

At the Far Reaches of Empire



At the Far Reaches of Empire

The Life of Juan Francisco de la
Bodega y Quadra

FREEMAN M. TOVELL



UBC Press • Vancouver • Toronto

© UBC Press 2008

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without prior written permission of the publisher, or, in Canada, in the case of photocopying or other reprographic copying, a licence from Access Copyright (Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency), www.accesscopyright.ca.

17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 09 08 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in Canada with vegetable-based inks on ancient-forest-free paper (100% post-consumer recycled) that is processed chlorine- and acid-free.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication Data

Tovell, Freeman

At the far reaches of empire : the life of Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra / Freeman M. Tovell.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-7748-1366-2

1. Bodega y Cuadra, Juan de la, 1743-1794. 2. Bodega y Cuadra, Juan de la, 1743-1794 – Travel – Pacific Coast (North America). 3. Pacific Coast (North America) – Discovery and exploration – Spanish. 4. Pacific Coast (North America) – Description and travel. 5. Explorers – Spain – Biography. 6. Explorers – Pacific Coast (North America) – Biography. I. Title.

F851.5.T678 2008 917.904'1092 C2007-907481-2

Canada

UBC Press gratefully acknowledges the financial support for our publishing program of the Government of Canada through the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP), and of the Canada Council for the Arts, and the British Columbia Arts Council.

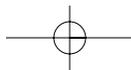
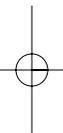
This book has been published with the help of a grant from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, through the Aid to Scholarly Publications Programme, using funds provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

UBC Press
The University of British Columbia
2029 West Mall
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2
604-822-5959 / Fax: 604-822-6083
www.ubcpress.ca

Frontispiece: Medallion depicting Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra. No portraits of Bodega made during his lifetime have survived, but this image by Juan Avalos captures his determined and intrepid spirit. The government of Spain presented this plaque to the Canadian Coast Guard in 1966 on the occasion of the launching of CGS *Quadra*. When the vessel was decommissioned, the plaque went to the Canadian Coast Guard offices in Victoria, British Columbia.

Photograph by Freeman Tovell.

To my wife,
Rosita,
for her constant encouragement and care



Contents

	List of Illustrations / ix
	Preface and Acknowledgments / xi
i	Beginnings / i
	PART I THE EXPLORER
2	The 1775 Voyage on the <i>Sonora</i> / 13
3	Preparations for the 1779 Voyage / 49
4	The 1779 Voyage / 69
5	Away from the North Pacific / 115
	PART 2 THE COMMANDANT
6	The Nootka Crisis and the Spanish Response / 131
7	The Administration of San Blas de Nayarit / 163
	PART 3 THE DIPLOMAT
8	The Nootka Convention and the Expedition of the Limits / 189
9	Bodega at Nootka / 202
10	The Commissioners' Negotiations at Nootka / 238
11	Leaving Nootka / 267
12	Results and Consequences of the Expedition of the Limits / 286
13	Endings / 315

Appendixes

- A Bodega's Secret Instructions to Eliza for the Reoccupation of Nootka / 337
- B Revillagigedo's Instructions to Bodega for the Expedition of the Limits / 339
- C History and Description of Bodega's *Viaje*: The Official Report of the Expedition of the Limits / 343
- D Biographical Notes / 348
- E Rank Structure of the Spanish Navy / 359

Glossary / 361

Chronology / 364

Abbreviations / 370

Notes / 371

Bibliography / 421

Index / 437

Illustrations

MAPS

Northern section of the West Coast of North America / xvi
Southern section of the West Coast of North America / xvii

PLATES

Following page 186

Bust of King Carlos III
Portrait of Vicente Tofiño de San Miguel
Portrait of Antonio María Bucareli y Ursúa
Portrait of Antonio Valdés y Bazán
1752 map of the North Pacific Ocean, by Philippe Buache
Portrait of Francisco Mourelle
Chart recording achievements of the 1775 Hezeta-Bodega expedition up
the American Northwest Coast
1777 plan of the port and naval department of San Blas, by Francisco
Mourelle
Bodega's 1778 planning chart of the Northwest Coast
1780 chart of the bay and port of Bucareli, by José Camacho
1780 chart of the Port of Santiago, by José Camacho
1780 chart of the Bay of Nuestra Señora de la Regla, by Juan Pantoja

Illustrations

1779 chart of the Northwest Coast of America, recording achievements of the Arteaga-Bodega voyage

1792 view of Friendly Cove (Yuquot), Nootka Sound

Portrait of Juan Vicente de Güemes Pacheco de Padilla y Horcacitas, second Conde de Revillagigedo

Interior of Chief Maquinna's house, 1792

The Bay of Nootka, from the beach of the Spanish establishment, 1792

Maquinna, chief of the Nootka, 1791

1792 chart of the discoveries made on the Northwest Coast by expeditions from San Blas

Preface and Acknowledgments

Capitán de Navío Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra was the pre-eminent Spanish naval officer in the period 1774 to 1794 on the Pacific coast of North America. Today, the services that Bodega y Quadra rendered are honoured in his native Peru as well as in Mexico, Spain, and Canada. The name Quadra adorns an island and a thoroughfare in Victoria, British Columbia. In California, his name lives on in Bodega Bay, where he stopped in 1775 at the end of his first perilous voyage into northern waters.

The Spanish surnames that dot the natural features and waterways of the Pacific coast, such as Valdes, Haro, Malaspina, Galiano, and Quadra, recall the voyagers who substantially advanced, each in his own way, knowledge of the geography, ethnography, and natural history of this rugged and mist-shrouded region. Collectively, these Spanish explorers were a diverse and uniquely skilled assembly of talents and abilities. Unlike most of the Russian, British, French, and American voyagers in the region at this time, they were not interested in trade. All were career naval officers; many would later rise to senior positions; five would achieve flag rank; and two are buried in Spain's Pantheon of Illustrious Mariners at Cádiz. Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra Mollinedo stands foremost among this accomplished group.

Bodega y Quadra was a success as a maritime explorer. He reached 58°N on the Pacific Northwest Coast in 1775 while commanding a twenty-four-foot schooner, and he was the first to chart the coast as far north as Prince William Sound. In 1779 he returned to explore and chart the entrance to Prince William Sound, Alaska. Twice he was commandant of the Naval Department of San Blas, Nayarit, Mexico, during its busiest period. It was

the home port from which northerly explorations were launched as well as the base that supplied the infant Spanish settlements and presidios or garrisons of today's California. Under Bodega's direction, Spanish ships searched for the fabled Northwest Passage and surveyed and charted the continent's coast. Bodega also distinguished himself as a diplomat in an attempt, with Captain George Vancouver, to arrange the transfer to Britain of the Spanish establishment at Yuquot – today's Friendly Cove on Nootka Sound, Vancouver Island – under the terms of the 1790 Nootka Convention, which narrowly averted a war between Spain and Great Britain.

Bodega y Quadra was typical of the new class of naval officers who were the core of the Enlightened Navy of King Carlos III. Born in Peru into a distinguished family, Bodega graduated from the Naval Academy in Cádiz, Spain. Viewed by his superiors as a potential maritime explorer, he was given special training in the newest methods of navigation and cartography. Intelligent, observant, and literate, he received high praise from the two viceroys of New Spain he served, Antonio Bucareli and the second Conde de Revillagigedo. He was lauded by all who came in contact with him for his charm, generosity, and consideration in matters large and small. His enlightened policy toward the Nootkan people and his close association with Chief Maquinna are a matter of record, and his cordial hospitality to all, including his British rival George Vancouver, has been universally admired.

Such praise is deserved, but Bodega had his imperfections. He incurred enormous debts when his overarching ambition to make a name for himself in his chosen career exceeded his financial circumstances. Serving on the outer edge of the empire, he lacked the support of an influential patron at the Spanish royal court. Furthermore, as a colonial-born subject from Peru, he was hampered by the governmental prejudice that hindered colonial subjects seeking high rank in the church and government. Despite his constant efforts to be promoted from four-ring captain to flag rank, he was never able to gain full recognition for his achievements from his naval superiors and political masters.

A number of friends have asked me what led to my research on Bodega y Quadra's life and times. It was a natural evolution: an early interest in maritime exploration became a lifelong one, having been shaped and sharpened considerably at the age of fourteen, when my parents augmented my boyhood library with the Anderson (1784) edition of *Cook's Voyages* and, later, with the two very large 1764 volumes of *Harris's Voyages*.

The second element of my interest emerged when, while serving in

Preface and Acknowledgments

xiii

Canada's foreign service, I held two diplomatic postings in Peru. This enabled me to gain some insights into the character of Spain's colonial society and history; at the same time it allowed me to develop a working knowledge of Spanish, which made research into primary documents possible.

Third and finally, as Foreign Service Visitor at the University of Victoria, I realized that in Canada, the record of Spanish exploration of the Pacific coast of the North American continent is scarcely known or appreciated. I hope this new material will help Bodega find his rightful place among better-known maritime explorers of the Pacific Ocean and show the extent of the Spanish presence in these regions.

In undertaking this study, which stretched over more than fifteen years, I must first thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for a grant that enabled me to undertake the necessary research in Mexico and Spain, in the Huntington Library in San Marino near Los Angeles, and in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

This research rested primarily on official reports and correspondence and on other documents found in the vast archival institutions of Spain – in particular, the Archivo Histórico Nacional and the Museo Naval in Madrid, the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, and the Archivo General de Simancas in Valladolid – and in Mexico at the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City. To a lesser extent, supplementary materials were found in the diaries and ships' logs of the Spanish, English, and American seamen with whom Bodega came into contact.

Because Spanish naval officers seldom if ever commented on one another, very little of consequence is to be learned from those closely associated with Bodega. The most regrettable gap, however, is the absence of any personal papers, such as correspondence with relatives or friends, which would provide insights into his personal and private life. One longs for the discovery of a box of such material in some attic or archive.

In the course of researching and writing this work, I have received much assistance from a number of people. Some are mentioned in the footnotes and some are not, but to all I am most grateful.

Of those who have contributed significantly to my task, I would mention Dr. Christon I. Archer, professor of history at the University of Calgary, who first aroused my interest in the Spanish presence in the Pacific Northwest. I would couple his name with that of Dr. Donald C. Cutter, professor emeritus at the University of New Mexico, an acknowledged authority on the history of the Spanish era in the American Southwest and in California. Their counsel was frequently sought and freely given.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to the late Dr. W. Kaye Lamb for his

constant interest and encouragement. I derived much benefit from his deep knowledge of the exploration of the Canadian West and, in particular, of the career of Captain George Vancouver.

A number of people have been of incalculable assistance as the manuscript evolved and finally emerged. The late Vivian C. Fisher, head of the Microforms Division of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, gave unstinting help both while at the library, retrieving documents on microfilm in the Bancroft's collections, and later in retirement, by locating documents I required and volunteering others she thought would be of interest. Dr. W. Michael Mathes, formerly of the University of San Francisco and a recognized authority on the early Spanish voyages, has given me constant advice on matters pertaining to the Catholic Church in New Spain. His familiarity with the Mexican archives both in Mexico City and in Guadalajara has been most useful. I must acknowledge the assistance of two senior members of the staff of the Museo Naval, Madrid, for without María Luisa Martín-Merás and María Dolores Higuera, I would have become lost in the museum's rich holdings.

Ethnologist Richard Inglis's first-hand knowledge of the Mowachaht-Muchalaht First Nations has guided me around the dangers that await a stranger venturing into their history and culture. Our conversations have been absorbing and wide-ranging. His support has been invaluable.

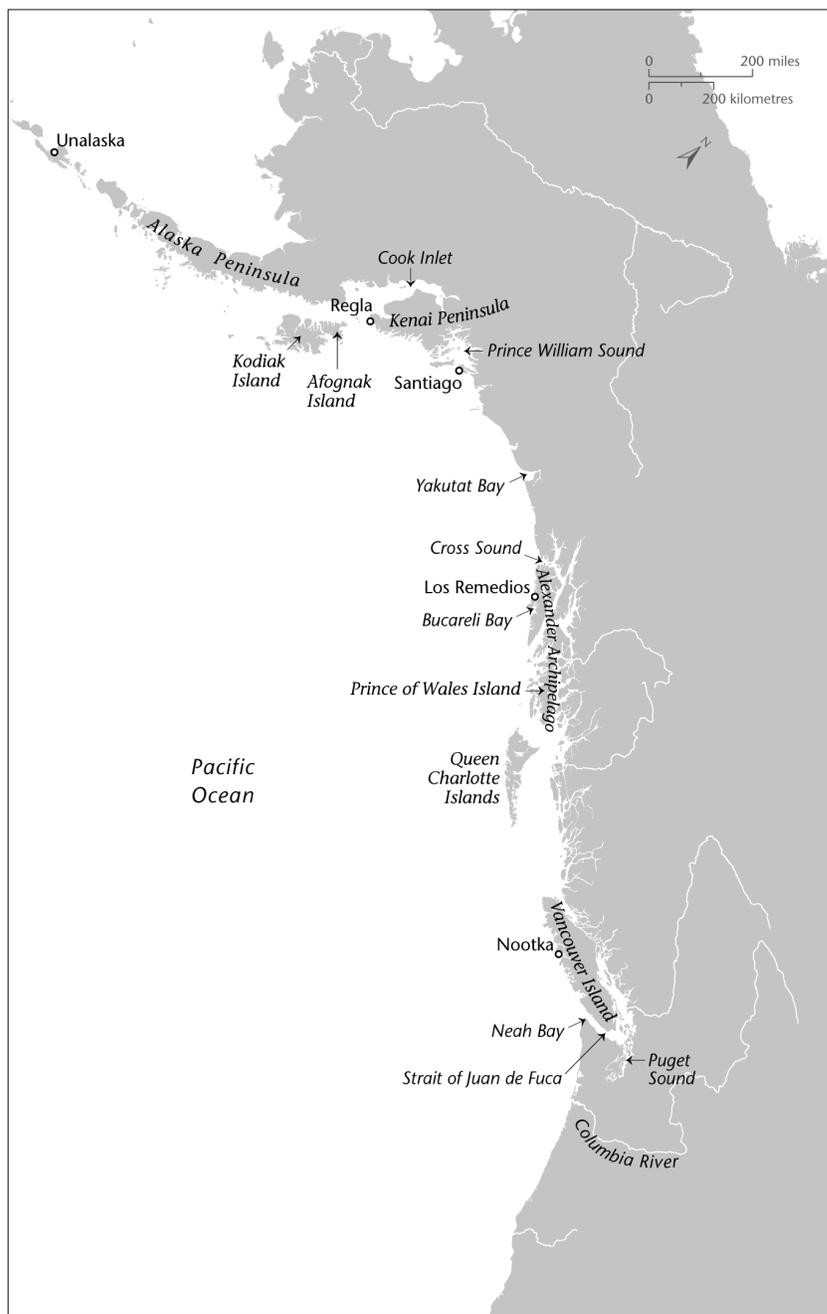
Camilla Turner refined the manuscript in the later stages of its development. Her skills as an experienced editor have been well honed in working with other authors and organizations, and she has been a joy to work with. Robin Inglis, president of the Vancouver Spanish Pacific Historical Society, who has an extensive knowledge of the history of this last great period of maritime exploration, greatly encouraged me and spent untold hours in an attempt to reduce the bulky draft to manageable proportions. My daughter Susan has been particularly expert and indefatigable in streamlining and reshaping what was a stubbornly lengthy manuscript. With her husband, Professor Peter Moogk, she accomplished a feat of clear-mindedness, professionalism, and tact. I appreciate their work enormously. Finally, I wish to thank Jean Wilson at UBC Press for her support and enterprise that brought this endeavour to final publication, and Anna Eberhard Friedlander and Matthew Kudelka, who copyedited the manuscript.

Let me add three editorial notes. Throughout this work, I do not refer to our subject as "Quadra," as he is generally and incorrectly known in Canada, but as "Bodega" or "Bodega y Quadra," by which names he is known in

Preface and Acknowledgments

xv

Spain, the United States, Mexico, and Peru. Unless noted specifically in the text, “Peru” refers to the Viceroyalty of Perú, which in Bodega’s time included large parts of what is now Ecuador, Chile, and Bolivia. Also, unless otherwise credited, all translations from the Spanish are mine.



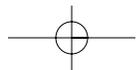
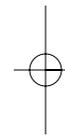
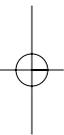
The northern section of the West Coast of North America, showing the places in Washington State, British Columbia, and Alaska visited by Bodega on his 1775, 1779, and 1792 voyages.

Map by Eric Leinberger

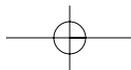
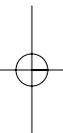


The southern section of the West Coast of North America, showing the Naval Department of San Blas in relation to the California missions and presidios, and other harbours on the coast north to the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Map by Eric Leinberger



At the Far Reaches of Empire



I

Beginnings

SPAIN AND THE AMERICAS

WHEN JUAN FRANCISCO DE LA BODEGA Y QUADRA was born in Lima, Peru, on May 22, 1744, Spain's American empire consisted of three viceroyalties: Peru (modern-day Peru, Chile, and Bolivia), New Spain (Mexico), and New Granada (Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela). In 1766, Buenos Aires, later named La Plata, was added as a fourth imperial division.

In 1775, the population of this enormous territory was more than fifteen million.¹ In 1780, this figure included about seven million Indians, four to five million *mestizos*, one million blacks, and three million whites. Of the whites, about 150,000 were *peninsulares* who had come from Spain to serve in the army, the church, and the imperial administration. The remaining whites, including Bodega's family, were *criollos*, or creoles. Most of the creoles owned and managed mines, landed estates, and large commercial ventures.

After its conquest by Francisco Pizarro in the 1530s, Peru became the treasure house of the Spanish Crown. Its gold and silver not only provided financial support for the wars and foreign ventures of King Charles I of Spain (Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire) and King Philip II but also stimulated Spain's domestic economic and cultural life. This wealth gave rise to the popular expression *vale un Perú* (it's worth a Peru), a phrase referring to wealth and opulence.

Peru's primary source of wealth was silver mining. Forced Indian labour extracted the silver ore from the mine in the cone-shaped mountain of Potosí.² Once cast into ingots and bars, the silver was carried by mule to the coast at Arica, where it was loaded onto ships bound for Callao, the port of

Lima. Here, other exports to Spain would be added, especially gold and mercury (“quicksilver”). The cargo was shipped on merchant vessels to Panama, where Indians transported it across the isthmus to the docks of Portobello on the Caribbean coast. There, it would await the convoy from Spain, called the Galeones a Tierra Firme y Perú, which left Cádiz every August. Peru’s thriving maritime trade was vulnerable to foreign attack, and Peruvians never forgot the late-sixteenth-century depredations of Sir Francis Drake and Thomas Cavendish.³ The Spanish navy maintained a base at Callao to protect the transport vessels.

When Bodega was born, Lima was home to a variety of social groups: a European elite of administrators, clergy, and merchants; *mestizo* craftsmen (*mestizos* were people of mixed European and indigenous ancestry); black household slaves; and Indian workers, who did most of the manual labour. Lima had a high percentage of non-Indian residents because it was the commercial and political capital of the viceroyalty. A census taken in mid-century gave Lima a population of 26,241. About one-tenth of Limeños were priests and nuns serving the many churches, convents, hospitals, and schools. The white population was sharply divided into *peninsulares*, who were born in Spain, and *criollos*, who were born in the Americas. There was scarcely any middle class, and the city’s geography reflected its social hierarchy. Around the Plaza de Armas in the city centre were the viceroy’s residence, the municipal offices, the cathedral, and the principal commercial establishments. On this square or near it, the leading families had their homes.

These families’ houses had windows protected with iron grilles and shuttered balconies in the style of southern Spain. As a mark of sophistication and elegance, some *criollo* women wore the traditional Andalusian *tapada*, which covered the face except for the eyes. Eighteenth-century visitors to Lima, such as the Frenchman Amédée-François Frézier, admired the regularity of its streets, the grandeur of the churches, and the vivacity of the city’s well-dressed inhabitants. Outside Lima, wrote Frézier, “the dwellings of the Spanish in Peru do not match the magnificence of their clothes.”⁴

Living standards fell in Lima during the 1700s. Production from the silver mine at Potosí and the mercury mine at Huancavelica declined, and an earthquake in 1746 – the second in sixty years – was calamitous. Matters worsened in 1776 after the decision was made to transfer jurisdiction over Alto Peru (Bolivia) and its silver mine at Potosí to the recently created Viceroyalty of La Plata. Lima’s growth slowed, although its intellectual life flourished. The University of San Marcos continued to be the leading institution of learning in the Americas, and the way of life of the resilient aristocracy underwent little change.⁵

While Peru was declining during the eighteenth century, the Spanish Empire was experiencing a renaissance. Thirty years before Bodega's birth, the Hapsburg kings of Spain had been replaced by the Bourbon dynasty from France and Navarre. The Bourbons, especially Carlos III, who came to the throne in 1759, modernized Spain and its empire with the goal of restoring Spanish prestige to the levels it had reached in the sixteenth century. Carlos III actively promoted reforms in the administration and the economy, as well as in the arts and sciences to free Spain from its intellectual isolation.⁶

Carlos III also reorganized and vastly expanded the navy, considering it vital to his foreign policy objectives.⁷ Spanish naval historians refer to the navy during this period as *La Marina Ilustrada*, "the Enlightened Navy," because under Carlos III the Spanish navy was modernized to rival those of France and England. The ministers of the navy supervised three departments with the support of a very small staff. The *comandante* of the first department, which had its headquarters in Cádiz, was also the Capitán y Director General de la Armada, the technical commandant of the navy. The centres of the other two naval departments were at El Ferrol on the northern coast and at Cartagena in the Mediterranean.

Bodega's thirty-two years of service, from 1762 to 1794, coincided with the apogee of the Spanish navy. During his naval career there were three ministers of the navy. When he graduated from the naval academy, Julián de Arriaga y Rivero was in office. After Arriaga's death in 1776, responsibility for the navy went to Pedro González de Castejón. After he died in 1783, Antonio Valdés y Bazán became the minister. During Valdés's twelve-year watch, the Spanish navy reached its greatest strength ever.⁸ With the death of Carlos III in 1788 and the resignation of Valdés in 1795, the navy went into decline, and Spain soon ceased to be a major maritime power.

Under Carlos III, the Spanish government also took a more active role in the Americas. From 1754 to 1776, the Minister for the Indies (as the Spanish-American kingdoms were called) and the Minister of the Navy were the same man, Julián de Arriaga y Rivero. The two portfolios had been united because the American empire depended heavily on the *Marina de Guerra* – the War Navy – both for defence of the American kingdoms and for security of the merchant fleet and its trade routes. When Arriaga died, the portfolio was divided and the Indies went to the highly experienced and effective José de Gálvez. Between 1765 and 1771, before he became Minister for the Indies, Gálvez had been *visitador general* to New Spain. His appointment marked the beginning of a new, more active period of Spanish policy making, for the Americas in general and for New

Spain in particular. As a result of Gálvez's investigatory mission, the *intendencias*, the local administrative jurisdictions, and the *audiencias*, the regional governing councils, were restructured. He introduced major changes in Spain's commercial policy by relaxing the tight controls that had prohibited trade between the viceroyalties. This was done when Madrid promulgated the Reglamento de Libre Comercio in October 1778. This title was misleading, since the new policy only allowed commercial contacts between twelve ports on the Iberian Peninsula and twenty-four ports in "the Indies." Only two of these were in New Spain: Acapulco on the Pacific coast, and Veracruz on the Caribbean. Commerce between ports in the Americas was still reserved for Spanish ships.

After 1776, Peru's seniority as viceroyalty passed to New Spain, which, with a population exceeding one million, became the most important political and economic segment of the empire.⁹ Most of this population increase was homegrown, as there was little immigration. In 1790, Mexico City, with a population of 112,000, became the second-largest city of the empire after Madrid. Guanajuato, Puebla, Valladolid, and Guadalajara were other important Mexican centres.

Until the arrival of José de Gálvez in 1765, New Spain's northern region (later called Alta California) was viewed as marginal to Spanish interests. Gálvez soon came to fear that the thinly occupied west coast of New Spain, with its undefined northern border, would endanger the viceroyalty's security. As *visitador general*, he initiated the development of San Blas as a port to support military and naval operations for the colonization of Alta California, which began with the founding of San Diego in 1769. Bodega eventually became the commandant of the Naval Department of San Blas.

When the Spanish government in Madrid received reports from its ambassador in St. Petersburg about Russian activities in the North Pacific in 1774, Gálvez's expansionist views were given the highest priority. After the papal bull that divided the globe between Spain and Portugal was issued in 1493, Spain had claimed sovereignty over these seas. Yet it had never explored the Gulf of Alaska, which was within its portion. Moreover, by 1774, Spain's claim to sovereignty over the *mar del sur*, or Pacific Ocean, was being challenged by the Dutch, the English, and the French, whose navigators and traders were exploring and developing their respective commercial empires. By the latter part of the eighteenth century, the North Pacific had become a cockpit of rival imperial ambitions. This contested region was the setting for the life and career of Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra Mollinedo.

THE BODEGA AND QUADRA FAMILIES

As his name indicates, Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra was descended through his father from both the Bodega and Quadra families of Spain.¹⁰ They were Basques of the minor, landed nobility and had lived for several generations in the valley of Somorrostro near Bilbao.¹¹

The Quadras, to whom the Bodegas were connected by more than one marriage, were well established in the region. In 1476, Iñigo López de la Quadra, who served as page to King Ferdinand the Catholic when he visited Guernica, was severely wounded defending the king from an assassination attempt in Barcelona. He and his heirs were awarded a special annual income of four thousand ducats for his fidelity. Iñigo retired and died in Somorrostro. A later Quadra, Alvaro de la Quadra, was the Spanish ambassador in London who arranged Philip II's marriage to Mary Tudor. Pedro de la Quadra, as Archbishop of Burgos at the beginning of the eighteenth century, ordered the construction of the parish church of San Juan Bautista de Somorrostro, adjacent to the Quadra ancestral home. Finally, among his illustrious kin, Sebastián de la Quadra served as Secretary of State under Felipe V.¹²

The Bodegas owned land adjoining that of the Quadras. They, too, were well established in the region. In 1638, Pedro de la Bodega was alderman for the district known as Oyancas, now San Julián de Muskiz. The family resided near the village of La Poveña, where they managed a small estate.¹³ His son Pedro became mayor of Somorrostro in 1651. In 1721, Juan de la Bodega y de la Quadra, Juan Francisco's grandfather, was an alderman of Muskiz.¹⁴ From his first marriage, he had two sons, Juan and Tomás, both of whom became mayors of the valley of Somorrostro. The second, Tomás de la Bodega y de las Llanas, Juan Francisco's father, was elected mayor of the valley in 1761.¹⁵

Tomás left Spain for Peru in 1720 and Juan followed him in 1722, probably because their father had left the family holdings to the three children of his second wife. Members of the Quadra family had immigrated to Peru earlier and had done well; they held influential posts in the church and in the commercial world of Peru and Chile. The two young men had an uncle in Lima, José de la Quadra y Sandoval Rojas, who taught law at the University of San Marcos and who served on the viceroy's staff. He agreed to look after them.

Eight years after leaving Spain, Tomás Bodega married Francisca de Mollinedo de Losada, the daughter of a long-established, aristocratic colonial

family in the Chancay region on the northern coast of Peru. They were married in Lima's cathedral on November 20, 1728, where Francisca herself had been baptized on April 27, 1713. Presiding over the ceremony was her brother, the Franciscan priest Manuel Mollinedo, who later became the Bishop of Cuzco. Tomás and Francisca seem to have had children between 1731 and 1754, seven boys and five girls. Four of the children died before reaching adulthood. Of the surviving children, three of the older boys and the two girls pursued careers in the Church. The three youngest surviving children pursued secular careers. Their youngest son, Manuel Antonio, studied law and became an administrator and politician. The second youngest, Alberto, took over the family business and was given the family house in 1774. In sharp contrast to his siblings, the ninth child, Juan Francisco, chose a life of action and became an officer in the Spanish navy.¹⁶

BODEGA'S EARLY YEARS

Juan Francisco, Tomás and Francisca's fifth son, was born in Lima on May 22, 1744, and was named for his paternal grandfather and his mother. The cathedral's baptism register for June 3 records the following:

Juan Francisco de la Vodega y la Quadra: In the City of the Kings on the third of June of seventeen forty-four, I, Don Francisco Javier de Tapia, *teniente* of the priests of this holy metropolitan church, in the sacarium placed oil and holy water on Juan Francisco, twelve days old. He was baptized [earlier] in case of need by Father Pedro Carillo of the Order of St. Francis. [He is] the legitimate son of Don Thomás de la Vodega and de la Cuadra and of Dña. Francisca Moyinedo.¹⁷

Tomás's mercantile affairs in Peru prospered, and he quickly acquired a small fortune through agriculture, shipping, and, possibly, shipbuilding. He became a full member of the Tribunal del Consulado, a merchant's guild that adjudicated commercial disputes, and he served as second consul from 1762 to 1764 and as first consul from 1765 to 1766. He held a number of properties in the Chancay Valley, some of which may have come from his wife's family.

In 1748, Tomás bought two houses, one near the San Agustín convent on Calle San Sebastián and the second one on the Jirón Ancash. The second one had been destroyed by the 1746 earthquake. Tomás built a new, spacious house on this site.¹⁸ Close to the viceroy's residence, it was built on

the standard plan of residences of the day, the pattern of family houses in Seville. The family crest was usually carved over the wide door that led to a large courtyard.¹⁹ Two sets of apartments for the children were built along the sides. Across the end was the parents' apartment, consisting of a large salon, a dining room, and bedrooms. At the back was an enclosed garden planted with fruit trees, which reached down to the Rimac River (which gave "The City of the Kings" its other name, "Lima"). Off the courtyard was a shed for the carriages and horses, and to one side of the house, in a lane, were the kitchen and servants' quarters. The house would have been filled with furniture made with wood from Guayaquil, with occasional luxuries imported from China, the Philippines, or Guatemala. Because silver was readily available in Peru, all the tableware for daily use would have been silver, along with the chandeliers, flower vases, and hot-water heaters for counteracting the damp chill of the winter months.

Although Lima had a population of little more than 25,000, it was home to more educational institutions than any other city in the Americas, as well as the most famous ones. They were run almost exclusively by the Jesuits until their expulsion in 1767. The University of San Marcos offered courses in the humanities and law, the Colegio de San Martín offered courses in law and theology. The Colegio del Príncipe provided education for indigenous nobles, or *caciques*. We know nothing of Juan Francisco's early education. It is probable that when he was seven, he attended an elementary school in one of the convents. As for his secondary schooling, it is possible that he attended courses in navigation, geography, and mathematics at the Colegio del Espíritu Santo between 1756 and 1760. The lectures would have fostered an interest in a maritime career, rather than a life in the Church, as had been his siblings' vocation.

Juan Francisco enrolled in the Colegio de San Martín on March 16, 1761, to begin his post-secondary education, but he remained there for only one year. The success of his application to the Real Colegio de Guardiamarinas, the naval academy in Cádiz, was probably due to his father's connections in maritime shipping. At the age of eighteen, he began his preparations for a career as an officer in the revitalized Spanish navy, La Marina Ilustrada.

THE BEGINNING OF A NAVAL CAREER

Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra was a midshipman at the Real Colegio de Guardiamarinas from September 27, 1762, to October 12, 1767. The Real Colegio was the most important of several institutions offering technical

training for officers in the War Navy that had been established in Cádiz in the eighteenth century.²⁰ Most of the officers who served on the American Northwest Coast at the end of the eighteenth century were graduates of these institutions. At the time Bodega was a student at the Real Colegio, it was becoming an important centre for naval education in Europe. Jorge Juan y Santacilla, who had been appointed director in 1751, oversaw the building of an observatory, which complemented the academy's courses in navigation. While in England in 1748, he had made a careful – and secret – study of the training methods of the Royal Navy, acquiring British books and navigational instruments. A similar mission took Antonio de Ulloa to France, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and Germany. Juan y Santacilla also brought to Spain various foreign makers of scientific instruments.

The academy's regime was set out by a statute enacted by Felipe V in 1748. Its principal purpose was to “educate and endow the noble youth of my kingdoms in the sciences most useful to the navy.” Each cadet had to prove that he was legitimate and a “gentleman of notable nobility” as defined in law – that is, of pure blood and not a *converso* (i.e., a Jew or Muslim who had converted to Christianity). The candidate had to be between fourteen and eighteen years old, able to write, and of clean habits in mind and body. Excluded were those with any condition that would “prevent the cadet from taking advantage of his studies” or be “inappropriate for his duties in the service.” The total enrolment of the academy at any one time was not to exceed 150, and preference was given to the sons of serving army and navy officers.

The statute did not determine the length of time a cadet would attend before graduating. We know, however, that Bodega was a cadet for five years. Nor did the statute prescribe which courses were to be offered, although the needs were clear: a graduating officer had to be well grounded in all aspects of navigation, gunnery, and seamanship, in theory as well as practice. He also had to be well versed in the new and more sophisticated disciplines of naval science. Accordingly, the curriculum would have included mathematics, geometry, cosmography, trigonometry, cartography, manoeuvres and fortifications, artillery, and naval construction. The observatory would have offered courses in calculus, astronomy, geography, and navigation. Training in the academy would have entailed an interdisciplinary approach that avoided traditional professional rivalries. While no documentation has yet been found on Bodega's record as a student at the naval academy, he evidently displayed ability as well as an ambition to make a name for himself. He attracted the attention of his seniors, including the influential director, Juan y Santacilla, who taught navigation and ship handling, and Vicente Tofiño, who taught astronomy and cartography.

Beginnings

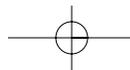
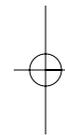
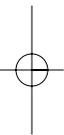
9

On graduation, the cadets were given the lowest commissioned officer's rank, *alférez de fragata*.²¹ Further promotions depended on performance and experience. Inevitably, promotion was faster in the lower ranks and slower as an officer climbed the ladder. There were no promotion boards and performance assessment was perfunctory, so rapid advancement depended on having an influential patron.

Graduating as an *alférez de fragata* on September 21, 1765, Bodega began his career with a series of junior postings in the Mediterranean. He was assigned to the seventy-gun frigate *Terrible* for a cruise to Cape St. Vincent and Corsica. This was followed by other voyages in the Mediterranean, first on the *Princesa*, of the same class, size, and firepower, and then on the frigate *Garzota*, transporting expelled Jesuits from Spain to Civitavecchia and Genoa in Italy.

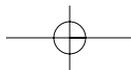
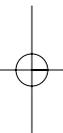
In 1767, fearing British occupation of Las Malvinas, or the Falkland Islands, the government in Madrid decided to reinforce the squadron based at Callao, Lima's seaport. Bodega returned to Peru on board the *Septentrion*. At Callao, the crews of the *Septentrion* and the two other ships of the squadron attempted a mutiny after the viceregal treasury failed to pay them for two months. Although the mutineers won their case, the punishment meted out to them was harsh. On Bodega's ship, of twenty-seven seamen chosen by lot, seven were shot and the rest were flogged. It was an experience the young Bodega would not forget.

By 1773, Juan Francisco was back in Spain, where he received two quick promotions, to *alférez de navío* in 1773 and then to *teniente de fragata* in 1774.²² His next assignment, to the Naval Department of San Blas, was a key moment in his career. It introduced him to the Northwest Coast, where he would earn his high reputation as an explorer and a diplomat.



PART I

THE EXPLORER: NEW SPAIN AND
THE NORTHWEST COAST



2

The 1775 Voyage on the *Sonora*

IN 1774, A YEAR BEFORE BODEGA ARRIVED at the Naval Department of San Blas on the Pacific coast of New Spain, the Spanish court had received vague reports from the Spanish ambassador in St. Petersburg that the Russians were active in the territories and seas north of Alta California. Spain's immediate response was to send an expedition from San Blas to explore the Northwest Coast of the Pacific Ocean and to investigate the situation. This would be one of only two explorations of the coast in which Bodega was not involved.

Early in 1774, Juan Antonio Pérez was the only experienced officer in San Blas available to lead the expedition. A Majorcan who had recently been given the rank of *alférez graduado de fragata*, Pérez was a veteran of the Californian supply ships and had served aboard the Manila Galleon.¹ His ship, the frigate *Santiago*, had been built in San Blas in 1773.² The viceroy governing New Spain, Antonio María Bucareli y Ursúa, provided Pérez with detailed, secret instructions – a document that would become the model for instructions issued to the commandants of subsequent explorations.³ Without explicitly citing concern over the Russian encroachments, he ordered Pérez to ascend to 60°N and return to Monterey. Should he meet any foreign ship, he was not to divulge the reason for his expedition. Nor was he to make any settlement on land; he should simply mark with a wooden cross and take formal possession of any site deemed suitable for occupation. Should any foreign settlements be encountered, he was to avoid them and sail farther north, where the ceremony of taking formal possession should be performed according to his instructions.

Pérez sailed on January 25, 1774, with supplies for the Alta California Christian missions and provisions for one year of exploration. Estéban José Martínez was the second-in-command.⁴ Father Junípero Serra, the Father Superior of the California mission, who was returning to Monterey, and two chaplains, the Franciscan fathers Fray Tomás de la Peña and Fray Juan Crespi, whose journals record many details of the voyage, sailed with him.⁵ The *Santiago* also carried some twenty-four passengers and a crew of sixty-two, including fourteen gunners.⁶

Pérez sailed out of San Blas far to the west to catch the prevailing northwesterly winds, which would carry him back to the more northern reaches of the coast – a practice that would be followed by all subsequent explorers. After a delay of one month in San Diego to repair the ship and another month spent at Monterey unloading supplies, the northerly voyage of exploration began. On July 18, Pérez first sighted land; it was the west coast of Langara Island in the Queen Charlotte Islands. He remained offshore for four days, with the weather and winds preventing him from finding an anchorage and making a landing. He and his people, however, did meet Haida Indians and traded with them. Sailing farther north, Pérez reached the Dixon Entrance at latitude 54°40'N, far short of the 60°N that his instructions had called for.

Turning south, Pérez sighted Vancouver Island, the first European to do so, and dropped anchor off the entrance to Nootka Sound near a point he named Punta San Estéban – today's Estevan Point. Again the weather prevented him from going ashore, but he traded with the Indians and named the entrance the Surgidero de San Lorenzo. He did not enter the sound or lay claim to it for Spain.⁷ However, in the course of trading abalone shells with the Indians, two silver spoons were apparently left behind. These spoons, seen by later English visitors, were cited by the Spanish as evidence of their prior discovery of the area. Martínez would claim that they had been stolen from him. Another failure, if true, was Pérez's refusal to investigate the wide entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, which Martínez declared he had seen while coasting Vancouver Island en route home.⁸

Pérez's voyage produced only slight immediate results. No sign of Russian activity had been observed. Nowhere had possession been taken, nor were any charts drawn up to increase Spanish knowledge of the coast. Little new geographic information had been obtained to add to what had been charted by Vitus Bering and Alexei Chirikov some thirty years earlier, in 1741. These early results had been recorded on a map full of conjecture issued by the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1758.

Pérez's voyage is more important for what followed than for what it

achieved. Clearly, further exploration would be necessary to banish all anxiety about a Russian threat from the minds of Spanish officials. Even so, the voyage had established a basis for Spain's historic claim to sovereignty over the Pacific Northwest; there would be many references to Pérez's voyage in the crisis that would later develop with Britain over Nootka Sound.

For the moment, the native artifacts that Pérez obtained in trade – the first of many acquired by maritime explorers – caused a minor stir in the Spanish royal court. When Carlos III displayed the Chilkat cloaks and other objects collected by Pérez before members of the court and foreign ambassadors, they were universally admired for their artistry and technical quality. “If these cloaks are woven by Indians of the country,” the minister Arriaga wrote effusively to Viceroy Bucareli, “that nation is more cultivated and civilized than all the others discovered up to now in America.”⁹ As Christon Archer has commented, the Spanish were now aware that the native cultures of the Pacific Northwest were superior to those with which they were familiar in Alta California and that “the numerous differences they revealed might hinder attempts at meaningful Spanish sovereignty.”

THE 1775 VOYAGE

Bodega, along with five other officers, was sent to San Blas because New Spain's Viceroy Antonio María Bucareli y Ursúa wanted to increase its complement of officers. The Pérez expedition of 1774 had made it clear that the department's dual obligation to supply the growing number of Alta California settlements and to meet the perceived Russian threat to Spanish sovereignty was more onerous than had been anticipated.¹⁰ The government in Spain had already reached the same conclusion. As early as April 1773, Minister of State Grimaldi told Bucareli that he had already informed the king “it would be necessary to select able and expert youths who could, with the ships at your disposal in San Blas, frequent those seas as far as Monterey and even higher if possible.”¹¹ The king approved the proposal to strengthen San Blas with six officers, and steps were taken to appoint them.¹²

On May 18, 1773, Minister of the Navy (and for the Indies) Arriaga wrote to the *capitán general* of the Spanish navy, the *capitán general* at Cartagena, and the *capitán general* at El Ferrol. He asked each to nominate six or eight officers of the rank of *teniente de fragata* and *alférez de navío* for service in New Spain.¹³ By August 3 the king had chosen Bruno de Hezeta y Dudagoita and Agustín de Moncada, both of whom were on duty in

Cartagena.¹⁴ They were ordered to go to New Spain by the first available transport and to place themselves under the orders of the viceroy, “who would assign to them their command of the ships employed on the Californian coast for exploration.”¹⁵ On August 7, Arriaga learned that while Hezeta had accepted this posting, Moncada had already been assigned to another position. In his stead, *alférez de navío* Diego de Choquet and *alférez de navío* Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra were nominated. Of the two, Bodega came with the better recommendation; he had agreed to go to New Spain, and his commandant at Cartagena thought him “to have a quiet and gentle disposition, good application and other suitable requirements for the purpose.”¹⁶ Bodega and Choquet were joined in Cádiz by Miguel Manrique, Fernando Bernardo Quirós y Miranda, and Juan de Ayala.

Bodega’s joy at his selection is evident from the letter he wrote immediately to the minister in the formal, highly affected style he used throughout his career:

Your Excellency, Sir. I recognize my obligation to inform Your Excellency of my arrival in this city on the 24th of this month by virtue of His Majesty’s order, communicated to me by the commandant general of the Department of Cartagena (where I was posted), after to be assigned to the Californias, where, if Your Excellency wishes to send me, I hope to merit repeated orders in your service which guarantee my special acquiescence. May God keep you many years.

I kiss Your Excellency’s hands [and remain] your most humble subject.

Cádiz, 28 September, 1773.¹⁷

“The Six,” as these hand-picked officers have become known to historians, undertook further training in navigation and chart making at the Real Colegio de Guardiamarinas before they left Spain. Although their primary task was to verify the accuracy of the reports from St. Petersburg about Russian penetration into Alaska, it was recognized that this investigation could only be accomplished through a detailed exploration of the uncharted coast north of Alta California.

The discipline of navigation was changing rapidly in 1773. The Spanish navy was adopting new instruments such as the chronometer, as well as new methods such as the determination of compass variation by azimuth readings. When Vicente Tofiño, the great hydrographer who taught Bodega at the Real Colegio, became the academy’s director, he had introduced a special program of advanced studies to help serving officers meet

the new requirements for astronomical navigation and mapmaking.¹⁸ On learning that Bodega and his companions had been selected to go to New Spain to take part in exploration, he arranged for them to return to the Real Colegio for a special course on “the new navigation” and to spend “three or four months in our academy and Observatory where they [could] practice the technicalities of astronomy and the use of the instruments.”¹⁹

Tofiño also urged Andrés Reggio, the *capitán general* of the navy, to make certain that the six officers were provided with good instruments to achieve the greatest possible accuracy in their navigation and charting assignments. Assuming that each expedition would consist of two ships, he suggested that each vessel be issued “two good azimuth needles to record accurately their course, observe the variation, and indicate land; and three sextants to observe the latitude and to make longitudinal observations.” To make charts of a small section of coast or a port, metal protractors and small tables on tripods would be necessary. To lay down features on a chart covering a longer section of coastline, the officers would be provided with astronomical clocks, quadrants having a radius of thirty inches, azimuth compasses to measure variation, and telescopes of a focal length of twenty-four inches. Tofiño’s recommendations for more training and the provision of up-to-date instruments were met. The group not only delayed their departure for New Spain on the store ship *Santa Rita* until the following June 13, 1774, but also took with them seven cases of instruments. They also were given five hundred pesos each for travel expenses.

TRIALS

The journey to San Blas took nearly six months. The six officers arrived in Veracruz on August 26, 1774. They paused in Mexico City from October 25 to December 15 to meet with Bucareli, who briefed them on Pérez’s voyage. The viceroy was disappointed that Pérez had not attempted even one landing or any serious cartography. Bucareli had already begun preparations for the next expedition to the north. In this, he gave the new officers from Spain a leading role. As the senior member of the six, *teniente de navío* Bruno de Hezeta, in the *Santiago*, was placed in command; Pérez, the experienced old hand, was appointed his second-in-command. They were to be accompanied by Juan Manuel de Ayala on the schooner *Sonora*, whose shallow draft would make her useful for inshore surveying and for taking possession on land. A third ship, the packet boat *San Carlos*,²⁰ commanded

by Miguel Manrique, was to make a thorough survey of San Francisco Bay. Quirós was given command of *El Príncipe*²¹ and was to take her on resupply missions to Alta California. Diego de Choquet and Bodega were to report to the commanding officer at San Blas, *teniente de navío* Ignacio de Arteaga y Bazán, while they awaited an assignment to another expedition.

It is not evident why Bucareli selected Ayala over Bodega to command the *Sonora*. Both were of the same rank, and although Ayala was older, Bodega was his senior in the service. Was this a case of the well-known preference for *peninsulares* over *criollos*? If so, it would not be the last time Bodega was passed over. Bodega himself was disappointed. He noted tersely, "I thought that on account of my seniority, some position was due me."²²

The six travelled on to San Blas with their seven cases of astronomical instruments. A pendulum clock had been damaged en route and was left with a clockmaker in Guadalajara to be repaired. As soon as he arrived in San Blas, Bodega rode down to the harbour on horseback. Undaunted by the small size of the schooner *Sonora*, he was determined that he would serve on her even though

[I] realized that its lack of any capability for such a lengthy and dangerous voyage could delay the expedition and that it would be carrying only one officer, I decided for the sake of the success of the commission to ask permission to embark on the schooner as second-in-command, not considering it to be an obstacle of having to serve under an officer of the same rank as myself or [failing to] recognize that I was exposing myself to infinite risks for my own satisfaction.²³

As there was no time to consult the viceroy, Bodega made a formal request to Hezeta to be allowed to embark on the schooner, assuring him he would be pleased to serve under an officer of the same rank. His petition was granted on March 8, 1775.

Piloto Francisco Antonio Mourelle de la Rúa, who had been assigned to the *Santiago*, asked to be transferred to the *Sonora*. Hezeta granted this request as well. It was the beginning of a fruitful association and solid friendship between Bodega and Mourelle; they were among the most intelligent and able Spanish naval officers who served on the Northwest Coast. In addition to being a superb cartographer, Mourelle was interested in natural history and ethnology.

The *Sonora* had been built for short trips from San Blas to Loreto in Baja California.²⁴ Bodega thought her to be no longer than a launch belonging to a ship of the line. Mourelle described the *Sonora's* inadequacies:

A deck and a tiny cabin were all it had for security or living quarters, with no chests or other baggage than the bunk and what could be contained in a box underneath; the height and width of the space for the crew [was so small that] they had to remain in a sitting position; the meagre deck did not allow the convenience of a walk; and in this inactive manner, we lived for ten months.²⁵

We could not help but be sorry to observe the horror which the crew conceived of the bad condition of the schooner, which afforded miserable quarters for the sick. The seamen could not go about their business without getting thoroughly wet, except when it was calm.²⁶

With the *Sonora* being so small, some of her stores for the voyage had to be carried on the larger *Santiago*, a frigate.²⁷ Of the *Sonora's* crew of fourteen, only four had previously been to sea; the remainder were newly recruited farmhands (*vaqueros*) from ranches around San Blas. The *Santiago* and *Sonora* were each provisioned for a year and carried water for four months.

Bucareli gave much the same instructions to Bruno de Hezeta as he had given to Pérez.²⁸ The viceroy wanted him to attempt to reach 65°N (the latitude of Fairbanks, Alaska) or higher. While examining the coast, he was to stay close to shore, avoid contact with any foreign establishments, and report on the native peoples, their customs, their form of government, and their trade patterns. Most important, he was to assert possession by Spain in as many places as he could get ashore.

The expedition departed on March 16, after a delay to allow some of the new crew to finish harvesting the fruit crops on the *haciendas*. A second delay occurred when, three days out from San Blas, Miguel Manrique on the *Sonora* became delusional. Ayala was accidentally wounded in the right foot by one of the pistols Manrique brandished. An assembled *junta* agreed unanimously that Manrique should be sent back and that the injured Ayala should take over the *San Carlos*, which was bound for the California missions. Hezeta appointed Bodega to command the schooner *Sonora*. Bodega's providential act of volunteering to serve on the *Sonora* not only saved the expedition from failure but also launched his career as an explorer.

In the open sea a third serious problem arose. The *Sonora* was found to be a very poor sailor. Bodega felt that he had been grossly misled. "The information we had was that she was swift," he wrote, and "her qualities had been praised to the skies." She could make only two knots in a medium breeze, three with all possible sail. He replaced the foresail with a spare mainsail, which "stretched from bow to stern," and he added two small sails in the mastheads. He tried shifting the cargo to alter her drag and loosened the stays and hemp lines. All his efforts made little difference to her

speed. On one occasion the *Santiago* took in sail so as not to get too far ahead. At another point the *Santiago* was even obliged to tow the *Sonora*.²⁹

To test the spirit of his crew, Bodega put on as much sail as he dared, but “such was the fear they felt ... that they pretended to have some ailment in order to be transferred to the frigate.” They were even more dismayed when they saw the command ship’s topsails reefed when their schooner was under full sail. The same fear of *Sonora*’s inadequacies, he noted, was shared by the crew of the *Santiago*; Hezeta threatened them with transfer to the *Sonora* as a “rigorous punishment.” On the smaller ship, the sailors’ condition

would have become insufferable, had not [Bodega] behaved with the greatest kindness to the crew ... He encouraged them to persist also, by giving them small presents frequently, and reminded them of the glory they would obtain on their return, if they reached the proper latitude.³⁰

During one heavy windstorm at night, when both Bodega and Mourelle had gone below to get some rest and the boatswain was on watch, one of the cabin boys informed them that the mainsail had been lowered and reefed, just as the *Santiago*’s had been. Bodega rushed up on deck and ordered the reef removed and the sail hoisted. Very annoyed, he gave orders that no sail was ever to be lowered without his permission. He told his men he

was ashamed to see them ... such cowards ... I asked what confidence could I have and what could I expect from them in higher latitudes, where it is certain that the seas and winds will have greater strength, if now, when the weather was clear, they feign so much timidity ... Finally, I told them of the glory they would have ... and the esteem they would merit from all and especially from me, who was their companion in their labours.

This exhortation apparently did some good, for Bodega saw a new spirit in them, a desire to please him and a resolve “to participate in my own fate and even to follow me to any destiny whatever.”

After a month of very slow progress, Hezeta convened a *junta* of officers to decide whether or not to put in at Monterey. In his lengthy written opinion, Bodega argued strongly against stopping at Monterey. He wanted to continue sailing until they reached the supposed Río de Martín de Aguilar.³¹ Bodega wrote:

I am of the opinion that on no account should we put into Monterey. The reasons which compel me to hold this view are solely dictated by service to the

The 1775 Voyage on the *Sonora*

21

King and the better fulfillment of our mission. It cannot be denied that in the latitude in which we find ourselves, it will be less difficult to anchor in 43° (the inlet discovered by Martín de Aguilar) than to go to Monterey. This being granted, what doubts can we have when the advantages are so well known?³²

Francisco Mourelle concurred:

According to reports, water is not lacking there, and the few sick we have will improve as soon as they step ashore. The damage to the topmast and the bowsprit can last out with the lashings we have made, and if not, we can fix them as much as possible. One cannot always navigate with everything in order ...

If we put into Monterey, we must realize that as the season is well advanced, we risk making no further advances this year and will have to wait until next year to continue. This will result in a serious delay in the service of His Majesty and his interests and we will not fulfill the orders of His Excellency the Viceroy. To decide to make a new topmast and bowsprit is the same as deciding to spend the winter there.

As to what is said of the condition of the schooner with all its futtocks split and totally useless, unable to hold a nail, and that this damage can have disastrous results because of the continuous and strong winds, none of this appears to me to be a sufficient reason to delay the expedition.

Bodega then added with a touch of bravado:

The command has been given to me and I must carry out my orders, I say, with the honour corresponding to my birth. I know the advantages which can result from the mission if, as I hope, I am able to reach 61° or higher in company with the frigate. I am fully aware of the consequences of what I have said and the arduous nature of the undertaking because of the small size [of the schooner], its poor handling, slow speed, and because it is essential for me to carry more sail than normal.

All these reasons, and those now being added, should have been put before His Excellency [the viceroy] by those persons who informed him maliciously of its [good] characteristics. It is now too late to change opinions. This fear, however, must not be an obstacle since those who are gladly willing to sacrifice themselves with me are my *piloto* and my small crew, who are resigned to their fate.

This should not be interpreted as rashness since up to now not the slightest amount of water has been found [in the hold] and we have not stopped working. Although the speed is low and the amount of sail is too much, they

are remedied by the continual care the *piloto* and I show to avoid accidents.

In the final analysis, God encourages and aids great actions and when fortune is so adverse that nothing can be done about it, it is glory for posterity for each one to die doing his duty and [to die] for the King.³³

Although all the other officers favoured going into Monterey, Hezeta deferred to Bodega's opinion, and the slow voyage northward continued.

The weather was poor, the winds were variable, the sea was rough, and the temperature turned colder as they sailed on. On June 1, the routine was broken by the death of one of the *Sonora's* cabin boys. He had gained access to the brandy barrel and drunk himself into a blind stupor. Bodega transferred him to the *Santiago* for medical attention, but the boy did not recover. Father de la Serra, the *Santiago's* chaplain, noted wryly, "He went blind drunk into Eternity."³⁴

TRINIDAD

The first signs that the ships were approaching land appeared shortly after. Bodega estimated that they were thirty leagues from Cape Blanco and twenty-seven from Cape Mendocino, if the Bellin map they carried could be believed.³⁵ On June 7, the coast was sighted clearly, stretching from north to south. The following day, Hezeta signalled to Bodega to sail ahead and seek a good harbour. This was the task for which the *Sonora* had been added to the expedition, and Bodega complied. A reconnaissance over the next two days and careful navigation between the large rocks, which extended as much as a mile out to sea, were rewarded: the *Sonora* found an inlet that seemed to offer the haven they were seeking.³⁶ Bodega signalled the *Santiago* to follow him in. Once safely inside, both ships anchored "a stone's throw from the beach." This was Trinidad Bay, home of the Yurok.

Even before the ships entered the bay, canoes full of natives came out to greet them.³⁷ Once the vessels anchored, more came alongside and "with the greatest affability mixed with the crews and began in a friendly manner to exchange deer skins and sea otter pelts for knives, beads, and other trifles the sailors bartered with them." The next day, June 10, both captains, accompanied by some of their officers, the two chaplains, and forty armed men, went ashore to visit the natives' village. The Spaniards found the people suspicious but not obstructive. Trading continued as they walked around the village, but the villagers showed no interest in bartering for European clothing.

The commandant decided to take formal possession of the region “on the top of a high hill which stood at the entrance to harbour” on the following day, the day of the “ineffable mystery of the Most Blessed Holy Trinity.” All the journals recorded the proceedings. The cross was first set up on the beach, where the first adoration was recited.³⁸ Fathers Miguel de la Campa and Junípero de la Serra wrote that they chanted the hymn of gratitude, *Tè Deum Laudamus*. The formal act of possession, the text of which had been prepared beforehand in Mexico City, required only the addition of the names of the ships, their commandants, the date, and the name to be given to the place. The document recorded that there was “no hostile resistance.” Hezeta assured the Yurok people, in response to their “desire to establish perpetual friendship with us,” that they could do so “as long as they maintained the cross.” In his account, Bodega omitted many details recorded by the chaplains, but his general description concurs with those by others.

The following day, both ships took on wood and water. There was plenty of “delicious water” in the ravines, and collecting water and wood on the beach was easily accomplished. The *Sonora* was boot-topped³⁹ in the hope of increasing her speed. Bodega also cut trees for two masts and yardarms as well as caps for the masthead. The Indians made no objection to the crews’ cutting trees for the purpose. On the contrary, they assisted the sailors’ work details.

Bodega made a careful chart of the bay with Mourelle. Bodega also wrote a report on the harbour. Any ship, he thought, should be able to anchor safely in the small bay protected by Trinidad Head, provided the cables were sheathed, but care needed to be taken to avoid the many protruding rocks in the bay. After repeated observations, its position was determined to be 41°07’N and 19°04’W of San Blas.⁴⁰

The viceroy’s standing instructions to all captains on exploration missions included a directive to report on the customs, characteristics, religion, and political organization of the natives.⁴¹ Despite the difficulties of communication and the limitations of time, Bodega, with the help of Mourelle and undoubtedly that of the officers and chaplains of the *Santiago*, was able to compile a good deal of information, which was based, he says, on visits to the ships from more than 250 Indians and on Spanish excursions to some of the villages.⁴² While his account is not as full as those of the chaplains, who had more time for the task, Bodega went beyond simple observations on material goods and economic patterns. He also recorded that he had seen iron used in the Yuroks’ weapons, and that they liked tobacco and had a small garden plot of it.

Bodega failed to record some events that occurred during the ships' stay, perhaps because he was not personally involved. First, the *Santiago* grounded because of the very low tide. Then two of the *Santiago's* apprentice seamen, José Antonio Rodrigues and Pedro Lorenzo, deserted. Hezeta, suspecting at first that the Indians had kidnapped them, seized two Yuroks as hostages, but they were released when Lorenzo returned voluntarily. He received two hundred lashes for his offence. Rodríguez was never found and became California's first illegal immigrant. Neither did Bodega mention Hezeta's exploration of Little River, which the Spaniards called Río de las Tortolas (Turtle Doves). On June 12, the day after the possession ceremony on Trinidad Head, the officers of both ships had a picnic ashore, which the chaplains had organized.

After spending nine days in Trinidad Bay, the two ships sailed away, apparently amid tearful farewells from some of the Indians who had boarded the ships before their departure. After presenting the sailors with shellfish, they embraced the Spanish, throwing their arms around everyone and saying, "Adios, amigo." They made signs that Bodega interpreted to mean that "they would weep when they saw the Holy Cross."

On June 28, the vessels set a northerly course and sailed to a point south of Vancouver Island, where the winds and currents drove them west and south. By the end of June, the ships were more than a hundred leagues from the coast.

The trying weather conditions did not, however, prevent a celebration on June 24, the feast of St. John the Baptist, Bodega's patron saint. Bodega invited the officers and chaplains of the command ship to celebrate the day with him. The ships lay to from one p.m. to four p.m. for the occasion. Father Serra tells us that "the officers went, and the occasion was celebrated with great rejoicing, including speeches, and both ships were dressed with flags, and salvos of musketry were discharged as the crews vied with each other in acclamations of 'Long live the King.'"⁴³

Using the new spars made in Trinidad Bay, Bodega put on extra sail and ended what he regarded as the embarrassment of being towed. It was still necessary to exercise great care. On July 9, when they were in the latitude of the strait of Juan de Fuca, the *Sonora* nearly foundered. A squall snapped the main topmast and caused the tiny ship to turn on her beam ends, whereupon the heavy seas prevented her return to an even keel. The water barrels broke loose from their chocks and rolled around, and water entered the hold, damaging some of the stores. Bodega was able to turn into the wind to make temporary repairs.

TRAGEDY AT GRENVILLE BAY⁴⁴

The coast of what is today Washington State was sighted on July 11. Turning south to seek a safe anchorage, the *Sonora* sailed close to shore while the *Santiago* stood off to await her signals. On his chart, Hezeta identified the location as the Rada de Bucareli. Perhaps anticipating criticism for the tragedy that followed, Bodega recounted in some detail the careful manoeuvres he was compelled to make to avoid the shoals in the waters less than a mile offshore. Coming in under the lee of nearby Cape Elizabeth at high tide, he sailed over the shoals, or sand banks, protecting the beach, without realizing they were there.

At this time the frigate was about a league away; I signaled it to come and anchor and I came in sounding 8 *brazas*, for which reason I immediately signaled "low water" to the frigate.⁴⁵ Although I attempted to get out, it was not possible to do so because of a great series of sand banks, which stretched outside all along the coast. To get outside was not possible because the wind was coming from the opposite direction to the way we came in, so I had to anchor. I sent the launch [with Mourelle] to inform the Commandant where I was, of the impossibility of my getting out at low tide, and the impossibility of his using the place as a safe anchorage for the night. I also asked him to let me know if there was a sheltered harbour by the point which was about a league to leeward.

Mourelle returned at midnight with the news that there was no shelter at the point to leeward and that the frigate had anchored a league from the *Sonora*.

The schooner's presence quickly attracted the attention of people from the nearby Quinault village. They were the first residents of the area to encounter European visitors. They tempted the sailors with "offerings and flattery," and by signs seemed to invite them to go ashore to visit their houses. Bodega noticed that they were soon joined by about sixty others. As the Spaniards were outnumbered, he ordered his people to arm themselves discreetly.⁴⁶ The Indians seemed to appreciate the glass beads, pendants, and kerchiefs presented to them. They returned with more fish without showing any fear. They approached the ship and exchanged pelts for glass beads and knives. With signs taken to show "gratitude and friendship," they endeavoured to persuade the Spaniards to spend the night in their village. The Indians approached the anchor cable, which Bodega interpreted as meaning that if they accepted the invitation, they would be

towed in. The Indians finally left “with the same signs of friendship and making a great noise and demonstrating by their actions and their arms that we were friends.” Later that evening, nine canoes approached the schooner, their occupants shouting. As the hour was late, Bodega armed his men so as to be ready for any treachery. As matters turned out, the Indians were so pleased with the presents made to them earlier that they had come to offer a large amount of food, including salmon and smelt, whale meat, meat of other land animals, and sweet onions, as well as some fresh water. To show his appreciation and once more to assure the Indians of his peaceful intentions, Bodega gave kerchiefs and glass beads to the men and rings and earrings to the women. After this, “they then returned happily to their villages, and I marvelled at how they behaved.”

The next day, June 14, Hezeta, whose ship was a short distance to the south, decided to perform the possession ceremony where he had anchored and without the *Sonora's* officers. Because he feared that his own ship's exposed position would worsen when the wind and sea came up, he conducted the ceremony hastily at 6 a.m., “following the instructions strictly in every detail [and] giving it the name Rada de Bucareli. As the situation did not admit any delay, Mass was omitted.”⁴⁷ Apart from Hezeta, Pérez, the surgeon Juan González, twenty armed men, and the chaplains themselves, the only witnesses were six unarmed Quinault “grown boys,” who were gathering and eating shellfish on the beach.

Meanwhile, Bodega made ready to sail to the *Santiago*. While he waited for high tide, he decided to take on wood and water, as well as cut a much-needed cap for the masthead, since a lengthy voyage “of four months' continuous hardship” lay ahead. He thought the job could be accomplished easily, for he could see “running streams of water and an infinite number of logs” on the beach. Moreover, the Indians who had returned again to trade were “showing the same sincerity and friendship as on the previous day and night.” A detail of six men was organized under the boatswain, Pedro Santana, who was “known for his good conduct and bravery by all.” Each was armed with a musket and sword, and some with two pistols. They were also given “some articles of little value” to offer for trade if approached by Indians. As the launch was too small to carry everyone, Bodega instructed it to return as soon as they had disembarked to take Mourelle and himself ashore with some barrels.

His journal then records the subsequent tragedy:

As there was some swell to the sea, they were not able to get ashore with all stability and so as soon as they began to step ashore, all of a sudden 300 Indians

came out of the woods and finding the men defenceless assassinated them treacherously. As I was without any means to help them, I ordered a few shots fired to see if they would frighten [the Indians], but they paid not the slightest attention since the shots could not hurt them. Just as useless were the various signals for help I sent the frigate, as the distance was too great for them to be seen. Thus I found myself isolated, without a launch, [and] without people to go to their defence.

On the schooner with his telescope, Mourelle saw the Indians come out of the woods, which were only twenty-five to thirty yards from the shoreline. He saw only a single flash from either a musket or a pistol, and he heard no shot. Aboard the *Santiago*, the shots were interpreted as a signal that the *Sonora* was in trouble among the shoals. Hezeta dispatched his launch with a kedge anchor and a cable. Bodega scanned the shore for any one of his people who might have escaped the massacre. He saw two men swimming toward his ship, but they were defeated by the cold water. He did not know “if when they retreated [to the shore] they died at the hands of the barbarians or escaped in the thickness of the woods.”

At noon, he weighed anchor in the hope of getting free with the high tide. Besides Mourelle, Bodega had on board only five men and a boy who were healthy and another four who were ill. There was very little wind as he manoeuvred his ship to get out to sea, when nine large canoes came out, each carrying more than thirty Indians. As the canoes closed, Bodega recognized in one, which had only nine men aboard, the “most robust youths” who the day before had each commanded one of the other canoes. They coasted up beside the schooner, bows at the ready and shielded by “some beautiful hides of great thickness.” The Indians made the same signs of friendship and, as before, appeared to invite the men of the *Sonora* to visit their village.

Rejecting these entreaties, Bodega noted sarcastically: “This was a contemptible reward for the noble treatment we had accorded them.” The Indians then began to approach the schooner from the stern. Bodega stationed his tiny group to repel any attack – one at the helm, another sounding the water’s depth, another looking out for shoals, another making cartridges, and the last carrying them to where they would be needed. He, Mourelle, and the cabin boy were the only ones left to fire the muskets and man the swivel guns.

At first the Indians kept the same distance from the *Sonora*, but when the nine natives saw that no one was manning the prow, they decided to board. Once they came within range, Bodega

opened fire with two swivel guns and three muskets, peppering them in such a way that we gave them no time between volleys. They paddled to escape with great swiftness. However, their skill was to no avail, as the first shots killed the greater number of them and the others quickly covered themselves with their leather skins.⁴⁸

He thought he could have killed more had he not been compelled to keep watch as the *Sonora* picked her way between the shoals to open water. The Indians hastily withdrew out of the range of the muskets and swivel guns to hold a conference and then decided to return to their village. Bodega did not record an ethnographic description of the Quinault. What little Mourelle recorded was clearly what he learned from the two chaplains, Fathers Campa and Serra.⁴⁹

Bodega rejoined the *Santiago* as soon as he could get free and immediately boarded it with Mourelle to report to Hezeta. Distraught and angry, he asked for thirty men to go ashore to “seek the most severe satisfaction for such an abominable atrocity and to be sure of the fate of the two unfortunate ones.” He and Mourelle argued their case strenuously, but the *Santiago*’s officers were all opposed to their plan. Hezeta did not criticize Bodega for having allowed himself to be trapped inside the shoals, nor did he blame him for the tragic incident that followed. He concurred that the Indians had “shown great gentleness,” and he noted that they “had brought their women on board” and had exchanged meat and fish for glass beads – all signs of “true and sincere friendship.” He no doubt sympathized with Bodega’s desire to seek revenge; nevertheless, he counselled prudence. Hezeta had good reason for opposing Bodega’s request. His instructions permitted him to resort to force only in self-defence, and because he had so many on board affected by scurvy, the “least loss of manpower would have forced us to give up the mission.” Bodega and Mourelle accepted Hezeta’s ruling reluctantly. “Even though it did not conform to my opinion,” Bodega noted, “the Commandant decided to let such audacity go unpunished.”

A possible explanation of the sudden change in the natives’ attitude has been suggested by Quinault ethnologist David H. Chance:

Perhaps the land-claiming ceremony by twenty-four men, twenty of them heavily armed, had been perceived for what it was. The Quinaults would have surely known that erecting a pole with a cross-bar on it, while a medicine man in robes chanted, meant that something of great religious power was being done to their land. Some who doubtless watched from hiding in the woods half-circling the cove may have wondered if these were the Black

Klokwalles spirits from out in the ocean, a perfectly reasonable deduction from the Quinault perspective. This may be why the current Quinault tradition of the *Sonora/Santiago* affair recalls events only at Point Grenville; the land claim may have been the most significant and galling part of it.

The people of this coast were territorial even if in a slightly different way than that of the Europeans. They were very much accustomed to the communication of important facts through symbols like poles stuck in the sand. This may have been the first awakening, after a mere twenty-four hours of honeymoon with the presumptuous Europeans. The second may have been when the Spaniards evened the score with their guns.⁵⁰

Another possible explanation has been suggested by Delbert J. McBride, former curator of the Washington State Capitol Museum in Olympia and a scholar of Cowlitz-Quinault extraction. He believes that the expedition would not have been aware that the beach where Bodega's people went ashore was a sacred place connected with the coming into puberty of female members of the tribe, promising death to anyone who profaned it.⁵¹

The Spanish had charted the roadstead and named it after Viceroy Bucareli. Point Grenville was named Punta de los Mártires to commemorate their murdered companions. The shoal that had trapped Bodega's ship still appears on today's maps, appropriately, as Sonora Reef.

OPPORTUNITY

By mid-July, Bruno de Hezeta was deeply concerned about the *Sonora's* ability to continue in company. The evening before the massacre, Bodega had received word that Hezeta wanted him to attend an officers' *junta* to decide whether "the schooner should continue the voyage to a higher latitude since at every moment he [Hezeta] feared we would perish with seas and winds such as we had experienced on the 9th and 11th." Reflecting on this order, Bodega wrote:

This news did not surprise me, as from the beginning after leaving San Blas they have taken great pains to dissuade me from such an undertaking and urge me to return to port, trying to make me believe that it was impossible to reach a latitude higher than Monterey. I consider it to be of greater merit that I have not paid any more attention to such mournful predictions of the inconveniences and exertions I have undergone and await me in such a lengthy voyage.

During the *junta* that discussed the massacre, Hezeta voiced his concern that the schooner had twice been close to foundering.

Bodega and Mourelle were adamant about wanting to continue. On returning to his ship, Bodega put his reasons in writing for Hezeta:

On 21 May when we were in latitude 37° and longitude 27°46' west of San Blas, bearing in mind the slow speed of this schooner and finding all the fut-tocks useless as the carpenters attested and, finally, its resistance poor, we held a *junta* to determine whether it should return to the Department [of San Blas] or put into Monterey to examine the damage.

As it seemed to me, this was insufficient reason for me to return as to do so would completely delay the expedition. I felt this would not be acceptable under any circumstances, bearing in mind the service of the King and the reasons I expressed in writing.

The *piloto* of the schooner, Don Francisco Maurelle [sic], was of the same opinion. You decided that we should proceed [as planned] and I have reached latitude 49° without having had any reason to oblige me to put into harbour. Now on this occasion and with greater reason, I must be of the same opinion, having experienced such severe seas and winds, and I am certain that I can lie to without suffering the least damage. Even though [the schooner] heels over and water is shipped excessively, the former will always occur with every small ship and the second is not all that consequential as *ser de punta a la oreja* [the deck is completely covered].⁵²

Its speed with the sails I have had added does not differ much from that of the frigate. And finally, I am obliged to reach 65° as I have reached 49°. The labours I have experienced and expect are fundamental to every navigation, especially to explorers, and must be accepted with resignation and fortitude as they are for the King's service and the honour of the nation.

As I wish to fulfill, as required, the commission entrusted to me, considering that it would more difficult for the frigate to accomplish the task without the schooner, of reconnoitering the coast and its harbours, I expressed the opinion at the *junta* that we should continue [the voyage] and do so now in writing, adding that it would be an unbecoming affront to my nature to abandon the mission without serious reason.⁵³

Juan Pérez sided with Bodega. Hezeta agreed and acceded to the request that he replace from his own crew the six seamen the *Sonora* had lost.

With light winds and sailing west, the ships left the coast early in the morning of July 14. Five days later, Hezeta sent Bodega a letter enclosing a representation by Pérez, his second-in-command, as well as a certificate

from the *Santiago's* surgeon to the effect that the frigate could not reach a higher latitude because of the advanced season and the number of crew suffering from scurvy. Bodega replied, Mourelle agreeing, in his usual resolute tone:

I am of the opinion that, notwithstanding their strong and powerful reasons, we should continue for a while longer to see whether, in the meantime, we can gain more favourable winds to help us and not discontinue a voyage which has cost us so much discomfort. Although I recognize that few of my crew are well and that the greater part are in wretched health and tired after four months of navigation to which they are not accustomed, it seems to me appropriate to carry on in some way until it is obvious that the sick will not recover greater strength. If that should be the case, we could withdraw, reconnoitering the coast with the northwest winds we have experienced in the vicinity.

Reluctantly, Hezeta accepted Bodega's view, and they sailed on. The season was far advanced, and they had a long way to go to reach 65°N. The *Sonora* was in a wretched state, and her slowness only exacerbated difficulties. Bodega and Mourelle were certain that Hezeta had decided to abort the expedition.

On July 29, when the two ships were near the latitude of the Strait of Juan de Fuca but well out of sight of land, the weather turned nasty. Strong winds and high waves forced both ships to lay to. The night was so dark that the *Santiago's* lantern was scarcely visible. Several rockets and the swivel guns were fired to signal the *Santiago's* position, but on the *Sonora*, only one rocket could be seen dimly. Bodega attempted to move closer to what he thought was the *Santiago's* position, but as the wind and waves frustrated his efforts, he decided to stay where he was by heading up into the wind.

That night, he and Mourelle resolved to carry on the expedition alone. Both failed to record that decision in their journals. On July 31 Bodega noted only that the horizon was very cloudy, with visibility less than two leagues, and that the frigate was nowhere to be seen. As the weather deteriorated and forced him to maintain his position, he wrote that he had assumed the command ship would do the same. The following day, August 1, the weather was worse, with visibility only half a league. When the weather improved at noon, the *Santiago* had disappeared. Bodega began a search on a westerly course, assuming, he said, that the winds would have forced Hezeta to do the same. On August 4 he claimed that squalls, fog, and varying winds had persuaded him to alter his course to the north:

Now that the winds began to be more favourable and the frigate was nowhere to be seen, I decided to continue the exploration in accordance with instructions in spite of realizing that the consequences could be disastrous, so advanced was the season, if we attempted to reach a higher latitude in a ship so small, lacking medicines and surgeons and even water. I pressed on, taking fresh trouble for granted.

Somewhat disingenuously, he added:

All in all, it was necessary to put up with these inconveniences as it would be distressing having to incur again further expense for the Royal Treasury for succeeding expeditions that perhaps would suffer their own misadventures and not produce results unless we seek to overcome them with determination.

Some years later, Mourelle, whose journal repeated the same yarn even more cryptically, would confess that their separation from the command ship had indeed been premeditated and was not accidental. Their “official” version of what happened was not entirely false, for the night truly was unusually dark and overcast. They did steer westward to look for the *Santiago*, but, as Mourelle later admitted, they “slowly drifted away to the west ... [as] masters of their action.”⁵⁴

Mourelle described at some length how, for three hours between seven and ten that night (July 29), they had discussed what they should do, admitting that it was he and not Bodega who urged abandoning their senior officer. “As [we] both had the same thought, it was not difficult,” he later wrote, “to convince him to separate in spite of superior orders to travel in consort.” They were well aware of the risks involved. They would be sailing into unknown seas, and they could be trapped in archipelagos. They faced a shortage of food. Their meat, all seventy-two *arrobas*, about 1,800 pounds in weight, was stored on the *Santiago*. All they had left on the *Sonora* was rice, beans, soggy bread, lard, and water. Without medicines, they faced the certain loss of crew members through scurvy. There was also the possibility that they would be accused of insubordination were they to return to San Blas “without [any] progress worthy of consideration.” None of these risks, however, could prevail over their anxieties: they could not face their fellow officers if they turned back after they had come as far as they had, and they had as yet achieved nothing that was worthy of their superiors’ attention. Perhaps closer to the truth was Mourelle’s later admission that he and Bodega y Quadra were “two youths eager for fame and reputation.”⁵⁵ Thus began “one of the truly epic voyages in the coastal exploration of North America.”⁵⁶

REACHING NORTH FOR THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

After altering course to almost due north, the *Sonora* sailed on without much difficulty until August 15. Bodega and Mourelle knew they were near land when the sea became darker and tree branches, seaweed, whales, and birds with red beaks, feet, and chests were sighted.⁵⁷ They calculated their position to be 56°08'N and 154 leagues from the supposed coast. The fog was so thick they could not see the bow of their ship. They believed they were near an archipelago of unknown islands and that their situation was dangerous.

At noon the next day they sighted land at a distance of six leagues. This was Kruzof Island, immediately west of modern-day Sitka, Alaska. Sailing in closer, the explorers noted the high mountains capped with snow, among them the distinctive Mount Edgcombe.⁵⁸ Navigating carefully along the west coast of Kruzof Island, they entered an inlet three leagues wide. Despite being exposed to winds from the south, Bodega decided to spend the night there at anchor on a sandbar. He called the place Guadalupe.⁵⁹ As the ship left the next day, the crew saw two canoes, each carrying two men and two women, who showed no desire to come alongside. The men and women made signs, which the Spaniards took to be an invitation to go ashore. The now distrustful Bodega declined their offer.

Three days later, the *Sonora* entered Sea Lion Cove at the northern end of Kruzof Island. Bodega described it

as a harbour which was not as large as the previous one. It had a beautiful beach, a river four or five yards wide, a depth of water of eight *brazas*, sheltered from the winds on the first, second and fourth quadrants, and protected on the third by a chain of islands, linked one to the other, which go out to sea.

The *Sonora* anchored close to shore near a well-built house defended by a stockade of poles. Bodega decided to go ashore and take possession of the land at noon on the same day. Taking no chances against another surprise attack, he disembarked with fourteen well-armed men. To cover a possible retreat, he positioned two swivel guns and some men with muskets in the most defensible part of the cove while he planted a cross on a small hill, "taking possession of these lands with all the required formalities." Bodega named the place Puerto de Nuestra Señora de los Remedios, and situated it at latitude 57°20'N and 34°12'W of San Blas.⁶⁰ When the Spaniards returned to their ship, the Indians, who had remained behind their parapet,

were seen to carry off the cross. They erected it in front of their house, which suggests that they considered it something akin to a totem pole. Puerto de Nuestra Señora de los Remedios would assume symbolic importance as the farthest point north that a Spanish explorer had taken possession to date.

Bodega inspected the river and beach to see how best much-needed water could be taken on board. Although the Indians continued to remain behind their stockade, Bodega decided it was too dangerous and returned to the ship. The following day, August 19, he disembarked with the same number of men on a beach closer to the entrance to the cove. As he had done the day before, he established a strongpoint and fortified it with swivel guns and men with muskets. Taking six men with him, he went first to cut a tree and gather wood. When they began to fill the water barrels from the river, while others fished near the river mouth, about twenty unarmed Indians carrying a white pennant on a pole came out of their house and took up a position across the river. For some time they harangued the Spaniards. In due course they fell silent, as if expecting a reply. Bodega attempted to explain that the Spaniards meant them no harm and that they should have no fear. He signed that they had come to get some water, whereupon one of the natives, who was thought to be the chief, ordered water to be brought to the Spanish. It was offered in a goblet made of grass and handed over in the middle of the river. In exchange, Bodega gave them some beads and kerchiefs, which were repaid with dried fish.

All seemed to be going well as the water casks were filled, until the Indians saw that the water was being carried away. "They endeavoured to make us pay for the water, giving us to understand that it was theirs." This was the first time the Spanish became aware of the highly developed sense of private property that was widespread on the Northwest Coast. When offered more beads, the Indians threw them on the ground and ran to their house, from which they returned carrying very long, flint-tipped spears. When they gestured their intention to attack, Bodega told his people to hold fire. Seizing his own musket, he approached the riverbank and warned the Indians that he would fire on them if they advanced one step closer. He added that the Spanish wished to be friends and that he would lay down his musket if they laid down their spears. The Indians apparently understood Bodega's proposal and retreated to their house. Without further incident, the Spaniards finished drawing water and gathering wood. They also cut a tree for the topmast.⁶¹

The *Sonora* remained at Los Remedios for three days. With the weather

turning very much colder, with constant rain and fog, the lack of adequate shelter for the crew was becoming a matter of concern. Departing on August 21, Bodega sailed westward hoping to gain a northing breeze, but the winds conspired against him. His observations were proving the Bellin maps to be totally useless. Bodega did not know where and when he might find the mainland.

On August 22 the voyagers reached the farthest north they would achieve. Their observations gave the ship's position as 57°58'N.⁶² Reluctantly, Bodega decided to turn back. The greater part of his people were sick – Mourelle noted that only two men could be mustered for each watch – and the season was too far advanced to allow him to sail sufficiently far west to find the winds he needed to take him to higher latitudes. He wrote: “I decided to return steering east-southeast, following the coast at a distance of one mile, and resigned myself to have sailed as high as 58°, especially in a ship which could not have been expected to obtain such success.” He then added characteristically: “Having many times been urged to return and not to endanger myself, I never abandoned my purpose until compelled to do so.”

Mourelle questioned Bodega's decision. He later recorded, writing as usual in the third person:

The captain decided to turn back to reconnoitre the coast to the south, a determination with which the *piloto* did not agree. As a result, for a few days there was a small quarrel that differences of opinion can produce. But as both wished to contribute to the best success of the exploration, they became reconciled in the knowledge they had reached 58° of latitude, which has never been reached by other navigators who in our times have sailed north from California.⁶³

THE RETURN JOURNEY

Bodega's purpose in hugging what he thought was the mainland coast as he sailed south was not just to correct the Bellin maps he had with him, but also to search for the entrance to the passage across North America that Admiral Bartolomeo de Fonte claimed to have discovered in the same general latitude in 1640. Bodega failed to find the “great archipelago of San Lázaro through which Fonte is said to have entered,” but with considerable exaggeration, considering the highly complex geography of the region, he said it was not for lack of trying:

Eagerly, I have examined the deepest and smallest inlets, going around whatever points presented themselves, refraining from any navigation at night so as not to lose a single indication, forcing myself to take special care as required by such an earnest task and so that the slightest doubt does not remain in my mind as to the direction and position of the coast.⁶⁴

Bucareli Bay

The search for the mythical passage was not a total waste of effort. On August 24, the *Sonora* sailed into a large bay on the west side of Prince of Wales Island. It was so well protected from the winds that the ship was nearly becalmed almost immediately. Bodega anchored near the entrance. Feeling unwell, he sent Mourelle ashore to take formal possession “with the usual formalities.” The bay was named the Entrada de Bucareli after the viceroy and today retains the name of Bucareli Bay. The spot on which the cross was raised was most likely a promontory overlooking the bay he called Puerto de la Santa Cruz, a name it still bears, on the west coast of Suemez Island.⁶⁵ Although the voyagers remained there only two days, they charted the bay and established its position as 55°17'N and 32°09'W of San Blas.⁶⁶

Bucareli Bay was a discovery for which Bodega would always have a special regard. “The Entrada,” he wrote,

is worthy of esteem because of its mild climate, the tranquility of its waters ... the excellent bottom, and the fish. I would undoubtedly have stayed a few days longer were the season not so far advanced ... The soil is fertile, as is the entire coast. We saw no Indians, only some trails they use when hunting and fishing. The nights are exceptionally bright and mild because of seven volcanoes of snow and fire, which their vapours illuminate and temper.⁶⁷

After the rough journey that the *Sonora* had endured and after the hardships sustained by all, finding such a haven was a welcome surprise. They could not stay long. Having provisioned their schooner with water and wood, they departed two days later, on the August 26.

Sailing due south, they encountered Forrester Island, which was “almost level with sea” and surrounded by reefs, and where the currents were so strong that the lead of the sounding line “could not descend to the depths.”⁶⁸ He estimated that Forrester Island lay “four or five leagues” to the east of Cape Augustine on Dall Island.⁶⁹ Bodega fixed the position of Cape Augustine at 55°N, the same latitude on which Pérez had reported

having seen an entrance.⁷⁰ Bodega was not convinced that Pérez was wrong, but two of his seamen who had sailed on the 1774 voyage told him they thought they had been farther south.⁷¹

As the *Sonora* sailed along the coast of Dall Island, the winds changed direction and made it impossible to continue on a southeasterly course. Bodega and Mourelle agreed they should attempt another northing in the hope of reaching 60°N, which they thought they could do “in a few days” provided the winds maintained the same direction, especially since most of their crew now showed signs of recovering their health from the fresh fish and warmer temperatures of Bucareli Bay. In his frank, unbuttoned style, Mourelle later wrote that he thought it “imprudent” to do so, as there was still much coast to reconnoitre, but he added that “no determination could be so agreeable as this one because the verve of the spirits of two youths was such as to fill them full of enthusiasm to find themselves at [the North] Pole.”⁷²

The weather turned much colder, and Bodega distributed to the crew four jackets, some flannel capes, and cloth that Hezeta had given him for trading with the Indians, as well as some shirts and overcoats belonging to Mourelle and to him. He did so because he realized that “the cold would frighten them and made them sick.”

The winds did not keep up the steady direction he hoped, and the weather became stormy and the seas turbulent. Instead of proceeding northward, he found the ship being pushed nearly imperceptibly toward the deep, rough waters off Baranof Island. He was forced to tack until September 1, “when God was pleased to give us westerly winds, which enabled me to get away from the coast.”

Seven seamen were found to have been struck with scurvy. Some were affected in their mouths, while others had pains that restricted the movement of their legs and joints. Only two were fit to stand watch: one at the helm, the other working the ship. Bodega and Mourelle took turns handling the sails and manning the pumps, even though they themselves were beginning to feel the first effects of the dreaded infirmity. Bodega was obliged to draw the only possible conclusion:

Finding myself with people struck with this contagious illness, without medicines for them and exposed to having it spread to others, as it was impossible to keep them separated, I realized that, however much I might force myself, reaching a higher latitude would be out of the question. One could even doubt whether we could return should the winds grow stronger without people to work the ship.

Reluctantly, he and Mourelle abandoned their second attempt at reaching a more northerly latitude and, taking advantage of a favourable wind, headed southward. They carefully examined the shoreline whenever it was possible. They estimated their latitude – the highest they would reach on this second attempt – at $56^{\circ}47'N$, southwest of the entrance to Sitka Sound.

At midnight on September 6, the winds began to blow with such force that the mainsail had to be double-reefed. Even this was not sufficient, and the *Sonora* had to heave to. Knowing that he was very close to land, Bodega struggled for two hours to control the ship, with the crew becoming visibly alarmed. Their panic reached a peak when

a sea of great strength broke over the ship, tearing out railings, stanchions, clamps, and the gunwales of the deck house. The water carried away everything over the deck. We believed we had foundered, because for four minutes nothing could be seen in the ship but a foaming sea. The cabin was flooded ... and we could not tell one from the other.

When the water began to drain away through the scuppers and carry away things in the hold through the hatches, we began to hear moans and wailing, as the railing had smashed the boatswain against an anchor, leaving him senseless. Other sailors were also hurt, and although not seriously so, they could not help working the ship. In this critical moment, I found myself with only two seamen, the *piloto*, the boatswain's mate, and one of my servants.⁷³

Manoeuvring with only a fore topmast staysail, Bodega managed to swing the tiny schooner about to put the wind behind him and steer northwest to avoid running ashore.

Although tarpaulins had been spread over the hatches, water was flooding into the hold faster than the pumps could cope with it, and up on deck the scuppers were unable to provide much relief. Despite the exertions of those manning the pumps, there was a sense that the ship would sink before the storm ended. Eventually, the pumps began to function properly, and by eight in the morning the ship was free of water. The gudgeon of the rudder was discovered to have split. A nail found in the broken tiller was inserted in one eye to secure the rudder. When the storm passed, only one seaman was well enough to man the helm, and Bodega and Mourelle had to handle the sails.

Following a generally southeasterly course, the *Sonora* passed Graham Island in the Queen Charlotte Islands without attempting a landing. Because of the debilitated condition of his crew, Bodega was compelled to abandon any attempt to sail close in along the shore to inspect every inlet.

When some of the men had recovered sufficiently to be of help and when he was certain of a steady wind, he did attempt to sail in closer, but generally, he had to be content with gaining a good idea of the general direction of the distant coast.⁷⁴

By September 17, Bodega was off the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. He states in his journal that he was within one league of the coast and that he saw land but was compelled to turn out to sea when the winds shifted to the southeast. He thus missed being the first European to sight the fabled strait. By now, both Bodega and Mourelle were suffering from fever as well as scurvy pains. The crewmen were aware of their superiors' sickness and "became so dismayed that they thought themselves lost." To allay their fears, the two leaders "made every effort to show ourselves on deck and God was pleased to help us to this end."

Off the coast of Oregon, the vessel closed in at 45°27'N, never sailing more than one and a half miles from shore. Bodega's health was now improving, and he began to search carefully for the legendary Río de Martín de Aguilar.⁷⁵ Although he anchored every night at sunset so as to be sure not to miss the river, he found nothing. He wrote with assurance that "it does not exist between 45°27' north and 42°50' north," where he sighted Cape Blanco. The river was supposed to be at 43°N, but his search between 44°50'N and 42°50'N was so carefully done, he thought, that the fault must lie with the instruments that Sebastian Vizcaíno had used in his 1602-3 voyage, which were notoriously inaccurate.

Bodega Bay

Continuing south and still hugging the coast, Bodega began searching for San Francisco Bay. On October 3 he encountered a large bay, into which he sailed. Examining it, he spied a river to the southeast, one "of great volume, and entering it, I saw a large harbour." When the sea came up with "extraordinary violence" because the tide was coming in, he felt certain he was in San Francisco Bay. He was actually in Bodega Bay, a small harbour just north of San Francisco, having mistaken the entrance to Tomales Bay for a river. After he anchored off the tip of Tomales Bluff, a large number of Indians came in their canoes from all parts of the bay, gathering on a hill overlooking it. For a considerable time they shouted at the ship. Nothing was understood, but two Indians came out in their canoe to offer feathers, bone collars, a basket of seeds that tasted like hazelnuts, and other goods. Bodega gave them some of the little cloth, mirrors, and beads he had left.

The presence of the Indians caused Bodega to realize he was not in San Francisco Bay as he had thought. He described the newly found bay as

“large and indeterminate to the southeast; it provides a perfect shelter as it is like an inner harbour.” He made no attempt to explore it because all he wanted was “to land the sick, full of pity seeing them almost at their end without the slightest succour [possible].”⁷⁶ He anchored just inside Sand Point for the night. At two in the morning the incoming tide collided with the outgoing tide, creating a tidal bore that broke so violently against the schooner that breakers covered it from stem to stern. One such breaker carried off the launch that had been tied up alongside, “smashing it in a thousand pieces,” and caused one of the anchors to fail. It could not be retrieved. Although the entry had been easy, leaving the bay without a southeast wind was another matter. It was necessary to wait for the ebb tide. Given this experience, he did not recommend Bodega Bay as a harbour, as the “currents enter and leave with such force that when the weather outside is bad, the seas break at the mouth.” Nor did he give it a name.⁷⁷

Monterey

Leaving Bodega Bay the following morning, he rounded Point Reyes. Bodega saw the entrance to San Francisco Bay and was tempted to go in, but discretion being the better part of valour – and having no launch or knowledge of the tricky waters of the entrance – he suppressed that desire. He headed for Monterey, which was sighted indistinctly through the fog at three in the afternoon of October 7. Mourelle confessed that they were not certain of their location until they entered the bay and found the *Santiago* and the *San Carlos* riding at anchor. According to one witness, the *Sonora*'s arrival was greeted with “extraordinary joy, as it was feared that it had been lost.”⁷⁸ After firing welcoming shots with their cannon, to which the *Sonora* replied, Hezeta and Ayala came out in their launches to welcome the *Sonora* and her crew in person and to take her in tow to the anchorage.

Miraculously, Bodega had lost none of his crew since the massacre off Cape Elizabeth. Although the entire crew and both Mourelle and Bodega were weak with scurvy when they arrived in Monterey, none died of it.⁷⁹ As Bodega remarked:

The ship had so few conveniences that it is a miracle we did not all arrive back crippled, because we were continuously almost inundated [with water], [had] no space at all to take more than two steps, and [were] obliged to remain standing or seated, which was the best rest possible.⁸⁰

All were incapable of walking and had to be helped off the ship and into the launches.

Bodega and Mourelle recuperated in a house overlooking the harbour

made available to them by the commandant, Fernando de Rivera y Moncada, while the crew of the *Sonora* was taken to the nearby mission of San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo. Then

the captains and pilots of the schooner accompanied by the members of the crew who could make the journey came to this mission of San Carlos ... to fulfill a vow they had made while performing their tasks in moments of danger to offer a solemn mass made to Our Lady of Bethlehem, the Conqueror, who is venerated in the church of this mission.⁸¹

Thanks to the excellent care they received from the Franciscan fathers, the vegetables from the mission garden, the fresh meat and milk, and the warmth of the Californian climate, all began a slow recovery. The *Sonora* was in such bad shape that she had to be careened and her planking tightened “because of the heavy blows received during the voyage.” The process took longer than anticipated and delayed the two ships’ departure.

After their reunion, both captains and their officers no doubt exchanged accounts of their respective adventures. After the ships separated, Hezeta had undertaken a search for the schooner until August 11. At that point, he was probably off either Esperanza Inlet or Kyuquot Sound, just north of Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island. He recorded seeing “some high mountains in the interior of this coast which have quite a lot of snow in their ravines.”⁸² Heading south for Monterey, Hezeta began to hug the coast as he had been instructed to do. On August 17 he encountered the entrance to the Columbia River, naming it the Bahía de la Asunción de Nuestra Señora (Bay of the Assumption of Our Lady), although it would later be known to the Spanish as the Entrada de Hezeta. He attempted to enter, but his crew members, weakened by scurvy, were in no condition to battle the swirling currents. He speculated that “these currents and the seething of the waters have led me to believe that it may be the mouth of some great river or some passage to another sea.” After searching without success for the Strait of Juan de Fuca and convincing himself that “no such strait exists,” Hezeta concluded that the turbulent “bay” might possibly be the strait.⁸³

The officers and *pilotos* met to reconcile and perfect their charts, observations, and journals. Hezeta, Bodega, and Ayala each wrote short accounts of their respective voyages for the viceroy, which Ayala took with him when he left for San Blas on October 13 in the *San Carlos*. In his formal correspondence with Hezeta while at sea in 1775, Bodega had always showed respect for his commandant, and when it came to assessing Bodega’s performance, Hezeta seems to have chosen to pass over the decision by Bodega and Mourelle to steal away under cover of darkness and continue

north, alone in their inadequate vessel. Bodega y Quadra closed his report with a tribute to Mourelle:

I would fail in my duty to Your Excellency if I did not inform you of the honour with which Don Francisco Mourelle, the *piloto* of this schooner, has served. Because of the great intelligence he has exhibited during the voyage, so much vigilance, and the continual care he has shown, I doubt that I would have been able to suffer so many miseries had I not had such a companion with whom to share the labours.⁸⁴

Hezeta called a *junta* with the officers and *pilotos* to consider what the expedition should do next. He proposed that the ships spend the winter in San Diego and continue the explorations the next spring. While all agreed that that would be an “honourable determination,” the *junta* decided against it. After the hardships of the summer, the ships were in no condition to undertake another lengthy voyage. New sails were required, and the crewmen, with their clothes in rags, were practically naked. There was no brandy left, no lard, oil, or vinegar. While corn might be found in San Diego, the amount would not be sufficient to feed them all. A formal statement was drawn up recording their decision and was signed by all present.⁸⁵

On November 1, twenty-two days after the *Sonora's* arrival, the health of most of the crew having greatly improved, Hezeta and Bodega departed for San Blas. The voyage was uneventful, except that two days out the veteran mariner Juan Pérez succumbed to typhoid fever. He was buried at sea “with salutes of musketry and cannon.”⁸⁶

The vessels arrived at San Blas on November 20, 246 days after their departure. Bodega concluded his journal with the laconic remark: “In spite of the labours expended in the course of the voyage, I count myself fortunate to have carried out that part of the orders of His Excellency Don Antonio Bucareli which fell to me.” Bodega was forced to take to his bed for three months to recover his health.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS OF THE 1775 VOYAGE

The remarkable saga of the *Sonora* tends to obscure the expedition's achievements and disappointments.⁸⁷ Although no Russian settlements were found, their existence remained a possibility. In the realm of discoveries,

Hezeta had sailed too far out to sea to see the Strait of Juan de Fuca or other significant straits and bays that make up the complex geography of the Northwest Coast, and Bodega had had no better luck.

Hezeta's sighting of the entrance to the Columbia River was a major discovery. He was the first European in the historical record to do so. Unfortunately, he was unable to confirm whether it was indeed "the mouth of some great river or some passage to another sea" because he was unable to cross the bar at the entrance.⁸⁸ Bodega missed the river completely after encountering contrary winds when he reached that latitude.⁸⁹

Although Bucareli Bay was not a major discovery, it was a natural jumping-off point for exploration farther north that could be used to avoid the three-month voyage from San Blas.⁹⁰ Hezeta recommended that a shipyard be established at Trinidad Bay in northern California. He saw this as "a virtual necessity" both for practical reasons and for another that was always present in Spanish strategic thinking – namely, the fear that leaving the bay unoccupied would make it accessible to any foreigner wishing to occupy it or to use it as a port for illegal trade.⁹¹ Bucareli admitted that he was attracted to the idea of a northern base, but he was not prepared to recommend it until the number of navy ships on the coast had been increased. Nothing ever came of the proposal.⁹²

Bodega's discovery of the bay that today bears his name was followed up almost two decades later, when he was naval commandant at San Blas. In spite of his earlier unfavourable report, in 1793 he recommended it as an outpost to protect the coast north of San Francisco. This was after Bodega Bay had been visited by George Vancouver and some English fur traders, including James Colnett. Viceroy Revillagigedo, always worried about possible English encroachment, decided to occupy the area, but the effort came to naught.⁹³

Viceroy Bucareli was highly pleased with the expedition's accomplishments. He wrote eight letters to Minister Arriaga, each devoted to a particular aspect of the expedition.⁹⁴ Overlooking their insubordination, he praised Bodega and Mourelle in the warmest terms. Of Bodega, he wrote:

The schooner in which he embarked and carried out this expedition would have destroyed the spirit of anyone else considering the enterprise. To Lieutenant Quadra [sic] neither this consideration nor the fact that he first embarked as second officer to one of the same rank could not dissuade him from going to sea, and, with the gallant zeal with which he has dedicated himself to the service, he has carried it out happily and with good fortune.⁹⁵

Bodega, he thought, would have journeyed even farther north had his “heroic constancy and disdain of risks” not been defeated by the number of his people afflicted with scurvy, by the contrary winds, and by the lateness of the season. Francisco Mourelle, Bucareli wrote,

has demonstrated honour, prudence and intelligence in his career, as all reports given me testify ... Bodega y Quadra praises him highly and recommends that his work warrants his transfer to the Royal Navy as an officer, for which he is well qualified.⁹⁶

A memorandum containing the main points of the viceroy’s eight letters was prepared for the king.⁹⁷ Carlos III was so delighted that he took the unusual step of ordering that the expedition be announced in the *Gaceta Oficial* for March 14, 1776. After a brief reference to the Pérez expedition of 1774, the notice went on:

As a consequence of these valuable events, the king ordered officers sent to the port of San Blas to extend these navigations and discoveries as much as possible. To this end at the beginning of 1775 *Teniente de Navío* Bruno de Hezeta in the frigate *Santiago* and *Teniente de Fragata* Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra in the schooner *Sonora* and for the same purpose *Teniente de Fragata* Juan de Ayala in the packetboat *San Carlos* sailed to Monterey.

The first reached 50° of latitude, the second 58° and the third 37°42′. They reconnoitered the coast in between, which is populated by savage Indians. The harbour of San Francisco was charted carefully, and the Indians in the neighbourhood were especially docile and tractable.

His Majesty, in consideration of the special and distinguished service which these naval officers and *pilotos* have rendered and to encourage others, has promoted Bruno de Eceta [sic] to *capitán de fragata*, Juan de Ayala and Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra to *teniente de navío*, and Juan Pérez to *teniente de fragata*. The *pilotos* José de Cañizares and Francisco Maurelle [sic] have been promoted to *alférez de fragata*.⁹⁸

Finally, the newly appointed Minister of the Indies José de Gálvez sent a letter conveying the king’s approval of the promotions for all the officers and *pilotos*. In the same letter, Gálvez confirmed the king’s desire that another expedition be organized, and he specifically ordered that Bodega be given command of one of the ships.

The Hezeta-Bodega voyage launched Bodega’s career. He was justly proud of what he and Mourelle had achieved. Mourelle’s pride is especially

obvious in the candid and blunt *notas del redactor* he inserted here and there in the synopsis of the voyage he wrote later while he was compiling the compendium of all Spanish voyages north for Viceroy Revillagigedo of New Spain. A *nota* that appears at the very end of his summary of the 1775 voyage, is revealing:

It will never be denied that those who sailed in the *Sonora* were the first to gain that latitude of a vast continent and, more or less, establish its coastline and harbours to the extent possible with so many sick and in the [short] time available. They will always retain the satisfaction that his [Mourelle's] journal gave Cook sufficient information to navigate with a knowledge of those seas, since he carried a copy of it on his ship.⁹⁹

As for Bodega, from the moment he made his offer to sail on the *Sonora* rather than remain in San Blas, his strong desire to actively serve the King and his own appetite for adventure were plain for all to see. It was entirely by chance that command of the small schooner fell to him, and he immediately determined, with no apparent lack of confidence or courage, to make the most of his good fortune and to exploit it to his advantage. Shortly after returning to San Blas, he ensured that his efforts would be noticed in Spain. He not only forwarded his formal report, the *Navegación*, to Viceroy Bucareli, as was customary, but also sent a copy directly to Arriaga, the Minister of the Indies.¹⁰⁰ In the covering letter, he was not afraid to write:

I have no doubt that I will merit Your Excellency's respect and attention when you are informed of this particular achievement. The principal reward I desire, one which acknowledges my performance, is to be given only the most hazardous assignments which would fulfill my wishes.

Cartography and Navigation

In his papers, Bodega said nothing about his navigational procedures or what instruments he used to determine his position at sea during the 1775 expedition. We know that when he and his companions left Cádiz in 1774, they brought with them the instruments recommended by Vicente Tofiño, but we do not know whether Bodega had any of them aboard the tiny *Sonora*. Tofiño considered that for charting small bays the only requirements were a metal protractor to measure angles on paper and a small table on a tripod; however, he contended, the exploration of vast spaces required an astronomical clock, a quadrant of two-and-a-half-foot radius, telescopes

of a focal length of twenty-four inches, azimuth compasses to measure variation, and sextants.¹⁰¹ From the number of sightings Bodega and Mourelle recorded and the tables in which they listed daily their position and the variation of the compass, it is evident that they had, besides the indispensable lead line, a magnetic compass, a sextant, and an azimuth compass. But they did not record what type of instruments they were or who had made them. Mourelle in his journals suggests that when returning from the north, hugging the coast as much as possible from 49°N down to Monterey, weather permitting, he and Bodega located prominent features by triangulation. They were making a running survey. But that is all they tell us.¹⁰²

In the area of cartography, the expedition produced a full harvest of plans and charts.¹⁰³ Especially important was Ayala's first comprehensive chart of the San Francisco Bay, drawn by his *piloto*, José de Cañizares, who made the survey. Bodega produced two *cartas reducidas*.¹⁰⁴ The archipelago of the Alaska Panhandle was shown as a single line as if it were the mainland. Only the bays, the *ensenadas* (coves and inlets), and the rivers actually seen were indicated. Mount Edgecombe was shown as San Jacinto, the name Bodega gave it. There was, naturally enough, no indication on either chart of the Strait of Juan de Fuca or of the Queen Charlotte Islands. Bodega's two charts were the first to delineate North America's Pacific coastline north of San Francisco with any degree of realism.¹⁰⁵

Bodega recorded a wealth of knowledge about the weather, winds, tides, and currents, and also about the natural signs he observed at various distances from the coast that would guide a mariner, such as the darkening colour of the water as the coast was approached and the sighting of birds, sea otters, whales, sea lions, and jellyfish when the coast was very near. These observations would be put to good use by later voyagers, including Bodega himself.

The maps the expedition produced were accorded special attention in Spain. Carlos III directed that one set of the maps, charts, and courses be conveyed on a confidential basis to the Ministry of Marine for study by the *pilotos*. Two months later he authorized a second notice about the Hezeta voyage, which appeared in the *Gaceta Oficial* for May 19:

[The viceroy] has also reported that the officers and *pilotos* have made very accurate maps and charts of the coast and seas of northern California, which His Majesty has decided to have engraved and so publicize the results of the aforementioned navigation from Monterey.

This announcement and the publication of the maps were the first exception

to Spain's short-sighted policy of keeping secret the activities and findings of her explorers. Although the British ambassador in Madrid at this time did not report the first notice of March 19 in the *Gaceta Oficial*, several English newspapers printed what purported to be a translation of the Spanish account.

Political Implications

Viceroy Bucareli outlined the political implications of the voyage for Julián de Arriaga, the Minister of the Indies and the Navy. He began with the most immediate task of the voyage, which had been to discover whether the reports of Russian activity on the Northwest Coast of America were true. He assured the minister that up to 58°N,

there need be no fear of any foreign establishment; that between that latitude and Monterey there are twenty-two degrees [of land] inhabited by Indians more or less tractable; that they have no commerce with outsiders; that the bow and arrow is common up to 56° where the Indians arm themselves with spears; that the knowledge obtained of the coast and harbours and the problems of navigation are such that there is no need to take special measures, as nothing is urgent.¹⁰⁶

He also pointed out that by performing four acts of formal possession between Trinidad Bay and 57°18'N, the expedition had extended the king's dominions northward by almost five hundred Spanish leagues, as shown on the charts they had produced.¹⁰⁷

Bucareli was overly optimistic in assuring his government that there was no immediate threat to Spanish sovereignty. In fact, Russian fur traders had established themselves in the Aleutians as well as in Cook Inlet and were about to move into Prince William Sound and the Alexander Archipelago. Bucareli failed to appreciate that, having claimed the entire area the expedition had charted, Spain was increasing its vulnerability to foreign threats. Spanish efforts to sustain a claim over this area would produce nothing but problems over the next two decades. The Northwest was about to become a scene of international rivalry over the trade in sea otter furs.

More Exploration

Viceroy Bucareli said nothing specific about the possibility of subsequent northern expeditions in his letters to Madrid. However, he prepared the ground by pointing out that the expedition had found several valuable harbours with safe anchorages as well as abundant forests that promised ample

timber for shipbuilding. As further enticement, he reported that as a whole, the native people seemed docile and open to trading as well as proselytization. In a letter forwarding copies of the expedition journals and charts, he also praised them as a source of information:

You will find in these [documents] new intelligence acquired at the cost of much hardship, continual risks and heroic steadfastness, highly useful information we [formerly] did not have, suspicions [are] dispelled of such a magnitude that exploration can be promoted as the King wishes and necessity demands.¹⁰⁸

Bucareli would realize his ambition for more exploratory expeditions. An important consequence of the Hezeta-Bodega expedition of 1775 was that Spain became irrevocably committed to a search for the Northwest Passage. At first, Viceroy Bucareli struggled with inadequate funds as there seemed to be no inclination to indulge in pre-emptive efforts. This changed dramatically after 1776, the year when Arriaga died and was replaced as Minister of the Indies by José de Gálvez. When news reached Madrid that James Cook would be making an attempt to find the Pacific entrance to the legendary Northwest Passage, the Spanish government felt that it could not ignore a British venture that might threaten the security of the Spanish Americas. Yet when the king immediately ordered Bucareli to prepare another expedition to sail north the following year, 1777, employing the same officers, the viceroy kept this royal directive to himself.

3

Preparations for the 1779 Voyage

EVEN BEFORE BRUNO DE HEZETA'S 1775 expedition returned to New Spain – indeed, as early as August of that year – the viceroy of New Spain, Antonio Bucareli y Ursúa, anticipated Madrid's continued interest in exploring the coast north of the Alta California settlements. He ordered the commandant at San Blas, Ignacio de Arteaga y Bazán, to make plans with *comisario* Francisco Hijosa y Rodríguez for another voyage, even though there was some doubt as to whether Hezeta, Bodega, and Mourelle would be healthy enough to undertake another arduous voyage so soon.¹

BUCARELI'S DILEMMAS

Bucareli was well aware of the obstacles he faced. The Naval Department of San Blas had some purely administrative problems that made it difficult to mount another expedition to the north. The department was undergoing one of its periodic financial crises, the Pérez and Hezeta-Bodega expeditions having left a debt of nearly 8,000 pesos. Bucareli covered this departmental deficit by providing an additional 20,000 pesos.² More serious was the shortage of ships. Apart from one or two small ships, there were only the frigates *Santiago* and *Concepción*, the schooner *Sonora*, and the packet boats *San Carlos* and *El Príncipe*. They were seldom all available at the same time, for each had to be careened or laid up for repairs periodically. Related to the shortage of vessels was the constant shortage of trained personnel of all ranks. To mount a third expedition to the North Pacific, the viceroy