

*Allgemeine Geographische Ephemeriden*, Bd.2, October 1798: 390-391.

*Translated by Robert King*

The *Moniteur* of 9 Fructidor (26 August 1798) gives the following news of Malaspina's voyage.

30 July 1789 two Spanish corvettes, *la Decouverte* and *la Sutile*, sailed from Cadiz in company with each other, the first under the command Don Alexander Malaspina, the second under Don José de Bustamante. The commanders had particular orders to chart the coasts of America from the Rio de la Plata up to Cape Horn, and from that Cape up to the extreme northern limits of that part of the world. Upon their arrival on the North West Coast of America between 59, 60 and 61 degrees North Latitude, they sought in vain for a passage to the Atlantic Ocean. They therefore concluded that the strait foretold by an old Spanish mariner, Maldonado, had existed only in his imagination, and that Cook's prediction was based on reason, at least in these regions. At the beginning of the year 1792, *la Sutile* and a Spanish a galliot, *la Mexicaine*, joined with other, English ships under the command of Captain Vancouver, with the intention of confirming and examining the immense archipelago discovered by the Admiral de Fuentes [De Font], as also the Juan de Fuca inlet. Captain Vancouver's description, which has just appeared, will tell us about the results of these investigations.

Etches, commander of the American [English] ship *La Princesse royale*, had by this time found that the whole western part of America from 48° to 57° North Latitude consisted of a chain of islands lying at the entrance of a large inland sea, somewhat similar to the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas. After he had sailed on a northward course through this sea for a space of more than a hundred nautical miles, he arrived about 200 nautical miles distant from Hudson's Bay. Since the object of his voyage was purely commercial, he did not seek to investigate the extreme limits of this new Mediterranean Sea, but from what he could discover of it, it seems probable that it has a connection with Hudson's Bay. More than 50 islands which he visited were all inhabited by Indian tribes of a peaceful character, well-disposed toward trade.

The two Spanish corvettes discovered an archipelago, which was so far unbeknown to Europeans; the inhabitants call them the Babacos [Vava'u], and the manners and customs of these islanders will be found in their accounts. The corvettes employed the greater part of the year 1792 in visiting the Marianna and Philippine Islands, as also Macao on the coast of China. From here they went between Mindanao and Mountag (?) [Morintay] Islands, and directed their course along the coasts of New Guinea. When they were over the Equator, they traversed a gulf of around 500 nautical miles, which no European ship before them had reported on. When they directed their course from this gulf to New Zealand and New Holland, they discovered in the archipelago known by the name of the Friendly Islands, the Babacos [Vava'u], and remained at anchor there for some time.

After a number of other investigations in the South Seas, in the month of Prairial (20 May 1793) they made land at Callao on the coast of Peru. From this port they made several excursions, including to the Moluccas [Malvinas] islands. They finally decided to sail to the Rio de la Plata, having overcome all obstacles and all the perils

of those southern latitudes. They then sailed to Cadiz, where they arrived after 90 days.

This voyage will certainly contribute much to the progress of Navigation, Botany and Mineralogy. In addition, they carried out various gravity experiments under different latitudes in both hemispheres, which will provide opportunity for important discoveries concerning the irregular shape of our globe and as well will contribute to the determination of a universal Metre.