

**ACCOUNT OF A
MEMORIAL PRESENTED
TO HIS MAJESTY**

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Account of a Memorial Presented to His Majesty by Pedro Fernandes de Quir

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PEDRO FERNANDES DE QUIR

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MEMORIAL PRESENTED TO HIS MAJESTY

BY

CAPTAIN PEDRO FERNANDEZ DE QUIR,

Queiros

CONCERNING THE POPULATION AND DISCOVERY OF THE FOURTH
PART OF THE WORLD,

AUSTRALIA THE UNKNOWN,

ITS GREAT RICHES AND FERTILITY, DISCOVERED BY THE SAME
CAPTAIN.

WITH LICENCE OF THE ROYAL COUNCIL OF PAMPALUNA,
PRINTED BY CHARLES DE LABAYEN, ANNO 1610.

From the Spanish.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTICE

BY

W. A. DUNCAN, ESQ.

SYDNEY: THOMAS RICHARDS, GOVERNMENT PRINTER.

1874.

Vignaud
3-11-27

NOTICE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

THE work of which the following is a translation is a Spanish pamphlet of eight quarto pages, and is of such extreme rarity that a copy of it is marked at the enormous price of £42 in a recent London catalogue, at which price it was actually sold. It does not appear to have been previously translated.

The author, Pedro Fernandez de Quir, is usually quoted by the Spanish name of De Quiros* and in the Biographical Dictionaries he is said to have been a native of Spain. From the way in which he spells his name, and from the foreign idiom in which his Spanish is written, I strongly incline to the opinion that he was a native of Portugal. The writer of a very interesting life of De Quir in the *Biographie Universelle* (Tome XXXVI) stoutly maintains his Spanish origin, but Nicholas Antonio, the Spanish author of the *Bibliotheca Hispana*, disclaims for his country the honor of having given birth to this great navigator, and styles him, "*Lusitanus; Eborensis, ut aiunt Lusitani*," (a Portuguese, a native of Evora, as the Portuguese say). Be this as it may, the whole of his discoveries were made in the service of Spain, like those of Columbus, to whom he must be placed second only in rank as a discoverer.

* Pronounced "Keeros."

It has long been a disputed question whether De Quir was or was not, as he believed himself to be, the discoverer of the Australian Continent. Putting aside facts which will be alluded to further on, and which seem conclusive on the subject, a perusal of the following memorial, which appears to be a *resumé* of eight other memorials presented to Philip III, although it in no way detracts from De Quir's fame, goes far, when compared with the statement of his second in command, De Torres, to decide the question against his claim. De Quir states that all the islands he discovered were within the tropics, although he expresses the opinion, founded on ill-understood statements of the natives, that some of them extended southward 90°. Ulloa, indeed, basing his statement on the authority of Diego de Cordovo, says that De Quiros discovered a large island in 28° south latitude; and, if this could be relied upon, he must have discovered the Australian Continent, which is the only large territory so situated. This, however, would seem to contradict the minute account of their voyage given by De Torres, who certainly saw its most northern point, when he passed through the strait which now bears his name; and who states that he sailed considerably westward from the *Australia del Espiritu Santo* of De Quir to reach that strait. Moreover, De Quir's description of the islands discovered by him, and their inhabitants, though applicable to Tahiti, the New Hebrides, and other South Sea Islands, is, for the most part, inapplicable to the Australian Continent.

The mode of calculating the longitude was at that time very uncertain—neither De Quir nor De Torres ever allude to it—hence it is difficult to follow their exact route, but I believe the following account will be found substantially correct.

Biographers differ as to the earlier naval services of De Quir, but, without dwelling on uncertainties, his historical career began in 1595, when he joined the second expedition of Mendaña as first pilot. The friend and companion of this commander, having his entire confidence, Mendaña confided to De Quir the destinies of the expedition. De Quir proved himself worthy of the choice. They discovered the island of Vera Cruz, and the Marquesas, and after the death of Mendaña, De Quir, by his firmness, maintained discipline among the discouraged crew; he inspired his seamen with the ardour which triumphs over obstacles; and with crazy vessels, having famine on board, and navigating in seas little known, he succeeded in taking back to Manila the miserable remains of his fleet. From thence he embarked for Acapulco, and from Mexico he proceeded to Peru, where, in two memorials, he addressed to the Viceroy de Velasco a request that he might be furnished with a new fleet to enable him to pursue the discoveries begun by Mendaña. He seems to have been most strongly impressed with the idea of an Australian continent, during his former voyage, and he used very strong arguments to convince De Velasco of its existence. But the Viceroy considered the demand beyond his authority. He, therefore, advised De Quir to proceed to Madrid,

and furnished him with letters to Philip III, strongly sustaining his projects. The King received him well, but appears to have done little for him in the way of substantial aid. He, however, ordered him to be furnished with two ships, and invested him with full power to prosecute his discoveries. De Quir accordingly returned to Peru, had two ships and a corvette fitted out with everything necessary, and with Lays de Vaez de Torres as "Admiral" or "the other Captain," as he variously styles him, he sailed from Callao on the 21st December, 1605. He steered W.S.W. for about 800 leagues without finding any land. Altering his course to W.N.W., on the 26th January, 1606, he saw a small island (La Encarnacion) in latitude 25° S., and about 1,000 Spanish leagues from Peru. From thence steering W. by N., on the 29th January, he discovered an island (San Juan Bautista) in latitude 24° , about 10 leagues in circuit. On the 4th February he discovered in $21^{\circ} 20'$ an island (Santelmo) which appeared to be about 30 leagues in circuit. On the 5th four similar islands were discovered, which he named Les 4 Coronados. Sailing W.N.W. from these to a distance of four leagues, he discovered another island, which he called S. Miguel; a little farther on a similar island, which he called S. Pablo.*

*The Spanish discoverers who, provokingly, hardly ever mention the native names of the islands discovered by them, usually gave to each the name of the Saint on whose feast the discovery was made. The Dutch and English who followed them, ignore both the original names and the calendar, but confer on the islands or groups the names of their patrons, Van Diemen, Lord Howe, or Lord Sandwich; or with worse taste, they attach to places that they did not discover old names with a "new" qualification. Thus we have New Holland, New Zealand, New South Wales, New Caledonia, New Hebrides, *waque ad naustrum*. Cannot this even yet be reformed?

Altering his course to N.W. he saw, on Feb. 9th, in latitude $18^{\circ} 40'$ an island to the eastward, to which he gave the name Santa Polonia, and on the 10th he discovered the island of Tahiti, to which he gave the name of Sagittaria. On the 14th, 15th, and 21st February other islands were discovered. On the 2nd March he discovered in latitude 10° S. an island to which, from the beauty of its inhabitants, he gave the name of Gente Hermosa. In this parallel he sailed for thirty-two days, and saw many signs of land.

On the 7th April he discovered an island named Taumaco. Here they anchored on the 9th, and were most hospitably received by the natives; but in return for this hospitality De Quir committed the grievous error of taking forcibly on board four natives to act as interpreters. Upon this the natives rose with indignation and attacked their invaders, but they were soon quieted by the big guns of the ships, and might, as usual, took the place of right. De Quir learnt from Tumai, the chief of this island, the names and situations of sixty islands; that a vast continent existed nearer the equator, and that, farther south, he would find an immense fertile inhabited country, named Manicolo. Sailing from Taumaco on the 16th and steering towards the south, he, on the 21st, discovered the island of Tucopia (New Hebrides). Not finding good anchorage here, he left Tucopia on the 22nd, and sailing towards the south discovered an island in latitude $14\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ S. to which he gave the name of Nuestra Señora de la Luz.

On this island was a volcano. Other islands were discovered in sight of this last, to which De Quir gave the names of El Vergel, Las Lagrimas de S. Pedro, Las Portales de Belen, El Pilar de Zaragoza, San Raymundo, and Santa Maria. At this last the natives showed much hospitality to the Spaniards, and it was De Quir's intention to requite them honorably, but he commenced his good work by taking two chiefs on board his ship, by force, to feed and clothe them. It is not surprising that his intentions were misunderstood, and that a few arrows were shot at one of the boats on the following day.

Leaving Santa Maria they proceeded southward in search of the great southern land, and on the 30th April they believed it to be in sight. Before them was a large open bay, and a "coast without end." The bay was examined by De Torres on the following day, and pronounced to be good, and De Quir entered it on the 2nd May, which, being the feast of SS. Philip and James, it was named, accordingly, San Felipe y Santiago. The port, far within the bay, was named Vera Cruz, and the territory was named Australia* del Espiritu Santo. The port was situated between two rivers, as large as the Guadalquivir, one of which he named the Jordan, and the other the Salvador. A full description of the bay and surrounding country is given in the following memorial. De Quir sojourned a month here and took formal possession of the territory in the name of Philip III, believing that it would prove an excellent site for a Spanish Colony.

* De Quir always spells it "Austrialia." I have used the ordinary orthography in the translation.