



## **RUSSIANS, SPANIARDS, ENGLISHMEN AND NORTH AMERICANS IN THE NORTHERN PACIFIC OCEAN (1533-1880): GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT AT THE SERVICE OF THE ECONOMY**

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Recibido: 4 de septiembre del 2019

Enviado a evaluar: 6 de septiembre del 2019

Aceptado: 28 de noviembre del 2019

### **ABSTRACT**

The Pacific Ocean began to be known by the Europeans when Vasco Núñez de Balboa discovered it in 1513. Under the Papal Bulls and the Treaty of Tordesillas, it was understood that this huge sea was Spanish property, at least as far as the North American coasts. Spaniards controlled the coastlines as far as Baja California and already in century XVIII, when they find out that Russians are settled in the northern zone, they initiate timid claims and realize a few explorations up to Alaska. But there was not colonization in that part of America.

**Keywords:** North Pacific Ocean, Russians, Spaniards, English discoveries, Americans.

### **RUSOS, ESPAÑOLES, INGLÉS Y NORTEAMERICANOS EN EL OCÉANO PACÍFICO NORTE (1533-1880): GEOGRAFÍA Y MEDIO AMBIENTE AL SERVICIO DE LA ECONOMÍA**

### **RESUMEN**

El océano Pacífico comenzó a ser conocido por los europeos cuando Vasco Núñez de Balboa lo descubrió en 1513. Gracias a la influencia de las bulas papales y al Tratado de Tordesillas, se entendió que este enorme mar era propiedad española, al menos hasta las costas norteamericanas. Los españoles controlaron los litorales hasta Baja California y ya en el siglo XVIII descubren que los rusos están asentados en la zona septentrional, e inician tímidos reclamos y realizan algunas exploraciones hasta Alaska. Pero no hubo colonización en esa parte de América.

**Key words:** Océano Pacífico septentrional, Rusos, Españoles, Ingleses y Norteamericanos.

## RUSSES, ESPAGNOLS, ANGLAIS ET AMÉRICAINS DU NORD DANS L'OcéAN PACIFIQUE NORD (1533-1880): LA GÉOGRAPHIE ET L'ENVIRONNEMENT AU SERVICE DE L'ÉCONOMIE

### RÉSUMÉ

L'océan Pacifique a commencé à être connu des Européens lorsque Vasco Núñez de Balboa l'a découvert en 1513. Grâce à l'influence des taureaux papaux et du traité de Tordesillas, il était entendu que cette énorme mer était la propriété espagnole, du moins jusqu'à la côte américaine. Les Espagnols contrôlaient les côtes jusqu'à la Basse-Californie et déjà au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, ils découvrent que les Russes sont installés dans la zone nord, initient des revendications timides et effectuent des explorations jusqu'en Alaska. Mais il n'y avait pas de colonisation dans cette partie de l'Amérique.

**Mots-clés:** Océano Pacífico septentrional, Rusos, Españoles, Ingleses y Norteamericanos.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Spaniards arrived at the Pacific Ocean at the time when Hernán Cortés conquered the Aztec Empire and made trips in 1533, 1534 and 1535, but he did not go beyond what would later be known as Baja California. In 1539, Francisco de Ulloa navigated the mouth of Colorado River along the delta, recognizing Montague Island, the peninsula and entering the riverbed.

Antonio de Mendoza y Pacheco, first viceroy of New Spain, ordered Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo to explore the North Pacific. On September 26, 1542, he discovered San Diego Bay and on November 15, he reached the Bay of Monterrey. This explorer died on January 3, 1543 and he is supposed to have been buried on the island of Santa Catalina, opposite the coast where the Californian city of Los Angeles now sits. On February 18 of that year, he took command of the Bartolomé Ferreló fleet, which traveled to northern California and was about to reach the shores of the current state of Oregon.<sup>1</sup>

British explorers arrived in California on June 1579. Francis Drake was the commander of the expedition, which came from the Magellan crash and started looting Spanish possessions. It anchored in an excellent port named New Albion, which is supposed to be the current Point Loma. The problem is centered on the fact that there is no agreement among scholars regarding the specific place.<sup>2</sup>

British will no longer navigate these waters until the time of James Cook, who was still looking for the Northwest Passage, a tracking that the Italian Giovanni Caboto had inaugurated in 1497 by order of Henry VII of England. That search concluded in 1906, when the Norwegian Road Amundsen managed to connect the Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific. This event should not ignore the recognition due to

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<sup>1</sup> F. Fuster Ruiz, *El final del descubrimiento de América. California, Canadá y Alaska (1765-1822)*, Murcia, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> A. S. Oko, Francis Drake and Nova Albion, *California Historical Society Quarterly*, XLIII (2) 135-158.

the English navigators; they made many efforts over four centuries to find it.<sup>3</sup>

Navigation of the North Pacific was abandoned during the following two centuries and returned to gain importance with the presence of Russians in the coasts of Alaska and California where they found the current Fort Ross, which was then supposed to be Spanish territory.

Vitus Bering, a Danish sailor at the service of the Russian Empire, who sighted the American coasts on July 17, 1741, discovered Alaska. The incident occurred at noon, at 12:30 pm, according to the notes written in the Journal on board. That day responds, in the Byzantine calendar, to the feast of St. Elijah and for that reason they baptized the mountain and its volcano with the name of this biblical character.

The computation of time, based on the Julian calendar, disappeared from the history of Russia by a decree issued by Lenin and began to operate on January 31, 1918. In 24 hours it was passed on February 14, 1918 and, on this day, the Gregorian calendar began to be observed in all Russian territories.<sup>4</sup>

In the eighteenth century, the Russian Admiralty was based in St. Petersburg, in the Baltic Sea, a city that was equally capital of the Empire and where the Tsar resided with his court. The diplomatic corps had embassies and accreditation in this city; that, in some way, was ideal for obtaining sensitive and confidential information. This is one of the aspects that I will consider in this essay.

Vitus Bering had received orders from the Tsar to sail the North Pacific for two specific purposes: 1) to find out whether present-day Siberia was linked to America or not; 2) obtain information of the discovered lands, since they could belong to one of the European powers that had colonies in American lands.

Russia begins the colonization of Alaska with human groups dedicated mainly to animals hunt, as their furs had an excellent trade. There was a problem that was difficult to solve in 1741 and it was the distance between St. Petersburg and the Kamchatka peninsula, which was around 10,000 kilometers far and had to be crossed by the so-called main road with a route similar to that, which today has the route of the Trans-Siberian railway, linking Moscow with Vladivostok. Vitus Bering transited this route on more than one occasion.<sup>5</sup>

Americans reached the Pacific Ocean by land, thanks to the expedition carried out by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark (Junquera Rubio 2017a). This trip was made by mandate of President Thomas Jefferson and lasted more than two years, from May of 1804 to September of 1806. It began in Saint Louis of Missouri and reached the coasts of the current states of Oregon and Washington. This exploration was the result of having purchased the Louisiana of

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<sup>3</sup> C. Junquera Rubio, *Canadá: A Mari Usque Ad Mare*, Pamplona, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> C. Junquera Rubio, *Calendario agrícola*. León, 2009; C. Junquera Rubio, *Las raíces que dieron vida a Rusia*. Pamplona, 2017b; C. Junquera Rubio, *Siberia. Descubrimiento, conquista y colonización*. Pamplona, 2017c.

<sup>5</sup> C. Junquera Rubio, *Siberia. Descubrimiento, conquista y colonización*. Pamplona, 2017c.

Napoleon in 1803. Immediately the expansion to the Far West began and the policy of Washington will remove all barriers to reach the Pacific coast of California. In addition, in 1867, the United States bought Alaska from Russia.<sup>6</sup>

I will now develop this topic and offer discussion points.

## 2. EUROPEANS AND NORTH AMERICANS IN THE NORTHERN PACIFIC AND THE WESTERN ARCTIC

Russians arrived in Alaska on July 17, 1741. Christopher Columbus had arrived almost 250 years earlier in the Caribbean. Russian colonization in North America was very different from the French, Dutch, Portuguese, English and Spanish colonization, since its history was shorter. One fact to consider is that the number of Russian settlers was around 500 as the highest figure and that shows that Alaska and the continental American lands had little appeal.<sup>7</sup> The explorers, coming from Siberia, settled in diverse points of the coast and established contact with the native societies: Inuit, Inupiak, Yupik, Aleutians, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, and etcetera.

The first Russian settlement with permanent characteristics was established in 1784; that is, it was necessary to wait 43 years to achieve the first colonial post. The architect was Grigorii Ivanovich Shelikhov, who arrived in that year to the island Kodiak with two boats whose names respond to Tri Sveti and Sviatoi Simon. He built a fort (*ostrog*) named Three Saints Bay. The Russian settlers were arriving, but in small and scarce numbers.<sup>8</sup>

The attractiveness of the Aleutian Islands and the American continental soil was focused on the exploitation of furs. For this reason the most notable group was composed of promyshlenniki, a Russian word that can be translated by merchant.<sup>9</sup> This group arrived single with no wives. Due to this, men had to look for a companion among the native women. The descendants will be known as Creole and have their own history in Alaska.<sup>10</sup>

North America, which borders the Pacific Ocean, was unknown to Europeans until 1741, when Vitus Bering reached the American coast. In the middle of the 18th century, the Russians themselves lacked cartography and this deficiency generated many problems. Interestingly, some hypotheses were confirmed, since in 1507, the cartographer Martin Waldseemüller had predicted that America was separated from Asia by an ocean, then unknown. The Spaniard Vasco

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<sup>6</sup> F. A. Golder, *The Purchase of Alaska*, *The American Historical Review* 25 (1920) 411-425; C. M. Naske and H. E. Slavonick, *Alaska: A History of the 49<sup>th</sup> State*. Norman, 1987.

<sup>7</sup> L. Black, *Russian in Alaska 1732-1867*. Fairbanks, 2004; C. Junquera Rubio, *Siberia. Descubrimiento, conquista y colonización*. Pamplona, 2017c.

<sup>8</sup> L. Black, *Russian in Alaska 1732-1867*. Fairbanks, 2004; C. Junquera Rubio, *Descubrimiento y colonización rusa de Alaska*, *M+A, revista electrónica de medioambiente* 17 (2016) 40-76; A. Posnikov and M. Falk, *Exploring and Mapping Alaska. The Russian America Era, 1741-1867*. Fairbanks, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> R. Fisher, *The Russian Fur Trade, 1550-1700*. Berkeley. 1943: 29-30; S. Haycox, J. K. Barnett and C. Liburd, *Enlightenment and Exploitation in the North Pacific 1741-1805*. Seattle and London, 1997: 6; C. Junquera Rubio, *Siberia. Descubrimiento, conquista y colonización*. Pamplona, 2017c: 18.

<sup>10</sup> L. Black, *Russian in Alaska 1732-1867*. Fairbanks, 2004: 209-222.

Núñez de Balboa discovered it and named it Mar del Sur on September 25, 1513 and with this name it will be known for many years.<sup>11</sup>

The organized Russian expeditions left from the Kamchatka peninsula and showed that there was no such union, but they will testify the existence of many islands settled in the North Pacific: San Lorenzo, Diomede, Aleutianas and others.<sup>12</sup> All of them will be colonized by the Russians, in three modalities: 1) military occupation by the Cossacks and that had little relevance; 2) animals hunt to achieve their furs and build a market, which will be the task of promyshlenniki; 3) Orthodox missionaries who did a good job.<sup>13</sup> Each of these actions had its particular objective.

I have previously provided some information about Russians in North America.<sup>14</sup> I am going to focus now on what could have happened in Alaska after the Second Kamchatka Expedition, carried out under the leadership of Vitus Bering and whose result was to discover that territory. This company returned to the coast of Siberia with a new good: new geographical discoveries and a good load of furs.

Russian actions on the American coasts were carried out in two types: 1) official; that is, those that were designed by the state authorities (Tsar, Duma, Admiralty (Naval Academy) and Academy of Sciences, 2) commercial, which were initiated informally by the aforementioned promyshlenniki. The two left a good cartographic heritage, which shortly after will be desired by England and Spain. At some point, French ships arrived but with little success.<sup>15</sup>

The American landscape and a good part of the marine fauna that resided in the coasts of Alaska were described by Alexei Chirikov (or Chirikof), commander of the boat Saint Paul, under command of Vitus Bering.

In his report to the Admiralty, he put it this way: "Near the land along which we sailed and observed for about 400 versts, we saw whales, sea lions, walruses, dolphins, birds, white-bellied ducks and a host of other types They have twisted red spikes and many gulls of different species. On the earth, there are high mountains everywhere, the shores of the sea are steep and the depth of the coast is great; in the nearby mountains where we were approaching the land, as mentioned above, the tall wood abounds; The snow was occasionally

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<sup>11</sup> A. Posnikov and M. Falk, *Exploring and Mapping Alaska. The Russian America Era, 1741-1867*. Fairbanks, 2015; F. Correa, *Balboa: La fantástica historia de un hidalgo español*. Badajoz, 2017; C. Junquera Rubio, *Siberia. Descubrimiento, conquista y colonización*. Pamplona, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> C. Junquera Rubio, *Siberia. Descubrimiento, conquista y colonización*. Pamplona, 2017c.

<sup>13</sup> C. Junquera Rubio and S. Valladares Fernández, *Oblatos de María Inmaculada. Agentes de cambio social y promotores de la modernidad en el Noroeste y el Ártico de Canadá*. Madrid, 2019.

<sup>14</sup> C. Junquera Rubio, *La Región Ártica, Observatorio Medioambiental* 15 (2011) 129-155; C. Junquera Rubio, *Descubrimiento y colonización rusa de Alaska, M+A, revista electrónica de medioambiente* 17 (2016) 40-76; C. Junquera Rubio and S. Valladares Fernández, *Oblatos de María Inmaculada. Agentes de cambio social y promotores de la modernidad en el Noroeste y el Ártico de Canadá*. Madrid, 2019.

<sup>15</sup> A. Posnikov and M. Falk, *Exploring and Mapping Alaska. The Russian America Era, 1741-1867*. Fairbanks, 2015.

seen in the mountains. The further north we navigated, the more snow abounded in the mountains. At the point where we headed home, we saw NNE 3/40 on the coast, very high mountains, higher than those of Kamchatka, all covered in snow".<sup>16</sup>

As of 1741, Russian cartography realized two parallel versions of all the nautical letters that arrived at the hands of the authorities. This project was then formalized through two models: 1) nautical charts made by specialists assigned to official expeditions; 2) maps prepared by merchants who sailed the sea in search of the riches of the American coast. There were even times in which the atlases made by promyshlenniki were more precise than those made by the cartoonists of the Admiralty.

Thanks to several successes, Russian navigators managed to destroy myths that circulated as realities since centuries before. This is the case of the Land of Juan de Gama that only existed in the imagination. The seas, the coastlines, the Aleutian Islands and many other geographical features were described with precision. A long list of official and other irregular expeditions allowed knowledge of northern Americans bordering the Pacific Ocean and the Arctic to the mouth of the Mackenzie River.<sup>17</sup>

The history of Russian cartography, the one after 1741, is the most complete. There were many cartographers, hydrographers, draughts men, etc., who participated in this task. Dominates the Mercator projection that was the best known. The Admiralty understood that these successes should be kept secret and that the results obtained should even be denied to the Imperial Russian Academy of Sciences; moreover, no foreign country or strange person should have access to this knowledge access.

Given the possibility that foreigners present in the Russian Empire, for whatever reason, could obtain information about the North Pacific Ocean, a distorted version of what was captured in cartography was made. The deception was short-lived. The flight of information to Western Europe (England, France, Spain and Portugal mainly) was already known in 1747, because in that year the whole organization of the Second Kamchatka Expedition of Vitus Bering was published in Copenhagen (Denmark). This action was carried out by von Haven, who had traveled to Russia twice and had met with Spanberg, one of the trusted officers of Vitus Bering, who provided him with information.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, in that year of 1747, a map that became famous appeared in Paris (France), which was made by two French residents in Russia for a long time: Joseph Nicolas Delisle and Philip Bauche. They had exported several Russian maps from St. Petersburg to Paris and used human mails that were connected to espionage. The materials achieved were not the best, but they believed that they had achieved the best. The publication of these materials received criticism from the first moment coming from the Englishman John

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<sup>16</sup> A. Postnikov and M. Falk, *Exploring and Mapping Alaska. The Russian America Era, 1741-1867*. Fairbanks, 2015: 59.

<sup>17</sup> Th. Ortolan, *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée durant le premier siècle de leur existence*. Paris, 1932: 299.

<sup>18</sup> A. Postnikov and M. Falk, *Exploring and Mapping Alaska. The Russian America Era, 1741-1867*. Fairbanks, 2015: 57-66.

Green who had data provided by his compatriot Thomas Jefferys.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, in Madrid (Spain) appeared the work of Andrés Burriel, a Jesuit who knew California, and who made a ruthless criticism.<sup>20</sup>

In Russia, something similar happened. Razumovski was in charge of rejecting the data of Delisle and Bauche and had the support of the German Müller, who was then the president of the Russian Academy of Sciences. However, Russians could attack, but they were affected by the secret and this aspect favored the publication of the two French, which had a lot of publicity for a while.

Disclosures outside of Russia forced the authorities especially the Admiralty. The materials of the Second Expedition to Kamchatka, achieved by Vitus Bering and others, began to be known sooner than the authorities of the Naval Academy wished. One of the Russian collaborators was Jorge W. Steller, who provided the first description of Alaska and it was published fifty years after his death in 1746, when he was traveling from Solikamsk to Irkutsk. He had the data of the discovery of American lands because he participated directly in the discovery.<sup>21</sup>

The eighteenth century will be a century rich in publications on Siberia and the two littorals of the North Pacific Ocean: Asia and America. To this, we must add the islands that were in the middle of the sea. The promyshlenniki settled in Siberia initiated projects to reach the American coasts and achieve the furs of the animals. They needed to invest capital in ships and hire sailors. At this time, they went ahead to the authorities residing in Okhotsk and Kamchatka, but their discoveries and the nautical charts that they reviewed had to be given to the return to the representatives of the admiralty. We are in a time that has been called "the era of promyshlenniki".<sup>22</sup>

The port authorities resided in Okhotsk and the commander of this port was the one who granted the permits to sail. The merchants had to request it to go out to the open sea and then negotiate with the aboriginals to buy the furs they had stored. As Russian citizens, they were obliged to notify the natives who were subjects of their Most High Majesty the Tsar and for this reason, they had to pay a tribute (*iasak*). The Russian authorities warned the promyshlenniki that they should not use force of arms unless their lives were in danger.<sup>23</sup>

Emelian (Yemelian) Basov, a Cossack who became a sailor and merchant, started scientific and commercial expeditions. First, he sailed to the Commander Islands and continued to advance until his ship docked on the island of Medny. This guy returned to Kamchatka with an excellent load of furs. This success served to begin the exploration of all the Aleutians and start taking advantage of their economic resources.

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<sup>19</sup> Th. Jefferys, *The American Atlas*. London, 1974 [1776].

<sup>20</sup> A. Burriel, *Noticia de la California y de su conquista temporal*. Madrid, 1757.

<sup>21</sup> F. Whympers, *Russian America or 'Alaska': The Natives of the Yukon River and Adjacent Country*. London, 1869; G. W. Steller and O. Frost, *Journal of a Voyage with Bering, 1741-1742*. Stanford, 1993.

<sup>22</sup> A. Postnikov and M. Falk, *Exploring and Mapping Alaska. The Russian America Era, 1741-1867*. Fairbanks, 2015: 77.

<sup>23</sup> C. Junquera Rubio, *Siberia. Descubrimiento, conquista y colonización*. Pamplona, 2017c.

The Russian Admiralty requested, after the return, a detailed report, especially of the discoveries of new lands. Okhotsk was the place where they had to deliver the documentation, because St. Petersburg was far away. For this reason, it is easy to understand that the promyshlenniki had to become unofficial cartographers; but, thanks to them, the Admiralty Academy increased its news about the geography and the societies that inhabited the territories of the North American Pacific.

On the other hand, the files that were generated after Vitus Bering, had numerous copies and many of them were filed in Kamchatka and were known by many sailors and merchants. Others, also duplicated, came to the Duma (Senate) and the Naval Academy in St. Petersburg. These materials served to colonize Alaska and this colonization is a direct consequence of the fur trade. This activity forced many traders to find a safe place to winter, because there was not enough time to cross the northern Pacific Ocean and return to Kamchatka. Those trips required a lot of time then, but the authorities understood that the movements towards the American coasts were a necessity. In 1753, the Tsar, the Duma and the Admiralty relied on Vasily Miatlev, to increase the number of shipyards to build ships. It was a way to encourage expeditions to the American coasts and to favor trade. This man was appointed governor of Siberia in 1757.

The project developed by Vasily Miatlev was based on using the mouth of the Amur River and establishing there a shipyard and a naval base to allow future travel. Miatlev failed in his attempt because the Chinese were not willing to favor, but to hinder, because they had been fighting for about a century for that territory.<sup>24</sup> In 1764, the Duma authorized expeditions from the mouth of the Anadyr River, since, by then, the Aleutians were known.

Russian expeditions from Kamchatka to American lands were many throughout the 18th century. We must bear in mind that some were exclusively scientific (the least) and other commercial (the most). The Russians had, by 1780, an important cartographic archive highly desired by other European powers, especially England and Spain. Russian authorities imposed the secret on their discoveries, but they forgot the bribe, which worked as well.

Emelian Basov, Ivan Sindt, Pert Krenitzin, Mikhail Levashov, Staehlen, Peter Simon Pallas, and many others make up a laborious generation of cartographers and mapmakers. They were the ones who favored the Russian expansion towards America.

By 1770 or so, the Russian Admiralty had a lot of data, but it still lacked reliable news on the following points: 1) native populations settled on the islands and American mainland, 2) available economic resources, 3) possibilities to establish colonies with Russian subjects coming from Siberia, 4) if in that part of the American continent there were already establishments of other European nations and 5) to find out if there was any connection between the Pacific and the Atlantic,

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<sup>24</sup> C. Junquera Rubio, El papel jugado por los misioneros jesuitas en la firma del Tratado de Nerchinsk, en 1689, suscrito entre Rusia y China, *Estudios Eclesiásticos* 91 (2016b) 619-659.



because it was public and notorious that the English had been in their search.

The results of the expeditions of these years could be kept secret until 1777. In this year, the English William Robertson published his *History of America* and had previously had access, with permission from the Empress Catherine II, to the materials deposited by the sailors and the *promyshlenniki* in St. Petersburg. It is suspected, and with good logic, that these materials fell first into the hands of the British Admiralty and that they were provided to James Cook. This was true despite the secret.<sup>25</sup>

By 1770s, Russian Admiralty Academy had a concept of the Pacific Ocean, between Kamchatka and America, which responded fully to reality. The official authorities forbade the use of the data provided by the secret government expeditions, because they did not want conflicts with any of the nearby European powers, such as England and Spain. Likewise, *promyshlenniki* were also interested in secrecy, because it guaranteed them a monopoly on the resources of marine fauna, especially furs from otters.

The quality of the hydrographic and cartographic work of the Russian professionals was then up to international standards. The navigation skills of the *promyshlenniki* and their technical team had improved significantly. The commercial vessels sailed, along the Aleutian Islands, with good specialists on board, graduated in the navigation schools of Siberia.

In this story, Pedro Simón Pallas plays an important role. Although most travel materials made by *promyshlenniki* and state-sponsored expeditions were not available to their contemporaries, in the 1780s, Peter Simon Pallas published a series of essays in the first four volumes of *Neue magazine Nordische Beitrage* (1781-1783). This publication dealt with the geography, ethnography and environment of the northern countries. Pallas based his studies on previous disclosures and original documents on Russian investigations in the northern part of the Pacific Ocean. Here, for the first time, extensive geographical generalizations were made about this region.

The geographical constructions, created by Pallas, were presented in his work *Erlaeuterungen ueber die im oestlichen Ocean zwischen Siberian und America geschehenen Entdeckungen*. Although this work was published after the voyage of Captain Cook, Pallas left its contents dated 1771, highlighting the significance of the progress made by the Russians in the study of the northern part of the Pacific Ocean long before the voyages of the great English sailor.<sup>26</sup>

A very remarkable Russian penetration was the influence exerted by the Orthodox missionaries in the western Arctic and in the interior of the continental Alaska. When the Catholic missionaries, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, settled at Fort Good Hope (now Kasho's

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<sup>25</sup> A. Postnikov and M. Falk, *Exploring and Mapping Alaska. The Russian America Era, 1741-1867*. Fairbanks, 2015: 129-144.

<sup>26</sup> P. S. Pallas, *Neue Nordische Beytraege*, 7 vols. Saint Petersburg and Leipzig, 1781-1796.

Got'ine), on the Mackenzie River, in the present Northwest Territories, they found that the poles were only six days away.<sup>27</sup>

This presence was very strong and had taken root among the native populations, because the American governor AP Swineford reported, in 1887, that the Russian government continued to financially support 17 schools, attended by Orthodox missionaries, which proved to be very effective, as the populations of native speakers expressed themselves in their own language and in Russian; that is, these societies were bilingual and this fact prevented advancing American culture 20 years after having acquired Alaska.<sup>28</sup>

### 3. SPANISH EXPEDITIONS IN THE NORTH PACIFIC

Spaniards began to navigate the Pacific Ocean as a result of the colonization of the Philippines. Connecting this archipelago with the Viceroyalty of New Spain posed to look for new marine routes that allowed uniting Manila with Acapulco and this was materialized in what is known as return-trip (*tornaviaje*) or route of the Nao de Acapulco. The architect, who established this route, was Andrés de Urdaneta, who had knowledge of the Hiro-Shio current. This knowledge came because he had participated in the first circumnavigation around the world. The *tornaviaje* was designed to ensure trade from the Philippines to Spain through the Viceroyalty of New Spain, which had a port in the Pacific: Acapulco, and another in the Atlantic: Veracruz.<sup>29</sup>

The Spanish colony of the Philippines served as a bridge for Catholic missionaries to travel to China and Japan and seek suitable places to establish centers from which to evangelize and, at the same time, achieve very diverse information. Jesuits knew that Russians were on the Asian coasts of the Pacific since the seventeenth century; and, even, they acted as intermediaries to establish peace treaties between Russians and Chinese.<sup>30</sup>

One of these missionaries, Andrés Burriel, published a book entitled *Noticia de la California and its temporary conquest* in 1758 and warns that the Russians are settling in northern California, in territories that are Spanish. Another Franciscan missionary, Jose Torrubia, who had traveled through the Philippines and Mexico, also reported the Russian danger to California in 1759. This notice indicates that he knew the Russian navigations through the Pacific Ocean, but it has not been possible to specify how he came to this knowledge, but it is

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<sup>27</sup> Th. Ortolan, *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée durant le premier siècle de leur existence*. Paris, 1932: 299; R. Diubaldo, *The Government of Canada and the Inuit, 1900-1967*. Ottawa, 1985; C. Junquera Rubio and S. Valladares Fernández, *Oblatos de María Inmaculada. Agentes de cambio social y promotores de la modernidad en el Noroeste y el Artico de Canadá*. Madrid, 2019: 95.

<sup>28</sup> S. Atkins, *Spiritual & Secular Transculturation in Russian America, 1821-1867*, *Past Imperfect* 13 (2007) 134-166.

<sup>29</sup> F. Sánchez Aguilar, *El lago español: Hispanoasia*. Fuenlabrada, 2003; A. Sánchez Sanz, *El Galeón de Manila. La aventura de los tesoros de Oriente*. Zaragoza, 2013.

<sup>30</sup> C. Junquera Rubio, *El papel jugado por los misioneros jesuitas en la firma del tratado de Nerschinsk, en 1689, suscrito entre Rusia y China*, *Estudios Eclesiásticos* 91 (2016b) 619-659.

suspected that in one of his trips from Manila to Acapulco he could see Russians on the Californian coast.<sup>31</sup>

What we know with certainty is that in 1761, the Spanish ambassador to Russia, Pedro de Góngora y Luján, better known as the Marqués de Almodóvar, received instructions from Madrid to find out as much as possible about the presence of Russians in the Pacific Ocean. The diplomat had to obtain reports in three places: 1) Academy of Admiralty, 2) Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg and 3) Empress Elizabeth I, who was the second daughter of the Tzar Peter I and the Empress Catherine I. In October 1761, the Spanish ambassador sent the first reports based on Russian official sources. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ricardo Wall, received these data in Madrid and it was reported that Russians had not yet reached the American coasts, but that they were prepared to do so. In this report, it was reported that Bering and Chirikov had reached 45<sup>o</sup> north Latitude. In the opinion of the ambassador, he says, Russians could be a danger to the coasts of California, but by that time, the first settlers were settling in Alaska.

The Spanish response consisted of expanding the northern land borders. This political action made it possible, between 1769 and 1776, to favor the creation of new settlements and Catholic missions. In this time San Diego, Monterrey and San Francisco were born, for example. The northern limit of these territories reached 39<sup>o</sup> north Latitude.<sup>32</sup>

There were two important changes in Madrid: 1) Julian de Arriaga was appointed Minister of the Navy and the Indies; 2) a new ambassador was elected to the Russian court and the chosen one was Lacy, who managed to place a spy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in St. Petersburg and this secret agent provided him with copies of nautical charts, maps, graphs, etc., of the Russian expeditions through the Pacific Ocean. These materials were sent to Julián de Arriaga, who sent them to the Viceroy of New Spain, Antonio María Bucarelli and Ursúa. Ambassador Lacy sent a copy of the map called Müller-Truscott to Madrid. This happened in May 1773. Observed on valued dates, we can say that Spain had access to Russian nautical secrets four years before England, which achieved them in 1777. The documentation of the eighteenth century is deposited in the India's Archive, in Seville, in the Archive of the Naval Museum, in Madrid, and in the General Archive of the Nation, in Mexico City.<sup>33</sup>

The first Spanish decision was to build a naval shipyard in San Blas, in the Mexican Pacific. The objective was to have a place where ships could be made that had the capacity to navigate the Californian coasts unexplored even by Spain. Julián Arriaga was clear that he had to send naval specialists to the Viceroyalty of New Spain and began

<sup>31</sup> Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia, *Noticia de la California y su conquista temporal y espiritual*. Madrid, 1908: 396-428.

<sup>32</sup> M. Ortega Soto, Colonización de Alta California: primeros asentamientos españoles, *Signos Históricos I* (1999) 84-102; F. Baena Reina, Rumbo al Oeste. Las Californias y el Pacífico en el siglo XVIII, in M. I. Montoya Ramírez and M. A. Sorroche Cuerva (ed), *Espacios de tránsito. Procesos culturales entre el Atlántico y el Pacífico*. Granada, 2014: 9-24.

<sup>33</sup> AGI, Estado, Legajo 86B, Documento 100; M. Fernández Rodríguez, *La presencia rusa en el Pacífico noroeste*, in L. Martínez Peñas and M. Fernández Rodríguez (ed), *El Ejército y la Armada en el Noroeste de América. Nootka y su tiempo*. Madrid, 2011: 93-117.

issuing six. In a short time, others will arrive to help in naval matters.<sup>34</sup>

The first Spanish expedition is dated 1774. Juan Pérez Hernández and Esteban José Martínez were sent to explore. They sailed on the Santiago ship to the islands north of the archipelago of Queen Charlotte, spent time on Vancouver Island, and then returned to Monterrey. The following year, the Santiago sailed to the northern areas, but this time under the command of another officer, Bruno de Heceta, while a frigate, Sonora, was in charge of Bodega y Quadra with Maurelle as a pilot.<sup>35</sup>

The Santiago had problems with the Indians and a temporary violence was unleashed; moreover, before the difficulties with these societies, then unknown to the Spaniards, the ship returned to port and, in this return, discovered the mouth of the Columbia River. The Sonora sailed parallel to the coast and reached the island of Chichagof. Upon his return, Bodega y Quadra examined much of what is now British Columbia.<sup>36</sup> In 1779, Bodega y Quadra and Maurelle, once again, went north, reaching the view of Mount Saint Eliahj, the one discovered and named by Vitus Bering, and entered the bay of Prince William.<sup>37</sup>

In these years, Carlos III reigns in Spain and Julian de Arriaga is minister of Indians and Antonio María Bucarelli y Ursúa Viceroy in New Spain. The Spanish expeditions produced a large number of ethnographic descriptions and allowed the collection of numerous material objects made by the Indians with whom they came in contact. They highlighted the products of the Tlingit, Haida, Nootka and other societies that were settled from Northern California to Alaska.<sup>38</sup>

Thanks to these contacts, peaceful and violent at the same time, it was learned that the natives of North America possessed copper and iron weapons. The warriors showed scars unpleasant for the stranger, but very valuable from the perspective of the native culture. In addition, what was more important, the indigenous leaders were willing to trade, to acquire Hispanic products, as well as the sailors from the viceroyalty of New Spain wanted to acquire native products. Native people wanted what they did not manufacture with their traditional techniques: steel utensils, knives and firearms.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> E. Vila Villar, *Los rusos en América*. Sevilla, 1966: 58; S. Bernabeu Albert, *El Pacífico ilustrado. Del lago español a las grandes expediciones*. Madrid, 1992: 191-280.

<sup>35</sup> L. J. Burpee, *The Discovery of Canada*. Toronto, 1946; D. Pethick, *Approaches to the Northwest Coast*. Vancouver, 1976: 43; F. M. Tovell, *At the Far Reaches of Empire: The Life of Juan Francisco de Bodega y Quadra*. Vancouver, 2008: 353.

<sup>36</sup> M. L. Rodríguez Sala, *De San Blas hasta la alta California: los viajes y diarios de Juan Joseph Pérez Hernández*. México, 2006.

<sup>37</sup> C. Junquera Rubio, Descubrimiento y colonización rusa de Alaska, *M+A, revista electrónica de medioambiente* 17 (2016a) 40-76; C. Junquera Rubio, *Evolución de la imagen del indio. Desde su descubrimiento en el siglo XV hasta el XX y con énfasis en los Estados Unidos y Canadá*. Saarbrücken, 2017a; C. Junquera Rubio, *Canadá: A Mari Usque Ad Mare*. Pamplona, 2019.

<sup>38</sup> C. Junquera Rubio, *Canadá: A Mari Usque Ad Mare*. Pamplona, 2019.

<sup>39</sup> F. Bodega y Quadra, *El descubrimiento del fin del mundo (1775-1792)*. Madrid, 1990.

The Spaniards marveled at the canoes used to navigate those seas and also realized that their navigation systems were more advanced than they supposed. In the Queens Carlota archipelago, Pérez Hernández collected clothing made with excellent technical quality, achieved in a similar way to a chessboard where the black and white squares were mixed; moreover, certain furs of marine origin, such as otter, showed a technique that was considered excellent.<sup>40</sup>

Near Nootka Bay, some natives offered fish, otter furs and fur seals. In return, they received beads from Monterrey and trinkets.

In Madrid, the Minister of the Indies, Julian de Arriaga, caused a certain impact between the members of the royal court and the accredited diplomatic corps, among whom was the Russian ambassador, when he showed them clothes of the Haida. Arriaga wrote to the viceroy Bucarelli, "If these garments are woven by Indians of the country, that nation is the most cultivated and civilized than all others discovered so far in America." This document is dated April 11, 1773 and is preserved in Seville, in the General Archive of the Indies.<sup>41</sup>

Although Juan Pérez Hernández maintained friendly relations with the Haida and the Nootka, Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra, captain of the schooner Sonora, who escorted the frigate Santiago, commanded by Lieutenant Bruno de Hezeta, lost six sailors, who had been sent ashore to obtain water and firewood near Grenville, on the coast of the current US state of Washington.

Bodega y Quadra was accustomed to friendly receptions with the natives settled in more southern regions. In this case, he misunderstood certain signs that he understood as gestures of friendship and turned out to be the contrary. The offers of fish, certain exchanges, dances that used to be reception, presence of women accompanying the men who went up to visit la Sonora, etc.<sup>42</sup>

On August 18, 1775, in the *Puerto de los Remedios* of Kruzof Island, Bodega y Quadra disembarked with a group of armed sailors and erected a cross, engraved another on a large rock and took formal possession of the land for Spain, employing the formula promulgated by Viceroy Bucarelli in his instructions.<sup>43</sup>

Today no one disputes that the Spanish expeditions reached Alaska and that they reported geographical positions above 48° and reached up to 60°. The scientific trip of Malaspina shows that the Spanish sailors did a good job, but of little utility because their hypothetical historical rights, those that came from the Treaty of Tordesillas and the Alexandrines Bulls were not valid by the end of the eighteenth century. The Hispanic successes were important because the trips

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<sup>40</sup> F. Bodega y Quadra, *El descubrimiento del fin del mundo (1775-1792)*. Madrid, 1990.

<sup>41</sup> AGI, Estado 20-21.

<sup>42</sup> R. Fisher and H. Johnston (ed), *From Maps to Metaphors. The Pacific World of George Vancouver*. Vancouver, 1993.

<sup>43</sup> F. Bodega y Quadra, *El descubrimiento del fin del mundo (1775-1792)*. Madrid, 1990: 92; M. P. Cabello Carro, *El coleccionismo científico en las Indias en el siglo XVIII*, in E. Martínez Ruíz and M. Pazzis Corrales (ed), *Ilustración, ciencia y técnica en el siglo XVIII español*. Valencia, 2008: 153-182.

made after 1774 review the coasts of North America between 38° and 60° North latitude.

#### **4. THE EXPEDITION OF CAPTAIN COOK IN SEARCH OF THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE**

English authorities and the executives of the Hudson's Bay Company had been concerned, for a long time, to discover the Northwest Passage from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. In 1761, Samuel Hearne traveled overland from Hudson Bay to the west for two reasons: 1) discover copper mines and 2) achieve authentic news about the Northwest Passage. This expedition lasted several years and, in 1772, reached the highest northern level. This success "proved" that there was no connection between the two oceans. But of this is the case, there were more than 72° North latitude. Because of this, British government started the search from the opposite side; that is, from the Pacific to the Atlantic. This was the main task of Captain Cook and if he had succeeded, he would have pocketed the amount of 20,000 pounds sterling that was the reward offered by the British Admiralty for that task.<sup>44</sup>

On July 6, 1776, James Cook received secret instructions, since he had to sail directly to the northwest coast of America, without stopping anywhere until reaching 45° N latitude, and from there continue along the coast, until reaching 65° N of latitude. It is not clear why he had to set course to that latitude, but perhaps two data influenced: 1) Francis Drake could have reached that point in 1579; 2) the terrestrial discoveries of the explorers of the Hudson Bay Company could give interesting news, especially for Alexander Mackenzie.<sup>45</sup>

Cook's expedition sailed well stocked with literature and maps of the northern part of the Pacific Ocean. James Cook previously knew that Russian navigators had reached 72° 30' North latitude and English espionage had taken copies of the maps of Müller and Truskott made between 1754 and 1758, and had also achieved the map of Jacob von Staehlen of 1773.

Cook's trip was developed with two ships: the Resolution and the Discovery. It is possible that it should touch the current coasts of Oregon. For three weeks, he steered his boats along the American northern coast, but at a considerable distance from it. Between March 29 and April 26, the ships were anchored in Nootka Bay on the west coast of Vancouver Island, and then sailed from north to northwest along the coastline in the direction of Alaska. Cook did not suspect that he was heading to the Alexander Archipelago.

The Cook expedition reached Alaska thanks to the Russian maps of Müller and the reports of Sven Waxell.<sup>46</sup> On May 1, 1778, he sailed the same places Chirikov had sailed on and on May 4, he reached the point from which Bering had sighted Mount Saint Elihaj and named the whole area Bering Bay though now carries the name of Yakutat Bay.

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<sup>44</sup> C. Junquera Rubio, *Canadá: A Mari Usque Ad Mare*. Pamplona, 2019.

<sup>45</sup> L.J. Burpee, *The Discovery of Canada*. Toronto, 1946.

<sup>46</sup> F. A. Golder, *Russian Expansion on the Pacific 1641-1850*. Clevelan, 1914 [1971].

I am not going to describe James Cook's travels because they are very well known. The important thing is that their movements confirmed that Russians were in the North Pacific and that they had excellent cartography. Relying on his discoveries, Cook proved that Vitus Bering had made correct annotations in his writings, so the Englishman paid tribute to Danish in his diary. The encounters they had with Russians proved helpful to the English, especially the conversations between Cook and Izmailov.

James Cook died assassinated in Hawaii and was replaced by Georges Vancouver, who sailed along the Canadian coasts and in when there he coincided with another Spaniard: Francisco Bodega y Quadra.<sup>47</sup> They used to have clashes but always ended up as friends. Vancouver completed Cook's work and helped England become the owner of British Columbia, which created settlements and merchant ports that would allow the merchandise to be taken out of the Hudson Bay Company.<sup>48</sup> As a consequence of his presence, friction with Russian merchants arose.<sup>49</sup>

## 5. THE ROAD TO THE DOMINION OF ALASKA BY THE UNITED STATES

Now when Cook was sailing through the Pacific Ocean, the independence of the Thirteen Colonies was happening. The armed conflict lasted eight years (1775-1783). Represented both human and economic efforts for both contenders. This fact was going to introduce a remarkable change in the history of all America, but especially in the north, because the first republican state was born on the continent known as the New World; that is, almost three centuries after being discovered by Christopher Columbus.

American victory at the Battle of Yorktown forced the signing of the Treaty of Paris on September 3, 1783. American authorities expanded the territory of the Thirteen Colonies and practically reached the Mississippi River occupying lands that were a reserve for Indian communities settled between that river and the Appalachian Mountains. This fact represented having approximately one third of the present surface area of the North American continental territory from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

In 1803, the territorial surface of the United States was extended with the purchase of Louisiana to Napoleon. This acquisition allowed to have double the surface. In the west were still the Spanish colonies and in the north the British, what is the current Canada. President Thomas Jefferson requested financial support from Congress for a secret trip, which is known as Lewis and Clark, which left Saint Louis, in Missouri and reached the Pacific coast in the current state of Oregon. The round trip lasted about two years and it helped the government of Washington to know with certainty the economic potentials hidden in that vast area.

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<sup>47</sup> L. J. Burpee, *The Discovery of Canada*. Toronto, 1946; E. Vila Villar, *Los rusos en América*. Sevilla, 1966.

<sup>48</sup> C. Junquera Rubio, El impacto de la Hudson's Bay Company en los territorios de las sociedades canadienses a finales del siglo XVIII, *M+A, revista electrónica de medioambiente* 19 (2018) 95-120.

<sup>49</sup> L. J. Burpee, *The Discovery of Canada*. Toronto, 1946; E. Vila Villar, *Los rusos en América*. Sevilla, 1966.

The expedition of Lewis and Clark facilitated the data that were required to expand the territory and that will arrive already when Mexico replaces Spain in the northern zone of America. I recently offered a comprehensive study on how these actions were developed, including the theories of border modification by Frederick Jackson Turner.<sup>50</sup> In a short time the coasts of the current states of Oregon and Washington will become US domain and that reality is strengthened when the treaty Adams-Onís is signed with Spain in 1818-1821<sup>51</sup>.

The important thing, for what is going to be discussed here, is that a new power emerges, which is genuinely American. In 1867, the territory was enlarged with the purchase of Alaska from Russia and this fact, which is not naive at all, allows access to a wide area of the North Pacific and the Arctic, and, therefore, to the marine resources which at that time represented a lucrative business. The North American crews, dedicated to the capture of whales, were wintering in the Southampton and Herschell Islands throughout the 19th century.<sup>52</sup>

## **6. CHARACTERS OF THE NORTHERN PACIFIC EXPLORATIONS**

During colonial times, the Pacific Ocean was considered a property of Spain. This fact comes from the Treaty of Tordesillas and taking into account the content of this document, Spaniards explored and colonized coasts and islands in areas near their colonial domains. The founding of cities and the establishment of maritime ports are facts that favored the opening of land routes through which they had to circulate goods that would supply European businesses.

The boats carried out cabotage traffic, transporting local products. But the only transpacific traffic was practiced by the Manila galleon, which made the annual journey between Manila and Acapulco, bringing Asian products to the viceroyalty of New Spain and from there to Manila. Spanish trade in the Pacific lasted from 1570 until the decolonization of America.

Spanish colonial rule was discussed by England. The English ignored politically the content of the Treaty of Tordesillas, since what they wanted was a part of the business that represented the economy. The political tensions between Spain and England were historical realities of centuries. The aim of the British was to establish permanent maritime ports from which they could trade with Spanish cities in the metropolis and in the large colonies of America. The rivalry did not reach the point up to compromise the Spanish dominion.

The raids of Francis Drake and Richard Hawkins were no more than a temporary nuisance, which did not affect the security of the Spanish possessions either in the Atlantic or in the Pacific. It must be recognized that English diplomats were able to negotiate and achieve success at certain times. In 1604, the Treaty of London was signed to

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<sup>50</sup> C. Junquera Rubio, *Evolución de la imagen del indio. Desde su descubrimiento en el siglo XV hasta el XX y con énfasis en los Estados Unidos y Canadá*. Saarbrücken, 2017a.

<sup>51</sup> A. Deconde, *A History of American Foreign Policy*. New York, 1963.

<sup>52</sup> R. Finnie, *Canada Moves North*. New York and Toronto, 1943: 28.



stipulate that England renounced piracy against Spain in exchange for achieving navigational rights through the North Atlantic and inspecting all those regions. This fact, simple on the other hand, allows to think legally that Spain accepted a reduction of what was established by the Treaty of Tordesillas and allowed to open the door to a foreign power to settle in marine waters that were considered Spanish. One of the clauses of this pact stipulated that Spain renounced to re-establish Catholicism in England, so the religious issue was also in the minds of the negotiators of both sides.

The Stuarts maintained a friendly relationship with the Spanish monarchy, but this situation was replaced by another radical, which emerged with the arrival to power of the Lord Protector: Oliver Cromwell. The policy instituted by this person had three dimensions: 1) decide any action with a Protestant criterion; 2) show their enmity to Spain and 3) desire to invade the Spanish colonial territories in America to achieve the riches that produced those possessions.

The results of the English expeditions were mediocre, but they were successful with the Madrid Peace Treaty of 1670, since based on that treaty Spaniards recognized that English pioneers could navigate freely through the Caribbean to communicate with the islands that were under their control, especially Jamaica. The interest of all these movements was based on contraband.<sup>53</sup> This decision allowed other European powers to also settle in the Caribbean: Holland and France. At the end of the 17th century, this sea was international.

The so-called Treaty of Utrecht (in fact there were several signed) of 1713 represented a victory for England. The price to pay by the English was to recognize Felipe V as heir to the Spanish throne and introduce the Bourbon dynasty in Spain. The profits were that the English could introduce the seat ship that could go to the markets of Spanish America with customs immunity, which increased the contraband.

Throughout the eighteenth century, European powers focused on the North Pacific and its economic resources. The region experienced unprecedented political action and there were serious attempts to establish colonies to ensure dominance.<sup>54</sup> Russian authorities imposed silence and secrecy on the discoveries of their official navigators and their merchants, as well as of the documents that they had to deliver at the Admiralty Academy. The discoveries were known in Western Europe and all the nations involved wanted to participate and achieve profits.

The expeditions of exploration had a marked scientific nuance, but behind that facet, there was a political and economic benefit and, for this reason, governments of each country wanted to consolidate their presence. Cartography played an important role and thanks to it new products appeared in international markets, especially otter and seal furs. The capture of large cetaceans was known in Europe since the middle Ages. The massive depredations imposed exhaustion in Atlantic waters and there was a need to look for new fishing grounds.

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<sup>53</sup> C. H. Haring, *Trade and navigation between Spain and the Indies in the time of the Hapsburgs*. Gloucester, 1964: 192.

<sup>54</sup> S. Bernabeu Albert, *El Pacífico Ilustrado: del lago español a las grandes expediciones*. Madrid, 1992.

In what affects the North American Pacific, Russians discovered the fur riches that had been hidden until Vitus Bering arrived. This finding did not go unnoticed because European markets, which were consumers, detected an increase in supply. This wealth was desired and the English will send James Cook and other sailors as George Vancouver. And the Spaniards who were already close wish to climb higher. At the end of the 18th century, the Pacific ceased to be a sea controlled by Spain to become international. The presence of many flags meant that the cartography was bringing a new knowledge that had a great impact.

The arrival of the English to the North Pacific was a reality from 1789 and the number of boats fishing in waters considered Russian and Spanish, increased significantly. Spanish authorities protested before London but the complaints did not help at all.<sup>55</sup> Consequently, concerned by the increase of foreign ships near their colonies, Spanish viceroys deployed a remarkable activity in exploration and colonization from the coast of California to Alaska, though in rare occasions were exploring beyond San Francisco.

A consequence of the maritime struggle is represented in the much studied crisis of Nootka, in July 1789, between Georges Vancouver and Francisco de Bodega y Quadra. The first incident came from the fact that Spanish ships seized two English ships. The British press and politicians, stimulated by the economic interests of their ship owners, challenged Madrid authorities and threatened with a war.

The Nootka incident was exploited by English politics as an excuse to discuss Spanish rights in the Pacific. The war ultimatum launched by the British led the Spanish to make many quick defensive preparations. In short, Madrid gave up to London, since Minister Floridablanca understood that a war was more expensive than an agreement. The peace agreements were signed in San Lorenzo del Escorial on October 28, 1790 and supplemented with two other agreements signed in 1791 and 1793. All these data can be seen well illustrated in Cesáreo Fernández-Duro.<sup>56</sup>

The crisis of Nootka introduced a new argument in colonialism: lands newly discovered by an European power could be theirs if the occupied them; otherwise, any rival could keep them. The nineteenth century begins with this new doctrine that exceeded what is stipulated in the Treaty of Tordesillas. British capitalism acted by protecting private property and understood that occupying a territory allowed the improvement of nature and thus eliminated the concept of extreme exploitation.<sup>57</sup> Current ecologists, if they could have acted then, would have rejected the argument as false and contrary.

In practical terms, the pact of 1790 concretized the boundaries between the two empires on the northwestern coast of northern Pacific. The English ships were able to sail along the entire coastline, but the clauses of the treaty indicated that they could not get close to

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<sup>55</sup> S. Bernabue Albert, *El Pacífico Ilustrado: del lago español a las grandes expediciones*. Madrid, 1992.

<sup>56</sup> C. Fernández-Duro, *Historia de la Armada Española*, tomo VIII. Madrid, 1843: 15.

<sup>57</sup> J. M. Norris, The Policy of the British Cabinet in the Nootka Crisis, *The British Historical Review* LXX (1955) 562-580.

the Spanish coasts, so that they did not act as smugglers. These wishes, however, were never fulfilled.<sup>58</sup>

The pacts between England and Spain had little effect, since the North Pacific would be mute witness to many changes. English, settled on the coast of British Columbia, met immediately with Russians, who by 1799 had grouped into the Russian-American Company, launched by Alexander Baranov.<sup>59</sup> This society succeeded another one that had been founded by Gregori Shelikov, Ivan Golikov and others.<sup>60</sup>

This society appeared legally through an ukaz (edict) of Tsar Paul I and that document indicated that all activities were subject to the opinion of the Minister of Commerce who, in turn, was accountable to the Tsar himself and gave him a third of the gains, because since the time of Ivan IV the Terrible, all the territory of Siberia and the one that was adding, was considered as personal property of the Czar.<sup>61</sup> The activities were to be developed mainly in the Aleutian Islands and Alaska. However, in a short time, the company's employees were descending along the Pacific coast, up to 55°.<sup>62</sup>

By 1821, the American Pacific coast had new owners: Mexico, the United States, England and Russia. The foundation of an ostrog (fort) in the place that today occupies Fort Ross, a few kilometers north of the city of San Francisco, continued to generate some problems until 1846. Just in this year, California gets annexed to the United States. Prior to this date, the border problems had become more pronounced with England.

Interestingly, the Tsar himself decided that his American domains should reach up to 43°<sup>63</sup>, but immediately came protests from English and Americans, which forced to set the latitude at 51° north latitude. Russians had to negotiate and agreed to sign a treaty with the United States in 1824<sup>63</sup> and with England in 1825.<sup>64</sup> In a few years, in 1838, Russians leased the Panhandle region to the Hudson Bay Company, since the British executives were constantly violating the agreement.

The profits of the Russian-American Company began to fall after 1818. In view of the bed course of business, Russian government sent an administrator in the person of Ferdinand de Wrangel. The fur trade diminished and Russians sold Alaska to the Americans in 1867.<sup>65</sup> The Russian-American Company was negotiated in 1881 to the Hutchinson, Khol and Company of San Francisco and later it was

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<sup>58</sup> A. Cantillo, *Tratados, convenios y declaraciones de paz y de comercio*. Madrid, 1843: 624.

<sup>59</sup> C. Junquera Rubio, *Siberia. Descubrimiento, conquista y colonización*. Pamplona, 2017c.

<sup>60</sup> A. Postnikov and M. Falk, *Exploring and Mapping Alaska. The Russian America Era, 1741-1867*. Fairbanks, 2015: 209-218.

<sup>61</sup> C. Junquera Rubio, *Las raíces que dieron vida a Rusia*. Pamplona, 2017b.

<sup>62</sup> A. Postnikov and M. Falk, *Exploring and Mapping Alaska. The Russian America Era, 1741-1867*. Fairbanks, 2015: 211.

<sup>63</sup> V. J. Farrar, The Reopening of the Russian-American Convention of 1824, *The Washington Historical Quarterly* 11 (1920) 83-88.

<sup>64</sup> J. W. Shelest, *The Dryad Affair: Corporate Warfare and Anglo-Russian Rivalry for the Alaskan Lisière* ExploreNorth (www.ExploreNorth.com/library/history/shelest.html), 1989.

<sup>65</sup> F. A. Golder, The Purchase of Alaska, *The American Historical Review* 25 (1920) 411-425.

transformed into the Alaska Commercial Company, but its glory had already vanished.

In 1808, the American citizen John Jacob Astor founded the American Fur Company. By 1830, it was the largest furrier monopoly in the United States and possibly was, at that time, the largest American company.

## **7. ELEMENTS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT FOR A DISCUSSION**

Portuguese and Spanish were the forerunners of geographical discoveries in the fifteenth century. The Treaty of Tordesillas made it possible to divide the unknown world in half. The rest of the world accepted a decision that affected politics and the economy, because trade depended for years on what these two nations could offer to international markets. The Atlantic Ocean replaced the Mediterranean and the Baltic, which had been the economic seas of Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

The Pacific Ocean enters Western history for two reasons: 1) its discovery in 1513 by Vasco Núñez de Balboa, 2) in 1521, Magallanes and Elcano manage to make the first trip round to the world or circumnavigation. Because of the Spanish explorations between America and Asia, the Pacific Ocean was denominated the "Spanish lake".

This sea became highly commercial because it facilitated communication between Manila and Acapulco thanks to the so-called Manila galleon, which transported goods from the Viceroyalty of New Spain to the Philippines and vice versa. This trip was made with monopoly criteria.

Something similar was happening in Siberia, once Ivan IV the Terrible managed to destroy the power of the Mongols by expelling them from Kazan and Astrakhan. Overcoming the Ural Mountains, Russians arrived by land to the Asian Pacific in a century or so. This colonization opened the doors of the North Pacific, which was discovered by Russians in both sides: Asian and North American side.

Russians had employed intensive hunting of animals whose furs were intended for commerce. The same intention is manifested since Vitus Bering discovered Alaska. The marine animals of the northern coast of the Pacific became a precious booty. American furs, especially otter furs, have reached European markets and rival economies will want to enter the business equally. Moreover, business generates by itself rivalry and dispute for the economic goods to be exploited, in this case otters, walruses and whales mainly. Furs and ivory were two very desirable products and these are the reasons why Spain would claim the North Pacific as its own, but international politics had in the area other powers with which it should be counted.

Russians, Spaniards and Englishmen will become opponents on the American coast from California to the Arctic. Russians had an initial advantage because their sailors and merchants knew how to lay the foundations of the cartography of the time and this science was developed at the service of the economy, mainly of the furrier. And

one consequence of this was that there were renowned sailors navigating those northern seas.

The Russian colonization was short in time but it is recognized that it was very trying and James Cook detected that there was harmony between the Russians and the Native Americans. The northern Pacific had four owners in the eighteenth century: Russia, Spain, United States and England. At present, it has three: the Russians in the Asian part and the North Americans and Canadians in the American part.

At this point, let's put a question: are the skins still the economic resource to be exploited? Obviously, the fur trade is still in force, though since the mid-nineteenth century, and may even before, other products also became desirable: gold, diamonds, oil, gas, etc. And these products have forced to rethink our relation to nature and ecology, because their industries have polluted and generated disasters, such as the Exxon Valdez in Alaska.

The question is that climate change is understood as a benefit because it will allow the melting to be faster and the areas that are free of ice will be easier to exploit from the point of view of mining, since metals are very much desired by industries. The negative part will be that the flora and fauna will suffer while the traditional life of the Inuit communities, who see Western cultural activities as a danger to their existence, depends on these natural resources.

These aspects, in sum, should make us think that history should be a subject aimed to overcome discrepancies and to create a better and more equitable society. Will we be able to achieve it? I doubt it! and I do not want to be pessimistic.

## **8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES**

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