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## Document 1568F

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# Mendaña expedition—Narrative of Chief Pilot Gallego

*Sources: Four mss. extant: 1) MNM ms. 921; 2) AGI Patronato 18-1-1 (Nº 10, Rº 4); 3) BM Add. ms. 17.623; 4) Ms. which was in the possession of Lord Amherst of Hackney in 1901 (it is now in the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, N.Z.); translated by Amherst & Thomson, Vol. 1, pp. 1-3, 66-69.*

## True and correct account of the Voyage to the Isles of the West in the South Sea, made by Hernando Gallego, a native of the city of La Coruña in the Kingdom of Galicia

In the year of our Lord Jesus Christ 1566 [rather 1567], during the reign over the Spanish kingdoms of the Catholic King Philip II and the Governorship in his name over the kingdom of Peru of the Illustrious Sir Lope García de Castro.

Governor Lope García de Castro ordered the outfitting of two navy ships for the discovery of certain islands...

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On the morning of Saturday, which was the 4th of September [1568], I told Juan Henriquez, the pilot, that we ought to petition the General to go one way or the other, because we were tacking about, using up the provisions and water; and that we should put ourselves towards one pole or the other to go on our voyage, since he had not wished to take my opinion, but to follow his own. And so I requested him, and all this took place before Antonio de Cieza, the clerk, all of which will appear more at length, as that petition is in the possession of the said clerk.

From Saturday to Sunday evening we went NW 25 leagues, and we must have been in about the latitude of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a degree [N].

On Monday and Tuesday, the 6th and 7th of the said month, we ran to the north 35 leagues, and we found ourselves in the latitude of 3° N of the equinoctial.

And on the 8th of the said month we went NE by E, and found ourselves in the latitude of 4°; and that day I told those in the *almiranta* to keep a good lookout from 6° to 11°, because there was land ahead; and so they did, although we went forward. In 11 days<sup>1</sup> we went 25 leagues NE by E and we found ourselves in the latitude of 5° and 5 leagues [rather minutes] NE [rather N].

And on the 12th of the said month of September, at 5 o'clock in the morning [afternoon?], we had the sails furled, with squalls; we hoisted in the middle of the night, when the wind chopped into the east, and we put her head NNW, being reefed, because of the necessity for catching some water from the showers to drink. Presently the wind chopped to the NE, and we went NNW, although we made no [hardly any?] headway to the N by W to reach the latitude of 6°, because the needle inclined to the NE.

On the 15th and 16th of the said month the wind was freer, and we went to the NE with little wind and fine weather. And we went about 12 leagues SE with many squalls.

### [Discovery of Namu]

On the 17th of the said month, with the wind NE, we went to the N, till we were in 8° N of the equinoctial; and, being in this latitude of 8°, we came upon the shoals and islands of **San Bartolomé**<sup>2</sup> the E and SE point of which is in 8° and the other extremity at the NW in 8-2/3°.<sup>3</sup> We came upon these islands two hours before dawn. They run NW—SE, in length about 15 leagues; and they have two lines of reefs, which appear like channels on either hand. There would be about half a league between one and the other. At the end of one or the other on the NW are two little islands.<sup>4</sup> They lie with the other, ESE, a league apart. There is a great depth of water; on the west side we could not find any bottom to anchor at this island. We launched the boat to go for water. In this island there are many houses and people. Between the islands, of which there were more than twenty, [we saw] a boat or canoe under sail.

When they landed they found nothing but one Castile cock, which they brought. The people left their houses and fled. We found a **chisel** made of a nail, by which it appeared that ships had passed that way. They did not find any water, but they found some coconut palms bored through, which showed how they got their water, and some pieces of *cayro*.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Ed. note: That is, on the 11th day of September.

2 Ed. note: Wrong assumption, based on his inaccurate chart no doubt.

3 Ed. note: Namu's latitude ranges from 7°45' to 8°12'N. What follows is a very good description of the atoll.

4 Ed. note: Their present names are Namu proper (upon which they effected a landing) and Mattamett.

5 Ed. note: Meaning coir, rope made from coconut husk fiber. The etymology of this word is from the Tamil language of India, imported into the Iberian peninsula by the Portuguese.

We beat to windward for three hours<sup>1</sup> and I could not find a bottom to anchor, there being about 1,000 fathoms.<sup>2</sup> These Indians drink *chicha* from a kind of pine-apple [pandanus], and for this reason there are swarms of flies. The boat having returned with the people, we resumed our voyage.

We ran to the north till we were in the latitude of 9-1/2 degrees; this was on the 21st of the said month. On that day the wind changed to the north, and we put her head E by N to get nearer to the land, and beat to windward, because water failed us, and the people were sick and were dying rapidly. We went on this course for 20 leagues, and found ourselves in the latitude of 12-1/6 degrees.

On the 22nd of the said month, the wind was light in the NE, and we put her head to the north till we found ourselves in 11-1/2 degrees; this was on the 28th of September. Between those dates we made 5-1/2 degrees N—S, 94-1/2 leagues. On the 29th and 30th of the said month we headed NNW to 12°.

### [Discovery of Wake]

On the 1st and 2nd of October, in those two days we went till we found ourselves in latitude 19° and 1/3, and we discovered a small island, low in the water, forming as it were an enclosure, like network.<sup>3</sup> It was uninhabited, and surrounded by reefs. We remained all that night in a cross sea to take water, believing it was inhabited. There was nothing on it but sea-birds, and sandy places covered with bushes. The island is about 2 leagues in circumference. It was the day of San Francisco, and we gave the island the name of **San Francisco**. It is in the latitude of 19° and 1/3 N of the equator.

On the 5th and 6th of October we went towards the north. I took the latitude in 22°...

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1 Ed. note: That is, on the north side of the atoll.

2 Ed. note: The Spanish unit of measure mentioned here is "estado", which was the average height of a man, and therefore close to a fathom.

3 Ed. note: I do not have the original to refer to, but this word was probably "red" which also means "fishing-net".

