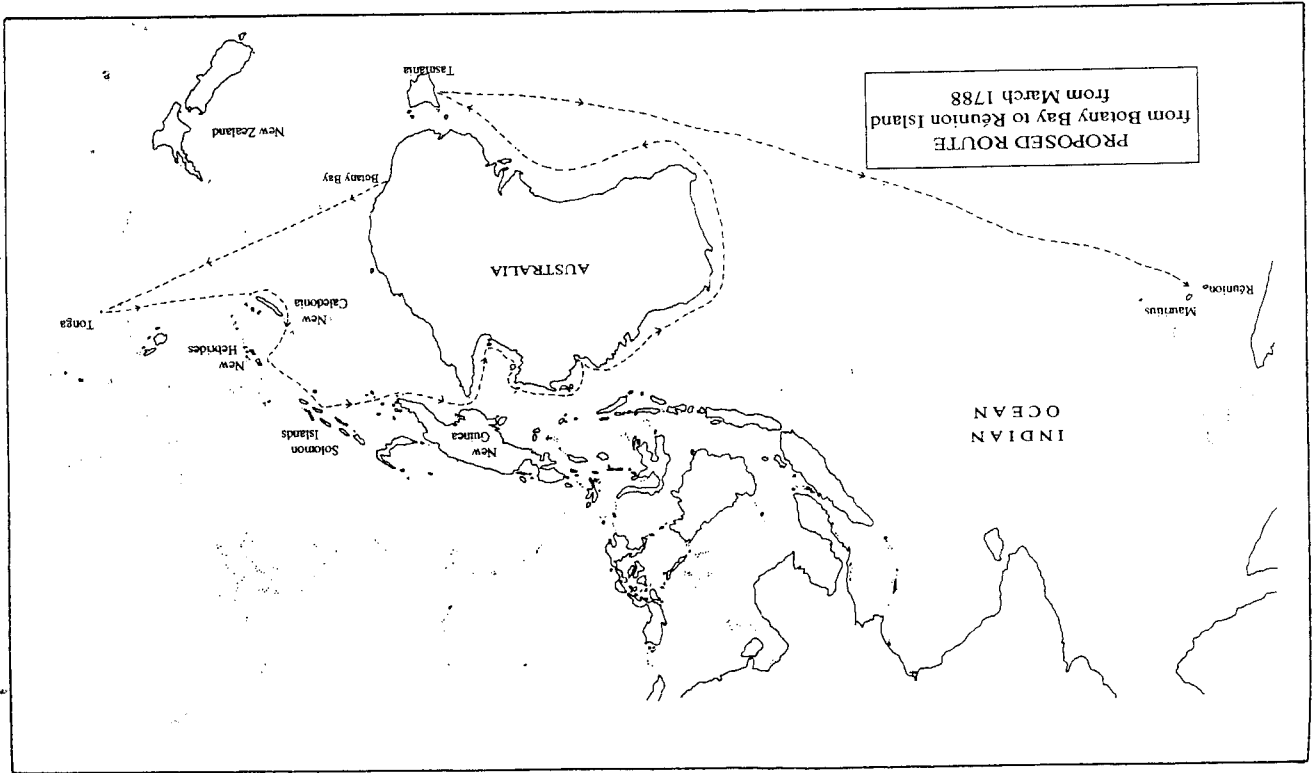


*La Pérouse in Alaska*



Track of the  
LA PÉROUSE EXPEDITION  
through the Pacific





*La Pérouse in North-East Asia*