

Chapter 5

EASTERN SHORES AND SOUTHERN LANDS

... the Spaniard from the east,
His flickering canvas breaking the horizon
That shuts the dead off in a wall of mist.

‘Three hundred years since I set out from Lima
And off Espíritu Santo lay down and wept
Because no faith in men, no truth in islands
And still unfound the shining continent slept;

‘And swore upon the Cross to come again
Though fever, thirst and mutiny stalked the seas
And poison spiders spun their webs in Spain. . . .’

The Californias: Cermeño and Vizcaino

Unamuno’s voyage of 1587 in search of Rica de Oro was no more productive on the eastern shores of the Pacific than in its western waters. He did find a new port, San Lucas, near the present San Luis Obispo, but this seems to have made no impression on the authorities: the current Viceroy of New Spain, Manrique, was simply not interested, although the projected voyage of Juan de la Isla in 1572 and Gali’s actual one of 1584 had certainly envisaged exploring the American coast north of 35–40°N.¹ The younger Luis de Velasco, Viceroy in 1590, was however much concerned with the sickness and privations normal in the latter stages of the Galleon passage, and secured authority to investigate this coast to see if there might not be some fit port of succour. To this end the Portuguese Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeño sailed from Manila in the 200-ton *San Agustin* on 5 July 1595.

Cermeño’s first objective was Cape Mendocino, which seems to have been known from a disastrous Galleon crossing in 1584.² On 6 November, two days after his landfall somewhat north of the Cape, he was at Drake’s Bay, which he named Bahia de San Francisco—one may be sure with no intention of a compliment to his predecessor, who was in these waters sixteen years earlier. Here he lost the *San Agustin* in a squall, but assembled a prefabricated launch, and on 8 December sailed south, crossing Monterey Bay (his Bahia de San Pedro) and near Point Concepcion meeting Indians who knew the words ‘Mexico’ and ‘Christiano’, probably from Unamuno’s party. Food was very short—largely

Douglas Stewart, ‘Terra Australis’, in *Collected Poems*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney 1967; used (with a trifling emendation) by courtesy of author and publishers.

acorns bartered from the Indians—but despite strong pressure from his crew Cermeño insisted on examining the coast. At Isla San Martín, off Baja California, they were saved by finding a stranded fish said to have been big enough to support seventy men for eight days. Finally he reached Chacala on 7 January 1596.³

Cermeño had done his best, but the wrecking of the *San Agustín* robbed him of any reward. She carried (legally) private merchandise, and the ensuing enquiries into its loss concluded that he had crossed promising inlets instead of examining them properly, though it was allowed that he was driven to do so by hunger. The new Viceroy, the Conde de Monterey, drew the sensible inference that further investigation should be made not by trading vessels from Manila but by a special expedition from New Spain.

Sebastian Vizcaino is not an attractive figure, though it may be harsh to say with Wagner that ‘there was hardly any Spaniard of his day . . . who wrote more and accomplished less’—in view of the Spanish mania for paper and the many fiascos, this is no small claim. A merchant, Vizcaino had like Cermeño been on the Galleon *Santa Ana* when Cavendish took her, and his letter to his father mentioning this misfortune gives a strong impression that his main interest in life was to make money; as a message from a distant son to an anxious parent, it lacks appeal.⁴ Yet he completely supplanted the much finer Cabrillo, most of whose work seems to have been forgotten; only his harbour of San Miguel remained on the maps, until Vizcaino typically renamed it San Diego.⁵

Vizcaino’s first voyage, June to December 1596, was financed by a partnership, on a quite substantial scale: three ships, one of 500 tons, and 230 men, with twelve cannon. The aims were colonisation in Baja California, and pearling; a town was founded at La Paz, Cortes’s Santa Cruz, but half of it was burnt down, and the infant settlement was abandoned after two months. Vizcaino, clearly a smart operator, bluffed himself out of this fiasco: all that was wrong was the timing of the start, and there were numberless Indians crying out to be saved. . . .

The second expedition, in 1602, was much more tightly controlled by officialdom. The objective was definitely the exploration of the coast up to Cape Mendocino, and if possible beyond it; the Gulf of California and its pearls were strictly barred, unless on the return Vizcaino should find that he had time, good winds, and enough food to explore it—and on past form this last condition surely amounted to a veto.⁶ The chronicler of the voyage, Fray Antonio de la Ascension, alleges ulterior aims, notably Quivira and the Straits of Anian. The Father, however, was obviously more romantic than well informed: he was responsible for reviving the idea that Baja California was an island, an idea which had been abandoned as long ago as 1539–40 but now persisted for most of the century—and indeed, despite new evidence that should have been conclusive against it, well into the eighteenth.⁷ To Fray Antonio, the channel insulating California communicated with Anian. But he makes good reading: a gruesomely detailed description of scurvy is followed, without transition, by

rhapsodies on Monterey and its 'affable Indians of good disposition and well built [too significant words!] . . . [who] would have much pleasure in seeing us make a settlement in their country. Those who come from China in need of relief could very well resort to this port.' The good Father was also very much taken by the loving kindness of the pelicans in feeding their sick and maimed, and from compassion released one that the Indians were using as a decoy.⁸

Vizcaino sailed from Acapulco on 5 May 1602, with three good ships, 200 selected men, and provisions for a year. Progress against head winds was slow, and it was not until 10 November that he entered San Diego, which he described in nearly the same words as Cabrillo's party; and here, as with Cermeño's nomenclature, he breached his clear instructions to retain already given names; since he had with him one of Cermeño's pilots, he must have known at least the latter's names.⁹ On 15 December, seven years after Cermeño, he came to Monterey Bay, which he and Ascension greatly over-rated as a port for the Galleons. At the end of the year Vizcaino sent back the worst of the sick in the almiranta (twenty-five of the thirty-four died) and himself went on with the *San Diego* and the launch *Tres Reyes*; he called in at Cermeño's Bahía de San Francisco (renamed 'Don Gaspar') and reached Cape Mendocino on 12 January 1603. The *Tres Reyes* was driven north to Cape Blanco, reporting a great 'Rio de Martin Aguilar' (named for her dead commander) which was probably either the Mad or the Rogue River of today. Despite their striking names, neither of these is of special note, but in the eighteenth century Aguilar's river became inflated into a mighty estuary, the entrance into the Strait of Anian.¹⁰ Vizcaino was back in Acapulco by 21 March.

Considering his resources, and the aid of the pilot Bolaños who had been with Cermeño, Vizcaino's achievement compares unfavourably with that of Cabrillo sixty years earlier; but the work of his forerunners was for the time effectively blanketed by his new toponymy. However, in October 1603 the Marques de Montesclaros succeeded the Conde de Monterey, and the new Viceroy was not impressed by the glowing reports on the Bay named in honour of his predecessor. Although in 1606 a royal decree was issued naming Vizcaino to command a Galleon returning from Manila to 'ascertain in what manner the said port of Monterrey can be colonised and made permanent', it arrived after he had left for Spain, and the project lapsed in favour of another search for our old friends Rica de Oro and de Plata.¹¹

Interest in the Californias, till near the end of the seventeenth century, relapsed into concentration on pearling ventures in the Gulf.¹² Vizcaino made large claims for Monterey; he also claimed to have been near China and Japan, an old illusion stemming from a supposedly marked northwestward trend of the coast of Alta California. The later riches of the modern State of California, except perhaps for timber, were not apparent from the coast; as Brebner says, the neglect of Alta California was not accidental, and even with the greater resources of the

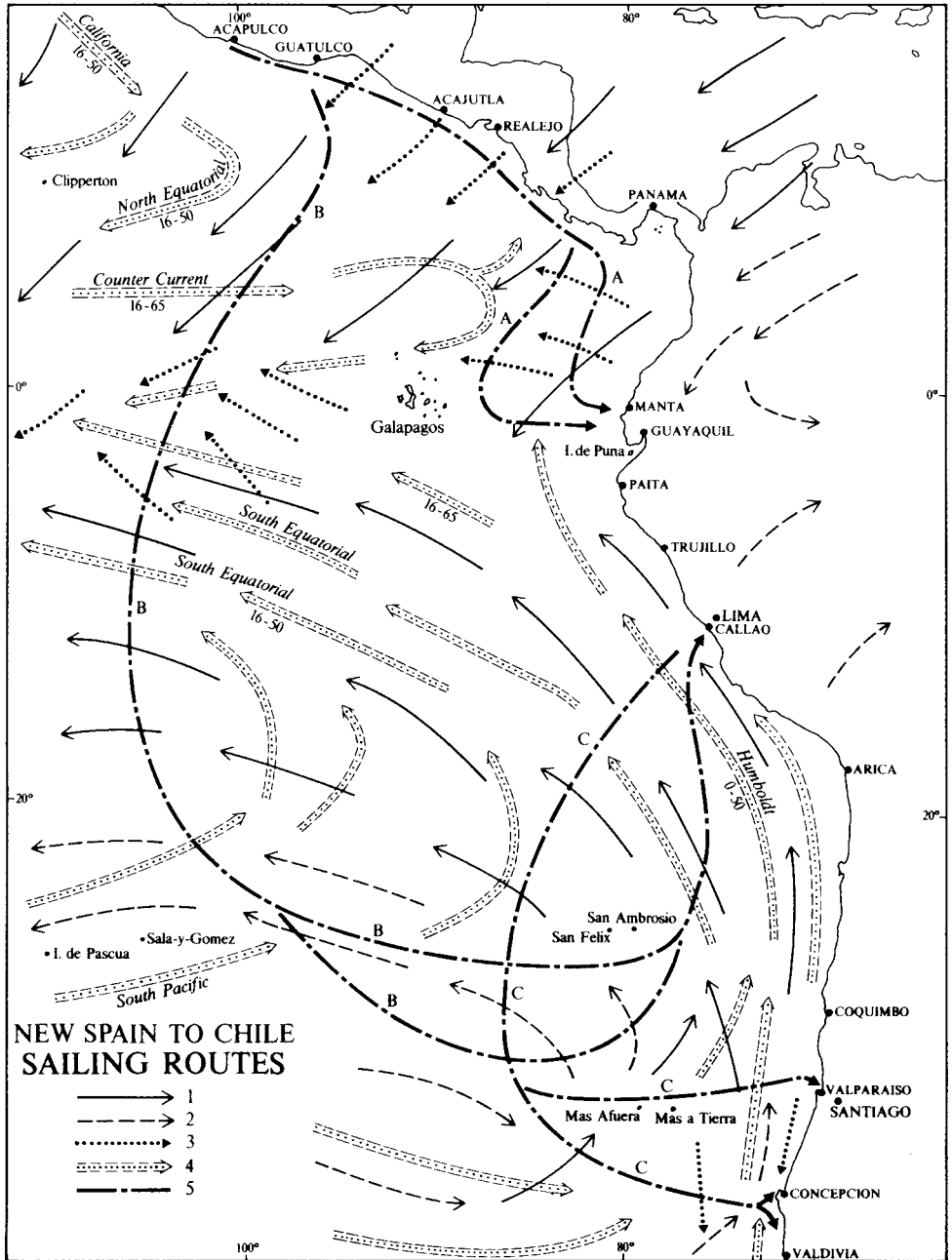
eighteenth century, there was very little economic development, extensive stock-rearing apart, in the three-quarters of a century of Spanish and Mexican rule.¹³ Simply for rest and refreshment of the Galleon crews, a port on this coast would



Plate X. THE NORTH PACIFIC: DE JODE 1578. Islands in the Philippines are confused but recognisable; there is some notion of Japan, which is separated from the Lequeos; Anian and Quivira are established; but the Ocean is still far too narrow. From G. de Jode, *Speculum Orbis Terrarum* (Amsterdam 1578), facsimile published by Theatrum Orbis Terrarum BV (Amsterdam 1965). By courtesy of Mr N. Israel, Amsterdam. ANU.

have been helpful; but it would have meant delays unacceptable to the mercantile interests of New Spain. In any case, Cabrillo's San Miguel (San Diego) would have been more to the point than Monterey, which is within the area of fog risk and, as a colony, would have been much more isolated and vulnerable.

Three hundred leagues from New Spain the east-bound Galleons saw the first



of the *senas* or signs of land—various seaweeds which appeared in a regular order, seals and dogfish—and then

Te Deum was sung, and all persons congratulated one another with the sound of drums and trumpets . . . This unseasonable rejoicing was caus'd by that long and dreadful voyage of above 3,000 leagues; which makes them think themselves in the port, when they have 700 leagues to it . . . It now appear'd that the pilots had mistaken above 200 leagues in their accounts. . . .¹⁴

There were handsome tips for the first sailor to sight the *senas*, and a boisterous court was held, as for 'crossing the Line'. Careri brings the scene before us vividly, the release from tension when at last they knew where they were; life on the passage was poor, nasty, brutish—and *long*, so long!

The *senas* were indeed regarded as a reliable indicator of longitude. From this point the Galleons trended southeast until making a landfall; the coast was usually in sight, but it was regarded as dangerous and the people as hostile, so no landing was made: 'The prospect . . . of Acapulco, "the safest and finest port in all the North parts", was too strong an inducement'.¹⁵ The very few landings which were made, under stress of weather, in sterile Baja California provided no inducement for sojourn.

As for the argument for a defensive base north of New Spain, Montesclaros disposed of it in a letter of 4 August 1607 from Acapulco, and in almost the same terms as Manrique had used twenty years before: the security of these parts lay simply in their inaccessibility. An isolated settlement would be but an added target for intruders, a bait rather than a bulwark; Dutch or English 'would find Spaniards with whom to treat and trade . . . as they do in the north of Santo Domingo'—that is, on the island which was the first base of Spanish power in the Indies: a give-away sentence indeed! Hence each Manila ship would need two armed escorts. . . . In short, as Wagner puts it, a Spanish settlement 'would have been of more service to the English than one of their own even if they could have maintained it'.¹⁶

The eastern thresholds; Juan Fernandez (Fig. 13)

Quite as important as these northern coastal reconnaissances, indeed a good deal more important until well after the middle of the eighteenth century, was the discovery of the open-sea routes between the Spanish centres on the eastern

◀ *Figure 13.* NEW SPAIN TO CHILE: SAILING ROUTES. 1, dominant winds in January, over 80 per cent observations excluding calms; 2, in January, 25–80 per cent; 3, variations in July, all 41–60 per cent; 4, currents with speeds in km per day; 5, sailing routes: A, 'on the meridian'; B, 'on the latitude'; C, Juan Fernandez' route.

Compiled from *Fiziko-Geograficheskiy Atlas Mira* (Moscow 1964), Plates 40–1 (winds); V. I. Voitov and D. D. Tomarkin, map in W. G. Solheim (ed.), *Archaeology at the 11th Pacific Science Congress* (Honolulu 1967) at 89 (currents); British Admiralty Charts 5215, 5216. Routes from literary sources, approximate only.

shores of the Pacific. The Doldrums, the belt of equatorial light variable winds and calms, and the remarkably strong and persistent Humboldt or Peru Current running northwards from about 45°S to the Equator, closely parallel to the coast, are major obstacles to easy communication by sail. For most of the year, but especially in the northern summer, the westerly bulge of South America has prevailing south or southeasterly winds; and these conditions persist far south of Arica, where the coast takes a straight north-south trend. From the Isthmus to southern Mexico winds are weak and uncertain, with spells (often lengthy) of calms. In the northern winter, conditions are marginally better: Mexican and Nicaraguan waters have light winds from northeast to northwest, with occasional storms, 'Tehuantepeckers' or 'Papagallos', from north; while as far south as Ecuador there is a better chance of picking up a northerly wind, and from January to March there actually may be a southwards current (*el Niño*) for a short distance on either side of the Gulf of Guayaquil. 'El Niño' (so called from its advent about the feast of the Christ-child) is irregular in occurrence (though this is disputed) and is of less significance for navigation than as bringing heavy rains to the coast, leading to floods on land, and at sea, owing to an influx of warm water from the north, to catastrophic if temporary disruption of Peruvian fisheries.¹⁷

It follows that at least as far north as the Isthmus, sailing north is at all times easier than sailing south; indeed, while from April to September the passage Callao-Guatulco could often be made in four to six weeks, the reverse voyage could take seven or eight months. The normal time in the favourable (northern winter) season was two or three months, keeping fairly close to the coast (to keep the light northerlies) as far as the Gulf of Panama, then sailing (or trying to) south, perhaps as far as a sight of the Galapagos Islands. Landfall was made near Manta, a wretched little town (only seventeen *vecinos* in 1570) about 1°S, or at Santa Elena or Isla de Puna: these were better placed for shelter, water, food, and timber (with asphalt for caulking at Santa Elena), and served as outports for Guayaquil, whose deltaic approaches were difficult for ocean-going ships. The Galapagos themselves were accidentally discovered in 1535 by Bishop Tomas de Berlanga, on his way to Peru; perhaps the only prelate to make such a discovery, if we discount St Brandan. . . . This route 'on the meridian' was at any rate better than following the coast: near Manta the Bishop met people who had been on a galleon from Nicaragua for eight months. Little wonder that the run from New Spain to the Philippines was considered much easier than that to Peru.

In the unfavourable season, the voyage to Peru could be made 'on the parallel', striking south across the Trades to 30°S (or, later, even as far as Juan Fernandez, 30°42'S) and then northeast to pick up the southerly winds or currents of the Peruvian coast. This route was probably discovered about 1540-4, by a pilot with Cortes's man Diego de Ocampo; but as it still took three or four months, it seems to have been all but forgotten later in the century. In the good season, there was not a great gain in time over the meridian route, but in later colonial days the 'parallel' track, was used when ships could not wait for the opening

of the normal sailing season. Its analogue farther south, Juan Fernandez' course from Callao to Chile, was more significant.

Between the discoveries of these two open-sea routes, notable work was done in the maze of channels and islands along the stormy fiord coast of Chile south of Chiloé: a most intricate and hazardous navigation, on shores still imperfectly known in the first half of this century, and indeed not giving up all their secrets until the advent of aerial survey.¹⁸ The first southern voyage, under Francisco de Ulloa and Cortes Ojea, in 1553–4, penetrated thirty leagues into the Straits of Magellan, but was surpassed as a feat of seamanship four years later by that of Juan Ladrillero and Ojea, which left Valdivia or Concepcion on 17 November 1557, with three very small ships and sixty men—commissioned, amongst other things, to look for spices! (This may not be as absurd as it looks, since there may well have been reports of the cinnamon-like 'Winter's bark', so named for Drake's captain, and so useful to Sarmiento's wretched colonists.) Ojea, the almirante, became separated, and reached nearly to the Straits; but he missed the entrance, and jumped to the conclusion that some island torn from its moorings by tempest had grounded and jammed the channel—presumably the origin of the idea that the Straits had been blocked by an earthquake. Unfortunately, the poet Ercilla gave currency to the myth in the opening canto of his very popular epic *La Araucana* (1569); it at least reflects the fact that a major hindrance to the west-east passage was the difficulty of identifying the right entrance in this maze of inlets. On the return journey from his farthest fiord, still called 'Ultima Esperanza', Ojea wintered in extremely harsh conditions, living largely on seaweeds, the staple of the local Indians; these were thievish, but friendly, presenting the Spaniards with packets of coloured earth so that they could paint themselves decently. After rebuilding his bergantin, Ojea reached Valdivia on 1 October 1558. Meanwhile, Ladrillero went down the wild western coast of the Fuegian archipelago to the Canal Santa Barbara in 54°S, and then penetrated the Straits to the Atlantic end. He wintered in more comfort than Ojea and was back in Concepcion by mid-1559, bringing 'a detailed account of the hydrography of the Chilean archipelagoes and the Strait of Magellan which was not improved on until the nineteenth century',¹⁹ except perhaps by parts of Sarmiento's survey. Obscure voyages, all but forgotten, but resolute and daring.

Fray Reginaldo de Lizarraga tells of a Santiagueño 'conceived and born at sea' on the Callao-Chile run, 'and his mother became pregnant again, and still they had not reached the port of Coquimbo.'²⁰ A good story, which at least emphasises the contrast between the northwards passage, running with winds and current, taking only three or four weeks, and the southwards, at best as many months, and sometimes the greater part of a twelvemonth. The discoverer of the open-sea route which circumvented these inordinate delays was one of the twenty-six people, several of them sailors, living in Santiago de Chile in the 1570s, and all named Juan Fernandez; the meticulous researches of José Toribio

Medina have narrowed the field to one.²¹ He also discovered the island long named after him, but since 1966, by official decree of the Republic of Chile, styled Robinson Crusoe's Island.

Juan Fernandez seems to have come to Chile about 1550-1, and in the next twelve years had much experience, as boatswain and later master, in navigation between Peru and Chile. In February 1574 he was in command of the *Nuestra Señora dos Remedios* from Valparaiso to Callao; and when, on 27 October 1574, he took her out on the return, there can be scarcely any doubt that his southwestwards track—into the open Pacific—was deliberate. The wind regime on the coast is such that he could hardly have been blown off-shore; on the other hand, he was a close friend of Gallego, Mendaña's pilot on the 1567 voyage to the Solomons, and from him he must have learnt that once out of the mainstream of the Humboldt Current, and well into the Southeast Trades, winds and currents made a good southing much easier than it was close to the coast.

On 6 November Fernandez sighted the barren rocky islands he named San Felix and San Ambor (a Saint so obscure, even to Spaniards, that he was soon replaced by San Ambrosio), and on the 22nd two islands which he named for the day, Santa Cecilia's. These were certainly the group known by his name, but it is not clear whether the two were Mas-a-Tierra and Mas Afuera ('Nearer Land' and 'Further Away') or the former and the nearby little island of Santa Clara. Thirty days from Callao he reached a Chilean port, either Valparaiso or Concepcion; and there was no further need for embarrassing confinements on board. Although his island did not appear on the maps until early in the next century, his 'new navigation' was soon adopted as the standard track.

One of the founders of Santiago, Juan Jufre (who introduced goats to Chile, and hence, at a remove, to Crusoe's Island), backed a reconnaissance in 1575, perhaps under Fernandez, though it is not certain the latter ever set foot on his islands. Nothing came of this, but in 1576 Fernandez was sent by Jufre (who had wanted Sarmiento for command, but that redoubtable figure was in trouble with the Inquisition) to discover 'the islands which are frontier to this kingdom.' Knowledge of this expedition rests on one of the memorials with which the highly uncritical Dr Luis Arias sought to revive, in the totally unfavourable climate of Philip III's reign, the grand designs of Mendaña and Quiros for a vast religious imperialism in the South Sea. Fernandez is said to have sailed, from about 40°S, on a westsouthwest course for one month—and to have discovered a land with well-clad white people and many fine rivers. In the eighteenth century this was taken up enthusiastically by Alexander Dalrymple—to whom it must of course have been Terra Australis—and considered more cautiously by James Burney; it has been variously identified as Easter Island, New Zealand, Australia, the Solomons, Tahiti, and (by the Chilean Vicuña Mackenna) as fantasy; which last seems most probable.²² Arias himself is most confused, and his evidence is—at best—third-hand; Medina makes a gallant attempt to show that Fernandez found somewhere, say Tahiti, but carries no conviction. At all events,

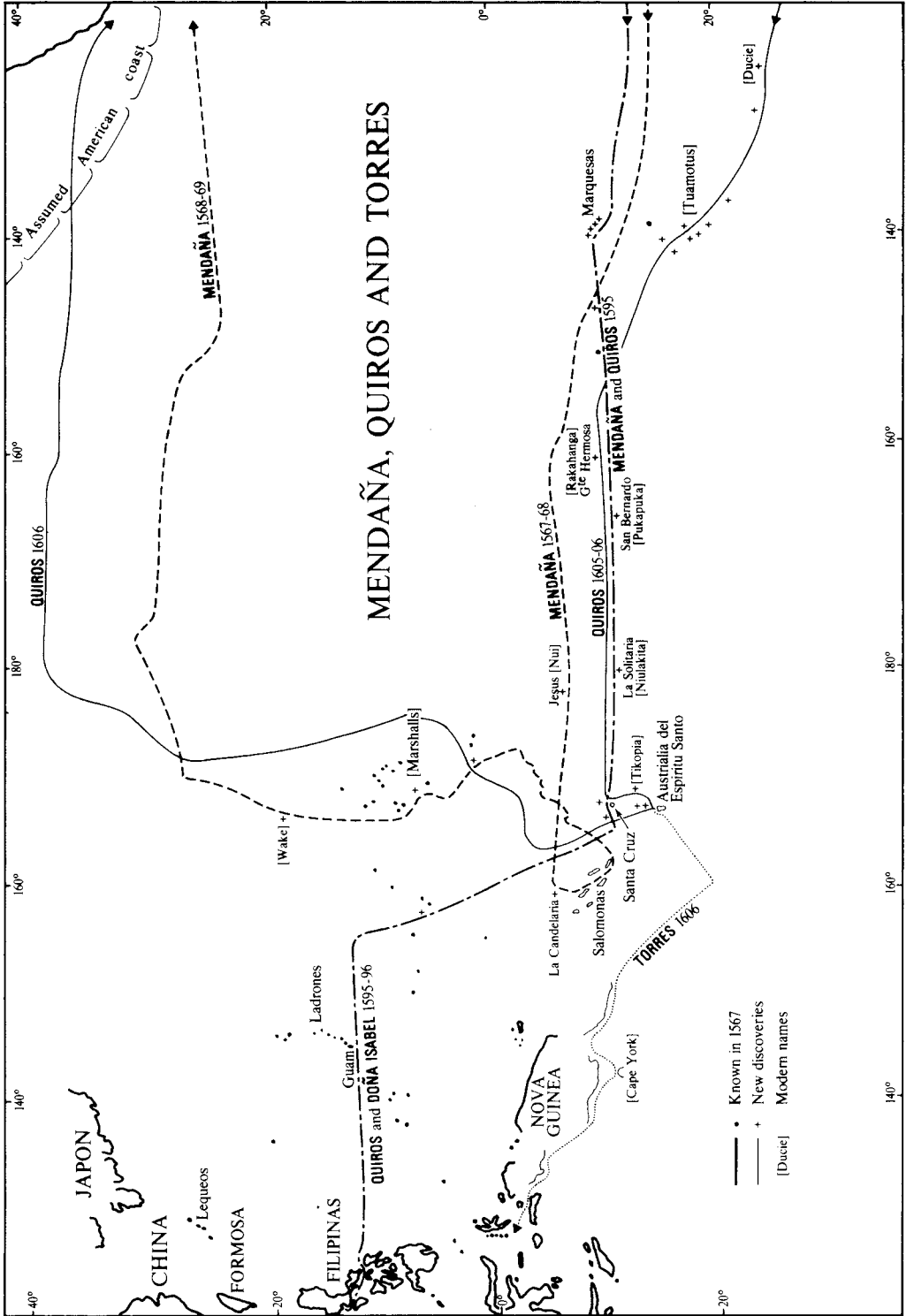
what with the Araucanian Wars and Drake's raid nothing could be done—the heretics might hear of it—and any follow-up was put off from day to day until Juan Fernandez died in 1599. The mantle fell on Quiros.

At this point it is convenient to sketch the history of Juan Fernandez Island, and its strategic significance, into the eighteenth century. An ineffectual attempt at colonisation was made in 1591–6, and again in 1599, by Sebastian Garcia, who became a Jesuit and deeded his grant to his Society; in 1642 Tasman proposed that it should be made a Dutch base, and there was a feeble Jesuit attempt at exploiting their claim in the early 1660s.²³ The earlier Dutch incursions missed the island, but Schouten and Le Maire found it in 1616, and 'it became thereafter a sought-after haven for navigators of all flags . . . but most particularly for those who would not find a welcome in the ports of Spanish America'²⁴—which meant any flag but Spain's. Early and late in the period it was a place of refreshment for the Nassau Fleet (1624) and Roggeveen (1722), but above all it was a base for the English (and odd French) buccaneers—Sharp, Wafer, Dampier, Cowley, Cook, Davis, Rogers, Stradling, Shelvocke, Clipperton; only Morgan is missing from the roll-call. For the southeast Pacific it was as potent a magnet as Guam in the west; the South Sea Company had vague plans for 'the Gibraltar of the Pacific', and Roggeveen and de Brosses suggested settlement by the Netherlands and France respectively.

Spanish warships visited the islands in occasional defensive flurries, and from time to time left ferocious dogs to kill the goats so valuable to the buccaneers, or at least to drive them to inaccessible heights—a strange defence measure for an empire. But not until 1750, after the visit of the most illustrious corsair of all (after Drake)—Anson—did Bourbon Spain take the logical step of settling and fortifying an island which after all should have been easy to supply, only a few days' sail from Valparaiso. Soon after Anson's stay, Juan and Ulloa, as part of their famous inspection of the Pacific colonies, examined both Mas Afuera and Mas-a-Tierra, and made positive and specific recommendations for the fortification of the latter.²⁵ When it was at last done, it was done secretly and effectively: great was the surprise of Philip Carteret, in 1767, to find 'a great number of men all about the beach' and Spanish colours flying over a stone fort with a score of embrasures—a far cry from Alexander Selkirk's hut and his ballet of goats and cats.²⁶

The Southland I: Mendaña and the Bay of the Star (Figs. 14 and 15)

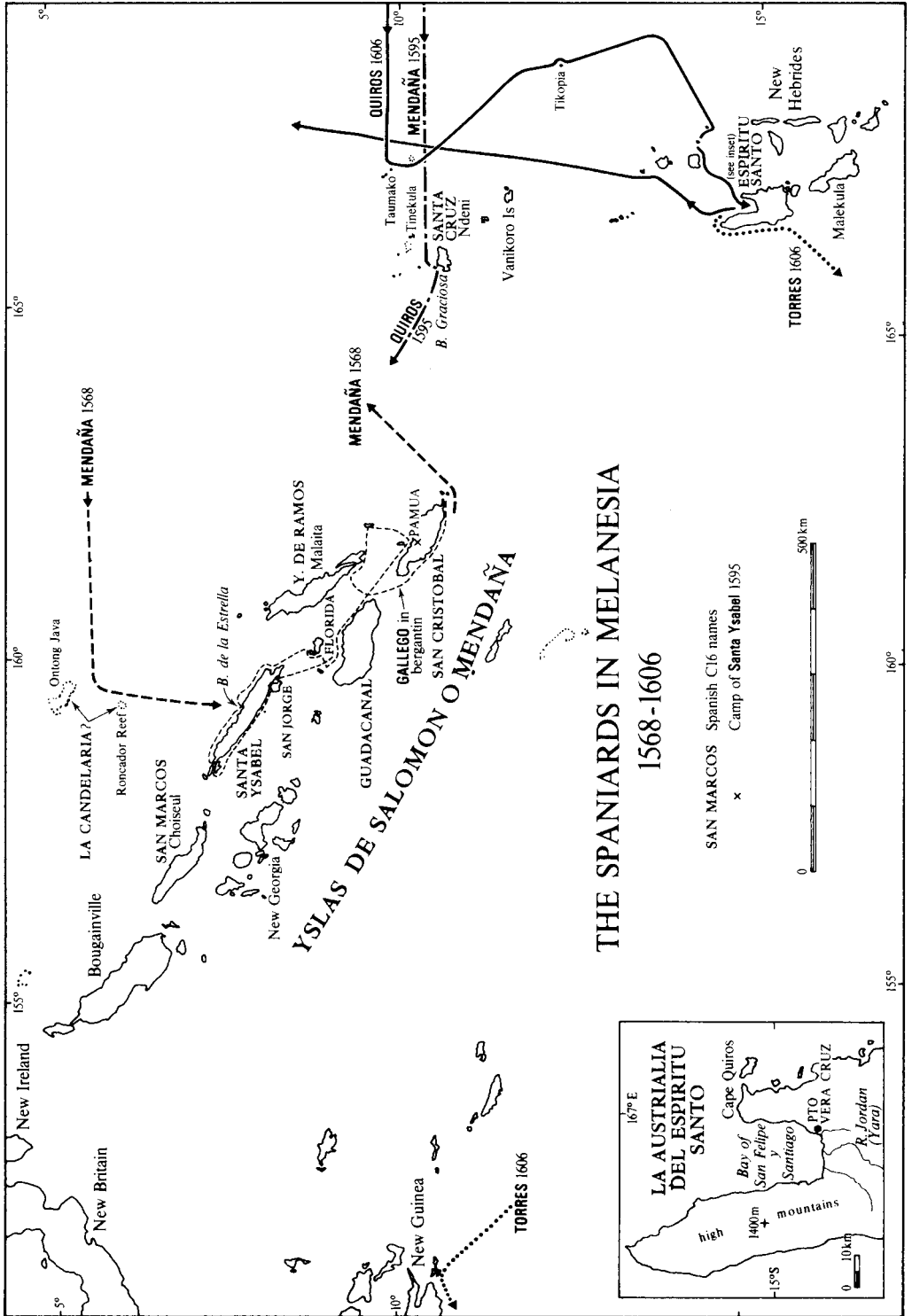
King Solomon's servants had brought much gold from Ophir, bringing it to 'Eziongeber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea': somewhere east of Suez, then—Scripture said it—lay a land of incalculable wealth. Ptolemy's Golden Khersonese was an obvious candidate; so were the mysterious islands of Veach and Locach and Maletur, 'the misbegotten progeny of Polo'; some Portuguese thought that Ophir would be found in East Africa, in the hinterland



of Sofala, where later romance would place 'King Solomon's Mines'; Magellan opted for the Lequeos, Columbus thought he had found it in Española: 'as geographical knowledge extended eastwards and westwards without Ophir being recognised, its supposed position moved with that knowledge, always a little ahead of the latest discovery.'²⁷ And in Peru a new element was added, particularly in the active mind of Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa: tales of Tupac Yupanqui's Inca fleet with 20,000 men, which had found black people—and gold—in islands to the west; while across the Pacific in the Moluccas, Galvão had heard that in Chile Valdivia had news of an island king, beyond whom 'were the Amazonas, whose queene was called Guanomilla, that is to say, the golden heauen', so that there must be great riches there, 'and also at an Island called Solomon'.²⁸ The resulting voyages—by Mendaña in 1567–9, Mendaña and Quiros in 1595–6, Quiros and Torres in 1605–6—are among the most remarkable in the whole history of maritime discovery, alike in their geographical results (long misunderstood as these were) and as a story of high ideals, bitter disillusiones and sufferings, baseness and grandeur.

By the mid-1560s the Spice Islands were officially barred, the Philippines were becoming an annexure of New Spain; and quite apart from the restraints of policy, the developing knowledge of the wind-systems and the precedent of Grijalva's disaster were hardly encouraging for any Peruvian enterprise in these directions. The southwest was open, and already in the 1550s voyages thither were being mooted; and in 1565 there was a definite project for finding 'some islands, called Solomon, which lie over opposite Chile'—the first quasi-official use of the name.²⁹ This came to nothing—the scratch company recruited was suspected of planning to turn pirate, and hastily disbanded—but in 1567 the interim Governor Garcia de Castro appointed his young and inexperienced nephew Alvaro de Mendaña y Neyra to command two ships to find rich islands 'between New Guinea and this coast'. In Mendaña's mind the prime motive of settlement was the conversion of the heathen; this probably had only the most intermittent appeal for the rank-and-file or for Sarmiento, who later claimed to have initiated the project (he was at any rate active in its organisation) and to have declined the offered command, on condition of retaining overall control. This is unlikely; his position was captain of the flagship, not Chief Pilot, but in his own view he was at least on a par with that officer; as in so many Spanish voyages, the command was far from harmonious. Objectives were also unclear, as was doubtless inevitable, but seem to have been first of all Sarmiento's Western Isles, anywhere between 14 and 23°S and not far from Peru, and then Terra Australis itself, the great land-mass thought to run from New Guinea to Magellanica.

The hastily prepared *Los Reyes* and *Todos Santos*, with about 100 men, left Callao on 19 November 1567, the day of Santa Ysabel, who became patroness of the voyage. The *Los Reyes* was capitana, and carried Mendaña, Sarmiento,



and the Chief Pilot Hernan Gallego, who had been with Ulloa and Ladrillero in Magellanic waters. They sailed westsouthwest to about 15°45'S, then west by north and finally west. This change of course was strongly criticised by Sarmiento, who held that they were instructed to press on, and was also angry at Mendaña's refusal to investigate a cloudbank which Sarmiento thought might have been land. This insistence, and Gallego's promise on the last day of the year—already six weeks out—that they would find land by the end of January make it difficult to credit Mendaña's statement that they were provisioned 'for at least a month'. As Wallis says, that would mean not much over a month; but though the water was bad, it was not exhausted, and there seems no hint as yet of a real food crisis.³⁰ It is possible that in changing course Gallego had his own plan, to discover New Guinea from the east, basing himself on Bernardo de la Torre's Cabo de la Cruz (or Cruces) on that coast, which was thought to be only 600 leagues from Peru.³¹

On 15 or 16 January 1568 they came to an 'Ysla de Jesus', most likely Nui or some near-by island in the Ellices. Here again Sarmiento made trouble, criticising the failure to land and take possession (Gallego being unwilling to risk the ships, or to delay), and later hinting to the soldiers that they had left behind a kingdom.³² Continuing generally westwards, on 1 February, Candlemas Day, they reached some shoals they named 'Bajos de la Candelaria', either Ontong Java or Roncador Reef.³³ Then at dawn on Saturday the 7th they saw a large high land, no little atoll: Santa Ysabel, the largest truly Pacific Island yet seen by Europeans. It was fifteen leagues away, and they did not come close-to until late on Sunday: people came out in canoes, shy until a sailor swam to them, eager for caps and bells, thievish once they had nerved themselves to come aboard, but very friendly and soon imitating the sign of the cross and the Lord's Prayer. The ships could not find a harbour that night, but on Monday made port, being guided by a bright star, resplendent in full day-light—surely the Star of the East. Here in the Bahia de la Estrella (still so named), they landed and took possession, the Franciscans singing *Vexilla Regis prodeunt*—'the banners of the King press on'.³⁴

The bright omen was deceptive, though for a time all went well. By early April they had built a bergantin, and in the next month it visited the north coast of Guadalcanal and circumnavigated Ysabel. By the time it returned to Estrella Bay, relations with the 'Indians' had deteriorated, and the whole expedition shifted to Guadalcanal, settling on 12 May at Puerto de la Cruz, the site of the present agreeable little capital, Honiara. A week later the bergantin went out again, following the north coast of Guadalcanal, then across to Malaita and down to San Cristobal, returning to Puerto de la Cruz on 6 June. The ships then moved to an anchorage on San Cristobal, where they careened while the bergantin explored the south coast of the island. The work done in six months by Gallego and his co-pilot Ortega was notable (Fig. 15): very much of the

coasts of Santa Ysabel, Malaita (Ysla de Ramos), Guadalcanal, San Cristobal, and Florida had been examined, as well as many smaller islands, and Choiseul (their San Marcos) and New Georgia (Arrecifes) had been sighted. Although Gallego greatly over-estimated the sizes of his islands, many of his sites can still be identified with precision, and many of the Spanish names for the islands actually visited remain on the maps. This side of the work was done well. But the bright star had dimmed; the hopes of settlement and of converting the heathen had foundered utterly.

The first friendly reception, when after their visitors had come ashore the Indians had danced to Spanish fifes and guitars and their own Pan-pipes, when their leader Bileban-Arra and Mendaña had exchanged names—they were both *tauriquis* or chiefs—had gone sour. The islanders, faced with the intrusion of scores of non-producers demanding food, had gone into sullen retreat; the Spaniards naturally enough did not understand that their consumer demand meant the disruption of a nicely, even precariously, balanced economy. Mendaña, a genuinely honest and high-minded man, asked the friars what could be done; they—understanding something, but not enough—replied that parties should go out foraging for essentials: if nothing was offered, food and food alone could be taken, but the villages should not be stripped, and proper and adequate gifts should be left in exchange. It is clear that sincere efforts were made to live up to this semi-self-denying ordinance; but in time they inevitably broke down. Sarmiento, almost a throw-back to the earlier and tougher conquistadores, was not the best man to be put in charge of foraging. He was sent inland, and scaled the central range of Ysabel, a feat not repeated until this century. On the whole he held himself in hand for the time being, but it could not last: the gulf of misunderstanding was too great.

The Indians resorted to guerrilla harassment, interspersed with gestures, which in their own culture would show friendly intent. On at least one occasion these took the form of presenting human flesh for Spanish delectation, which was counter-productive. The dreary syndrome was repeated when the Spaniards moved to Guadalcanal; and we may be sure that news of the strange invaders had travelled ahead. The prizes of war were pigs, desperately needed by the Spaniards, central treasures in the local culture. Here, with a real food crisis, Sarmiento devastated a village (to Mendaña's anger) and took hostages by treachery. Nine Spaniards were killed in retaliation, and it became clear that cannibalism would not be kept within the family: the purser Catoira convinced himself that one Indian felt the legs of a soldier, his destined share of the feast, to see if they were tender. . . .³⁵ So a possibly friendly native group was counter-massacred, the quartered bodies being left where the Spaniards had been slain, and Sarmiento burned all accessible villages. The process began anew on San Cristobal.

It was time to go. A council was held on 7 August: Mendaña, assuming that the islands were outliers of a great landmass, wished to press south for another ten or twelve degrees; Gallego argued that, while they had enough provisions

for a return voyage, little more food could be gathered by scouting round the islands—and the ships were in very poor shape. In view of the distance from Peru, much greater than had been anticipated, the food shortage, and native hostility, it was generally agreed that settlement was impossible; Mendaña, Sarmiento, and a couple of gold-hungry soldiers dissented, but Gallego won the day. Any course but a return would probably have meant disaster. Mendaña accepted the decision, but so reluctantly that he persistently tried to make the pilots head southeast, into the Trades, alleging that the winds would change with the Equinox and that they would thus make Chile, though it is clear that he was still hankering for a Southland. The pilots replied, unanswerably, ‘the landsman reasons and the seaman navigates’, and after a month formally protested against further vacillations: the only way of salvation was by New Spain. Only then did Mendaña give way completely.³⁶

North of the Equator they came across an island which Gallego identified as Salazar’s San Bartolomé (Taongi) but which was actually Namu in the Marshalls; some rope and a nail fitted to a stick were probably relics of Villalobos or the *San Geronimo* in 1566. Further on, in 19–20°N, they sailed round the very isolated atoll of Wake Island (not seen again until 1796), and in mid-October the almiranta, now under Sarmiento’s command, parted company. The *Los Reyes* lost its main-mast in a great storm—in forty-five years Gallego had not seen its like—but they patched up a jury-rig, at first with no more sail than a blanket, and came through, although the ship ‘being built only for the coast of Peru, for which work she was good enough . . . was only fit to drown us all’.³⁷ The soldiers, racked with scurvy and reduced (like Mendaña himself) to a daily ration of ‘half a pint of water, and half of that was crushed cockroaches’, clamoured that ‘they no longer had any faith in charts and papers’ and demanded to turn back, which presumably meant a course for the Philippines, where Legazpi was still on Cebu. Faced with this lunacy, Mendaña asserted himself, for once in accord with his pilots: land must surely be near. Murmuring continued until, next day, a log ‘clean and quite free from barnacles’ was picked up; but it was still eight more days until, on 19 December, they sighted Baja California. Near the tip of the peninsula they rested and watered, and the sick were fed on pelicans; a great white cockatoo brought from the Solomons, ‘a very rare bird, the like of which has never been seen’, had been sacrificed to the same end. They could not make Navidad, and it was not till 23 January 1569 that they entered a Christian port, Colima, where three days later Sarmiento rejoined in the *Todos Santos*.³⁸

The voyage was not yet over, nor were their troubles. Sarmiento was the first problem: he was obviously insubordinate, and Mendaña had him arrested, probably to obviate false charges against himself. The transaction is obscure; Sarmiento was soon released, but either he or Mendaña, or both, thought it imprudent for him to come on to Peru. The battered voyagers were well received at Colima, but it was not much of a port and they could not refit there, while all down the coast, from Acapulco to Realejo, they were met at first with alarmed

suspicion, only allayed when Gallego was recognised by fellow-pilots: John Hawkins had been on the Atlantic coast two years earlier, and since 'it had not been certified that we were not Lutherans' they were taken for 'strange Scottish people', up to no good. At Realejo they were at last able to repair the ships, but only by Mendaña and Gallego pledging their personal credit. They did not reach Callao until 11 September 1569; they had been gone over twenty-two months.³⁹

The Southland had not been found, and the position of the islands actually discovered was far from certain. Unable to make adequate allowance for the favourable South Equatorial Current, Gallego had greatly underestimated the distance run from Callao to the Bajos de la Candelaria, making it 1638 leagues against an actual 2284, about 9700 and 13,525 km—a shortfall of over 28 per cent. It is true that he was able to deduce, correctly, that the islands lay not far southeast of New Guinea; but this depended on a grossly reduced figure for the width of the Pacific. With the techniques at Gallego's command, the error is excusable; but it set the Solomons on a wildly errant career.⁴⁰

Yet the existence of large high islands might well point to a mother-continent not far away, and indeed might not the islands seen to the west—Choiseul and New Georgia—be promontories from the main? If no *tierra firme* had been discovered, neither had any significant wealth been revealed; there were hints of gold, fallacious, but enough to spark off wild rumours along the waterfronts of the New World. Lopez Vaz, a Portuguese captured off La Plata by the Earl of Cumberland's men in 1587, spoke with great confidence of 40,000 pesos of gold, 'besides great store of cloves and ginger', brought back by Mendaña—this although the Spaniards 'were not seeking or being desirous of gold'! He added the intriguing suggestion that the Solomons had been so named 'to the ende that the Spaniards supposing them to bee those Isles from whence Salomon fetched gold to adorne the Temple at Jerusalem, might bee the more desirous to goe and inhabite the same'.⁴¹ The Ophirian Conjecture was far from dead; only Ophir was as elusive as ever.

To Mendaña, the isles, and their souls crying for salvation, became an obsession. He went to Spain with his uncle the Governor in 1569, and presented a too-glowing prospectus of his discovery and the opportunities it offered. Doubtless by the influence of de Castro, now on the Council of the Indies, he obtained in 1574 authority for a substantial expedition to found a colony of which he would become marquis: it seemed as if the old days of the Conquista had come again. But when he arrived in Peru, in 1577, he found the climate changed. His uncle was far away, and the new Viceroy, the great Francisco de Toledo, saw no point in such expensive ventures, even as a way of getting rid of turbulent soldiers of fortune—after all, they came back just the same, and claimed rewards for their services. Sarmiento was high in Toledo's favour, and corsairs more real than the phantasmal *gente estrangera escoseses* were soon to rock the Spanish Pacific world: while Drake and Cavendish were at large, not a

ship or man or peso could be spared for adventures however pious.⁴² But with the capture of Richard Hawkins off modern Ecuador in 1594 the immediate threat was eased; and Sarmiento, after his abortive fortification of the Straits of Magellan against a second Drake, and a polite captivity in England and a harsher one by Huguenot Frenchmen, was safely off the scene. A new Viceroy, the Marques de Cañete, was more favourably disposed than the ferociously realist Toledo. But it was a quarter of a century after Mendaña's return to Callao before he could set out once more on his quest.

The Southland II: Mendaña and the Holy Cross, Quiros and Doña Isabel

In all 'the tragical history of the Sea' there can scarcely be a more moving and terrible story than that of Mendaña's second, and last, voyage, unless it be Sarmiento's lingering disaster in the Straits. Mendaña's story is recorded by a poet, Luis de Belmonte Bermudez, the secretary to the Chief Pilot, Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, or, to give him his Portuguese name, Queiroz. The substance of the account is definitely from Quiros; the words are often those of the poet; it is an astonishingly vivid narrative, with much use of direct speech, which has been an inspiration to poets in our own day. The story, with its sequel in Quiros's own voyage ten years later, is one of almost unrelieved tragedy, and tragedy in the true and highest sense, that of the collapse of an ideal which its holders believed to be divinely inspired, in the hands of the pitiable human instruments.⁴³

Mendaña's aim was to found a God-fearing colony whence the light of the Gospel should spread. His instruments were four ships and 378 men and women, who included six religious; and also his wife Doña Isabel Barreto and her three brothers. On these, and on the Camp-Master Manrique, a quarrelsome old soldier, the divine light did not shine. The only leading figure, apart from the friars, who fully shared Mendaña's enthusiasm (the word is used in its older theological sense) was probably Quiros, though some humbler men and women had at least the gift of charity. There were others, such as the soldier rebuked by Quiros for wantonly shooting and slaying an islander with a child in his arms, who replied that he was very sorry the Devil had to take those destined for him, but then he had a reputation to maintain as a good shot.

From the start, the expedition was confused and disorderly. The moment he came aboard Manrique interfered in seamen's matters and quarrelled with Doña Isabel and Quiros. The two galleons and two smaller ships left Callao on 9 April 1595, and went north to Paita, provisioning, or rather requisitioning, at small ports en route: at one the almiranta was exchanged, by mixed force and fraud, for what they thought would be a better ship. At Paita there were more quarrels with Manrique, and only Mendaña's urgent pleadings persuaded Quiros to continue on board. After they sailed from Paita on 16 June, things improved for a while; winds and weather were favourable, and the ships made good progress southwestwards, and then in a generally westerly direction. Spirits were high,

and there were fifteen marriages in the first month at sea. But if Mendaña's weakness as a leader was displayed at Païta, his limitations as a navigator were no less clearly shown at their first landfall.

He had instructed Quiros to prepare a chart showing only the Peruvian coast and two points in 7 and 12°S, 1500 leagues from Lima: these showed where the Isles of Solomon would be found; all else was omitted lest one of the captains should be tempted to go discovering on his own account. The course was easy: once in 7–12°S, all that was needed was latitude sailing westwards, with both winds and currents helping them on. Yet after 1000 leagues Mendaña was sure that the first islands he came to, on 21 July, were the Solomons: they were in the right latitude, but in reality nearly 50° of longitude distant from San Cristobal. It was soon obvious, however, that their fair-skinned smooth-haired people could not be the fuzzy blacks of the Solomons, and Mendaña gave his discovery the name, still in part retained, of Las Marquesas de Mendoza, for Cañete's family name.

Four hundred of their people came out in canoes, people 'almost white, and of very graceful shape', one youth so clear and fresh and beautiful that Quiros 'never in my life felt such pain as when I thought that so fair a creature [the word was more literal then] should be left to go to perdition'.⁴⁴ For a time there was merrymaking in a spirit of mutual curiosity, until the freedom with which the islanders helped themselves to odd gear about the ships became annoying. A gun was fired, which scared most of them off; but one man who would not leave the flagship *San Geronimo* was wounded in the arm with a sword, and his fellows brandished spears, threw stones, and tried to tow the ship ashore. Then the shooting began. It was repeated, with less provocation, on other islands; there were intermittent friendly passages, but when the Spaniards left, only two weeks later, Quiros estimated that 200 Marquesans had been killed, for the most part in mere wantonness. And this was the first substantial contact between Europeans and Polynesians.

Mendaña accepted that these were not the islands which he sought, but three or four days after leaving the Marquesas (that is on 8 or 9 August) he announced that they would find the land they were seeking before nightfall on that very day. Supplies were running out, but at this news people ate and drank more freely; and then they saw no land for days, until 20 August, 400 leagues from the Marquesas: and then the land was only an atoll, which they called 'San Bernardo'. Nine days later they came upon another island, 'La Solitaria', but the surrounding sea was studded with reefs, too dangerous to attempt a landing. The authorities, in unwonted agreement, identify these as Pukapuka (Danger Island; not to be confused with Magellan's 'San Pablo' in the Tuamotus) and Niulakita, in the Cooks and Ellices respectively. With these meagre sightings, murmuring grew among the soldiers, abetted by some of the pilots, jealous of Quiros: they had sailed over the hypothetical islands, erased from the chart he had produced at Mendaña's behest, and they could sail on forever, or at least to

Great Tartary. For the sake of his promised Marquisate, Mendaña was prepared to send them fishing for his boasted pearls, on the bottom of the sea . . . But the end of the outward voyage was at hand, though it was not the sought-for end. Thirty days after Mendaña had announced land for that very day, they saw ahead a great bank of dark smoke: a less auspicious but more appropriate omen than the bright star of his first voyage.

The morning, 8 September, showed them clearly a large and beautiful island, which they had seen when the rain lifted the night before: this was Ndeni, which Mendaña called Santa Cruz.⁴⁵ To the northwest was the source of the smoke-bank, the volcano of Tinakula rising steeply from the sea like a sugar-loaf, and in active eruption. But they could not see the almiranta, and a search by the smaller ships found no traces of her. This mystery of the sea was not cleared up until 1970-1, when excavations at Pamua, on the north coast of San Cristobal, turned up Spanish colonial pottery in quantities indicating a longer stay, by more people, than could be accounted for by Gallego's exploration in the bergantin in 1568, which did not camp on the coast: there can be no reasonable doubt that this represents settlement by the company of the *Santa Isabel*. Despite the fact that Mendaña had recently refused an appeal by her captain for more water, the parting was probably not deliberate: the almirante's wife was left behind on the flagship, San Cristobal could have been recognised from Gallego's description, and whether or not the ship, which was in poor condition, was wrecked, it would have made good sense for it to wait for the rest of the fleet at its presumed destination.⁴⁶

At Santa Cruz, Mendaña again professed to recognize the island: the people were of the right colour, though their language differed from those of Santa Ysabel and Guadalcanal. The first reception was hostile, arrows being shot (harmlessly) from canoes; the arquebusiers soon drove off this feeble attack, with loss. After several tentative anchorings, the expedition finally came to rest at the head of a deep bay on the northwest coast of Santa Cruz, where the people were friendly, especially their chief Malope, who exchanged names with Mendaña. Here the settlement was commenced, at a point which can be precisely located from Quiros's relation, confirmed by pottery finds: Graciosa Bay still retains its singularly ill-fitting name.

The sickening cycle of friendly welcome, misunderstandings, sullen retreats, occasional reconciliations, robberies and killings began all over again, and was compounded by violent dissension within the thoroughly demoralised company. Mendaña stayed aboard ship—the Governor's house was not ready—and although the soldiers worked willingly at first, 'The Devil was able to work so well with some of them, that they kept in mind the delights of Lima'. Quiros was convinced that when matters had been put on a friendly footing with the inhabitants, some soldiers deliberately murdered villagers in order to provoke hostilities and so force the abandonment of the colony. Seditious petitions were signed, shots were fired over the ships—'I know not at what birds they were

aiming'. When Mendaña at last took action, it was, in Jack-Hinton's words, 'as little more than the vassal of Doña Isabel and her brothers.' The Camp-Master was cut down at Mendaña's behest and in his presence, and another malcontent killed; and on the same day the Spaniards' best friend, Malope, was murdered by some of Manrique's gang while actually feasting them. In a futile attempt at reparation, the head of the ensign mainly responsible was left at the door of Malope's house in his deserted village; the other murderer was reprieved—nearly 200 people had been lost with the almiranta, and not another man could be wasted—but died of shame and the scorn in which he was held. Manriques' head and that of the man killed with him should have been buried, but nobody bothered, and they were found on the beach, gnawed by dogs.

In all this, Quiros appears as an ineffectual peace-maker; such control as existed was in the arbitrary hands of the Barretos. Mendaña was ill and broken, sunk in a religious stupor; he died in mid-October, nominating his wife as Governess and his brother-in-law Lorenzo Barreto as Captain-General; but he in turn soon died of a wound received from the islanders. Naturally their hostility was now more persistent, and there were only fifteen healthy soldiers left. When most of the company moved to the ships, on 7 November, the first European colony in the South Seas ended its dismal and bloody existence of two months.

The agony, however, was far from ended. Morale was further depressed by the death of their conscientious Vicar, who had risen from his dying bed to confess Lorenzo Barreto. Two incursions were made for provisions, to a small off-lying island; the usual syndrome was acted out again. Mendaña's body was disinterred, that it might not be desecrated by the savages, but those on the capitana refused to take it aboard; it was placed on the frigate. They abandoned their dogs, which ran along the beach barking distractedly, all but the smallest one, which swam for the ships and 'for such fidelity was taken on board; and of him it may be said that fortune favours the brave.' At last, on 18 November, all three ships sailed, though Quiros had very sensibly proposed abandoning the two small vessels and using their men and gear on the capitana.

The plan was to sail westsouthwest as far as 11°S, in the hope of finding San Cristobal and the almiranta; failing that, to turn for Manila. Probably the *Santa Isabel's* people were still camped at Pamua, a hill-top on a headland with excellent visibility to sea, and had the *San Geronimo* pressed on when 11° was reached, the two might well have rejoined; in which case, in all probability, all would have shared the same unknown fate, for the ships were rotten and supplies were short. But seeing no land at 11°S, Quiros bore northwest, to avoid New Guinea, which he thought was close at hand; had his ships been well-found, he would have preferred to explore the lands of which, a few days later, he saw signs—a tree trunk and masses of reeds. But in his desperate position he felt under the necessity of avoiding the hazards of unknown coasts and islands.⁴⁷

The voyage to Manila was terrible in the extreme, and not relieved by human

solidarity in distress. Unremitting labour, by weakened men, was needed to keep sails and rigging workable. Quiros did his best to see that the workers and the sick were looked after; the Governess refused to share her ample stores, and raided the scanty water supply to wash her clothes. She suggested hanging murmurers, but at last released two jars of oil for the sick, which did not last long. Probably the people were too weary and broken to mutiny; if ever an officer were justified in heading a mutiny, this was the time, but Quiros devoted himself to the desperate and thankless task of acting as peace-maker between the generality and the hard-core gang around the Barretos. The galleot parted company early in December, after being specifically warned not to do so, for Quiros feared that the capitana might sink at any moment. A few days later the frigate disappeared; in this case Quiros had wished to bring her worn-out crew aboard the *San Geronimo*, but was over-ruled. For lack of gear to hoist in the boat, he was unable to land at Ponape or at Guam, which he reached on 1 January 1596; but here they were at least able to exchange scrap-iron for provisions brought out in canoes, though two Guanamese 'were killed by an arquebus, owing to a matter of a piece of cask hoop'.

In mid-January they reached the Philippines, but Quiros had no charts of the archipelago, and without them it was difficult and dangerous to find safe anchorage; there can be little doubt that only his insistence on his own expertise saved the capitana from disaster almost in sight of relief. They met a man who had guided Cavendish through the islands, and he told them that the land which they saw was indeed Cape Espiritu Santo, the northwest point of Samar, for which Quiros had been making. Here they found a good port and above all food; some of the sick died from over-eating. Recalcitrant to the last, Doña Isabel ordered the flogging of a married soldier who had gone ashore for food, allegedly against her orders; but the tough old boatswain protested so strongly that she had to yield. She continued to threaten condign justice in Manila, and sent her two surviving brothers ahead to report. Before the ship reached Luzon, provisions were short again, and when Quiros approached the Governess she upbraided him for his ill-service to Mendaña, who had spent so much on the expedition, before she grudgingly gave up a calf. At the entrance to Manila Bay the Spanish coastguard came aboard, and was horrified at the sight of the sick and starving men and women—and babies—below, when there were two pigs—but Doña Isabel's pigs—on the deck above. At his angry 'What the Devil! Is this a time for courtesy with pigs?' she reluctantly ordered them to be killed. It was difficult, with a weak and sullen crew, to work into the Bay, but soon food and supplies were sent from Manila. Fifty people had died on the twelve weeks' voyage, and of the nearly 400 who had sailed from Paita, about 100 survived when, on 11 February 1596, they anchored at Cavite, and the long horror at last was over.

The galleot reached Mindanao, in such distress that it was said that her crew landed to kill and eat a dog they saw on the beach. Of the frigate bearing Mendaña's body, there was only a vague report that she had been seen aground

on some unnamed coast, with sails set and all her crew dead. As for Mendaña's wife, on the voyage that evil woman had gone into retreat and prepared to meet her God; in Manila she met and married the Governor's young cousin.⁴⁸ Re-equipped and revictualled, the *San Geronimo* sailed for Acapulco, arriving there on 11 December 1597. There Quiros left her and sailed for Peru, but not out of this history.

Quiros, caught between the devil of Doña Isabel and the potentially turbulent sea of the sailors and soldiers, appears in all this as a man of stature approaching moral heroism; and it may plausibly be objected that the flattering portrait is drawn by himself or by his secretary, a poet who loved him. However, the account is not only psychologically and internally consistent, it is also consistent with what we know of him from other and not always friendly sources. His loyalty is unimpeachable, to Mendaña but also to Doña Isabel, whom he cannot have respected in herself, only in her office; indeed, this loyalty overrode his earnest desire to secure fair and decent treatment for his company. Those qualities of humanity and forbearance so apparent in the Quiros/Belmonte relation, and which so much appeal to us, are vouched for by a hostile witness, Prado, and indeed are precisely those qualities which earned Prado's scorn, and to a lesser extent that of a better man, Torres. And even in the relation, there are clear indications of the points where his very virtues became, in the context within which he had to act, failings and weaknesses.

As for his competence as a cosmographer, that was attested by such contemporary authorities as the notable Jesuit mathematician Clavius, the reformer of the calendar, and, given his technical resources, it stands up to modern criticism. It is notable that when he does assert himself, it is nearly always in matters of navigation, and he alone brought the *San Geronimo* through her dreadful voyage. The nobility of his dream, the intensity of his spiritual vision, will appear in the sequel; the passion with which he held them may seem to us, in an age psychologically conditioned to scepticism in such matters, extravagant to absurdity; but it must be seen in the context of his time, his country, and his Faith: he and Mendaña were men not of the Conquista but of the Counter-Reformation. His weaknesses are too marked to allow him true greatness; but he was a remarkable personality, and if not a great, then surely a good man: in no satiric sense, a 'Spiritual Quixote'.

The Southland III: Quiros and the New Jerusalem

Even while in Manila, Quiros seems to have determined on a return to the Islands; he begged de Morga to keep the existence of the Marquesas secret 'until his Majesty be informed and order what is most convenient for his service', since their central position in that South Sea would enable the English to do much harm should they hear of them and settle.⁴⁹ Back in Peru by June 1597, he tried to get a ship from the Viceroy Velasco, who (naturally, given the record) set a

precedent for future dealings with Quiros by hedging. At his suggestion Quiros went to Spain to put his plans to the Court; he visited Rome as a pilgrim in Holy Year, 1600, and secured the support of the Pope (in a personal audience), of the Spanish Ambassador to the Holy See, and of leading mathematicians and cosmographers, who were impressed by his navigational skills. His holy design may have been implanted in his mind by the unforgettable sight of the young Marquesan, so beautiful and yet damned; but if he arrived in Rome as a man with a mission, it was here that he became a man possessed, and his possession held him through humiliating failure, grinding poverty, and the sickness of hope ever deferred, until death 'saved him from further frustration and humiliation and the Spanish authorities from further inconvenience'.⁵⁰

In 1603 Quiros obtained the royal authorisation, the instructions to the Viceroy of Peru being couched in usually strong terms.⁵¹ There was some opposition from Doña Isabel's new husband, who considered himself Governor of the Solomons in succession to Mendaña, but this was smoothed over on Quiros's assurance that they were not in his program. He was given two ships, the *San Pedro y San Pablo* as flag and another *San Pedro* as almiranta, with a *zabra* or launch for inshore work; the complement of 250 to 300 people, including six Franciscans, was provisioned for a year, with seeds and animals for a colony. But, as so often, the staff structure seems almost calculated to ensure conflict in the command. There was certainly prejudice against Quiros as a Portuguese. The almirante, Luis Vaez de Torres, was stout-hearted, competent, and loyal, though without great respect for his leader; but the reluctant Chief Pilot, Juan Ochoa de Bilboa, may have been a trouble-maker, though Brett Hilder implies that the trouble he made was merely his correct stand against Quiros in the dispute over the distance sailed. As for Don Diego de Prado y Tovar, as his style implies the most exalted personage aboard, he was a gentleman-volunteer with some hopes of succession to the command—perhaps even the Viceroy's nomination as such—and it is difficult to find in his own doctored account the virtues that H. N. Stevens ascribes to this 'much-maligned man': he convicts himself of malice, disloyalty, and an unscrupulous determination to exploit his ambiguous status. He forgot that, in the long run at least, 'Malice to be effective should be concealed'.⁵²

There were very reasonable doubts in Lima as to the advisability of launching new colonies which would be difficult to support; the fleet's accountant, Iturbe, later alleged that Quiros shouted in the streets that the new Viceroy, the Conde de Monterey, was obstructing the intentions of the Council of State and the Pope, and it is possible that Ochoa and Prado were to some extent the Viceroy's watchdogs; on the other hand Monterey wrote a month before sailing to ask Quiros, in most friendly terms, for a progress report, and it was not until after his failure that Quiros blamed it on the delay of ten weeks in starting, and that in turn on the Viceroy.⁵³ Vagueness and secrecy as to objectives probably contributed to the unease; but the real aim was to find a great Terra Australis beyond but fairly near the discoveries of 1568 and 1595: the Marquesas were

well populated by a more or less civil people who could not have come from New Spain or Peru, still less from the western shores of the South Sea. Terra Australis failing, they would make for Santa Cruz and explore New Guinea, apparently facing the risk of unknown lee shores and, should New Guinea not be an island, of embayment. If the Southland were not found, the return would be by the East Indies and so round the world, which was politically practicable since the union with Portugal in 1580.⁵⁴

The course was to be westsouthwest to 30°S, then in zigzags between 10 and 20°S, with Santa Cruz as the destination if no land were found, and the rendezvous in case of separation. The fleet left Callao on 21 December 1605, and by 22 January 1606 was in 26°S, when Quiros abruptly changed course; but Torres, Prado, Ochoa, and another pilot were for pressing on, alleging the usual promising cloud-banks. They sailed in a generally northwesterly direction until 19 February, when they were in 10°20'S, sighting on the way the isolated Ducie and Henderson Islands and several of the Tuamotus;⁵⁵ at the most promising of these, 'La Convercion de San Pablo' (Hao, a large atoll, 50 km long) the people were friendly and landings were made. Quiros wished for a longer stay, though these were hardly the millions of whose salvation he dreamt; but he was ill and Ochoa disregarded his instructions. They now turned west for Santa Cruz, coming to an island which Quiros identified with Mendaña's San Bernardo (Pukapuka) but which was in fact Caroline. On 2 March they found a small well-populated island, covered with coconut palms, generally identified as Rakahanga in the Northern Cooks. The people were defiant, and there were martial passages, but also some amorous ones. Once more Quiros was dazzled by the physical beauty of the Islanders, and from his description Fray Juan da Torquemada in 1615 gave the island the most generally used Spanish name, 'Gente Hermosa', the beautiful people; but Quiros himself characteristically called it 'La Peregrina', the pilgrim, and Torres more realistically 'La Matanza', the killing.⁵⁶

Long before this the inevitable murmurings had begun, abetted by Ochoa, and were not mollified by Quiros's well-meant lectures to the people on the evils of gaming, even if winnings were devoted to the souls in Purgatory, and the advantages of using the time on their hands to learn the three Rs, martial arts, and the use of the spheres. His temper was failing, and he hoisted a block to the yard-arm, *in terrorem*. But he had to admit, even to himself, that the voyage was dragging. Although, as Wallis says, nobody had yet had more experience of the South Pacific, the wind régime was not known. Even had they sailed in early October, not late December, they would still have been too late to take advantage of the winter extension of the Southeast Trades to the north, and they were now entering, in March, an area where monsoonal winds from the northwest prevail from December to April—they were running only ten leagues a day, instead of the twenty-seven of August-September 1595.⁵⁷

On 25 March, Easter Eve, Quiros called a council, and discontent came to a head. Ochoa pointed out that they had been sailing for ninety-four days, against

sixty-nine from Lima to Santa Cruz in 1595, and there was no sign of land; by this reckoning they had come 2300 leagues. Quiros applied various corrections, making much play with the fact that Ochoa's experience was merely coastal, and said that he had overestimated by 600 leagues: this would put them 1600–1700 leagues from Peru and well east of Santa Cruz. Actually Quiros had himself underestimated by about 600 leagues. Torres and the Portuguese pilot de Leza were also much closer to the truth than Quiros—about 2000 leagues to Taumako—but allowed themselves to be overborne. As far as Gente Hermosa the general estimates were not wildly out; the errors piled up as they passed out of the region where the Trades are steady even in winter. Quiros had his way: Ochoa was deposed and transferred to the almiranta, but the snake was scotched, not killed.

Water was short, despite the use of a condenser which Quiros rated too highly, and it was with great relief that, on 7 April, they sighted an island higher and more promising than the atolls so far visited. This was Taumako, under 150 km northeast of Santa Cruz; Quiros was apparently running about half a degree north of the correct course for that island. The people here were friendly, with fine canoes, apparently knowing but disapproving of cannibalism; wood, water, and provisions were plentiful, and harmony was scarcely marred by the kidnapping of four young men for the salvation of their souls and their potential value as interpreters—factors barely distinguishable in the Spanish scheme of things. The chief, Tumai, was especially cordial; he told them of over sixty islands (some of them possibly as far away as Fiji or Tonga) and, 'by signs with fire', that the volcano seen in 1595 was five days to the west, and Santa Cruz could be seen from it. Obviously he had heard about arquebuses, and Quiros tried to explain away Malope's murder.

Santa Cruz was now in reach, but it was not the mainland of Terra Australis, it might be considered as Doña Isabel's territory, and to Quiros its memories were doubtless hateful; so on 18 April they headed southeast, with the tail of the monsoon, for the great land of 'Manicolo' of which they had heard at Taumako.⁵⁸ On 24 April the ships rounded Tikopia, where three of the men taken at Taumako escaped by swimming. Passing through the Banks Islands, the northmost New Hebridean group, they came on 1 May 1606, the day of SS Philip and James, to a great mountainous land, to Quiros the end of the quest: La Austrialia del Espíritu Santo. Or perhaps indeed 'La Australia . . .'⁵⁹

Espíritu Santo retains the name that Quiros gave it, the largest (3885 km²) and most diversified of the New Hebrides, where a bizarre Anglo-French Condominium, an old-style land-grabbing colonialism, and nativistic movements such as Nagriamel are trying to come to grips with the twentieth century. To Quiros, the problem of bringing the islands into the seventeenth century was sublimely simple: the New Jerusalem (such and no less was his name for the colony) would be devoted to the propaganda of the Faith and the welfare, material but first of all moral, of the natives.

The history of the New Jerusalem was a phantasmagoria: Quiros was now in the grip of a religious mania. It began realistically enough with the exploration by Torres of the great bay, still called St Philip and St James, in which they found themselves: a fine fertile land, well-timbered and well-watered, with a river, the Jordan, which in Quiros's eyes was as great as the Guadalquivir at Seville and hence proof of a land of continental size, though others were sceptical of this. There was a good port, named Vera Cruz; but nowhere suitable to build bergantins for coastal exploration. The land was well peopled by jealously separate tribes; but the people were not the golden youth of the Marquesas and Gente Hermosa.

They came out in canoes, with bows ready, and Torres's idea of an embassy was a whiff of arquebus-shot. This was meant to terrify, and it did. In the next few days there were occasional very wary meetings and exchanges; but when, a week after their arrival, Torres led a reconnaissance in some force, a great crowd blocked their way. Its leaders drew a line on the ground and indicated that both sides should lay down their arms—to their cost, says the pilot Leza, this tribe knew nothing of the arquebus—but to Torres this was an insolence, and he advanced across the line. The first death may have been by impatience or accident—Quiros tries to put a good face on it—and then a hard combat began. It could have only one ending; but that meant also the end of any hope of saving souls for Christ, and he admitted sadly that his great intention was now 'but a sound'.⁶⁰

Quiros was saddened but not deterred. A church was built of boughs and plantains, and on Pentecost Day, 14 May, he took possession of the land, as far as the Pole, in the names of the Trinity, Jesus, St Francis, John of God, and King Philip III. He hardly deserves the scorn poured on him for the creation of 'Ministries' when he was in fact setting up the standard Spanish municipality with the appropriate officers and magistrates, though thirty-four of one sort and another seems an excessive number. As Fray Martin de Munilla, the leader of the Franciscans, puts it, 'all the offices, which a well organised city should have' were distributed; and on normal Spanish form the early appointment of a Registrar of Mines was a very reasonable precaution. But this relative common sense was overlain by the trappings of the Order of the Holy Ghost which Quiros instituted, a bizarre medley of baroque chivalry and religiosity, dedicated, in Prado's words, 'to defend the Indians from their enemies and from the others who might wish to injure them, and other absurdities [*inpertinencias*] . . .'. Fray Martin (an old experienced man, in general very reserved about these enthusiasms) demurred at wearing the blue cross which was the badge of the Order—this would be against the Franciscan Rule—and overheard Quiros complaining of this to himself in words 'which could not be set down with ink on paper'. But the taffeta crosses were distributed to all—

even two negro cooks were rewarded by such largesse . . . for their gallantry and courage. Besides, on that day he granted them their

liberty, though they did not belong to him, and what is more they afterwards continued in the self-same state of slavery.

Even the aged Fray Martin was satirical about the marvellous 'diversity of knights . . . negro-knights and Indian-knights and knights who were knight-knights'.⁶¹ It is clear that Quiros's sense of reality, and his command over himself, were breaking down.

Prado claims to have attacked Quiros directly in the most insolent terms:

. . . you would give us so much gold and silver that we could not carry it, and the pearls should be measured by hatfuls . . . We have found only the black devils with poisoned arrows; what has become of the riches? . . . all your affairs are imaginary and have gone off in the wind.

Quiros should consider that he was dealing not with Indians but with Spaniards, some of whom had begged in the Ronda hills gun in hand, and 'those from the mud of Lisbon were just the same; look out for yourself . . .'. That this mutinous speech was made to Quiros before his friends may very well be doubted; but the feelings expressed must have been widespread.⁶² In 1595 Quiros had carried such things off by his recognised superiority as a pilot (which now, with better competition, was not so evident) and a patient evasiveness; but he was now in sole command, there was no arbitrary Doña Isabel to provide the cover of higher authority, and he seems to have taken refuge in a nervous breakdown. On 25 May, Corpus Christi was celebrated with much festivity, though some thought it an artificial and precarious pomp, since the Spaniards were so few and the Indians so many; but Quiros and Fray Martin considered it a strikingly auspicious asseveration of the Faith. That same evening Quiros walked a league inland, past the already sprouting gardens he had planted, and on his return casually announced that since they stood little chance against native hostility, they would leave next day and visit the islands to windward. . . .⁶³

Astonishing as this sudden decision must have been, there seems to have been no discussion. Obviously Quiros was overwrought, but probably by now hardly anyone had confidence either in the settlement or in the commander, and Prado's point was well taken—no gold or pearls had been found, only hostile Indians. So the second European colony in the South Seas endured a month, half the span of its predecessor. What followed for Quiros was anticlimax, both immediately and over the years; for Torres, an outstanding achievement.

The departure was delayed to allow the people to catch fish, and when they started on 28–9 May they were forced back by a resultant epidemic of fish-poisoning, though nobody died. Finally they sailed again on 8 June, but met strong southeasterly winds. Quiros decided to return and build a fort and a bergantin, waiting until the seasonal wind régime could be determined. The almiranta and the launch made the port of Vera Cruz, but the capitana apparently could not work up the bay, or at least the pilots so claimed. It was

a confusing situation, and the accounts are confused; the true reasons for the ensuing separation on the night of 11 June are not likely ever to be ascertained.⁶⁴ Prado said confidently that there was a mutiny on Quiros's ship; but he was on the almiranta, having transferred probably at Taumako, and the wish is rather too obviously father to the thought for much credence to be given to his statement, even if he were in general a more reliable witness. But even if there were no mutiny, there was a breakdown in command: clearly Quiros had lost his grip and was ill mentally if not physically; the pilots must have been in effective control, and they decided that the ship could not safely beat back to windward. Quiros was left to revolve distractedly the causes of his failure—untrustworthy subordinates, the ten weeks' delay in sailing at Callao, the 'half hour of time' in the Bay which robbed him of so great an enterprise.

On the capitana, the first thought seems to have been to make for Santa Cruz, forgetting that it was presumably dropped as a rendezvous by the decision to turn southwest from Taumako; but there was a strong feeling that they should make for Guam or New Spain, though Iturbe made a formal protest against giving over the search for new lands. Quiros was doubtful about making for Santa Cruz: they might easily miss the island and then, unable to beat back east, be faced with the old spectre of embayment on some unknown lee shore of New Guinea. They bore generally north, seeing a sail, undoubtedly native; Iturbe was bitterly critical of the failure to follow it, which indeed would probably have brought them to Santa Cruz within hours. On 21 June they were in the latitude of Santa Cruz, but there was no sign of land, and they might be either east or west of it. Quiros, now somewhat recovered, had reasoned objections to making for either Guam and the Philippines or for New Spain: at this season the westerly *vendavales* would render it hazardous, if not impossible, to make Manila, and the way to Acapulco was very long, water and food were short, and it might not be the right season to cross the Equator. In council, some still argued for the Philippines—they could recoup expenses with the silk and porcelain of China—but at last all agreed for Acapulco, Iturbe apparently under duress. Like Mendaña, Quiros wearily acquiesced, with the face-saving proviso that if they found promising islands, they should build a launch and explore; if not, they should reconsider when they struck the Acapulco-Manila Galleon track in the latitude of Guam. He consoled himself, rather lamely: other expeditions had been totally lost, he had laid a good foundation, Torres might make further discoveries, and it was all in the Lord's will. . . .⁶⁵ He made his own testament, a rambling pathetic plaint against the greed and cruelty of men.

They did find one island, but it was only an atoll, Butaritari or the adjacent Little Makin in the northern Gilberts, and after reaching 38°N and suffering the accustomed privations (but only Fray Martin died, at 80) reached Navidad and four weeks later, on 23 November 1606, Acapulco. Thence Quiros went to Mexico and eventually to Spain, to wear his life out in the sad effort to rekindle the dead flame of his mission.

The Southland IV: Torres and New Guinea

At Vera Cruz, Torres thought that the departure of the capitana was plain desertion, 'for they did not sail on the proper course, nor with good intention'.⁶⁶ He spent two weeks looking and waiting for the lost ship and then determined to carry on with the voyage, against the majority opinion—'for my temper was different from that of Captain Pedro Fernandez de Quiros'. They sailed round a good deal of Espiritu Santo, enough to establish that it was a large island and not a main, and then southwest as far as 21°S. Seeing no land, Torres bore northwest and made what he correctly assumed to be the southeastern extremity of New Guinea. North of that land, as he knew, was a route which would take him to the Moluccas, but he could not weather the peninsula.⁶⁷ Unless he were to give up his purpose, he had no option but to sail west into the Strait which now bears his name; but it was a bold decision, since he must already have seen enough to realise that the surrounding seas were very dangerous. In fact, the 150 km between Cape York, the northern tip of Queensland, and the nearest Papuan coast are crowded with reefs and shoals, many shifting, and in places masked by the muddy discharge of the Papuan rivers, especially off the great delta of the Fly.

The passage of the Strait was not repeated until Cook's 1770 voyage, and well might Torres write to the King 'these are not voyages performed every day . . .'. He sailed along 'Magna Margarita' for some 600 leagues, taking possession at various points, until he met people with iron and 'China bells' and crockery, and Mohammedans who had guns and were converting Papuans to Islam; then he knew they were not so far from the Moluccas. After some adventures in those islands, he reached Manila on 22 May 1607. Torres sent an account of the voyage to Quiros before he wrote to the King—an index of his essential though not uncritical loyalty.⁶⁸

In itself, the voyage after the entry to the Strait scarcely belongs to the history of the Pacific proper, and whether or not Torres saw Australia, while naturally interesting to Australians, is a trifle on a world view. His track is very difficult to determine, but the general consensus has been that he could not have sighted Cape York. The most recent examination however, by Brett Hilder, a seaman with nearly half a century of experience in the waters between New Guinea and Australia, seems definitive, and leaves scarcely a doubt that Torres did in fact see Cape York. Hilder's analysis on this point hinges largely on his recognition of the great bank or 'Placel' that Torres skirted; his discussion, both documentary and navigational, especially of Prado's maps, is meticulous, and in my view his case may be taken as proven.⁶⁹ Yet Torres naturally could not know that what he had seen was a mainland, and the continent had already been sighted by Willem Janszoon in the *Duyfken* from Bantam. He had coasted along the eastern shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria from 14°S to Mulgrave Island half-way between Cape York and Papua, some five or six months before Torres, in September 1606, was in the Strait; the Dutch priority is assured. But what matters is not a possible sighting of an unrecognised bit of land but the extent to which knowledge of the general

lie of the land filtered through to Europe. The significance of the voyage was the determination of the insularity of New Guinea and the consequent northern delimiting of any possible Terra Australis, and the opening (though its use was long delayed) of an alternative western passage to and from the Pacific.

It is true that this significance was not widely recognised; with Spain's power in decline, it was more than ever to her interest to conceal such dangerous discoveries; but the concealment was not total. It is still sometimes stated, or implied, that the insularity of New Guinea remained unknown until Alexander Dalrymple, from a memorial by Arias found at the British capture of Manila in 1762, realised that there was a strait and named it after Torres.⁷⁰ But even though Torres's *name* may have 'passed out of history', some concept of his discovery can be traced in the cartography of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.⁷¹ Quiros was reckless enough to print and circulate some of his memorials; these may not have contained much specific reference to Torres's discovery, but they treated of many things 'well let alone', and the Council of the Indies, justly alarmed, got a royal order that Quiros should call them in. Too late: one memorial printed at Pamplona in 1610 had been published in German, Latin, and Dutch, and incorporated in de Bry's widely-read collections of voyages, by 1613.

As for Torres's results, an insular New Guinea appears in the Duchess of Berry Atlas (1615–23), in maps by the remarkable Luso-Macassarese cosmographer Manuel Godinho de Eredia (who had contact with Prado), and in Antonio Sanches's world-map of 1623; but these may be discounted as both manuscript and Iberian. The Van Langren globe of c. 1625 shows not only an insular New Guinea but—south of the *Insulae Salomonis*!—the Baia de S. Philippo y S. Jago and Porte Vera Cruz on the north coast of a continental *Terra Australis*; four of Prado's names in the Orangerie Bay area (Papua) are used by Van Langren and Vaugondy. Gerritz' Dutch chart of the South Seas (1622) is highly confused, but does draw on these or similar Iberian predecessors. Towards the end of the century du Val's 'La Mer du Sud' (1679) is a wonderful conflation of Gallego, Mendaña, Quiros, Torres, Janszoon, Schouten, and Tasman; but almost the only things shown on it with some approximation to accuracy are a firmly insular New Guinea and the shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria. In 1700 the Dutch version of d'Albancourt's *Neptune françois* shows a south coast of New Guinea with many Torres-Prado place-names, though its relations with Carpentaria are left vague. This map, or the tradition it represents, probably influenced Robert Vaugondy's 'Carte General' for Charles de Brosses' very well-known *Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes* of 1756: the map shows an island New Guinea and a wide strait separating it from the west coast of the Cape York peninsula; though once more Espiritu Santo (and 'Jerusalem la Neuve') are impacted into a hypothetical northeast coast of New Holland.⁷² And de Brosses probably counted as much as, or more than, Dalrymple in Cook's thinking: certainly it is the former, not the latter, whom he cites when tackling the question of New Guinea's insularity.⁷³

The knowledge, then, was there, ‘would men observingly distil it out’: why was it so long neglected? One may suspect that the reason was simply that the course of Empire was not yet setting that way. Spain felt herself over-extended, and was in no condition to follow up such an opening; and for her rivals there were the known and assured trans-Pacific tracks—Magellan’s great diagonal before the Trades, and the Manila Galleon run—and known places of refuge, notably Guam and the Ladrones, and Juan Fernandez. Using these, there were plenty of pickings to be had without venturing so far into the unknown—booty on the South American coasts, the trade of the Indies, or the treasure of the Galleon itself.

The end of the Spanish saga

‘With Quiros died the heroic age of Spain.’⁷⁴ When he reached New Spain, the Viceroy Montesclaros was cordial at first, but relations were soon soured by a disagreement over the disposition of the capitana, the complaints of members of the crew, and Quiros’s liberal interpretation of his original cédula requiring royal officers to assist him; this took the form of a demand for 2000 pesos to take him to Spain. The Viceroy warned the Court that they might expect very wordy complaints from Quiros, who in turn resolved not to be satisfied in future with anything but the most precise commitments to him. He reached Spain in October 1607, in utter penury, by his own account (according to Markham) unable to buy even paper, and reduced to pawning the royal standard he had unfurled at the New Jerusalem. And he needed much paper for the bombardment of memorials which he now let loose. They had worked before, but he was now more discredited than he realised. One of Iturbe’s letters, a more reasoned attack than Prado’s (which seems to have been merely docketed), had preceded Quiros to Spain, and other unfavourable reports came in.

The bureaucracy’s treatment of Quiros was, however, much more reasonable and considerate than is generally allowed. Procrastination and expedient evasion were of course inevitable; but on the main count nothing could be done: Quiros’s demands were fantastic—1000 men and half a million ducats. The Council of the Indies thought that there were better uses for a treasury surplus, should there ever be one. Between his persistence and the increasing evidence of his unfitness as a leader, though his knowledge and talents were appreciated, the Council wearily noted that ‘he is not a reliable man, although he has got it into his head that he is a second Columbus, and that is his affliction’—and indeed Quiros himself was not backward in making the same comparison, not to mention an implied bracketing of himself with Caesar, Hannibal, Alexander and Pyrrhus.⁷⁵ In 1609 his affairs came before the council at least twenty times; one must sympathise with the senior clerks who had to read those endless memorials, and soothe down this intolerably monomaniac old bore.

But he retained some influential supporters, and it was felt that he must be handled gently lest he—of all people!—should defect to the heretics. Something

should be done: perhaps a post as cosmographer, perhaps send him to Peru to pacify him? At one point he was given 3000 ducats for his debts and a monthly retainer of 100 ducats—on condition that he ceased for a time to press his demands. As Kelly says, he ‘memorialized’ himself out of favourable consideration. The famous, or infamous, story that he was betrayed by being sent to Peru with two despatches—an open one entirely favourable, a secret one countermanning it—is not strictly true, for whenever Quiros received a favourable response, he demanded something much more specific, and once more no action was taken.⁷⁶ There were also theological objections to the component of conquest which, despite his experiences at Santa Cruz and Espíritu Santo and his protests at the cruelty of the Conquista, Quiros still included in his plans.

At last a decision of a sort was reached: Quiros was to go out to Peru with the new Viceroy, who was to do his best to send him on his way to the Southland. . . . It was not much, and probably it was indeed meant as a fobbing-off: one can almost hear the great sigh of relief as the Council minuted ‘and with this it can be taken that we have settled with this man’. But it was obviously the best that he would get and, perhaps with confidence, perhaps with misgivings, he acquiesced. He sailed with the Viceroy in April 1615, but he was never again to see Peru, let alone the Southland: he died on the voyage, probably at Panama.

His dream did not quite die with him: the Franciscans and the Chilean lawyer Juan Luis Arias continued to plan and petition for a great missionary effort in the Austral Regions. The last Franciscan appeals to the Crown were made in 1630–3, but it was then far too late: the springs of the national energy were running down. Abroad the Empire was increasingly hard put to defend itself, at home economic decline was well advanced.⁷⁷

The last voyage of Quiros was virtually the end of new Spanish enterprise in the Pacific for a century and a half, until the Bourbon revival brought the great northwards thrust in California and the Tahitian voyages, both in the 1770s. Even in the sixteenth century, security in the South Sea had been rudely shaken by Drake and Cavendish; in the seventeenth, the Dutch made the running in Pacific activity. But their efforts were rather of geostrategic than of strictly geographical significance. The Mar de Sur was still a Spanish lake, its axis between the poles of Manila and Acapulco, and the English and Dutch forays are best considered as threats to the Spanish system; with the notable exception of the voyage of Schouten and Le Maire, and of Tasman in 1642–3, their geographical results were secondary, the result of accident rather than design.

Those memorials of whose diffusion the Council of the Indies was so nervous did indeed play some part in this new phase of Pacific navigation: Celsus Kelly relates

the scene on board the *Eendracht* on 25 October 1615, the very morrow of Quirós’ death, when in mid-Atlantic Jacob Le Maire summoned his ship’s company, depressed by scurvy and adverse

weather, to announce the purpose and commission of the voyage: the *Terra Australis* of Quirós. 'I read to them in the cabin', he says, 'the memorial of Quirós in order to encourage them;' and Le Maire goes on to say that all were encouraged and rejoiced.⁷⁸

The work had fallen into other hands; but it had been initiated by the religious enthusiasm of Alvaro de Mendaña and Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, which brought them only an ambiguous Quixotic fame, some few moments of ecstasy, then disillusion and heartbreak.