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Goemulgaw Lagal: Cultural and Natural Histories of the Island of Mabuyag, Torres Strait

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COVER

Image on book cover: Pearlshelling station at Panay, Mabuyag, 1890s. Photographer unknown
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Jean-Baptiste Desparmet's account of the wreck of the *Pauline-et-Victoire*, Kuyku Pad (Jervis Reef), Mabuyag, September 1858

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This paper presents an account of the wreck of the French merchant vessel, the *Pauline-et-Victoire* (Captain Jean-Baptiste Desparmet), on Kuyku Pad in September 1858. Desparmet has left one of the few European records about Mabuyag and the Goemulgal prior to 1871. He was an accidental visitor to Mabuyag because he chose not to exit Torres Strait through the more usual southern route. Sailing from Poruma, he stood off Passage Island, intending to sail via Bligh Channel. Unable to take this route he located what he believed to be a navigable channel between Mabuyag and Kuyku Pad. The *Pauline-et-Victoire* struck Kuyku Pad on 27 September 1858. After much effort the vessel was refloated, but was driven back onto the reef by wind and currents. On 28 September the Goemulgal attacked the vessel. Unable to withstand a second attack, the crew abandoned ship and set out for Koepang in Dutch-administered Timor – a distance of 2,778 km. Desparmet's account of Mabuyag and the Goemulgal is brief. Beyond his comments on Mabuyag, Desparmet provides useful information on the diversity of shipping traversing Torres Strait and illustrates the difficulties that masters of small vessels, sailing alone, encountered in navigating waters where little was known about the changing winds, currents and reefs and with few navigational aids. He avoided contact as far as possible with Torres Strait Islanders. Accounts of his voyage and wreck of the *Pauline-et-Victoire* have been on the public record since 1859, but they remain relatively unknown. They are illustrative of resources in languages other than English documenting Torres Strait that await researchers' attention.

□ *Pauline-et-Victoire, Jean-Baptiste Desparmet, shipwreck, Mabuyag, Torres Strait*

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On 26 September 1858 Captain Jean-Baptiste Desparmet, master of the French merchant vessel the *Pauline-et-Victoire*, sailed west from Poruma (Coconut Island) and brought his vessel 'to anchor under the lee of Passage Island'¹ (Desparmet, 1983: 151). The next morning, thwarted by wind and tide from exiting Torres Strait through Bligh Channel, he attempted to take what he believed was a navigable passage between Mabuyag and Kuyku Pad. He called this channel Napoleon III Passage.² Strong currents and an ebb tide drove his vessel aground on Kuyku Pad '4 miles from the southern point' of Mabuyag (Desparmet, 1983: 151). The attempt to refloat her was, at first, successful and the vessel lay at anchor overnight. The next morning he sent five of his crew, under the command of the first mate, Lionel Hochard, in the ship's longboat, to take soundings of this passage and to reconnoitre the way ahead by boat (Nicholson, 1996: 208). The *Pauline-et-Victoire* dragged at her anchors and ran aground once again. The Goemulgal then attacked the vessel. During the ensuing conflict a number of Goemalgal were killed or wounded and the captain was severely injured. The remaining crew, unable to withstand a renewed assault, abandoned ship, took to the ship's whaleboat, and after rejoining Hochard, set out for Koepang³, which they reached after a trying voyage. After recuperating there, the captain and crew of the *Pauline-et-Victoire* embarked for Mauritius and then for France. Desparmet reached Marseilles on 2 March 1859 and his home at Saint-Jean-de-Luz⁴ on 4 March 1859.

Desparmet's account is one of the few known European records about Mabuyag prior to 1871. The first recorded European contact occurred during Captain William Bligh's second breadfruit expedition in HMS *Assistant* and HMS *Providence* (Lee, 1920: 273-278). On 16 September 1792 Bligh sighted an island he named Island U. He recorded

that 'is not one-third so large as Island V [Badu]: about it lie several lofty small isles – the largest to the east-south-east of it I called Passage Island – for with a remarkable black rock that lies south of it, it formed the passage I was to go through' (Lee, 1920: 195). Bligh's Island U was later renamed Jervis Island in honour of Admiral Sir John Jervis (Cummins, 2004: 67-75) and is shown on Bligh's chart (Bligh, 1792) as Jervis Island. This information was incorporated into the maps of Matthew Flinders (1814a)⁵, Phillip Parker King (1824) and Phillipe Vandermaelen (1827).

Bligh recorded the dangers in navigating this passage. He gave orders to Lieutenant Nathaniel Portlock, commanding HMS *Assistant*, to lead through the passage by sending boats ahead of him and waiting for the signal to weigh anchor at slack tide and lead out between Mabuyag and Badu (Lee, 1920: 197). Bligh called the passage 'Bligh's Farewell' (Lee, 1920: 198) and is known today as Bligh Channel⁶.

Captain Benjamin Orman⁷ left Sydney on 15 May 1816 in the *Mary* bound for Batavia (Djakarta) and Calcutta. In company with the *Hayston* or *Hasten*, he came upon the 'long line of reefs stretching from Jervis Island (Mabuiag) to Turnagain (Buru)' (Nicholson, 1990, II: 331, 1996: 60). Orman sought a safer southern route to complete his crossing of Torres Strait. In 1822 the *Hercules* (Captain J. Heron) was wrecked on Orman Reef (for John Lawrie's account of the wreck see Gesner and Hitchcock, this volume). The European sources are then silent about Mabuyag until June 1840, when Jules-Sébastien-César Dumont d'Urville (1790-1842) traversed Torres Strait on the return journey of the *Astrolabe* and *Zélée* to France from the Pacific Ocean and Antarctica. Although the entries in his published journal relating to Mabuyag are brief (Dumont d'Urville, 1987, II: 550-551), Dumont d'Urville's comments on the island and the Goemulgal have informed Desparmet's account (Desparmet, 1983).

The next recorded visitor to Mabuyag was Jean-Baptiste Desparmet in September 1858.

JEAN-BAPTISTE DESPARMET (1817-1873)

Jean-Baptiste Desparmet was born on 31 August 1817 in Saint-Jean-de-Luz, into a Basque sea-faring family (Robin, 2002: 351). He was the eldest of the three children of Pierre Desparmet and Jeanne Sarrouble (Desparmet, 1983: 269) (Figure 1).

Pierre Desparmet drowned in a storm off Bayonne in February 1828. Jean-Baptiste then followed his father to sea, embarking with his uncle, Joseph Desparmet, on the *Nouvelle Marie*. Despite his family's meagre means, he acquired a practical knowledge of seamanship, enabling him to serve as a *mousse* (cabin-boy) then as a *novice* (apprentice) on coastal vessels. His first long-haul voyage



FIG. 1. Jean-Baptiste Desparmet, aged 20 (Source: Desparmet, 1983).

was on the *Émile* which took him to the Coromandel Coast in India. Realising that his limited education inhibited his opportunities, he saved sufficient funds to undertake the required studies and, in March 1843, he obtained his papers enabling him to be a captain on long-haul voyages. Later in 1843 he embarked on the *François-Xavier* as first mate, bound for Mexico. Due to Captain Robert de la Mahotière's dalliance with one of the passengers, Desparmet carried out many of the captain's duties on the voyage. His first command was on a small schooner, the *Aimable*, bound for the fishing grounds off Newfoundland and St Pierre-et-Miquelon. On his return to France, his mother's cousin, Gustave Goyetche, obtained salvage rights over an American schooner that had run aground during a hurricane. Desparmet was promised command of the vessel if he was able to refloat her. After much hard effort the vessel was refloated and renamed the *Comète*. She was made ready for sea and departed for Santander in northern Spain in November 1846.

In April 1852 Desparmet married Pauline Fitz-Gerald in Bordeaux. The couple had three children – Henry, Xavier and Joseph (Figure 2). A few days after his marriage, he left for the Antilles with his brother, Léon Desparmet, as first mate. On 19 January 1853 the *Comète* ran aground on a reef near Santo Domingo and the crew took to longboats, arriving at Gonaïves in Haiti. Upon his return to France in March 1853, Desparmet was advised to use the insurance monies he received from the wreck to fund the construction of a 350-400 tonne vessel that would become the *Pauline-et-Victoire*.

Desparmet's first voyage in the *Pauline-et-Victoire* was to Pondicherry in southern India.⁸ He arrived at Mauritius where he embarked thirty Indian labourers who had been working in the local sugar industry for their return voyage to India (Desparmet,



FIG. 2. Jean-Baptiste Desparmet and his son Henry photographed before the departure of the three-master, the *Gaspard*, on its voyage around the world (Source: Desparmet, 1983).

1983: 53-54). Mauritius became a *de facto* base for his voyages and for his business dealings with Australia, the Pacific and Timor. Desparmet's choice was a sound commercial decision. The sugar industry on Mauritius was well established and operated with cheap labour (slave labour until 1833 and then indentured Indian labour) (Dauhoo, 2007; Ly-Tio Fane Pineo, 1984; Carter, 2008). Mauritius supplied sugar to the Australasian colonies until the Australian sugar industry gradually displaced it. Mauritius was also ideal for a French captain as preservation and use of the French language was guaranteed

in the Treaty of Paris (1814) which confirmed British possession of the island.

In October 1856 he arrived in Melbourne for the first time and there he saw what would be a profitable business opportunity: 'Australia was only little distant from its birth. I studied what I could do in this new world and, finally, conceived the project of bringing sugar to Melbourne' (Desparmet, 1983: 71). The opportunity to participate in the lucrative Timor pony trade⁹ attracted his attention to Torres Strait as a viable route to take from Melbourne or Sydney to Timor (Desparmet, 1983: 71, 73).

In January 1857 he set out for the Solomon Islands and Fiji, returning to Melbourne in May 1857. William Beyfus, a Melbourne merchant, encouraged his project to tranship sugar from Mauritius to Melbourne.¹⁰ Desparmet travelled to Tasmania to explore opportunities to carry sugar there. Returning to Melbourne, he then set sail on 26 June 1857 'headed towards Torres [Strait]' (Desparmet, 1983: 111) *en route* to Timor to purchase horses and ponies for sale in Mauritius. His course took him to Raine Island and there he had the choice of three passages – that towards Muri (Mount Adolphus Island), that of the Pollars, a 'quite narrow but deep channel and that to the north of Cockburn Reef leading towards the Birds islands'. He chose the last. North of Cockburn Reef he saw the wreck of the three-masted *Vaillant* (Captain Lescure) from Bordeaux. His route took him past Masig (Yorke Island), Muri, Mawai (Wednesday Island) and Kirriri (Hammond Island). At Ince Point he saw the wreck of a steamer 'that indicated from a distance the danger' (Desparmet, 1983: 111-112). He stopped at Booby Island, explaining the then-accepted maritime custom of leaving supplies there – 'really each vessel entering Torres Strait or leaving, disembarks, at its pleasure, a certain quantity of supplies which are placed at the opening of a cave on this island' (Desparmet,

1983: 112). He then sailed to Koepang where he made the acquaintance of the Dutch officials, including the Resident, S.G.F. Fraenkel¹¹, whose hospitality Desparmet and his crew would enjoy following the wreck of the *Pauline-et-Victoire*.

On 5 July 1858 Desparmet arrived in Melbourne, where he prepared his ship, which was in ballast, for sea.¹² He sailed on 26 August 1858 on the voyage that resulted in his vessel running aground on Kuyku Pad. His journey through Torres Strait in September 1858 was uneventful. He followed a well-established route, entering Torres Strait through Bligh's Passage and then sailing through the Great Northern Channel. He turned south, passing Edgor (Nepean Island), Masig and Auridh. From there he steered west-south-west towards Poruma. He intended to clear Torres Strait on 26 September but found the wind was to the south, requiring him to beat to windward to clear the Prince of Wales Channel – a manoeuvre that he considered would place his vessel at risk. The alternative he chose was Bligh Channel. He arrived at Passage Island on 26 September 1858. While anchored there, Desparmet believed that he saw another possible channel between Mabuyag and Kuyku Pad. After consulting his charts he 'found a note written on one of d'Urville's plans saying that, thwarted by the winds, he had not been able to explore a channel which ought to be found there' (Desparmet, 1983: 150). Desparmet named this channel after the Emperor Napoleon III and the small island in the channel that he considered could 'serve as a beacon by its position', after Admiral Ferdinand Hamelin¹³, the Minister for the Navy (Desparmet, 1859: 588). On 27 September contrary winds prevented him taking Bligh Channel, so he 'resolved to attempt the channel which offered itself to me' (Desparmet, 1983: 151). The effort cost him his vessel. The names he assigned

appeared on official charts and can still be found in the official nomenclature (Gazetteer of Australia place names search, 2015).

Following the wreck of the *Pauline-et-Victoire* and his recuperation in Koepang, Desparmet returned to France, arriving there on 2 March 1859. Not long after his return, he found himself engaged in protracted legal action until 1862 with the co-owners of the *Pauline-et-Victoire*, Vilette Nasse and Company, over indemnification for his half of the cargo. The loss of the vessel was never questioned. On the contrary, he was decorated with the Légion d'Honneur on the order of Napoleon III for his conduct during the attack on the ship and saving the crew (Desparmet, n.d.). He won his action against Vilette Nasse and Company and, having finally obtained reimbursement for himself and for his freight, he was able to finance the construction of his second vessel, the *Gaspard*. Although his health was affected by his injuries that he received at Kuyku Pad, he went to sea again in 1862.

Desparmet's first voyage in the *Gaspard* was to India, arriving there on 13 May 1863. Finding a cargo for Australia, he left Calcutta, arriving in Hobson's Bay on 18 September 1863. Returning to Australia in June 1864, he set sail for India in August 1864, venturing again through Torres Strait, following the route he took in 1858. At Auridh he noted his proximity to Napoleon Passage. Nostalgia suggested to him that he see once again the wreck of the *Pauline-et-Victoire*, but he turned south-south-west at Poruma, as prudence cautioned against any desire to risk his vessel in the waters off Kuyku Pad. He chose the safer, but 'little used, Simpson's Channel' and, clearing Torres Strait, he reached Timor in September 1864 (Desparmet, 1983: 207; Nicholson, 1996: 209) (Figure 3). He was not to return again to Australia.

In 1865 he set out for New Caledonia, Tahiti and Valparaiso. The return voyage to France

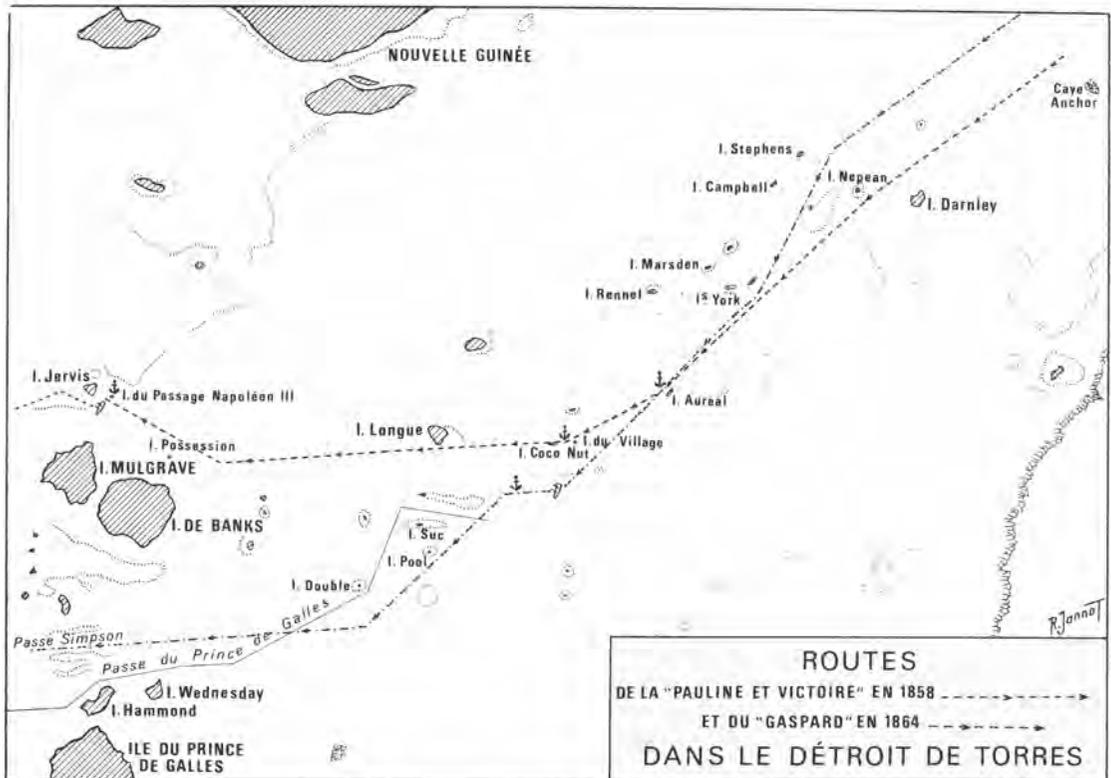


FIG. 3. Routes of the *Pauline-et-Victoire* in 1858 and of the *Gaspard* in 1864 through the Torres Strait (Source: Desparmet, 1983: 200).

was trying for Desparmet. His increasingly poor health and the death by drowning of the cabin boy in Tahiti took their toll (Desparmet, 1983: 242-244). Encountering mountainous seas in the South Atlantic, he remembered fondly his former crew, commenting: 'where is my crew of the *Pauline-et-Victoire*?' (Desparmet, 1983: 233). Desparmet reached France in June 1867 having been away thirteen months and five days (Desparmet, 1983: 249).

The *Gaspard* was sold and Desparmet returned to Saint-Jean-de-Luz. His efforts to obtain an appointment as port master at Bayonne or command of a steamer

were unsuccessful. He reluctantly took the position as third lieutenant on a steamer but was forced through ill health to return from a voyage to the Antilles. In February 1872 he was appointed as a member of a committee of experts to assess the damages to a three-masted barque, the *Edvire*. This ended in disputation and he resigned, although he would obtain command of the vessel. He received a handsome payment from the sale of steel rails in America and invested an amount of 100,000 francs with a relative who stole the funds leaving him ruined. Jean-Baptiste Desparmet died on 19 June 1873, aged nearly 56 (Desparmet, 1983: 265).

THE PAULINE-ET-VICTOIRE

The *Pauline-et-Victoire* was a three-masted barque, built and registered in Bordeaux in 1856.¹⁴ Desparmet named her after his wife and sister-in-law (Desparmet, 1983: 52). Fulgence Girard (1859: 70) described her as being ‘as elegant of line as rapid of speed’ (Figure 4).

The vessel was crewed largely by French sailors, but Desparmet signed on mariners of other nationalities, for example, English sailors at Buenos Aires (Desparmet, 1983: 58) and, in preparation for his voyage to the Solomon Islands and Fiji, a ‘crew of Lascars’¹⁵ (Desparmet, 1983:74). On the voyage through Torres Strait in September 1858 the *Pauline-et-Victoire* had a complement of 13, including the captain.¹⁶ Desparmet (1983:

142) thought highly of Lionel Hochard, the first mate, a ‘young captain and officer of merit who suited me by his energy and capacity’. He was appointed in Melbourne after Desparmet dismissed his previous first mate for borrowing money against the captain’s account without authority (Desparmet, 1983: 142). Hochard later obtained his own command on the Bordeaux merchant vessel, the *Impératrice*. In 1864 Desparmet (1983: 205) named a reef near Auridh Lionel Reef ‘in memory of the courageous first mate of the *Pauline-et-Victoire*’. Gillebert, the boatswain, was an older, experienced man, whom Desparmet (1983: 158) described as ‘an old grumbler, but so brave, valiant and energetic’. It was he whom Hochard put in charge of the whaleboat for the voyage to Timor due to the captain’s incapacity. Other members of his



FIG. 4. The *Les Amis de Saint-Jean-de-Luz*, owner: M.J. Lizariturry. A three-masted barque very similar to the *Pauline-et-Victoire* (Source: Desparmet, 1983).

crew included an unnamed chief steward, Rabatjoie¹⁷ the cook, described as being of African descent, Léon Bouard and Carlos Arguila. The latter, a Chilean, distinguished himself in his negotiations for provisions with the Tanimbar Islanders¹⁸ (Desparmet, 1983: 164-165). Some of the crew were young such as Louis Neveu and François Garnier who played a significant part in the conflict at Kuyku Pad. Desparmet noted that the 'the older one was not twenty-two' (Desparmet, 1983: 156). Discipline was sometimes an issue (Desparmet, 1983: 171, 196) for example, when the crew reached Koepang in October 1858, several of his crew caused a nuisance (and expense for Desparmet) pursuing women (Desparmet, 1983: 165).

Conditions on the *Pauline-et-Victoire* would have been cramped. Hardtack (ships's biscuit) was a staple, complemented with food the cook prepared in a small galley. Fresh produce and fresh water were obtained *en route*. Supplies of fresh water were supplemented by the *cuisine distillatoire* (kitchen distillery)¹⁹, a device that enabled fresh water to be obtained from sea water. Beer and wine were also distributed to the crew.

DESPARMET'S ACCOUNTS OF THE VOYAGE OF THE PAULINE-ET-VICTOIRE TO TORRES STRAIT IN 1858

The documentary record of the wreck of the *Pauline-et-Victoire* includes two accounts compiled by Jean-Baptiste Desparmet.

ACCOUNT 1

This account of the vessel's loss forms part of Chapter 8 "La perte de la *Pauline-et-Victoire* (The loss of the *Pauline-et-Victoire*)" in Desparmet's memoirs which were published by his descendants in 1983 with the title of *Journal d'un vieux marin* (Journal of an old mariner) (Desparmet, 1983: 148-158).

Journal d'un vieux marin is not a logbook kept on board the *Pauline-et-Victoire* as this and any original drawings perished with the vessel.²⁰ Rather, it is a personal memoir about his life as a professional seaman published by his descendants. Desparmet's memoirs present a straightforward and matter-of-fact account, devoid of literary artifice, though not without interest or style. His narrative, reported in the past tense, is interspersed with his observations and direct speech often in the present and, occasionally, in the future tense.

Although primarily intended to inform his family of a working life spent away from them, he did contemplate publication. Desparmet (1983: half-title page) noted in 1873: 'To Henry Desparmet. It is to my eldest son that I dedicate this book dealing with my life since 1828: it is to him that I commend it to be provided to the reader'.

The *Journal* contains twelve chapters arranged chronologically. The first five cover his life up to his first voyage to Australia in 1856. Chapter 6 sees him departing Australia and heading to Timor *via* Torres Strait. Chapter 8 recounts the voyage through Torres Strait and the wreck of the *Pauline-et-Victoire*. There is then a break in the narrative between his arrival back in Saint-Jean-de-Luz on 4 March 1859 and the construction of the *Gaspard* in October 1862. Chapters 9 to 11 relate to the voyages in the *Gaspard* and the final chapter recounts his retirement and the fate of the *Edvire*. The narrative ends with his last voyage on 2 May 1872.

The published volume contains no introductory essay. It is not stated whether any editorial work was carried out on the manuscript prior to its publication. There are some linking notes between Chapter 10 and 11 informing the reader of the legal proceedings that followed Desparmet's return to France and a brief concluding note that refers to the theft of 100,000 francs and

his death on 19 June 1873 (Desparmet, 1983: 167-168, 265). A useful glossary of maritime terms used by Desparmet and a genealogical chart which includes the persons mentioned in the *Journal* are included at the end of the volume.

The account of the loss of the vessel related in the *Journal d'un vieux marin* is presented first as it is the most detailed of the available accounts. The narrative included here, commences with Desparmet's departure from Auridh and concludes with the meeting of the two ships' boats *en route* for Timor.



...De l'île Auréal, gouvernant à l'ouest-sud-ouest, je suis venu ranger une petite île défendue à l'est par un récif long de 2 milles : je mouillai donc dans l'ouest par 8 brasses de fond. A peine l'ancre était-elle à l'eau que des natifs accoururent sur la plage. Quelques-uns s'avançaient sur les rochers et nous faisaient signe d'aller à terre. Cette démonstration, peu rassurante, me donna à penser qu'il était imprudent de passer la nuit à ce mouillage, aussi donnai-je l'ordre d'appareiller. Établissant les basses voiles, nous cinglâmes vers Cocoa-Nut, située à 6 milles dans le sud. A 7 heures, nous ancions par 7 brasses, les voiles furent serrées et les quarts réglés par bordées. Les factionnaires reçurent l'ordre de tirer sur toute pirogue qui s'approcherait. Après avoir écrit les notes de la journée, je pris le thé avec mon second, jeune homme qui me secondait très bien, et j'allais ensuite me reposer quelques heures.

Le lendemain 26 septembre, le branle-bas eut lieu au point du jour : plusieurs natifs se disposaient déjà à mettre leurs pirogues à l'eau.

...From Auridh island, steering to the west-south-west, I happened to run along a small island protected to the east by a reef 2 miles long: I anchored then to the west with a depth of 14.4 m.²¹ Hardly was the anchor in the water than the natives rushed onto the beach. Some moved forward onto the rocks and made signs to us to go ashore. This scarcely reassuring demonstration led me to think that it was imprudent to spend the night at this anchorage, thus I gave the order to get under way. Setting the lower sails, we steered towards Coconut Island, situated 6 miles to the south. At 7 o'clock, we anchored in 12.6 m, the sails were furled and the watches set by halves.²² The sentries received the order to fire on every canoe that approached. After having written the entries for the day, I took tea with my first mate, a young man who assisted me very well and I then went to rest for a few hours.

On the following day, 26 September, the commotion occurred at daybreak: several natives were already preparing to launch their canoes into the water.

Bien qu'ayant trafiqué avec eux quelques mois plus tôt, je ne voulus plus m'y risquer, d'ailleurs je voulais franchir le détroit le jour même. Je fis déraper l'ancre et nous appareillâmes toutes voiles dehors.

Le vent était au sud, il aurait fallu louvoyer pour franchir la passe du Prince de Galles et il aurait été dangereux de courir des bordées avec un bateau aussi grand que le mien dans des parages inexplorés et hérissés d'écueils. Je me décidai donc à laisser courir à l'ouest $\frac{1}{4}$ sud-ouest gouvernant pour la passe Farewell. Je passai très près de l'île Longue, île fertile presque entièrement couverte d'arbres. A peine l'eus-je doublée, que je trouvai 9 brasses de fond mais l'eau devenait bourbeuse et j'eus d'abord quelques craintes, mais le fond régulier toujours à 9 brasses me rassura. La vigie annonça à 3 heures du soir, le petit banc de l'Est, à 6 milles de l'île de la Possession qui elle se montrait toute blanche comme une sentinelle signalant les dangers de ce bras de mer.

A 5 heures du soir, l'homme de bossoir nous indiquait des récifs droit devant nous: le soleil m'empêchait de rien distinguer, obstacle qui se présente souvent dans le détroit de Torres dès que le soleil a passé au méridien. Qu'on ajoute à cela l'eau boueuse de ces parages et on comprendra combien la navigation y devient difficile.

Par prudence, je fis gouverner au nord-ouest pour aller mouiller sous le vent de l'île du Passage en laissant le grand récif d'Orsmann sur tribord, et jetai l'ancre par 7 brasses. Les quarts furent réglés comme la nuit précédente.

Au moment de mouiller, deux pirogues s'étaient présentées comme pour nous indiquer la route : ruse grossière dont ces sauvages sont coutumiers pour attirer les bâtiments sur les écueils.

Though having traded with them some months earlier, I did not wish to take further risks, moreover I wished to clear the strait that same day. I gave the order to weigh anchor and we got under way with all the sails set.

The wind was to the south, it would have been necessary to beat to windward to clear the Prince of Wales Channel and it would have been dangerous to run the course with a vessel as large as mine in unexplored latitudes bristling with reefs. So I decided to tack to the west $\frac{1}{4}$ south-west, steering for Farewell Channel. I passed very close to Long Island²³, a fertile island almost entirely covered in trees. Hardly had I rounded it, than I found a depth of 14.2 m but the water became dirty and I initially had some concerns, but the even bottom always of 14.2 m deep reassured me. The watch announced at 3 pm, the small sandbank to the east, 16 miles from [North] Possession Island which appeared all white like a sentry signalling the dangers of this arm of the sea.²⁴

At 5 pm, the look-out pointed out to us some reefs right in front of us: the sun prevented me from making anything out, an obstacle which is often found in Torres Strait as soon as the sun has passed mid-day. You may add to that the muddy water of these latitudes and you will understand how difficult navigation becomes there.

Through prudence, I steered to the north west to anchor under the lee of Passage Island, leaving the large Orman Reef to starboard, and I cast the anchor in 12.6 m. The watches were fixed as on the preceding night.

From the moment of anchoring, two canoes appeared as if offering to show us the way: a crass ruse to which these savages are accustomed in order to lure vessels onto the reefs.

A peine les voiles furent-elles serrées que ces barques se dirigèrent vers nous, s'arrêtèrent à distance et parurent observer nos plus petits mouvements. Mon second, jeune et ardent, voulait faire feu sur ces naturels qui semblaient nous espionner : ils envoient souvent quelques-uns des leurs en éclaireurs et font mille démonstrations d'amitié pour masquer leurs intentions perfides. Ils n'étaient que deux, je me mis à agiter un miroir pour les attirer à bord. A la vue du miroir que je faisais mouvoir de manière à faire tomber les rayons du soleil sur leurs visages, ils jetèrent des cris de joie. Un bout de corde lancé par un de mes hommes les détermina à s'approcher, d'abord avec méfiance, puis ils s'en saisirent et se hissèrent à bord. Ils s'avaient dans leurs pirogues que quelques-uns de ces fruits que ressemblent à des groseilles qu'ils nous échangeaient pour des biscuits de mer. Ne connaissant pas la nature de ces baies, je les fis plus tard jeter par-dessus bord.

Ils demandèrent : « Tabaco ! tabaco ! », mes hommes leur donnèrent un peu de tabac. Ils avaient, pour bijou, une plaque de nacre assez belle suspendue à leur cou. Je les convoitais, mais les rusés répondaient toujours : « Tabou ! Papoua ! Tabou ! » Heureusement, mon miroir les tentait et je réussis enfin à me faire remettre les nacres contre le miroir et une pièce d'étoffe... Loin de ressembler aux naturels de Timor, ils refusèrent l'eau-de-vie. Après cet échange, me montrant le soleil qui disparaissait derrière les îles Mulgraves, ils s'en retournèrent, enchantés en apparence de leurs acquisitions. Avant de partir, l'un d'eux s'était drapé dans son étoffe blanche et me désignant de la main dit : « Tabou ! » Il voulait me faire comprendre qu'il était chef comme moi puisqu'il était également vêtu de blanc : j'avais l'habitude de porter à la mer, pantalon, veste et gilet blanc, avec un panama pour couvre-chef.

Hardly had the sails been furled than these small boats headed towards us, stopped at a distance and appeared to observe our smallest movements.²⁵ My first mate, young and eager, wanted to fire on these natives who appeared to be spying on us: they often send some of their number as scouts and make a thousand shows of friendship to mask their treacherous intentions. There were only two of them and I began to jiggle a mirror to draw them on board. At the sight of the mirror which I moved in a manner to cause the rays of the sun to fall on their faces, they let out cries of joy. A rope end thrown by one of my men induced them to approach, at first with mistrust, then they grasped onto it and hauled themselves on board.²⁶ They had in their canoes only some of those fruits which resemble red currants which they traded with us for some hardtack. Not knowing what these berries were, I later had them thrown overboard.

They asked for: 'Tobacco! tobacco!'. My men gave them a little tobacco. They had, for ornament, a quite beautiful piece of mother of pearl shell that hung around their necks. I desired them, but the crafty fellows always replied: 'Taboo! Papua! Taboo!'. Fortunately, my mirror tempted them and I succeeded finally in having them hand over to me the pearl shells for the mirror and a piece of cloth... By contrast with the natives of Timor, they refused spirits. After this exchange, showing me the sun which was disappearing behind the Mulgrave Islands, they returned, apparently delighted with their acquisitions. Before leaving, one of them had draped himself in his white cloth and pointing to me with his hand said: 'Taboo!'. He wanted me to understand that he was a chief like me seeing that he was likewise dressed in white: I was in the habit of wearing at sea white trousers, jacket and waistcoat, with a panama hat as head-covering.

A leur départ, nous comprîmes qu'ils n'avaient aucune idée des armes à feu, car Hochard ayant tiré en l'air, ils n'en parurent absolument pas effrayés. Ces natifs ne voyaient pas beaucoup de navires, car depuis Dumont d'Urville, le seul qui soit venu dans ces parages jusqu'à l'entrée du passage que j'allais découvrir et dont il admettait l'existence, aucun bâtiment n'avait paru dans ces eaux inhospitalières.

Consultant diverses cartes et des plans, tant anglais que français, je ne pus, chez aucun, trouver trace de ce passage que je croyais avoir aperçu avant le coucher du soleil. Je trouvai une note écrite sur un des plans de d'Urville disant que, contrarié par les vents, il n'avait pu explorer un passage qui devait se trouver pas là. J'employai ainsi une partie de la nuit à parcourir tous mes livres et j'acquis bientôt la certitude que jamais Européen n'avait pénétré jusqu'à l'endroit où j'étais mouillé.

Le lendemain matin 27 septembre, contrarié par des vents de sud-sud-est qui m'empêchaient d'aller prendre la passe Farewell, je résolus de tenter le passage qui s'offrait à moi. Aussi, dès 5 heures du matin, donnant mes instructions à mon second, je l'envoyai sonder le passage depuis l'île jusqu'à sud de Jervis. Il était 6 heures lorsque le canot, bien armé, quitta *la Pauline et Victoire* monté par Hochard et cinq hommes. A bord, nous nous occupâmes des préparatifs d'appareillage. A 8 heures, je fis hisser le pavillon de rendez-vous, le second obtempéra à l'appel : les sondes étaient satisfaisantes. L'ancre dérapée, je gouvernai au sud, sous les huniers seuls, les basses voiles et les perroquets sur leurs cargues, un sondeur de chaque bord. Les sondes marquaient 6 à 7 brasses, le courant portant à l'ouest.

On their departure, we understood that they had no idea of fire arms, because even though Hochard had fired into the air, they appeared completely unafraid of them. These natives did not see many ships, because since Dumont d'Urville, the only person who had come into these latitudes up to the entrance of the channel which I was going to explore and which he assumed existed, no ship had appeared in these inhospitable waters.

Consulting various maps and plans, English as well as French, I was not able, in any of them, to find a trace of this channel which I believed to have caught sight of before sunset. I found a note written on one of d'Urville's maps saying that, thwarted by the winds, he had not been able to explore a channel which ought to be found there. So I spent a part of the night going through all my books and I soon became certain that no European had ever proceeded as far as the place where I was anchored.

On the next morning, 27 September, thwarted by winds from the south-south-east which prevented me from taking Farewell Channel²⁷, I resolved to attempt the channel which presented itself to me. So at 5 am, giving my instructions to my first mate, I sent him to sound the passage from the island right up to the south of Jervis [Island]. It was 6 o'clock when the boat, well-armed, left the *Pauline-et-Victoire*, crewed by Hochard and five men. On board, we busied ourselves with preparations for getting underway. At 8 o'clock, I had the recall signal hoisted, the first mate fell in with the call: the soundings were satisfactory. The anchor taken in, I steered to the south, with the top-sails only, the lower sails and the topgallants on their brales, a weight-man on each side. The soundings showed 10.8 or 12.6 m, the current bearing to the west.

Dès que j'eus doublé la pointe sud de l'île du Passage, à environ 4 encablures, le grand récif de Jervis se découvrit devant nous.

A tribord, nous distinguons la basse de Jervis, je mis le cap au sud et après avoir couru un demi-mille à cet air de vent, je vins à l'ouest-sud-ouest à cause du grand récif de Jervis qui se découvre à marée basse alors que le reste est couvert de 3 mètres d'eau environ.

J'étais à 4 milles de la pointe sud lorsque les deux officiers qui étaient en vigie sur la vergue du petit hunier s'écrient :

« Loffe de deux quarts. »

Je leur demandai s'ils ne voyaient pas de récifs à bâbord, ils me répondirent : « Non. » Je vins à l'ouest en continuant de sonder. Vingt minutes après avoir couru sur un fond régulier de 7 brasses et au moment où le sondeur criait « Six brasses et demie », le navire s'échoue et s'incline légèrement sur un fond de corail.

Le courant était violent, il y avait jusant. C'est alors que les maraudeurs qui circulaient à l'accore du banc et que j'avais laissé derrière moi s'approchèrent du navire. Trois d'entre eux montèrent à bord. Les voiles furent serrées et l'on fit dîner l'équipage, repas auquel les sauvages prirent part. Je parvins à leur dire, par signes évidemment, que la passe était franche. Il fallait gouverner à l'ouest-nord-ouest puis à l'ouest-sud-ouest, vérité que je pus vérifier plus tard, par le sondage.

Seul l'avant du navire était échoué. A midi, je fis descendre l'équipage dans la cale afin de jeter le lest de l'avant à l'arrière. Les natifs, sur mon invitation, suivirent l'équipage, mais quelques minutes plus tard, trouvant sans doute que le travail était trop dur, les vilains moricauds s'en retournèrent à leur pêche.

As soon as I had rounded the southern point of Passage Island, at about 4 cables, the large expanse of Jervis Reef unfolded before us.²⁸

To starboard, we made out the lower part of Jervis [Island] I headed southwards and after having run half a mile on this course, I came to the west-south-west on account of the large expanse of Jervis Reef which was exposed at low tide while the remainder is covered by about 3 metres of water.²⁹

I was 4 miles from the southern point when the two officers who were on look-out on the yard of the fore-topsail cried out:

'Luff³⁰ two points'

I asked them if they did not see any reefs to port and they replied: 'No'. I came about to the west while continuing to sound. Twenty minutes after having run on an even depth of 12.6 m and at the moment when the leadman cried: 'Six and a half *brasses* [11.7 m]', the ship runs aground and lists slightly on a coral bottom.

The current was very strong, there was an ebb-tide. It is then that the marauders, who were moving about at the edge of the reef and whom I had left behind me, approached the ship. Three of them climbed on board. The sails were furled and the crew were having dinner, a meal in which the savages took part.³¹ I managed to say to them, through signs obviously, that the channel was clear.³² I had to steer to the west-north-west then to the west-south west, a fact that I was able to confirm later, through sounding.

Only the bow of the ship was aground. At mid-day I had the crew go down into the hold in order to throw the ballast from the bow to the stern. The natives, at my invitation, followed the crew, but some minutes later, doubtless finding that the work was too hard, the wretched Blacks³³ returned to their fishing.

Pour moi, désireux de reconnaître le chenal, je montai dans la grande hune d'où j'ai pu faire un croquis de la passe, ce qui m'a été facilité par l'eau verte qui contrastait d'une manière frappante avec les eaux blanchâtres des récifs et des bancs. A 4 heures, ayant pris toutes les indications nécessaires, le travail de l'équipage étant achevé, je fis élonger deux ancres, l'une par le bossoir de tribord, l'autre par bâbord derrière. J'ordonnai le repos et l'équipage soupa en attendant la marée pour agir. Afin de leur donner du cœur, je leur fis servir double ration de vin et un café avec du sec.

Je profitai de ce répit pour rédiger mes notes. Cette passe à laquelle j'ai donné le nom de Napoléon III est bien plus sûre que celle de Farewell, surtout à l'entrée, où les récifs sont à fleur d'eau, donc très visibles. Une petite île, que je nomme Hamelin, peut servir de balise : elle indique l'entrée nord-ouest du banc. Cet îlot a la forme d'un tronc de cône qui s'élève de 6 mètres environ au-dessus du niveau de la mer. Plus tard, j'ai dressé les plans de cette passe et les ai envoyés à l'amiral Hamelin. Ils ont été admis et font partie aujourd'hui des cartes de Torres. (Voir carte N° 1862 du S.H.O.M)

A 9 heures du soir, le navire s'étant redressé a donné plusieurs coups de talon, nous indiquant ainsi que le moment d'agir était arrivé. On vire sur les ancres, le navire cède à leur force et, perdant sa fausse quille, vient à flot. Le vent soufflait avec furie, la nuit était sombre et le courant violent. Les chaînes et les ancres ajoutaient encore, en encombrant le pont, à la difficulté de la manœuvre. Tout m'empêchait d'aller prendre un autre mouillage.

For me, wishing to be acquainted with the channel, I climbed the maintop from where I was able to make a rough sketch of the channel, a fact that had been made easier for me by the green water which contrasted in a striking way with the whitish waters of the reefs and the shoals. At 4 o'clock, having taken all the necessary information, and the crew's work being finished, I had two anchors run out, one on the starboard bow, the other on the port side aft.³⁴ I ordered rest and the crew had supper, waiting for the tide to do its work. In order to give them courage, I saw to it that they were served a double ration of wine and coffee with some spirits added.

I took advantage of this breathing space to write up my notes. This channel to which I gave the name of Napoleon III is indeed more certain than Farewell [Channel], particularly at the entrance, where the reefs are at water level, thus very visible. A small island, which I called Hamelin [Island], can serve as a beacon: it marks the entrance north-west of the shoal. This islet has the form of the frustrum of a cone which rises about 6 metres above sea level.³⁵ Later, I prepared the plans of this channel and sent them to Admiral Hamelin. They have been adopted and today form part of the maps of Torres [Strait]. (See map N° 1862 of the S.H.O.M.)

At 9 pm, the ship now standing upright again touched the bottom several times, indicating to us that the moment to take action had arrived. We heave on the anchors, the ship yields to their force and, losing her false keel, begins to float. The wind was blowing with fury, the night was dark and the current very strong. The chains and the anchors, littering the deck, added further to the difficulty of the manoeuvre. Everything stopped me from proceeding to take up another anchorage.

Prévoyant que la journée du lendemain serait très fatigante, j'envoyai tout mon monde, officiers et matelots se coucher. Je restai seul pour veiller : il était une heure du matin. Profitant des quatre heures de répit qui me restaient avant le jour, je rédigeai les instructions que je voulais remettre à mon second quand il partirait pour sonder la passe. La prudence me conseillait en effet de me rendre un compte exact du nouveau canal dans lequel je m'étais engagé : je ne peux me le reprocher et c'est pourtant ce qui m'a fait perdre mon navire.

Dès 6 heures, le second s'embarque, avec cinq hommes et le maître, dans le grand canot armé en guerre et pourvu de vivres, compas, cartes et munitions. Cet officier poussa malheureusement, par excès de zèle, l'exploration plus loin que mes instructions ne le lui indiquaient. Surpris par le jusant aggravé par un fort vent d'est, il lui fut impossible de revenir à bord pour midi : il dut mouiller pour attendre la marée suivante.

Pendant ce temps, le vent soufflait par rafales et j'étais mouillé sur un fond dur. *La Pauline et Victoire*, entraînant ses ancres, revint s'échouer sur le même banc. C'était le jusant, la marée perdait rapidement, le navire se coula sur bâbord. Je ne pouvais l'empêcher, mais par précaution j'armai l'équipage.

Ce fut vers 10 heures du matin que la première pirogue, bien autrement armée que celles de la veille, déborda de Jervis, se dirigeant vers mon bateau. Je reconnus tout de suite une pirogue de guerre, longue de 15 mètres avec estrade pour les guerriers. Quatorze hommes la montaient. Ces maudits profitaient de l'absence de la moitié de mon équipage pour m'attaquer. Au loin, des feux s'allumaient sur toutes les îles, battant le rappel pour la curée.

Predicting that the next day would be very tiring, I sent everybody, officers and sailors, to bed. I remained alone on watch: it was one am. Profiting from the four hours of grace which remained to me before day, I drafted the instructions that I wished to issue to my first mate when he left to sound the channel. Prudence cautioned me, indeed, to furnish myself with an exact account of the new passage to which I was committed: I cannot blame myself and yet it is for this reason that I lost my ship.

At 6 o'clock, the first mate embarks, with five men and the boatswain, in the longboat, fully armed and provisioned with stores, compass, maps and ammunition. This officer, through an excess of zeal, unfortunately carried the exploration further than my instructions indicated to him. Surprised by the ebb-tide aggravated by a strong easterly wind, he found it impossible to return on board by mid-day: he had to anchor to wait for the next tide.³⁶

During this time, the wind was blowing in squalls and I was anchored on a hard bottom. The *Pauline-et-Victoire*, dragging her anchors, ran aground again on the same sandbank. It was the ebb-tide, the tide went out rapidly, the ship heeled to port. I could not stop it, but in precaution I armed the crew.

It was about 10 am that the first canoe, far better armed than those of the previous day, cast off from Jervis [Island], heading towards my vessel. I immediately recognized a war canoe, 15 m long with a platform for the warriors. Fourteen men crewed it. These wretches took advantage of the absence of half of my crew to attack me. In the distance fires were lit on all the islands, beating the call to the spoils.

La pirogue avançait avec rapidité, je la laissai arriver jusqu'à une dizaine de mètres et nous fîmes feu : le guerrier qui, dressé sur l'estrade brandissait son casse-tête, tomba mortellement atteint. La pirogue hésita, les sauvages nous lancèrent une pluie de flèches, mais protégés par les bastingsages, nous étions invisibles et personne ne fut atteint. Les canons de fusils bien appuyés, mes hommes tiraient avec précision : notre seconde décharge fut aussi heureuse et plusieurs sauvages tombèrent, tués ou blessés.

Ces primitifs n'avaient aucune idée de nos armes. Voyant plusieurs de leurs rameurs à bas, saisis de panique, ils se replient vers la terre, mais rencontrant bientôt une nombreuse flottille, réconfortés, ils reviennent sur nous secondés par une trentaine de pirogues. Nous les reçûmes de notre mieux et les aurions sans doute repoussés s'ils ne s'étaient divisés, les uns attaquant par l'arrière, les autres par l'avant. Trop peu nombreux, nous ne pouvions faire face à plusieurs attaques à la fois. En un clin d'œil, les sauvages eurent envahi le pont. Nous sautâmes sur nos haches, car il ne s'agissait plus que d'un combat corps à corps. A chaque coup un sauvage poussait un cri, mais à mesure que nous en abattions sur tribord, il en embarquait par bâbord, ou par l'avant, ou par l'arrière. C'était une boucherie, ahuris par nos coups de feu les sauvages passaient à l'état de bêtes fauves ; mes hommes le valaient. Jusqu'à mon vieux Rabatjoie, mon cuisinier nègre, qui, assailli dans sa cuisine, se fit jour à grand jets d'eau bouillante pris dans la cuisine distillatoire.

Je n'avais encore aucune perte à déplorer, lorsque, m'apercevant qu'une dizaine de natifs envahissaient ma dunette, j'y courus en criant :

- A moi, l'équipage

The canoe advanced rapidly and I let it come up to about ten metres and we opened fire: the warrior who, standing on the platform, brandished his club, fell mortally wounded. The canoe hesitated, the savages launched a shower of arrows at us but, protected by the bulwarks, we were invisible and no one was wounded. The rifle barrels well supported, my men fired accurately: our second volley was as fortunate and several savages fell, killed or wounded.³⁷

These primitives had no understanding of our weapons. Seeing several of their oarsmen down, and seized with panic, they turn around towards the shore, but soon meeting a numerous flotilla, reassured again, they come back at us supported by about thirty canoes. We welcomed them as best we could and we would have undoubtedly repulsed them if they had not split up, some attacking from the stern and others from the bow. Too few in numbers, we could not confront several attacks at the same time. In an instant, the savages had invaded the deck. We seized our axes because it had now come down to hand-to-hand combat. At each blow a savage let out a cry, but as we cut them down on the port side, they climbed aboard on the starboard side, or by the bow or by the stern. It was butchery, bewildered by our shots the savages got to the state of wild beasts; my men gave an account of themselves. Even my old Rabatjoie, my Negro cook, who assailed in his kitchen, appeared amidst great jets of boiling water, taken from the *cuisine distillatoire*.

I had still no loss to lament when, seeing that about ten natives invaded my poop-deck, I ran there crying:

- Crew, follow me

Emporté par la chaleur du combat, et croyant que j'étais suivi de mes hommes, je tombai sur ce groupe de naturels et en tuai ou blessai plusieurs en les chargeant avec ma baïonnette. Je les acculais vers l'arrière lorsque d'autres arrivent dans mon dos et l'un d'eux m'attrape par le cou pour m'étrangler. Aussitôt les autres s'acharnent sur moi et je tombe frappé de huit blessures.

Cependant, le combat continuait sur le pont, l'un de ceux qui, sans doute, m'avaient blessé, descendant l'escalier, rencontre le maître d'hôtel qui sortait du carré avec une carabine armée de sa baïonnette. Au lieu de la lui passer au travers du corps, ce malheureux se sauve dans la chambre, abandonnant son arme. Louis Neveu, un des matelots, s'en aperçoit, se précipite avec un hache. Le sauvage se retranche sur la dunette et lui lance la carabine en guise de sagaie. Louis esquive le coup et rattrapant l'arme, la sachant armée, fait feu et tue le canaque qui vient tomber sur mon corps. Louis Neveu et François Garnier, tous deux inscrits à l'île de Ré se font jour en combattant pour me dégager des mains de nos assaillants qui se préparaient à me jeter dans leur pirogue pour m'emporter à terre et me dévorer. Vigoureusement attaqués par ces jeunes gens, les sauvages m'abandonnent pour se défendre. Louis en profite pour rejeter mon corps sur la dunette car j'étais déjà à moitié hors du navire, puis se retournant, il abat à coup de hache tout ce qui se trouve sur son passage. C'est à ces deux enfants que je dois la vie : le plus âgé n'avait pas vingt-deux ans.

L'équipage, très inférieur en nombre mais mieux armé, a enfin le dessus, les natifs plongent dans la mer où ils sont encore poursuivis par les balles de mes hommes.

Swept up by the heat of battle, and believing that I was followed by my men, I fell on this group of natives and killed or wounded several of them charging them with my bayonet. I drove them towards the stern when others arrived at my back and one of them seized me around the neck to strangle me.³⁸ Immediately the others went for me and I fell, struck with eight wounds.

Meanwhile, the fighting continued on the deck, one of those who, doubtless, had wounded me, on coming down the steps, meets the chief steward, who was coming out of the mess-room with a rifle with bayonet fixed. Instead of running it through his body, this wretch runs away into the cabin, abandoning his weapon. Louis Neveu, one of the sailors, catches sight of this, rushes forward with an axe. The savage is confined on the poop deck and plunges the rifle at him like a spear. Louis avoids the blow and seizing the weapon back, knowing it to be loaded, fires and kills the Kanaka who just falls on my body. Louis Neveu and François Garnier, both signed on at the Île de Ré³⁹, make their way through fighting to extricate me from the hands of our assailants who were preparing to throw me into their canoe to take me on land and devour me. Vigorously attacked by these young fellows, the savages abandon me to defend themselves. Louis takes advantage of this to throw my body back onto the poop deck for I was already half outside the ship, then turning round, he strikes down with a blow of his axe all who cross his path. It is to these two lads that I owe my life: the older one was not twenty-two.⁴⁰

The crew, much smaller in number but better armed, finally has the upper hand, the natives jump into the sea where they are still followed by my men's bullets.

Le navire dégagé, on me transporta dans ma chambre pour me laver et panser mes blessures. J'en avais quatre à la tête dont une qui l'avait presque partagée, une lèvre coupée, un œil sortant de l'orbite, un morceau de genou emporté, deux flèches au thorax, pour ne parler que du plus grave. A peine se disposaient-ils à prendre un peu de nourriture pour réparer leurs forces, qu'ils voient, de toutes les îles, de tous les récifs, sortir une armada de pirogues : la mer en semblait couverte et à terre partout des feux, signal d'une attaque générale.

Il était deux heures et demie. L'équipage, composé de sept hommes épuisés par le combat, n'ayant plus de chef, se sent trop faible pour soutenir une autre lutte, délibère et d'une voix unanime décide l'abandon du navire.

Ma baleinière est amenée le long du bord, on a quelques minutes pour prendre un sac et demi de biscuits, 75 kg environ, et deux barils de bière qui font 60 litres. Trois hommes en tirailleurs font feu pour retarder les pirogues pendant que les autres chargent les vivres. La flottille hésite et s'arrête un moment, leur donnant le temps d'embarquer. Et le capitaine ? Fallait-il ou non emporter mon cadavre ? Ils décident, d'un commun accord, de ne pas m'abandonner quitte à me jeter plus tard par-dessus bord. On m'embarque sur mon matelas sans connaissance, le sang s'échappant de mes huit blessures et de plus en plus par le nez et la bouche. On hisse la misaine et la baleinière, poussée par une bonne brise, l'équipage faisant feu de toutes ses armes, salué par une grêle de flèches, parvient enfin à se frayer le passage.

La lutte de mes hommes a été couronnée de succès grâce à leur bravoure et à l'ignorance des sauvages qui ne connaissaient pas les armes à feu. J'ai signalé Louis Neveu et François Garnier au ministre de la Marine et j'ai eu le bonheur de voir leur courage et leur belle conduite récompensés. Quant aux sauvages, ils nous ont attaqués, pensant ne faire qu'une bouchée des huit hommes restés seuls à bord du navire échoué.

The ship cleared, they carried me to my cabin to wash me and to tend my wounds. I had four to the head, one of which almost split it in two, a cut lip, an eye jutting out of its socket, a piece of my knee missing, two arrows in my chest, to speak only of the most serious of them. Hardly were they ready to take a little nourishment⁴¹ to recoup their strength, than they see, from all the islands, from all the reefs, an armada of canoes set out: the sea appeared covered with them and on shore, fires everywhere, a signal for a general attack.

It was 2:30. The crew, comprised of seven men exhausted by the fight, no longer having a leader, feels too weak to sustain another struggle, deliberates and with one unanimous voice decides to abandon ship.

My whaleboat is brought alongside, they have a few minutes to take a bag and a half of hardtack, about 75 kg, and two barrels of beer, which equals 60 litres. Three men as sharpshooters open fire to slow down the canoes while the others load the supplies.⁴² The flotilla hesitates and stops a moment, giving them time to embark. And the captain? Was it necessary or not to take my corpse along? They decide, by common agreement, not to abandon me even if it means casting me overboard later. They carry me on board on my mattress, unconscious, blood oozing from my eight wounds and increasingly from my nose and my mouth. They hoist the foresail and the whaleboat, driven by a good breeze, the crew firing all their weapons, greeted by a hail of arrows, is able finally to clear the channel.

My men's struggle has been crowned with success thanks to their bravery and to the ignorance of the savages who were not acquainted with fire arms. I commended Louis Neveu and François Garnier to the Minister for the Navy and I have had the fortune to see their courage and their good conduct rewarded. As for the savages, they attacked us, thinking to make short work of eight men remaining alone on a grounded ship

La baleinière mit le cap à l'ouest pour retrouver le grand canot. Vers 4 heures, elle l'aborda alors qu'il s'en revenait tranquillement, poussé par la marée.

En me voyant inconscient et baigné dans mon sang, Hochard, qui n'en croyait pas ses yeux, demanda ce qui avait pu me mettre dans un tel état. Mes hommes l'informèrent en détail de l'attaque qui les avait contraints à abandonner le navire.

Hochard ordonna aussitôt au maître d'équipage de monter dans mon canot et le fit remplacer par un matelot : le nombre restait ainsi égal dans les deux embarcations. Puis il décida de faire route vers Coupang, capitale de Timor, distant de 1 500 milles du lieu du naufrage, soit 2 778 kilomètres. Il oubliait qu'à 60 lieues de là se trouvait l'îlot Booby où, le voyage précédent, j'avais déposé des vivres et des munitions.

Durant les premières journées, les embarcations, parfaitement voilées, naviguèrent de conserve : j'étais toujours sans connaissance, saignant abondamment de l'oreille droite, de la bouche et du nez. Ce ne fut que trois jours après avoir été abattu que je revins à moi. A 5 heures du soir, je donnai quelques signes de vie, et peu après j'ouvris les yeux. Me voyant dans ma baleinière, avec une partie de mes hommes, je ne pus, tout d'abord, me rendre compte de ce qui s'était passé, mais j'étais calme et j'avais toute ma connaissance.

Mes hommes me voyant revivre m'entourent et s'empresent de m'informer des événements. Je voulus me redresser sur mon matelas : impossible tant j'étais faible. Mes marins durent me soutenir. Ils parlaient tous à la fois, chacun voulait dire son mot. Sur ma demande, ils m'apprennent que le second est à petite distance. Les voiles sont amenées et nous l'attendons. Que l'on juge de la surprise de ces hommes en me revoyant de ce monde.

The whaleboat set a course to the west to meet the longboat. Towards 4 pm, it caught up with it while it was coming back calmly, driven along by the tide.

On seeing me unconscious and bathed in my own blood, Hochard, who could not believe his eyes, asked what had been able to put me in such a state. My men informed him in detail of the attack which had forced them to abandon the ship.

Hochard straightaway ordered the boatswain to get into my boat and replaced him with a sailor: so the number remained equal in the two boats. Then he decided to set a course towards Koepang, capital of Timor, a distance of 1,500 miles from the wreck site, or 2,778 kilometres. He forgot that 180 miles from there was Booby Island where, on the previous voyage, I had left supplies and ammunition.

During the first days, the boats, similarly rigged, sailed together: I was still unconscious, bleeding profusely from my right ear, my mouth and my nose. It was not until three days after having been knocked down that I came to. At 5 pm, I gave some signs of life and a little while later I opened my eyes. Seeing myself in my whaleboat, with a part of my men, I was not able, all at once, to realise what had happened, but I was calm and I had all my faculties.

My men seeing me come to life again gather around me and hasten to inform me of the events. I wanted to prop myself up on my mattress: impossible I was so weak. My sailors had to support me. They were speaking all at the same time, each wanted to have his say. To my question, they inform me that the first mate is a little distance away. The sails are lowered and we wait for him. You can judge the surprise of these men in seeing me back in this world again.

- Où allez-vous ? lui demandai-je.
- A Coupang, capitaine
- Quel cap faites-vous?
- L'ouest $\frac{1}{4}$ sud-ouest
- Malheureux, vous allez vous perdre dans l'océan Indien ! Gouvernez à l'ouest $\frac{1}{4}$ nord-ouest où vous êtes perdus...

- Where are you going? I asked him.
- To Koepang, Captain.
- What course are you setting?
- To the west $\frac{1}{4}$ south-west.
- You poor soul, you will get lost in the Indian Ocean! Steer to the west- $\frac{1}{4}$ north-west or you are lost...⁴³



ACCOUNT 2

This account of the wreck formed part of a report of the voyage and a sketch map forwarded to Admiral Ferdinand Hamelin (1859). An extract of this report and the sketch map were published in the *Annales hydrographiques* [Hydrographic annals] (Desparmet, 1859, 16: 585-89) under the title: "Extrait du rapport du capitaine J-B Desparmet, commandant le navire *La Pauline-et-Victoire*, de Bordeaux (Extract from the report of Captain J-B Desparmet, commanding the vessel *Pauline-et-Victoire*, from Bordeaux)".

Jean-Baptiste Desparmet (1983: 153) prepared his report for Admiral Hamelin on the Napoleon Passage and navigation in the Torres Strait while he was waiting for the tides to lift the *Pauline-et-Victoire* off Kuyku Pad. His report was accompanied by a map. An extract of this report and the map were then published in the *Annales hydrographiques*, the official publication of the Service Hydrographique et Océanique de la Marine [SHOM]⁴⁴ (Hydrographic and Oceanic Service of the Navy).

The primary purpose of this Extract report was to furnish mariners intending to sail in Torres Strait with updated navigational

information in a readily available and authoritative source. Consequently, the account of the Goemulgal attack and the crew's voyage to Timor, that forms part of Desparmet's narrative in his *Journal*, was presented in a footnote. Details of the wreck, the attack by the Goemulgal and the voyage to Timor vary in some details from that published in *Journal d'un vieux marin*. His map of Napoleon Passage, published with the Extract report, is reproduced as Figure 5.

One significant detail in this Extract report relates to the crew abandoning the vessel. This was done in such haste that 'all our baggage, as well as 2,600 pounds sterling in a sealed box; this box had been placed by the first mate in a practical safe place to this effect' was abandoned. Desparmet (1983) makes no mention of the box with the £2,600. The only other reference to the £2,600 is found in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche courant* (New Rotterdam Courier) and the *Supplement to the Maitland Mercury*. This considerable sum would have included Desparmet's settlement with the Melbourne merchants Cargill and Beyfus. Desparmet (1983: 142) stated that he then 'embarked with my money and prepared everything to cast-off'.

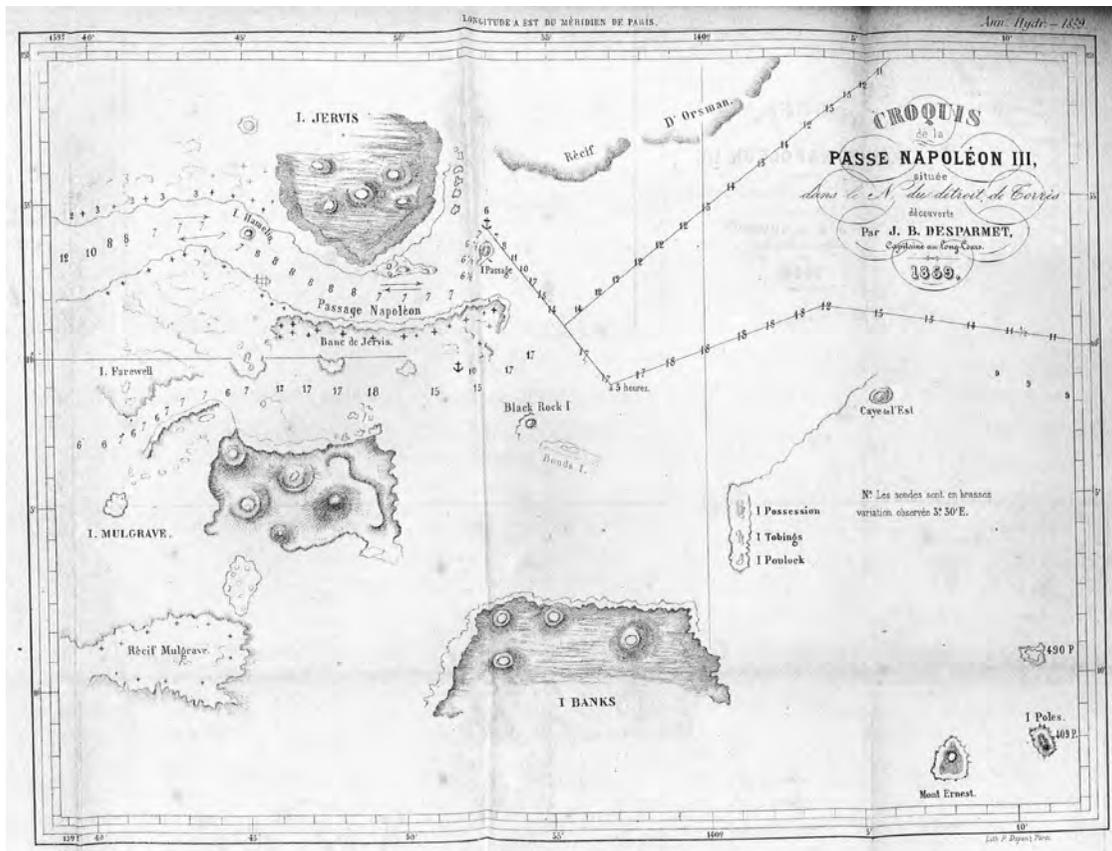


FIG. 5. Map of Napoleon Passage published in the *Annales hydrographiques*, 1859.

PASSE FAREWELL. – En gouvernant à l’O.q.S.O., j’ai passé très près de l’île Long, qui est défendue à sa partie Est par un récif de 2 milles de largeur; aussitôt que je l’ai eu doublée et en gouvernant à l’O.N.O., j’ai eu des fonds de 9 brasses ; l’eau commença à devenir bourbeuse, ce qui me donna quelques craintes d’abord, mais le fond régulier me rassura bientôt. A midi, la latitude observée était de 10° S, et la longitude (méridien de Paris) de 140° 18’ E. ; gouverné à l’O, sur un fond de 8 brasses. A trois heures, j’aperçus la petite caye de l’Est (caye Watson), située à 6 milles dans le N.E. de l’île de la Possession.

FAREWELL CHANNEL [BLIGH CHANNEL]. In steering to the W. by S.W., I passed very close to Long Island [Sasi] which is protected on its eastern part by a reef 2 miles in width; as soon as I had rounded it and steering to the W.N.W, I had depths of 14.2 m; the water began to become murky and gave me some fears at first, but the regular bottom soon reassured me. At mid-day, the latitude observed was 10°S, and the longitude (meridian of Paris) of 140°18’ E⁴⁵ steered to the W., on a bottom of 13.4 m. At 3 [pm], I caught sight of East Cay (Watson Cay), situated 6 miles to the N.E. of Possession Island.

À cinq heures du soir, étant par 10°02' de latitude et par 139°58' de longitude, la vigie annonce des récifs droit devant nous. Le soleil empêchait de rien distinguer et de se rendre compte par conséquent de la position de ces récifs (le soleil est très-souvent un obstacle à la navigation dans le détroit de Torrès, il en est de même des eaux bourbeuses). Par prudence j'ai fait gouverner au N.O. sur l'île du Passage, en laissant le grand récif d'Ormans sur tribord. A six heures trente minutes du soir, j'ai mouillé par 7 brasses ; l'île du Passage me restait au S.S.E. à la distance de 1 mille ; les voiles furent serrées et les quarts réglés. Le même service que la nuit précédente et en exerçant la même surveillance.

PASSAGE NAPOLEON III. – Le 27 septembre, à six heures du matin, le vent bon frais de l'E.S.E., le courant très violent portant à l'O, louvoyé entre l'île du Passage, et le banc d'Ormans, mais il me fut impossible de doubler cette île pour aller prendre le passe de Farewell. Je revins forcément au même mouillage après avoir lutté pendant une heure. Aussitôt remouillé, j'ai expédié le second pour sonder la partie Ouest de l'île du Passage, cette partie me paraissant être saine. Après une heure d'exploration et sur un signal donné, le second revint à bord. Les sondes qu'il avait obtenues m'ayant rassuré. J'ai appareillé sans perdre de temps sous les huniers seuls, les basses voiles et les perroquets cargués, en gouvernant au sud. La sonde marquait 6 brasses ½ et 7 brasses. Étant dans l'O. de l'île du Passage, à une distance de 4 encablures, le grand récif de Jarvis se découvrait droit devant nous à la distance de 1 mille. A tribord j'avais l'extrémité des récifs attenants à l'île Jarvis et je gouvernai au S.

At 5 pm, being at 10°02' latitude and 139°58' longitude, the look-out points out some reefs right in front of us. The sun prevented me from making anything out and consequently from rendering an account of the position of these reefs (the sun is very often an obstacle to navigation in the Torres Strait, it is in this the same as the murky waters). Through prudence I steered to the N.W. to Passage Island, leaving the large Orman Reef to starboard. At 6:30 pm, I anchored in 12.6 m; Passage Island remained to the S.S.E. at a distance of 1 mile; the sails were furled and the watches fixed. The same roster as the preceding night and exercising the same surveillance.

NAPOLEON III PASSAGE. - On 27 September, at 6 am, the wind quite fresh from the E.S.E., the current very strong bearing to the W, beat between Passage Island, and Orman Reef but it was impossible for me to round this island to proceed to take Farewell Channel, I returned perforce to the same anchorage after having struggled for an hour. Immediately on anchoring again, I sent the first mate to sound the western part of Passage Island, this part appearing to me to be safe. After an hour of exploration and on a given signal, the first mate returned on board. The soundings which he had obtained reassured me. I got under way without losing time with the top-sails only, the lower sails and the topgallants on their brales, steering to the south. The sounding showed 11.7 m and 12.6 m. Being to the W. of Passage Island, at a distance of 4 cables, the large Jarvis Reef unfolded right before us at a distance of 1 mile. To starboard I had the edge of the reefs adjacent to Jarvis Island and I steered to the S.

Après avoir couru 2 milles au même aire de vent, je vins à l'O.S.O. à cause de grand récif de Jervis qui s'étend de l'E. à l'O ; ce récif découvre de basse mer jusqu'au méridien de la pointe Sud de l'île Jervis, puis il reste couvert de 2 brasses d'eau. La sonde marquait 7 brasses; après avoir doublé la pointe Sud de l'île Jervis, je vins à l'O., puis à l'O.N.O., suivant exactement la direction du banc de Jervis. Ce passage formé par ce banc et les récifs attenants à l'île Jervis a 2 milles de large; c'est un des beaux passages du détroit de Torrès et il n'est connu d'aucun navigateur.

En gouvernant à l'O.N.O la sonde donnait des fonds réguliers de 7 brasses au moment où j'étais à 4 milles environ dans l'O. de la pointe Sud de l'île Jervis ; les deux officiers qui étaient en vigie sur la vergue du petit hunier crient : Lof de deux quarts. Je leur demande s'ils ne voyaient rien à bâbord, ils me répondent : Non. Je vins à l'O., en continuant de sonder ; je trouvai le même fond, puis 6 brasses $\frac{1}{2}$; le navire échoua et s'inclina légèrement sur un fond de roches.

Le courant était très-fort, j'ai pu constater 4 milles à l'O., il y avait jusant ; avec des difficultés inouïes je fis élonger et mouiller sur un fond de 8 brasses, et dans le canal l'ancre de bossoir de tribord avec 80 brasses de chaîne et un autre ancre par derrière avec un aussière de 120 brasses; cela fait, je fis transporter de l'avant à l'arrière près de cinquante tonneaux de lest.

Il y avait 3 mètres d'eau sur l'avant du navire ; 12 mètres sur l'arrière et il était échoué jusque par le travers du mât de misaine.

After having run 2 miles on the same course, I came to the W.S.W. because of the large Jervis Reef which extends from the E. to the W.; this reef was exposed at low water right up to the meridian line from the southern point of Jervis Island, then it remains covered by 3.35 m of water. The sounding showed 12.6 metres; after having rounded the southern point of Jervis Island I came about to the W., then to the W.N.W., following exactly the direction of Jervis Reef. This passage formed by this bank and the reefs adjacent to Jervis Island has a width of 2 miles; it is one of the fine channels of Torres Strait and it is not known by any navigator.

Steering to the W.N.W. the sounding indicated regular bottoms of 12.6 metres at the time when I was about 4 miles to the W. of the southern point of Jervis Island; the two officers who were on look-out on the yard of the fore-topsail cry out: Luff two points. I ask them if they saw anything to port, they reply to me: No. I came about to the west continuing to sound; I found the same depth, then 11.7 m; the ship ran aground and listed slightly on a rocky bottom.

The current was very strong, I was able to establish 4 miles to the W., there was an ebb-tide; with extraordinary difficulties I was able to run out the anchors and anchor on a bottom of 13.4 m, and in the channel, the starboard bow anchor with 134.16 m of chain and another anchor aft with a hawser of 201.24 m; that done, I had moved from the bow to the stern nearly 141.5 m³ of ballast.

There were 3 metres of water over the bow of the ship; 12 metres on the stern and it was reaching right up to the beam of the foremast.

ÎLE HAMELIN. – Cette passage, à laquelle j'ai donné le nom de Napoléon III, est bien plus sûre que celle de Farewell. Elle est plus facile à l'entrée où les récifs sont à fleur d'eau et bien visibles. Une petite île, qui a la forme d'une pyramide triangulaire tronquée, élevée de 6 mètres environ, et que j'ai nommée île Hamelin, sert de balise par sa position et indique l'extrémité N.O. du banc de l'île Jervis, sur lequel j'ai naufragé. L'île Hamelin me restait au N.q.N.O. à la distance de ½ mille.⁵⁵

L'île Hamelin est un jalon qui doit servir de guide, en gouvernant droit dessus, dès qu'on a doublé la pointe Sud de l'île Jervis et en tenant toujours le milieu du chenal. On laissera l'île Hamelin sur tribord, à 2 encablures, jusqu'à ce qu'on la relève à l'E.q.S.E. La sonde marquera 7 brasses : en gouvernant à l'O.S.O. pendant 4 milles on aura le même fond, puis 10 brasses et 12 brasses, et alors tous les dangers du détroit de Torrès seront franchis. On gouvernera à l'O, dès qu'on aura obtenu 12 brasses et dès ce moment on ne rencontrera plus ni haut-fond ni changement de couleur de l'eau.

NAUFRAGE SUR LE RECIF DE L'ÎLE JERVIS.

– C'est le 27 septembre, à onze heures trente minutes, que la *Pauline-et-Victoire* a échoué au moment où la sonde marquait 6 brasses ½. Les voiles furent serrées et on s'occupa de retirer le navire des récifs par les manœuvres que j'ai indiquées plus haut, puis on attendit l'heure de la pleine mer pour pouvoir agir.

A neuf heures du soir, le navire s'étant redressé, il a donné plusieurs coups de talon qui nous ont indiqué que le moment d'opérer était arrivé. Aussitôt on vira sur les ancres, le navire céda à la force et, laissant sa fausse quille, il était à flot un instant après.

HAMELIN ISLAND. This channel, to which I have given the name of Napoleon III, is much more certain than Farewell [Channel (Bligh Channel)]. It is easier at the entrance where the reefs are at water level and quite visible. A small island which has the form of a truncated triangular pyramid, about 6 m in height and to which I gave the name Hamelin Island, serves as a beacon by its position and marks the N.W. extremity of the Jervis Island reef on which I was wrecked. Hamelin Island remained to my N. by N.W. at a distance of half a mile.

Hamelin Island is a marker which should serve as a guide, steering straight on, as soon as you have rounded the southern point of Jervis Island and keeping always to the middle of the channel. You will keep Hamelin Island to starboard, at 2 cables, up to the point you sight it on the E. by S.W. The sounding will show 12.6 m; steering to the W.S.W. for 4 miles you will have the same depth, then 16.7 m and 20.1 m, and then all the dangers of the Torres Strait will be cleared. You steer to the W until you have got 16.7 m and from that moment you will no longer encounter either shallows or changes of water colour.

WRECK ON THE REEF OF JERVIS ISLAND.

– It is on 27 September, at 11:30, that the *Pauline-et-Victoire* ran aground at the moment when the sounding showed 11.7 m. The sails were furled and we were engaged in removing the ship from the reefs through the manoeuvres which I mentioned above, then we waited for the hour of high tide to be able to act.

At 9 pm, the ship standing upright again, touched the bottom several times, that indicated to us that the moment to manoeuvre had arrived. We immediately heaved on the anchors, the ship yielded to their force and, losing its false keel, it was afloat a moment after.

La nuit était sombre et le pont encombré de chaînes et d'aussières, ce qui rendait impossible de manœuvrer pour aller prendre un mouillage convenable, d'autant plus que le courant était fort et le vent violent.

Le 28 au matin, par prudence et avant d'appareiller pour continuer ma route, je crus devoir envoyer mon second avec des instructions pour sonder l'espace de 5 à 6 milles et pour avoir des données précises qui me mettraient à l'abri de tout autre événement.

A six heures et demie du matin le canot partit du bord, emportant tout ce qui était nécessaire. Le second poussa l'exploration plus loin que mes instructions le lui indiquaient et, surpris par le jusant et par le vent d'E. très violent, il lui fut impossible de revenir à bord ; vers midi il fut obligé de mouiller pour attendre la marée suivante.

Le vent venait par rafales et j'étais mouillé sur un fond dur. La *Pauline-et-Victoire*, traînant ses trois ancres, commença à talonner à six heures du matin. A midi le navire était déjàugé de l'avant à l'arrière sur un fond de concave et couché sur le côté de bâbord.

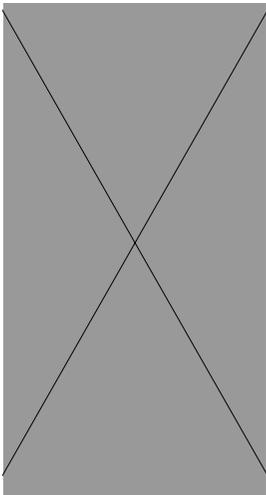


FIG. 6. Group portrait of Napoleon III his wife Eugenie and son Eugene. c1860-1870. Image H32767 State Library of Victoria

The night was dark and the deck cluttered with chains and hawsers, which rendered it impossible to manoeuvre to take up a suitable anchorage, the more so because given that the current was strong and the wind violent.

On 28th in the morning, through caution and before getting under way to continue my course, I deemed it advisable to send my first mate with instructions to sound the way for 5 to 6 miles and to have the precise information which would cover me from every other eventuality.

At 6:30 am the long boat left from on board, taking all that was necessary. The first mate carried the exploration further than my instructions indicated to him and, surprised by the ebb-tide and the very strong wind from the east, it was impossible for him to return on board; towards mid-day he was obliged to anchor to wait for the next tide.

The wind blew in squalls and I was anchored on a hard bottom. The *Pauline-et-Victoire*, dragging her three anchors, began to scrape the bottom at 6 am. At mid-day the ship was lifted up from the bow to the stern on a concave bottom and heeled on the port side.



FIG. 7. Ferdinand Alphonse Hamelin. Image National Archives of Austria #7301816 - PORT_00070816_01

REPORTS OF THE WRECK OF THE *PAULINE-ET-VICTOIRE* IN THE EUROPEAN AND AUSTRALIAN PRESS

News of the wreck of the *Pauline-et-Victoire* was reported in the Singaporean, Australian and European press. These accounts are necessarily précised versions of events and largely concentrate on the attack on the *Pauline-et-Victoire* and the crew's voyage to Timor. An account published in the *Singapore Free Press* was reprinted in the *Supplement to the Maitland Mercury* (19 February 1859) and the *Moreton Bay Courier* (5 March 1859).

The press reports complement, and in some details vary, from Desparmet (1859, 1983). The variations in the texts are of interest however, especially relating to the conflict on the *Pauline-et-Victoire* and the hasty departure of her crew.

ACCOUNT 1

Girard (1859). 'Enlèvement et pillage de la *Pauline-et-Victoire*, de Bordeaux, par des pirates malais (The seizure and looting of the *Pauline-et-Victoire*, from Bordeaux, by Malay pirates)'. *Le Monde illustré*, no 90, 9 January: 70.

Pierre Fulgence Girard was a lawyer, man of letters, director of literary journals, secretary of the Société d'Archéologie d'Avranches (Archaeological Society of Avranches)⁴⁶, historian, writer, politician and businessman. He was born on 21 September 1807 at Granville and died on 10 April 1873 at La Broise. Girard studied law at Caen and Paris and participated in the demonstrations at the beginning of the July Monarchy that brought Louis-Philippe to the throne in 1830. Girard became a lawyer at the Avranches bar. His literary activity commenced with the publication of a small work, *Keepsake Breton* in 1832 containing 40 poems by 21 authors. He was a principal contributor to the *Journal d'Avranches* and in 1834 he wrote for *La France maritime*, founded by Amédée Gréhan.

Here he showed his interest for accounts of shipwrecks and other nautical dramas. Girard published novels, historical studies and essays and was a founder *Le Monde illustré* and contributed weekly articles to it on a wide range of topics (Fulgence Girard [ca 2001]).

Le Monde illustré (Illustrated world) was a weekly review that commenced publication in Paris on 17 April 1857. The paper covered general news and was illustrated with engravings and, and later, photographs. In 1938 it merged with *Le Miroir du monde* to become *Le Monde illustré Miroir du monde*. Publication was suspended on 8 June 1940 and recommenced on 22 February 1945 with the title *Le Monde illustré*. In December 1948 the publication merged with *France-Illustration* to become *France-Illustration Le Monde illustré*. In 1956, with a further merger, the title *Le Monde illustré* disappeared.

Girard's literary account was based on information provided by the co-owners of the *Pauline-et-Victoire*, Vilette Nasse and Company. It is likely that Desparmet provided the company with an account of the events in Torres Strait after his return to France.

Girard reported accurately the passage of the *Pauline-et-Victoire* through Torres Strait and that she ran aground in Torres Strait. He chose to transform Desparmet's matter-of-fact account of the wreck, where the protagonists were the Goemulgal, into a more dramatic account of a 'naval drama for which their three-master was the theatre in the great archipelago of Asia' for 'the seizure and looting by some Malay pirates' (Girard, 1859: 70). His account was accompanied by an engraving by Henri Durand-Brager⁴⁷ illustrating the attack by the 'Malay pirates' and the escape of the crew in the whaleboat (Figure 8).

Girard's editorial liberty of attributing the conflict to Malay pirates would have found some resonance with his readers. Newspapers such as the *Illustrated London News* published

numerous accounts of the depredations of pirates.⁴⁸ In France, accounts of Malay pirates appeared in the press, for example the *Journal de dimanche* (Sunday paper). Articles such as Charles Lavollée's 'Les pirates malais' (The Malay pirates) published in the *Revue des deux mondes* in 1853 informed readers of the problem that piracy in the Malay Peninsula, Borneo and in the Sulu Sea caused to British, Dutch, French and Spanish authorities.⁴⁹ The 'Malay pirate' became a feature in contemporary imaginative literature. Titles such as Élie Berthet's *L'homme des bois* (Man

of the woods) (1864), Pierre Lavayssière's *Le Capitaine Landren, ses voyages et ses aventures dans les Indes orientales* (Captain Landren, his voyages and his adventures in the East Indies) (1864), or Pierre Frédé's *La chasse aux pirates malais* (1884) illustrate the comment of Denys Lombard (1979: 231) that 'diffused through an exotic literature...the image of the "Malay pirate" armed with a *kris* (or with a *crid*) and running amok, has not ceased to haunt, from the nineteenth century, our western mentality'. Piracy remains a menace in south-east Asia today (Warren, 2003).



FIG. 8. Attack and pillage by Malay pirates on the three-master, the *Pauline-et-Victoire*, grounded in the Torres Strait. Drawing by M. Durand Brager from documents provided by the owners, Messrs Vilette Nasse and Co., *Le Monde illustré*, 9 January 1859.

Enlèvement et pillage de la *Pauline-et-Victoire*, de Bordeaux, par des pirates malais

Les détails particuliers que nous avons reçus de MM Vilette, Nasse et Ce, armateurs de la *Pauline-et-Victoire*, nous permettent de donner un récit complet du drame naval dont leur trois-mâts a été le théâtre dans le grand archipel d'Asie.

Ce navire, aussi élégant de formes que rapide de sillage, franchissait, le 25 septembre dernier, la passe de Bligh et s'avavançait sous une brise maniable dans le détroit de Torres ; après avoir passé la nuit suivant au mouillage de l'île aux Cocos et celle du 26 à l'ouvert d'une baie abritée de l'île du Passage, il appareilla le 27 au matin et poursuivit sa route avec la circonspection que prescrit la prudence dans ces eaux dangereuses. Vers midi, le second était monté sur la vergue du petit hunier pour embrasser du regard l'aspect général de ces parages, où la sonde avait déjà donné plusieurs fois des profondeurs inquiétantes, lorsque la voix d'un des matelots de vigie signala l'imminence d'un danger.

Loffe de deux quarts ! criait-il. La sonde n'accusait en cet instant que sept brasses. On obéit; la sonde jetée de nouveau donne la même profondeur. À l'instant le navire talonne et s'arrête presque aussitôt, l'avant engagé dans un pâté de coraux.

Les efforts de l'équipage parvinrent à l'arracher à cet écueil ; à huit heures du soir, il était à flot et s'affourchait sur trois ancres pour résister aux courants et passer avec sécurité la nuit.

L'expérience ayant révélé au capitaine les dangers qu'offrent à la navigation, même la plus prudente, ces parages, dont le fond madréporique crée, d'une année à l'autre, des écueils inconnus ; il expédia, dès six heures du matin, sa chaloupe, montée par quatre matelots, sous les ordres de son second, pour explorer une passe qu'il devait franchir pour sortir du détroit de Torres ; elle devait rallier le bord vers midi, afin que l'on put profiter de la relevée pour opérer le débarquement.

The seizure and looting of the *Pauline-et-Victoire*, from Bordeaux, by Malay pirates

The particular details which we have received from Vilette, Nasse and Co, owners of the *Pauline-et-Victoire*, permit us to give a complete account of the naval drama for which their three-master was the theatre in the great archipelago of Asia.

This vessel, as elegant of line as rapid of speed, cleared, on 25 September last, Bligh Entrance and advanced in Torres Strait under a commanding breeze; after having spent the following night at anchor near Coconut Island and on the night of the 26th in the mouth of a bay sheltered by Passage Island, she cast off on the 27th in the morning and continued her course with the caution which prudence demands in these dangerous waters. Towards mid-day, the first mate had climbed onto the yard of the fore-topsail to survey the general appearance of these latitudes, where the sounding had on several occasions already given disturbing depths, when the voice of one of the sailors on watch signalled the immediacy of danger.

Luff two points! he shouted. The sounding at that moment showed only 11.7 m. He obeys; the line thrown once again gives the same depth. Instantly the ship scrapes the bottom and stops almost straightaway, the bow entangled in a coral crust.

The crew's efforts managed to pull her off this reef; at eight pm, she was afloat and moored on three anchors to hold against the currents and spend the night securely.

Experience having taught the Captain the dangers which these latitudes offer to navigation, even the most prudent, by which the madreporic sea bed creates, from one year to another, unknown reefs; he sent, at 6 am, his launch, crewed by four sailors, under the orders of his first mate, to explore a passage which she must clear to exit from Torres Strait; [the launch] was to rejoin the ship towards mid-day in order that they could benefit from assistance in carrying out the unloading.

Vers une heure de l'après-midi, la chaloupe n'étant pas encore de retour, le capitaine était descendu dans sa cabine, pendant que l'équipage dînait sur l'avant, lorsque son attention fut appelée par un piétinement suspect, dont le bruit se faisait entendre sur la dunette. Il s'y rend aussitôt.

Une pirogue malaise avait abordé le navire, et les quatorze sauvages qui la montaient escaladaient l'arrière. Le capitaine leur enjoint de se retirer, et bien qu'il n'eût à la main d'autre arme qu'une badine, il s'élançait vers eux pour faire exécuter immédiatement son ordre. On connaît l'audace, l'adresse et la vigueur de la race malaise. Ces sauvages, aux membres robustes et dont les regards étincelants révèlent à la fois l'intelligence et la férocité, l'enveloppent aussitôt et le frappent de leurs casse-têtes et de tout ce dont ils peuvent se faire une arme. M Desparmet tombe sanglant à leurs pieds, sans pouvoir faire entendre d'autre appel que le cri : A moi !

Avertis par le bruit de la lutte, les marins accourent à son secours ; ils s'arment précipitamment de tout ce qui tombe sous leurs mains : couteaux, haches, herminettes, fusils, et s'élancent résolument sur ces assaillantes ; les sauvages tentent vainement de résister ; ils sont culbutés dans la mer ; plusieurs y trouvent la mort, affaiblis par leurs blessures ou atteints par les balles.

Le capitaine, sans connaissance, est porté dans sa chambre ; on lui prodigue tous les secours que réclame son état, lorsqu'un des hommes de bordée vient apprendre que vingt grandes pirogues de guerre ; chargées de sauvages armés, sort d'une des anses de Torres et se dirige vers la *Pauline-et-Victoire*. Le lieutenant ordonne de s'armer et s'élançait sur le pont pour s'assurer du nombre et de la force des pirates. Il reconnaît bientôt l'inutilité d'une résistance sans autre dénouement possible que le massacre de ses hommes ; un parti seul reste à prendre : évacuer le navire et profiter de l'âpreté au pillage de ces bandits, pour échapper à leur férocité.

Towards one o'clock in the afternoon, the launch not yet back, the captain had gone down into his cabin while the crew had their dinner on the forecastle, when his attention was drawn by a suspect trampling, the noise from which could be heard on the poop deck. He immediately went up there.

A Malay canoe had come alongside the ship, and the fourteen savages who were on board, were climbing the stern. The captain tells them to leave and, though he had in his hand no other weapon but a cane, he rushes upon them to have his order executed immediately. We are all aware of the boldness, the dexterity and the strength of the Malay race. These savages, with their sturdy limbs and flashing looks which reveal both intelligence and savagery, surround him immediately and strike him with their clubs and with everything with which they could arm themselves. Mr Desparmet fell bleeding at their feet, without being able to utter another call than the cry: 'To me!'

Alerted by the noise of the struggle, the sailors run to his assistance; they arm themselves hastily with everything that comes to hand: knives, axes, adzes, rifles, and launch themselves resolutely on these assailants; the savages try vainly to resist; they are toppled into the sea; several find death there, weakened by their wounds or struck by the bullets.

The captain, unconscious, is carried into his cabin; the crew lavish on him all the help that his condition requires, when one of the men on watch is told that twenty large war canoes, full of armed savages, are leaving from one of the coves of Torres [Strait] and heading towards the *Pauline-et-Victoire*. The lieutenant orders the crew to arm themselves and dashes onto the bridge to confirm the pirates' number and strength. He soon recognises the uselessness of resistance without any other possible outcome than the massacre of his men; only one option remains to be taken: evacuate the vessel and profit from the ruthlessness of the looting by these bandits, to escape their ferocity.

Le capitaine est descendu sur un matelas dans le canot où l'on jette confusément quelques armes, des cartes, des instruments nautiques, quelques munitions et quelques vivres. Tous les marins ensuite y prennent place, et l'on pousse au large au milieu des cris, des menaces des Malais qui, en cet instant, envahissent le navire.

C'est là le moment qu'a choisi M. Henri Durand-Brager pour dessiner, dans sa scène la plus saisissante, ce drame sinistre.

L'embarcation se porta d'abord sur la chaloupe partie le matin sous les ordres du second, et qui en cet instant, gouvernait elle-même pour rallier la *Pauline-et-Victoire*. On apprit à ceux qui la montaient la catastrophe qui venait de s'accomplir, et l'on arrêta, en commun, quel que fût le danger de cette navigation, de se diriger vers Coupang, dont on était séparé par quatre cents lieues. Nous ne suivrons pas ces embarcations dans leur long trajet à travers les récifs et au milieu d'îles habitées par des populations perfides et cruelles, parages redoutés moins encore pour leurs populations féroces que pour la violence de leurs ouragans. Séparés par une nuit d'obscurité et d'orage, les deux canots sauveteurs se trouvèrent réunis, après quatorze jours de mer, dans le port hollandais où les attendait l'hospitalité plus sympathique.

FULGENCE GIRARD.

The captain is lowered on a mattress into the ship's boat where they throw a confusion of weapons, maps, nautical instruments, ammunition and supplies. All the sailors then take their places in the boat and push off amidst the cries, the threats of the Malays who, at this moment, are invading the vessel.

It is that moment that Mr Henry Durand-Brager has chosen to represent, in his most gripping scene, this gruesome drama.

The boat met up at first with the launch that had left in the morning under the first mate's command; and which at this moment was itself heading to rejoin the *Pauline-et-Victoire*. They acquaint those aboard it with the catastrophe which had just taken place, and decided, together, whatever the danger of this route, to head towards Koepang, from which they were separated by four hundred leagues. We will not follow these boats in their long crossing through the reefs and in the midst of islands inhabited by treacherous and cruel populations, latitudes feared no less for their fierce populations than for the violence of their hurricanes. Separated by a night of darkness and storm, the two rescue boats find themselves reunited, after fourteen days at sea, in the Dutch port where the kindest hospitality awaited them.

ACCOUNT 2

'Attack and pillage of a French ship, by Malay pirates'. *Illustrated Times*, 5 March 1859: 1⁵⁰.

The *Illustrated Times* was a short-lived competitor to the *Illustrated London News*. It was established by Henry Vizetelly on 9 June 1855. The publication of the *Illustrated Times* had a serious effect upon the circulation of its rival as it was a cheaper paper and it constantly forestalled its more expensive rival on many important occasions. The *Illustrated London News* eventually purchased the *Illustrated Times* and both continued publication until the *Illustrated Times* ceased publication on 2 March 1872.

The account of the wreck contained in this article, from the date of its publication and the attribution of the attack to Malay pirates, would suggest that it is informed by Girard's article.

ATTACK AND PILLAGE OF A FRENCH SHIP, BY MALAY PIRATES

The *Pauline* and *Victoire* of Bordeaux was working through Torres Straits, with an easy breeze, a careful look-out and attendance to her course being kept on board. About noon the second mate, who was mounted on the fore-yard-arm, for the sake of getting a more extended view of the dangerous coasts along which they were creeping, suddenly cried, "Luff two points". At this moment the lead only gave seven fathoms; the order of the mate was obeyed; the sea line was again cast, and still the same depth. In another minute the vessel dragged the bottom, and almost immediately stuck fast. However, by dint of extraordinary efforts, the crew succeeded in hauling the ship off, and three anchors were thrown out to keep her to the current, and prevent her drifting during the night.

Experience having taught the captain the dangers to be encountered in navigating these straits, he resolved to send the long-boat, well-manned, in search of some more favourable channel. While the men were at their dinner on the fore-castle, and the captain seated in his cabin anxiously awaiting the return of the long-boat, a Malay pirogue had come alongside the merchantman. In another instant the savages who manned her were on board. The captain hastened on deck at the noise and desired the intruders to retire; he was instantly surrounded by a mob of wretches and fell beneath their clubs. The crew rushed forward to his assistance, arming themselves with anything that came in their way, and resolutely attacked the aggressors. For a time they were successful, the pirates, unable to resist the determined front of the Europeans, gave way and were driven into the sea.

The captain, insensible from his wounds, was carried to the cabin. While the crew were thus occupied, twenty large pirogues, filled with armed men, were seen on their way to the ship. A few minutes' reflection showed them the utter hopelessness of opposing resistance to these great odds; one chance only remained, and that was to abandon the ship, and, profiting by the savages' thirst for plunder, to escape unpursued.

Placing the captain on a mattress, the crew lowered him into the boat, and also some charts, nautical instruments, and a few arms. Each man then took his place, and they shoved off amidst the yells and menacing gestures of the pirates who had just boarded the ship. In a short time they were joined by the long-boat; and in fourteen days of stormy weather, succeeded in reaching the Dutch settlement of Cupang.

ACCOUNT 3

'Attack by savages on a stranded ship'. *Supplement to the Maitland Mercury*, 19 February 1859: 6. This text was reproduced in the *Moreton Bay Courier* on 5 March 1859: 250

The report, reproduced in two Australian newspapers, was originally published in the *Singapore Free Press*. These articles referred to the £2,600 in gold that belonged to the captain, which the Extract report stated was left on the vessel when the vessel was abandoned.

It is likely that the *Singapore Free Press* republished an article with its provenance in the Netherlands East Indies colonial press. The account of the wreck in the *Singapore Free Press* and then in the two Australian newspapers was also published in Dutch in the Colonial news section of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche courant* (New Rotterdam Courier) on 26 January 1859.⁵¹ Summary reports then appeared in *Dagblad van Zuidholland en 's Gravenhage* (South Holland and The Hague Daily) on 27 January 1859 and the *Leidse courant* (Leiden Courier) on 28 January 1859.

These newspaper accounts took Badu as their reference point. They also stated that 'efforts were then made to regain the ship, but this is found impossible owing to the strong current and heavy winds from the east, which were directly against them'. No reference was made in Desparmet (1859, 1983) to any attempt to regain the vessel.

ATTACK BY SAVAGES ON A STRANDED SHIP

(From the *Singapore Free Press*)

On the 11th and 14th October two boats arrived at Timor Koepang, containing Captain J D Desparmet, two mates and 9 seamen of the French barque *Pauline et Victoire* of Bordeaux. This vessel left Melbourne on the 26th August last,

bound to Batavia. After making Torres Strait by Bligh's entrance, the vessel had almost passed through when she struck on a bank called Bligh's Farewell, 4 miles north of Mulgrave island, on the morning of the 27th September, between 9 and 10 o'clock. She succeeded, however, in getting off, and at 9 p m. came to anchor in deep water. On the morning of the 29th the two mates and four seamen were sent in a boat to sound the channel, but the current proved so strong that they were soon carried out of sight of the vessel. About 10 o'clock in the forenoon of the same day a strong current from the west, and a hard breeze, drove the ship from her anchors, and she was carried stern on upon the same bank, and fell over on her side. Hopes were still entertained of getting her off, if the current and wind abated, on the return of the two mates and the sailors. In the forenoon a boat approached the ship from Mulgrave Island, with twelve naked and unarmed natives, who came on board, and after having bartered some cocoanuts for biscuits, &c, took their departure. At noon, while the crew were at dinner, the Captain, when he came on the poop, saw fourteen naked and unarmed natives who had climbed up the side. He made signs that they must leave the ship, but he was attacked by seven of them, who seized him by the throat and beat him so severely over the head with two stanchions, that he was soon stunned. The five men of the crew who remained on board, on hearing the cries of the Captain, rushed to his assistance, and, armed with their knives, succeeded in driving the savages overboard. Some of the natives, who were severely wounded, took refuge under the ship, from whence they were expelled. About two o'clock in the afternoon, eighteen or twenty boats full of natives were

observed approaching the vessel, and as it was considered impossible to resist such a large party it was resolved to abandon her. Some provisions, a chart, the compass and arms, were placed in the boat, together with the still insensible commander, and a course was steered to the west, and in the evening they fell in with the boat which had been sent away in the morning. Efforts were then made to regain the ship, but this was found impossible owing to the strong current and heavy winds from the east, which were directly against them. It was then determined to proceed to Timor Koepang. The Captain in some measure recovered from his stupor on the 1st October, and after having been 12½ days at sea since leaving the vessel, the boat containing the captain and five of the sailors reached at Timor Koepang, and the other boat with the two mates and four sailors arrived two and a half days later. The ship was in ballast, the only property on board consisting of a box in the cabin containing £2600 in gold belonging to the captain.

VALUE OF DESPARMET'S ACCOUNTS

Like Bligh and Dumont d'Urville, Desparmet moored off Mabuyag with the primary purpose of locating a navigable channel through which he could safely exit Torres Strait – a point he makes when sailing from Poruma: 'I wanted to clear the Strait the same day' (Desparmet, 1983: 148). He believed that no European had visited the waters off Mabuyag since Dumont d'Urville (Desparmet, 1983: 150).

When prevented from taking his first preference, Bligh Channel, he studied his charts and found notes on one of Dumont d'Urville's charts showing that he had proceeded up to the entrance of the channel that he was intending to investigate. Jean-Baptiste

Desparmet (1983: 150) was conscious that he was venturing into unexplored territory.

Desparmet was one of many mariners who demonstrated their willingness to use Torres Strait as a regular sea route. Matthew Flinders recommended on 10 June 1803 to Phillip Gidley King, Governor of New South Wales, that 'the Torres Strait is both practical and may be expeditiously made. In His Majesty's sloop under my command I have safely passed from the South Sea to the Indian Ocean by it in three days, lying at anchor each night in tolerable safety...' (Flinders in Foley, 1982: 11). King (1803: 356) was equally impressed and on 7 August 1803 informed the Secretary of State for War and Colonies, Lord Hobart:

The passage, Captain Flinders has ascertained thro' Torres's Straits into the Indian Ocean, will, after repassing it once more, be a great advantage to the navigation of those parts, and facilitate the intercourse with India as far as it may be desirable. But a still more interesting object than that presents itself in the advantage this colony will derive in procuring breeding stock from Timor and the islands to the eastward of Java, as the voyage from hence by Torres's Straits will not exceed six weeks.

Jeremy Beckett (1998: 36) has noted that the period from 1789 to 1849 is well documented, with the accounts of Bligh, Edwards, Flinders, King and the scientific expeditions of the *Beagle* (1837-1843), the *Astrolabe* and *Zélée* (1837-1840), *Fly* (1842-1846), and the *Rattlesnake* (1846-1850). Beckett (1998: 36) further observed that 'Haddon noted that little was known about the years between the departure of the naval survey ships in 1849 and the arrival of the missionaries in 1871. Steve Mullins (1995) has since conducted an exhaustive search of the archives, which

filled in some gaps in the story, though without changing the overall picture'.

Beckett's assessment holds true for Desparmet's accounts. He spent two days in the waters off Mabuyag, without landing on any island. Despite the brevity of his stay, his comments about Torres Strait (including Mabuyag and the Goemulgal) are generally accurate and accord with other sources. For example, Desparmet (1983: 147, 154) stated that the *pirogues de guerre* (war canoes) that attacked the *Pauline-et-Victoire* were about 15 metres in length. This is consistent with Bligh's description of canoes being 58 feet in length (Lee, 1920: 180-181; Flinders, 1814b, I: xxiii) (see McNiven, 2015). Desparmet (1983: 154) referred to the oarsmen in the canoes that approached the *Pauline-et-Victoire* during the first attack and illustrated them in his sketch (Figure 9). In his Extract report he stated that the second wave of canoes approached under sail (Desparmet, 1859: 590).

Desparmet's accounts are of value to the researcher. They provide the only presently known record of contact with Mabuyag and the Goemulgal between 1840 and Henry Chester's report in 1871 (Chester, 1871). His account also provides useful information on the Torres Strait, including:

1. the extent and diversity of British and non-British shipping traversing the Torres Strait and contiguous waters (*Reizen*, 1862; Nicholson, 1996; Wichman, 1910);
2. the extent of French maritime interests, French shipping in the Indian and Pacific Oceans and the involvement of French shipping to and from the Australasian colonies (Cabantous *et al.*, 2005; Dunmore, 1969);
3. the extent of reefs and the nature of winds and currents in Torres Strait;
4. the difficulties of navigation, the need for accurate marine surveys, and the

inadequacies for mariners of the existing maps and charts;

5. the areas of Torres Strait infrequently visited by Europeans;
6. the exigencies facing ships' crews wrecked in Torres Strait and the importance of the Dutch settlements in Timor;
7. contemporary European attitudes towards Torres Strait Islanders; and
8. the violence that occurred in pre-1871 contact history in Torres Strait.

When Desparmet traversed the Torres Strait in 1858, a ship's master was reliant on his charts and reference books containing descriptions of previous voyages, the attention of the leadsman and the alertness of his crew on watch to avoid foundering on reefs since. Navigation aids in the form of buoys and lights were not laid in Torres Strait until 1874 (Foley, 1982: 29) and the Torres Strait Pilot Service was not established until 1884 (Foley, 1982: 33).

Desparmet (1983: 150) referred to consulting 'all my books' and English and French charts and maps. These charts and maps would have included, no doubt, charts published by the British Admiralty's Hydrographic Office, such as *Australia, Torres Strait, Endeavour Strait from Booby Island to Cape York* (Australia Torres Strait, 1846), *Australia, Torres Strait, Endeavour Australia, Torres Strait, western channels* (Australia Torres Strait, Western Channels, 1855) and the French Navy's Service Hydrographique et Océanographique de la Marine [SHOM], such as *Détroit de Torres: comprenant la partie nord est...* (1860). He referred specifically to annotated copies of some of Dumont d'Urville's charts (Desparmet, 1983: 150). It is possible that these 'charts and maps' included a copy of the *Carte de la route des corvettes L'Astrolabe et Zélée à travers le détroit de Torres* (Map of the route of the corvettes *Astrolabe* and *Zelee* across the Torres Strait) (Vincendon-Dumoulin, 1840) (Figure 10) drawn by the hydrographer on the *Astrolabe*, Clément Adrian Vincendon-Dumoulin⁵² as

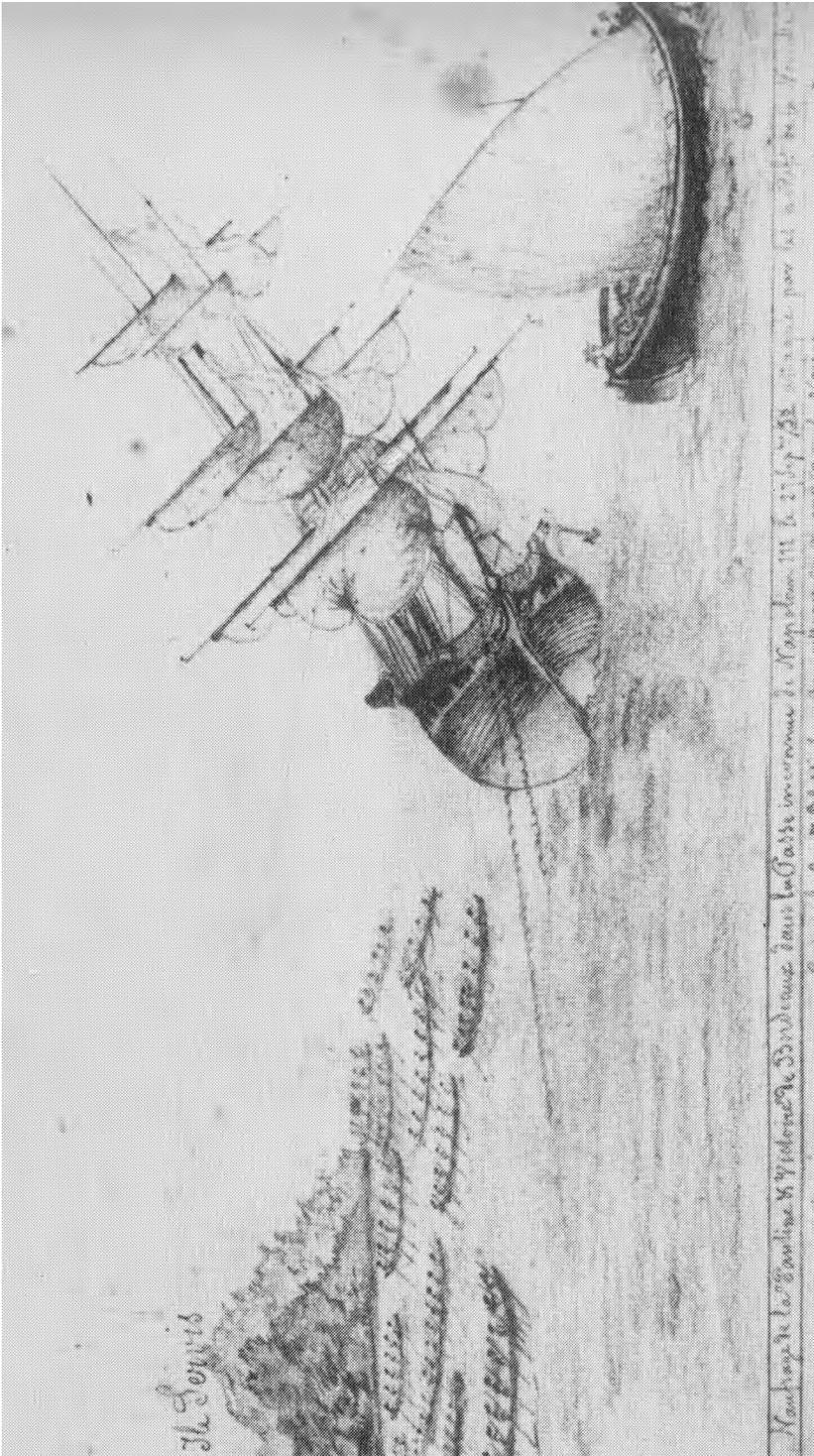


FIG. 9. Jean-Baptiste Desparmet's drawing of the wreck and attack on the *Pauline-et-Victoire*, Kuyku Pad, Mabuyag (Jervis Island), 27 September 1858 (Source: Desparmet, 1983).

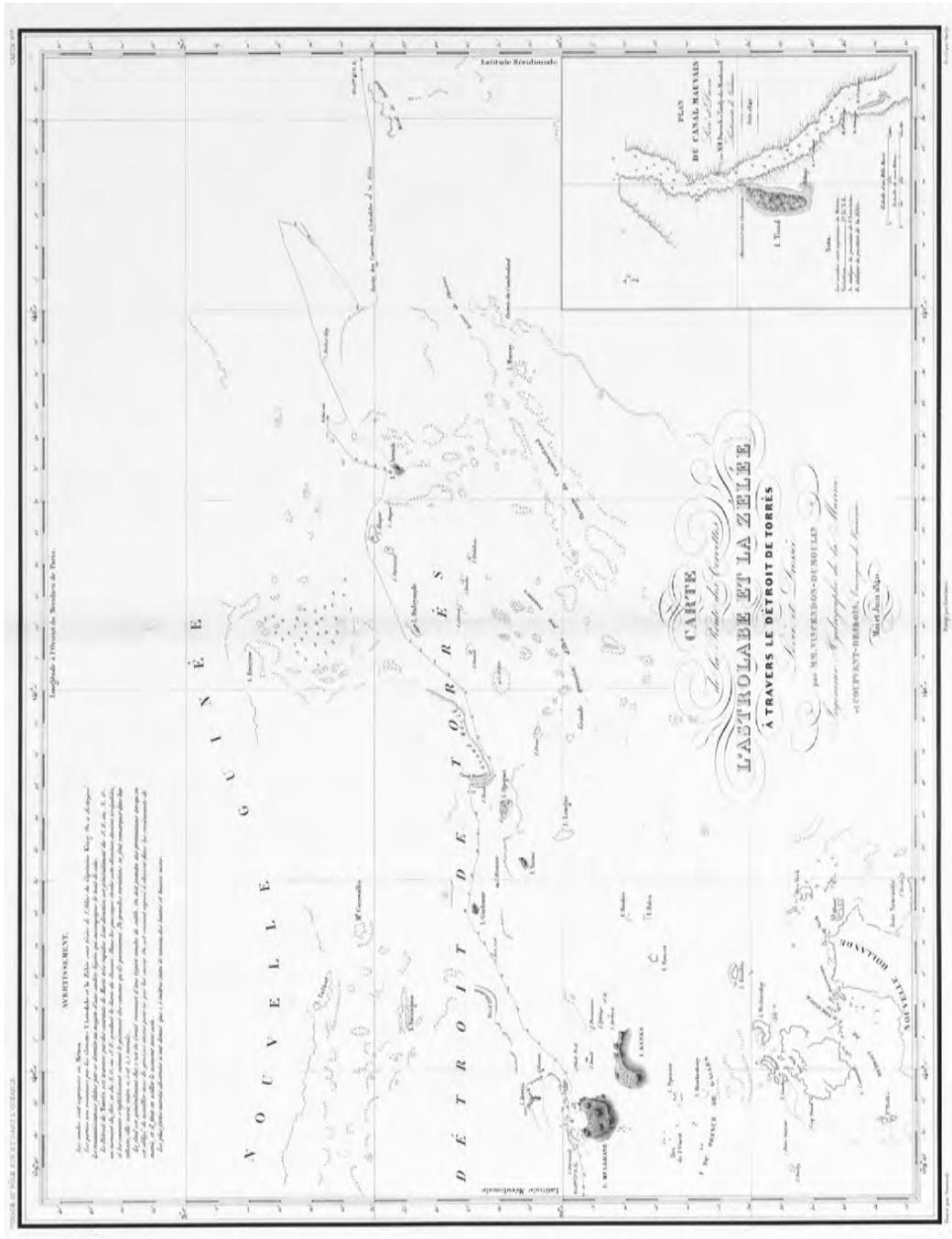


FIG. 10. C.A. Vincendon-Dumoulin, *Carte de la route des corvettes l'Astrolabe et la Zélée à travers le Déroit de Torrès ... mai et juin 1840* (Paris: Publiée sous le Ministère de M. le Duc de Montebello, 1847) (Source: John Oxley Library, Brisbane).

Desparmet (1983: 199) referred specifically to Vinedon-Dumoulin's maps as he prepared to take the *Gaspard* through Torres Strait in 1864.

It is logical that a French captain seeking to traverse Torres Strait in 1858 would rely on the account of Dumont d'Urville's passage through the Strait in 1840. Jean Guillou (1985: 36) asserted that Desparmet greatly respected Dumont d'Urville. This is a well-founded conclusion as Jules-Sébastien-César Dumont d'Urville occupies an important place in the history of French maritime exploration in the Pacific. Lapérouse, d'Entrecasteaux, Baudin, Freycinet, Duperry and Dumont d'Urville played a significant role in documenting the Australian coastline, the islands of Melanesia and Polynesia, the coasts of New Guinea, the South Pole and Alaska. Taillemite (1999: 629) said of Desparmet's countryman:

In the line of French maritime discoverers, two names stand out: Lapérouse and Dumont d'Urville. Both brought essential contributions to the knowledge of the world. The voyage of the *Astrolabe* and the *Zélée* was the last of its kind organized by the [French] Royal Navy and Dumont d'Urville was in France the last seaman of maritime discoveries. With him, there drew to a close, it can be said, an epic that commenced in the XV century in which the French have taken part, even though a little late, but which they nevertheless enriched in several ways.

Desparmet (1983: 146) was also aware of the experiences of other ships' masters in Torres Strait, for example the voyage of Captain Durand of the *Espérance* (Dunkirk) near Ugar.

Desparmet, as a practising mariner, was concerned about the inaccuracies he encountered with the available charts and

sought to inform fellow captains of the latest information gained through his own experience. He communicated his information about Napoleon Passage to the Minister for the Navy and an extract account of the voyage and a map showing soundings were then published in an official and authoritative publication, the *Annales hydrographiques*. In October 1863, while in Sydney, he had the opportunity to discuss navigation in the Torres Strait with the officers of the visiting French frigate *Sibylle* (Desparmet, 1983: 177-178).

Desparmet's account provided little detail about Torres Strait Islanders, in contrast with his more extensive comments about the Fijians (Desparmet, 1983: 95-104). Torres Strait Islanders were for Desparmet an omnipresent threat. He preferred to avoid contact with a people he regarded as untrustworthy and treacherous – a view which he stated succinctly in the concluding remarks of his summary report: 'In the Torres Strait...you should exercise great oversight while at anchor, as much for the anchor as for the natives who are treacherous ferocious cannibals' (Desparmet, 1859: 593).⁵³

Matthew Flinders had recommended to 'sailing masters to be cautious and not land on uninhabited Torres Strait islands, and... that a strict watch be kept on Islanders who approached ships in canoes' (Flinders, 1814b, I: 110). Dumont d'Urville had proffered similar advice. Their advice was generally followed by mariners as Henry Chester⁵⁴ confirmed in his comment that 'I have heard of instances where ships were afraid to anchor till after dark and then carefully put out all the lights and kept watch under arms to prevent being surprised' (Chester, 1871).

During his first Torres Strait voyage in 1857 Desparmet demonstrated his prudence, based on his mistrust of the Islanders, by posting armed men on deck during periods when the *Pauline-et-Victoire* was at anchor,

for example, when anchored off Mawai, 'where the *natifs* [natives] lit fires on the shore to entice us to land, but knowing their treachery, I had armed men on guard the whole night' (Desparmet, 1983: 112). He followed the same approach in 1858 by avoiding anchoring off several islands in Torres Strait and arming the sailors on watch.

Despite his desire to avoid contact, Desparmet engaged in trading activities with the Torres Strait Islanders, including the Goemulgal.⁵⁵ When anchored off Mabuyag, two Goemulgal came on board the *Pauline-et-Victoire* and asked for tobacco using the English word (Desparmet, 1983: 150).⁵⁶ Desparmet (1983: 147) referred to '*une sorte de fruit assez semblable à la groseille*' (a kind of fruit quite similar to the red currant) which the Goemulgal traded for hardtack when they came alongside the *Pauline-et-Victoire*.⁵⁷ He (Desparmet, 1983: 150) did not know what the berries were and tossed them overboard. The captain had realized profitable returns for tortoise shell, pearl shell and pearls in Fiji, so it is not surprising that he was attracted by a pearl shell ornament that was worn by one of the Goemulgal who had come on board the *Pauline-et-Victoire* and he described his determination to obtain it (Desparmet, 1983: 150).

Desparmet (1983: 157) accepted responsibility for losing his ship on a dangerous reef to tides and winds in poorly chartered waters but he attributed the attack on his stranded vessel to treachery and cupidity of the Goemulgal.

Commercial imperatives required mariners to traverse Torres Strait throughout the year, despite the marked seasonal variations of tides and winds that made navigation difficult. Desparmet commented on the marked tidal variations he encountered in the Torres Strait. Squalls and tides caused the *Pauline-et-Victoire* to drag its anchors and run aground a second time on Kuyku Pad: a 'large expanse of Jarvis Reef opened

before us' and 'a large extent of Jarvis Reef was exposed at low tide' (Desparmet, 1983: 151). While he had Dumont d'Urville's charts as reference points, these had been created eighteen years prior to Desparmet's arrival off Passage Island. Girard (1859) drew attention to the 'madreporic sea bed created from one year to another' and 'unknown reefs'. For mariners, the changing nature of the reefs presented yet another navigational difficulty in using Torres Strait.

The loss of the *Comète* after striking a reef and then undertaking a long voyage in open boats in 1853 made Desparmet a cautious man and provided valuable experience he would need in the trying voyage to Timor in 1858. In Torres Strait he followed established navigational practices such as sending the longboat ahead to sound the depth of water.⁵⁸ The results of his decision can be seen in the detailed map of Napoleon Passage (Figure 5).

Desparmet referred to several wrecks in Torres Strait which he took as warnings of dangerous reefs. As he was approaching the Torres Strait in September 1858, Desparmet recounted the voyages of two French vessels that had encountered difficulties in navigating the waters near the Queensland coast and off New Guinea. The first related to the wreck of the *Duroc* (a small French naval vessel) on Mellish Reef in 1856. Desparmet recounted the dangers presented by the reefs and the crew's subsequent voyage in open boats and in *La Délivrance* (a schooner constructed from the wreckage of the *Duroc*), to Timor (Desparmet, 1983: 142; Guillou, 1982: 56-66).⁵⁹ The second referred to the wreck of the *Saint Paul* on Rossel Island (Yela) in the Louisiade Archipelago and the fate of her 317 Chinese labourers (Desparmet, 1983: 142-145).⁶⁰ Both accounts had resonance with Desparmet's position at Kuyku Pad with shared dangers to navigation of reefs, the fate of passengers and crew from shipwrecked vessels at the hands of Indigenous people,

and the privations suffered on long voyages in open boats to reach a European port. His third report recounted Captain Durand's experience at Ugar 'to give an idea of the mistrust...it is necessary to have at every moment regarding the natives' (Desparmet, 1983: 146).

The *Pauline-et-Victoire* was not the only merchant vessel to be attacked off Mabuyag. Haddon (1935: 56) refers to all but one of the crew of an unknown ship that struck on the reef opposite to Mumugubut Bay on Pulu prior to 1871 being killed by men from Mabuyag. Later the ship drifted off with the one man aboard and floated to near Naghir where the vessel was stranded. The Naghir men killed the survivor and the ship broke up. Other similar instances include the *Catherine Seymour* in 1868 (Nicholson, 1996: 224) and the *Sperwer* on Mawai (Wednesday Island) in 1869 (Mullins, 1995: 49-51, 54; Nicholson, 1996: 222-224).

Shipwrecks proved to be a valuable and unexpected source of materials that Torres Strait Islanders could usefully use. Wilkin noted that wrecks were regarded by Torres Strait Islanders as their property, commenting that 'wreckage or driftwood belonged to the finder unless they were too bulky to carry away. Then the owner of the land was informed and given a present for the discovery' (Haddon, 1904: 289). It is possible that Wilkin's comment that 'the Kaigas clan exercised a sufficiently real authority over Jervis reef to appropriate to their own use a wreck which occurred there some thirty years ago' (Haddon, 1904: 289) might refer to the wreck of the *Pauline-et-Victoire*. Mullins (1995: 26) referred to Torres Strait Islanders salvaging materials from shipwrecks and to their pulling wrecks apart to obtain items of use. A similar fate awaited the *Pauline-et-Victoire* after the crew departed in the whaleboat – a point emphasised by Girard (1859).

In 1792 Bligh found the Torres Strait Islanders willing to defend their interests. Haddon (1935: 55) referred to the 'valiant nature of Mabuiag men' and Mullins (1995: 82) noted that 'the people of Mabuiag (Jervis) were one belligerent group willing to challenge the newcomers [Europeans engaged in the marine industries]'

Flinders commented on the effectiveness of their canoes by observing them closing on the *Providence's* cutter on 5 September 1792 near Canoe Cay:

No boats could have been manœuvred better, in working to windward, than were these long canoes by the naked savages. Had the four been able to reach the cutter, it is difficult to say, whether the superiority of our arms would have been equal to the great difference of numbers, considering the ferocity of these people and the skill with which they seemed to manage their weapons (Flinders, 1814b, I: xxi).

Nathaniel Portlock provided advice to small ships traversing Torres Strait – advice that Desparmet followed:

It would also be highly necessary in small tonnage vessels which are very easily boarded by these active savages to be provided with close quarters, by having loop holes in the deck bulk-head of the cabin and conning of the hatches and a few stands of good arms with musquetoons should be kept constantly in proper parts of the ship. The savages throw arrows with great force and the wound made by them is extremely painful (Lee, 1920: 266).

Desparmet's fears of attack were realised on 28 September 1858 after the vessel ran aground for the second time (Desparmet, 1983: 154). With nearly half the crew absent

taking soundings in Napoleon Passage, the Goemulgal had the advantage of surprise and superior numbers which was to prove successful in their seizing the vessel (Figure 9).

His account of the conflict in *Journal d'un vieux marin* differed in detail from the accounts presented in his Extract report (Desparmet, 1859) and the press reports. Desparmet (1983) began his description with the launching, 'about 10 am' of the first canoe (Desparmet, 1983: 154). The account in the *Journal d'un vieux marin* is the only one to record the initial attack on the vessel. The others accounts truncated the course of events by beginning with the captain's appearance on the poop-deck and his subsequent injury. All versions agreed that further resistance to superior numbers was useless and the only option was to abandon the vessel. Chester (1871) criticized such actions, noting that 'crews are in general too ready to abandon vessels grounding in the Strait from dread of the natives'.

Desparmet did not actively seek conflict. He prevented Hochard from firing on the Goemulgal when the ship anchored off Passage Island (Desparmet, 1983: 149). He accepted the consequences of the conflict, referring to the encounter on the *Pauline-et-Victoire* as *boucherie* (butchery) (Desparmet, 1983: 155) and to the area of conflict as *banc de massacres* (Massacres Sandbank) (Desparmet, 1983: 207). He was nevertheless chastened by his experiences in September 1858 and was determined to defend his interests. On his voyage through Torres Strait in 1864 he had his 'five best snipers' armed in the long boat he sent to sound the depth of the water near Poruma and, remembering the events of September 1858, he 'promised myself to make them pay dearly for their brigandage if they came too close to us' (Desparmet, 1983: 207). He avoided any conflict during his last voyage through Torres Strait.

After abandoning the *Pauline-et-Victoire*, the remaining crew with the injured captain made their way through Napoleon Passage in the whaleboat. After catching up with the Hochard's becalmed longboat, the first mate decided to take the two ship's boats to Timor – '1500 miles from the wreck site, or 2778 kilometres' (Desparmet, 1983: 157). Timor was understood as the logical goal of shipwrecked crews passing through Torres Strait (Figure 11) and Hochard followed a well-established precedent: *Bounty's* launch (1789), voyage of William and Mary Bryant from Sydney Cove (1791)⁶¹, the ships' boats of the *Pandora* (1791)⁶², *Shah Homurzeer* (1793)⁶³, the *Morning Star* (1814)⁶⁴, and the *Governor Ready* (1829)⁶⁵, some of the shipwrecked crew and passengers of the *Charles Eaton* (1834)⁶⁶ and the crew of the *Duroc* (1856). Dumont d'Urville feared that if he was unable to refloat the *Astrolabe* and the *Zélée* after grounding on Warrior Reef, he would be obliged to follow in Bligh's footsteps by taking to the ships' boats and navigating their way to Timor (Logan-Jack, 1922, I: 127).

The haste with which the crew abandoned the *Pauline-et-Victorie* meant that the provisions and equipment loaded into the whaleboat proved to be insufficient for the voyage to Koepang. When he regained consciousness, Desparmet questioned why Hochard did not make for Booby Island where adequate provisions (and ammunition) could be embarked but he then admitted: 'I have to do him the justice of saying that this was the only option to take' (Desparmet, 1859: 590).

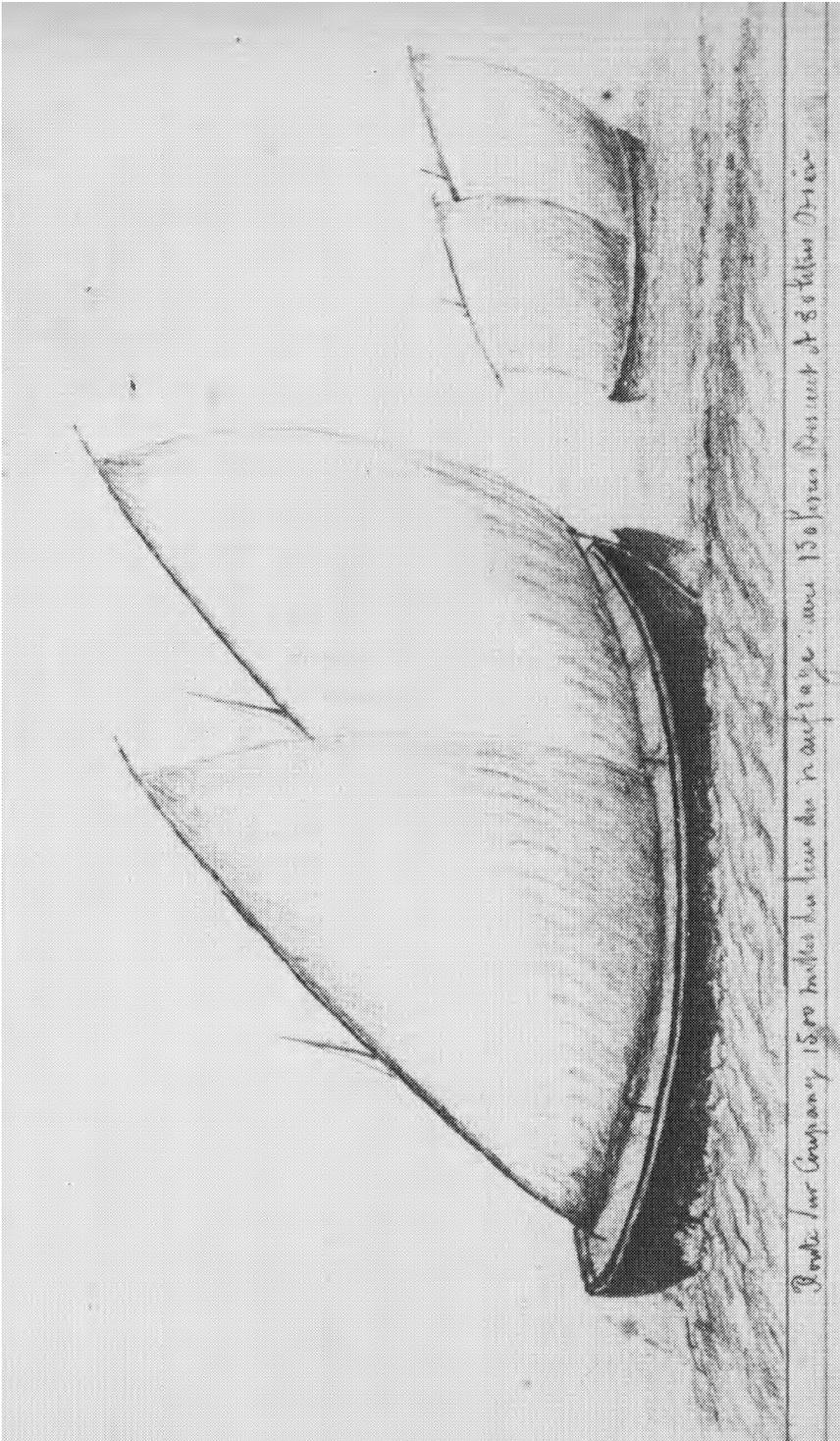


FIG. 11. Jean-Baptiste Desparmet and the two whaleboats en route for Koepong, October 1858 (Source: Desparmet, 1983).

CONCLUSION

Ships' journals provide the earliest record of the contact history between Europeans and Torres Strait Islanders. Haddon (1890: 299), for example, readily acknowledged his reliance on Jukes and MacGillivray stating that 'I believe I have recorded every fact of any importance concerning the Western Tribe of Torres Straits which has been mentioned by these authors'. The accounts of Bligh, Orman, Lawrie, Dumont d'Urville and Desparmet provide researchers with a record of European contact with Mabayag from 1792 to a few years before Chester's report of his visit in 1871.

No doubt, other accounts remain to be identified in repositories in the United Kingdom and Europe and other manuscripts held in family collections, such as *Journal d'un vieux marin*, await publication. Guillou (1985: 38) rightly considered Desparmet to have been a man 'fascinated by Torres Strait and the challenge that the crossing posed for a captain of a sailing ship in this dangerous region'. Jean-Baptiste Desparmet was a successful merchant seaman who sought profitable cargoes in remote parts of the world at a time of change and rapid industrialisation with its new technologies. Commerce attracted him to Australia at a time when the gold discoveries in New South Wales and Victoria brought rapid increases in the European population and created prosperity and opportunities for expanded trade. In the Pacific he encountered Europeans who had established lucrative trading ventures and missionaries who were teaching a new order. He has left a useful record of these times and places, including the Torres Strait. Nicholson (1996: 209) concludes his survey of Desparmet's voyages with his assessment that 'Captain J-B Desparmet thus departs the scene, leaving us very grateful for the memoirs of his encounters with Torres Strait'.

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Desparmet's accounts included frequent reference to nautical measurements. In dealing with a similar situation in Dumont d'Urville's text, Helen Rosenman found a 'wide assortment of measurements that have no exact equivalents. Despite the fact that the metric system had been adopted in France from 1799 to bring some order and uniformity to the chaotic pre-revolutionary system of weights and measures Dumont d'Urville used the old measurements that the Navy had always used' (Dumont d'Urville, 1987, I: xv). Desparmet followed the same usage.

I reproduce the relevant measurements from Rosenman's list (Dumont d'Urville, 1987, I: xv):

<i>une lieue</i>	a league – three miles
<i>une mille</i>	a nautical mile, fixed by the British Admiralty as one minute of the great circle of the earth, or 6,080 feet (1,852 metres)
<i>une brasses</i>	translates as 'a fathom', but is only about 5½ feet (1.677 metres) as against the English fathom of 6 feet (1,829 metres)
<i>une encâblure</i>	a cable (length) was 120 brasses (about 195 metres). The English cable was about 100 fathoms or 607 feet (184.7 metres)
<i>un tonneau nautique</i>	a unit of volume and is equivalent to 2.83 cubic metres

I have followed the usage of the Royal Australian Navy by expressing Desparmet's linear measurements of *milles* and *encâblures* as nautical miles and cables and his measurement of depth in *brasses* in metres.

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□ ENDNOTES

1. Passage Island is called Bupu by the Goemulgal and is situated at 9° 58' 39" S and 142° 14' 19" E (*Gazetteer of Australia place names search*, 2015). Except in quotations, I have used the form of geographical names found in the *Gazetteer of Australia*. See Dumont d'Urville (1987, II: 550) for his comments on Passage Island and its immediate area.
2. Napoleon Passage is located at 9°58' 59" S and 142° 06' E (*Gazetteer of Australia place names search*, 2013).
3. Koepang was the administrative centre of the Dutch-controlled part of the island of Timor. It is known in Dutch as Koepang, Coupang in French and Kupang in Indonesian. I have retained the form Koepang throughout this paper.
4. Saint-Jean-de-Luz is located on the southern Atlantic coast of France, in the Département des Pyrénées-Atlantiques and in the region of Aquitaine, very close to the Spanish frontier. The town is situated in the French Basque country and forms part of the Basque province of Labourd. For centuries Basque seamen had been involved in maritime commerce and long distance fishing as far as the banks of Newfoundland and St Pierre-et-Miquelon (Robin, 2002; Proulx, 1993).
5. Flinders did not visit Mabuyag during his voyage in the *Investigator* in 1802. He did, however, have knowledge of the island and contiguous waters as he served as a midshipman on the *Providence* during Bligh's visit to Mabuyag in September 1792.
6. Bligh Channel is situated at 10° 4' S and 142° 2 E (*Gazetteer of Australia place names search*, 2013). Bligh named the channel Bligh's Farewell. Desparmet referred to it as Farewell Channel.
7. Benjamin Orman (1784-1824) was an East India Company captain and merchant. He arrived in Sydney in April 1816 as master of the merchant vessel *Mary* with a cargo of merchandise from Calcutta. He returned in the same vessel in March 1817 and May 1819 with additional speculative merchant cargoes, returning to India each time via Batavia. Phillip Parker King urged Governor Lachlan Macquarie to purchase the *Haldane* that Orman had brought to Sydney in March 1820. The vessel was acquired on 24 January 1821 and renamed the *Bathurst*. King then completed his fourth and final survey in 1823 in this vessel. Orman died in Sydney on 1 March 1824 (Orman [nd]; Nicholson, 1990: 331). Orman's journal can be found on Australian Joint Copying Project microfilm reel M1627.

8. Pondicherry (French: Pondichéry) is a city in the southern Indian State of Tamil Nadu. In 1673 the Compagnie des Indes ([East] Indies Company) purchased a small coastal village from the Sultan of Bijapur. Pondicherry remained a French enclave until 1962 when sovereignty was transferred to India.
9. The Timor pony (*Equus ferus caballus*) was developed in Timor, possibly from Indian breeds. They were used by the Timorese for cattle work as well as riding, driving and light farm work. They are strong, frugal and agile and have a quiet temperament. Many have been exported to Australia where they have had an influence on the breeding of the Australian pony, for example they formed the foundation of the Coffin Bay Pony breed that was developed in South Australia. Historic Australian newspapers, 1803-1954 [n.d.] provides references about their importation and use in Australia, for example, in 1838, the *William* (Thomas Watson) brought 137 Timor ponies to Sydney, via Western Australia. Favenc (1888: 118) referred to Sir George Grey's exploring expedition in Western Australia being equipped with Timor ponies. Banjo Paterson made reference to a Timor pony in stanza 3 of *The man from Snowy River* (Paterson, 1961 (1890): 10).
10. *Sands and Kenny's Melbourne directory* (1858: 64) recorded: William Beyfus, merchant, 17 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.
11. Siegfried Georg Friedrich Fraenkel was the Resident of Timor and possessions (*Almanak en naamregister* 1858: 131, 470; Desparmet, 1983: 113). The Netherlands East Indies Government included Timor in the wider administrative unit, the Government of the Molucca Islands (Jhr C.G. Goldman Governor) (*Almanak en naamregister*, 1858: 126). Desparmet (1983: 165) stated that Fraenkel was awarded the Légion d'Honneur. This statement is confirmed in the *Almanak en naamregister* (1858: 193).
12. The *Pauline-et-Victoire* discharged her cargo in Melbourne and travelled to Torres Strait in ballast (i.e. without cargo). When the ship struck the reef, the absence of cargo made the crew's task easier as only the ballast had to be moved so that the vessel could be repositioned after running aground on Kuyku Pad. Desparmet (1859: 588) stated that the ballast was 141.5 m³.
13. Ferdinand Alphonse Hamelin (1796-1864) was born in Pont l'Évêque (Département de Calvados), the son of a teacher. He went to sea at the age of 10 as a cabin boy on the *Vénus*, commanded by his uncle, Jacques Félix Emmanuel Hamelin. He saw action in the Napoleonic Wars in the Indian Ocean where he was taken prisoner. He returned to France in 1812. Taken prisoner a second time in 1814, he returned to take part in engagements in Madagascar, Brazil and the Antilles. Promoted to Lieutenant in 1821, he saw action in the Mediterranean. Promoted to Commodore in 1842 he became the commander of the Pacific Station from 1844 to 1848. In 1848 he was promoted to Vice-Admiral and became a member of the Admiralty and Prefect of Toulon. In 1854 he entered the Senate and in 1855 became Minister for the Navy and the Colonies and in 1858 Minister for the Navy. During his time as Minister, major changes occurred in the French navy. In 1860 he was appointed Grand Chancellor of the Légion d'Honneur, the first naval officer to hold the position (Military photos [nd]).
14. Press reports of the ship's tonnage vary between 200 and 340 tons, depending on whether the vessel was loaded with cargo or in ballast. Reports of the arrival and departure of the *Pauline-et-Victoire* can be found in the Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney press between 7 November 1856 and August 1858 (Historic Australian Newspapers, 1803-1954 [n.d.]).
15. *Lascar* was a name given to sailors or militiamen from the Indian subcontinent employed on European ships from the sixteenth century until the beginnings of the twentieth century. The word derives from Farsi (Persian) لشکر (laskar) (an army, a host, a military force, a camp, an encampment) (Steingass, 1957: 1122) and Arabic العسكر (al-'askar) (army, host, troops) (Wehr, 1961: 613). Lascars served on British ships under 'lascar' agreements.
16. This figure is arrived at from Desparmet's comment that five of the crew (including the first mate) embarked in the long-boat to explore Napoleon Passage and eight (including himself) remained on the *Pauline-et-Victoire* (Desparmet, 1983: 154, 157).
17. It is unlikely that this was the cook's actual name as *rabat-joie* means *kill-joy* in English.
18. Timor Laut (Dutch: Timor Laoet) now the Tenimber or Tenimbar Islands is an archipelago in eastern Indonesia, south-west of the Aru Islands and is situated between 6° 20' and 8° 30' S., and 130 40' and 132° 5' E. The Dutch included the archipelago in the residency of Amboyna [Ambon]. It was divided into two districts: Larat, including the inhabited islands of Larat, Vordate, Molu, and Maro, together with many uninhabited islands; and Sera, including the Sera Islands, Selaru, and the southern part of Yamdena, all inhabited. Only Yamdena and Selaru are referred to as Timor Laut; all the others were called Tenimbar. Kaart Der Nederlandsche Bezettingen Of Het Eiland Nieuw Guinea (1853) shows Timor Laut as the present island as Pulau Yamdena. A later map showing the Tenimbar Islands can be found in Zuid Molukken (1938).

19. The *cuisine distillatoire* (kitchen distillery) was a machine that could desalinate sea water. It was invented in 1836 by Peyre and Rocher. The *cuisine distillatoire* resembled a small stove and was usually found on ships. Its upper part could be used to cook food and bread while its lower part could turn sea water into fresh water through distillation. Patented in 1838, the machine made long ocean voyages much easier. 1858 the *cuisine distillatoire* could produce 250 litres of distilled water each hour. The device was adopted by the French Navy and merchant marine (Cuisine distillatoire, 1840). On 31 May 1851 the *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle* reproduced an article from the *Nautical standard*, which discussed the device and questioned why it had not been adopted by the Royal Navy and the Merchant Marine (Supply of Fresh Water on Long Voyages, 1851).
20. Evidence for Desparmet keeping a log on the *Pauline-et-Victoire* can be found in his comment that he completed his 'entries for the day' after the vessel came to anchor at Poruma (Desparmet, 1983: 148).
21. Desparmet (1859: 585) named this small island île Pauline (Pauline Island). This name is not listed in Gazetteer of Australia.
22. Activities on board a sailing ship were carried out by the whole or a part of the crew. The part could be a half (*bordée*), a third, a half *bordée* (quarter) or a division (sixth). The halves are called starboard and port.
23. Bligh gave the name Long Island to Sasi on 4 September 1792 (Lee, 1920: 188). Desparmet (1859:586) stated that Sasi was protected by 'a reef two miles in breadth'.
24. See similar comments by Bligh (Lee, 1920: 195).
25. See similar comment by Dumont d'Urville (1987, II: 551).
26. Bligh commented about the willingness of Torres Strait Islanders to come aboard the vessels (Lee, 1920: 175).
27. See Bligh's description of Farewell Channel in Lee (1920: 197).
28. Dumont d'Urville (1987, II: 551) commented on the extensive reefs that extended either side of Farewell Passage.
29. Desparmet (1859: 587-588) stated that 'after turning south after sighting Jervis Reef, the ship ran 2 miles and then turned west-south-west because of Jervis Reef which extended from the east to the west; this reef was exposed right up to the meridian of the south point of Jervis Island, then it remained covered by 3.35 m of water'. He continued 'The sounding showed 11.73 m; after having rounded the southern point of Jervis Island, I came about to the west, then to the north-west, following exactly the direction of Jervis Reef. This passage forced by this bank and the reefs adjoining Jervis Island at 2 miles in length; it is one of the fine passages of Torres Strait and not known to any navigator'. Bligh also commented on the reefs overlapping one another (Lee, 1920: 197).
30. To "luff" is to steer a sailing vessel far enough toward the direction of the wind, or the sheet controlling a sail is eased so far past optimal trip that airflow over the surfaces of the sail is disrupted and the sail begins to "flap" or "luff". It can be done to de-power a sail to maintain control of the vessel or to slow or stop a vessel in a controlled manner.
31. See comment by Dumont d'Urville (1987, II: 549).
32. Desparmet (1983:150) observed that the Goemulgal had little contact with Europeans. His need to communicate with the Goemulgal through signs would appear to confirm this. Desparmet's situation contrasts with the position in the Eastern Islands. Aimé-Auguste-Elie Coupvent-Desbois, Ensign on the *Zéléé*, found that the Erubam-Le were able to communicate in broken English, suggesting a more regular contact with English ships (Dumont d'Urville, 1987, II: 542-543).
33. The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (Dictionary of the French Academy [n.d.]) states that *moricaud* dates from the sixteenth century and was, by its etymology, racist in intent with its reference to Moors, but Desparmet used it rather as a term of annoyance when the Goemulgal preferred to return to their fishing rather than move ballast in the hold of the *Pauline-et-Victoire* (Desparmet, 1983: 153).
34. Desparmet (1859: 588) stated that the ballast was moved after the sea anchors were run out.
35. Desparmet (1859: 588) described Hamelin Island as 'a small island that has the form of a truncated pyramid'. It is now known as Hamelin Boulders and these are situated at 9°57'42" S and 142°09'08" E (Gazetteer of Australia place name search, 2013).
36. The *Supplement to the Maitland Mercury* (1859: 6) stated the current took the longboat out of sight of the *Pauline-et-Victoire*.

37. Desparmet (1859: 590) stated 'as many killed as wounded'.
38. The *Supplement to the Maitland Mercury* (1859: 6) stated that fourteen Goemulgal who climbed onto the ship were unarmed. Seven of them attacked the captain and beat him severely over the head with two stanchions. Girard (1859: 70) stated that the captain was armed only with a cane.
39. The Île de Ré is an island situated in the Atlantic Ocean facing the city of La Rochelle in the Département of Charente-Maritime. It is separated from the mainland, in the north by Breton Strait and the Île d'Oléron, to the south by the Antioch Strait. It was linked to the mainland in 1988 by the Île de Ré bridge. The island formed part of the old Province of Aunis, of which La Rochelle was the capital. Its area is about 85 km² and is the third largest island in Metropolitan France. Known since ancient times, the island has become a popular tourist destination. The maritime explorer, Nicolas Baudin (1754-1803) was born at Saint-Martin-de-Ré on the Île de Ré. Desparmet (1859: 590) stated that Louis Neveu and François Garnier enlisted at Royan, a town situated on the French mainland between La Rochelle and Bordeaux.
40. The *Supplement to the Maitland Mercury* (1859: 6) stated that 'the five men of the crew who remained on board, on hearing the cries of the Captain, rushed to his assistance, and, armed with their knives only, succeeded in driving the savages overboard'.
41. Girard (1859: 70) stated that the crew 'had their dinner on the forecastle' towards 1 pm.
42. Girard (1859: 6) commented that crew 'throw a confusion of weapons, maps, nautical instruments, ammunition and supplies' into the whaleboat. Desparmet (1859: 590) provided greater detail of the whaleboat's departure: 'the canoes advanced rapidly, they were at 5 cable lengths or more, when the whaleboat abandoned the *Pauline-et-Victoire*, which, from then, became the prey of the assailants. The whaleboat made course for the long-boat which was anchored at about 6 miles away, abandoning the ship; all our baggage, as well as 2,600 pounds sterling in a sealed box; this box had been placed by the first mate in a practical safe place to this effect'.
43. John Bach discussed Bligh's navigation in the *Bounty's* launch on its voyage to Timor (Bligh, (1986, II: 26-37). See comments by Bligh on the course from Torres Strait to Timor (Lee, 1920: 201).
44. In 1720 the French Government established the Dépôt des cartes et plans de la Marine (Office of maps and plans of the Navy). In 1886 the Office was reorganized as the Service hydrographique de la Marine (Hydrographic Service of the [French] Navy). In 1971 the Service was renamed Service hydrographique et océanographique de la Marine. SHOM is administered the Ministère de la Defense (Ministry of Defence).
45. The meridian of Paris (the meridian passing through the centre of the Paris Observatory) is situated at 2°20' 14.025" to the east of the Greenwich meridian. It is also known as the meridian of France and was defined on 21 June 1667 by the mathematicians of the Academy of Sciences. The Greenwich meridian was not used in France for navigation purposes until 1914. Some French cartographers continue to indicate the Paris Meridian on some maps. The equivalent meridian is 142°38'E.
46. The city of Avranches is located on the southern Atlantic coast of the Département de la Manche in the Basse Normandie (Lower Normandy) region.
47. Jean-Baptiste Henri Durand-Brager (1814-1879) was a French painter with a preference for maritime themes and Eastern landscapes. He travelled in Europe and Algeria before entering the studio of Eugène Isabey. In 1840 he was part of the expedition charged with bringing back the ashes of Napoleon I from St Helena to France. Upon his return to France he painted numerous naval battles and during the Crimean War he was present at the siege of Sebastopol. Along with painting he was equally interested in engraving and became an illustrator for books and magazines, including *Le Monde illustré*.
48. Accounts of piracy can be found in, for example, *Illustrated London News* 29 November 1845: 339; 25 August 1849: 130; 24 April 1852: 315; 29 May 1852: 423; 3 September 1864: 251. These may be accessed at *Illustrated London News* historical archive 1842-2003. Government action in the suppression of piracy can be seen in the treaty with the Sultan of Tidore approved by the Governor-General of the Netherlands East Indies in 1860. This treaty contained clauses relating to the fight against piracy and kidnapping (Netherlands East Indies, 1860).
49. Lavollée drew on three English works – Henry Keppel. 1853. *A visit to the Indian Archipelago, in H.M. ship Maeander*; with portions of the private journal of Sir James Brooke [and] with illustrations by Oswald W.B. Brierly (Bentley: London), F.E. Forbes. 1848. *Five years in China: from 1842 to 1847, with an account of the occupation of the islands of Labuan and Borneo by Her Majesty's Forces* (Bentley: London) and Robert MacMicking. 1852. *Recollections of Manilla and the Philippines, during 1848, 1849, and 1850* (Bentley: London) to inform his article.

50. The electronic versions of both these newspaper articles can be found at Historic Australian newspapers, 1803-1954 [nd].
51. The article published in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche courant* is available electronically at <http://kranten.kb.nl/view/article/id/ddd%3A010115114%3Ampeg21%3Apo01%3Aa0002>
52. Clément Adrian Vincendon-Dumoulin (1811-1858) was born at the Château de Foras at Chatte (Isère) and died at the Château Vincendon at Chevières (Isère). He entered the Polytechnic School in 1831 and was appointed to the Corps of Hydrographic Engineers in October 1833. In 1837 Admiral Hamelin recommended him for the position of hydrographer on the *Astrolabe*. Following his return to France he undertook the revision of the maps prepared during the expedition, fifty-seven of them being published in 1847. He worked with Dumont d'Urville on the publication of *Voyage au Pôle Sud et dans l'Océanie*. After Dumont d'Urville's death in a train derailment in 1842, he assumed a major role in the publication of the voyage. He undertook further hydrographic work between 1848 and 1855 and authored a work on the surveying of coastlines accurately while a vessel was under sail. 'He was a modest and unassuming man. In 1853 he was at the top of the grade and received the accolade of *Officier de la Légion d'Honneur*. His health never really recovered from the serious illness that he had contracted in New Zealand in 1840, and he died prematurely in 1858' (Dumont d'Urville, 1987, II: 561).
53. Bligh, Flinders, Stokes and MacGillivray generally used neutral terms such as 'Indians', or 'natives' in their descriptions of the Torres Strait Islanders, as did Dumont d'Urville in preferring *naturels* (natives) – a use that Desparmet (1859) followed. In his chapter in the *Journal d'un vieux marin* on the loss of the *Pauline-et-Victoire*, he refers to the Goemulgal as *naturels/natifs* (natives) and *guerriers* (warriors), but in most instances, he used pejorative terminology such as *sauvage* (savage).

Desparmet asserted that the Torres Strait Islanders were cannibals. At Mabayag, he assumed the worst of the Goemulgal: 'our assailants who were preparing to throw me into their canoe to take me on land and devour me' (Desparmet, 1983: 156). His abhorrence of cannibalism was general. When Gillebert discussed 'eating each other' to stave off starvation on the voyage to Timor, Desparmet (1983:159-160) retorted that he would never tolerate the horrors of cannibalism, citing the images conjured up from the events that occurred on the raft of the *Méduse* (Medusa) off the West African coast that so scandalized France in 1816-1817. The Romantic painter, Théodore Géricault (1791-1824) made the incident famous in his painting *Le Radeau de la Méduse* (The Raft of the Medusa) of 1818-1819 (Blot, 1962; McKee, 1975). A near-contemporary parallel to the tragic events on the Medusa's raft occurred with the wreck of the Nantucket whaler, the *Essex*, following its sinking by a sperm whale, in waters off South America, in October 1819. The crew took to the ship's boats. Six men who died of natural causes were eaten by their shipmates and one was shot and eaten. The boats reached a small island (Henderson Island) where they searched for food and water. Three survivors of the wreck who chose to remain there and were rescued later by the merchant vessel *Surry* and brought to Sydney. The other remaining survivors who continued on in the boats were rescued and returned to Nantucket (Chase, 1821).
54. Henry Marjoribanks Chester (1832-1914) was appointed Commissioner of Crown Lands, Warrego District and Police Magistrate at Charleville in January 1866. The position was abolished and he was unemployed until April 1868 when he became Land Agent at Gladstone and then in May 1869, Land Agent at Gympie. He was appointed Police Magistrate at Somerset in 1869 when Frank Jardine took extended leave. He relinquished the position when Jardine returned in August 1870. He remained at Somerset until he was re-employed by the Government in 1875. From August 1870 until March 1872 he spent much of his time visiting the Torres Strait Islands occasionally engaged in pearl shelling. Chester was appointed Police Magistrate at Somerset in October 1875 and after 1877 at Thursday Island. He remained at Thursday Island until April 1885 when he was transferred to Cairns as Police Magistrate. In May 1887 he moved to Cloncurry and then to Croydon. He was transferred to Cooktown until 1898 and then to Clermont. His last appointment was at Gladstone, before taking pre-retirement leave in July 1903. He died in Brisbane (Carroll, 1969: 35-36; Bolton, 1969: 386-387).
55. Reference to trading relations between visiting European vessels and Torres Strait Islanders can be found in the literature from the time of Bligh's voyage in 1792. Mullins (1995: 21-30) provides a useful overview of the extent of trade between Torres Strait Islanders and visiting European ships (see also McNiven, 2001). Bligh and Flinders noted their experience of Torres Strait Islanders' willingness to trade for items needed by crew of visiting vessels: fresh fruit and vegetables, sea-food and fresh water. They recognized the Torres Strait Islanders as skilled traders (Logan-Jack, 1922, I: 115-116).
56. Tobacco was known in the Torres Strait through contact with English vessels (Haddon, 1912: 141-143, 150, 377-383, 1935: 303-304; Moore, 1979: 68, 95, 190, 281-282).

57. The *Supplement to the Maitland Mercury* referred to trading 'some cocoanuts for biscuits'.
58. George Tobin (1791-1811) illustrated this in his sketch no 75: The general "Order of sailing", September 1792.
59. The *Duroc* was a small naval craft (an aviso – similar to a despatch boat or advice boat) that was wrecked on what Desparmet (1983: 142) refers to as Millist island (presumably the only permanent land in the Mellish Reef, now known as Heralds-Beacon Islet). This is a small cay measuring 600 m by 120 m that rises a few meters above the high water mark and accords with the description given by Guillou (1982: 60) where the *Duroc* ran aground. Captain de Lavessière named the island Îlot de Refuge (Refuge Islet). Some of the *Duroc's* crew set out for Timor in the ship's boats and the remainder constructed a schooner (called the *La Deliverance*) from the remains of the *Duroc* on the island and then sailed to Koepang via Torres Strait (Guillou, 1982; Magdelaine, 1872; Wreck of the *Duroc*, 1857). Mellish Reef is in the north-eastern section of the Australian Coral Sea Islands Territory and is located 1,060 km east of Cairns and is the most distant from the Australian continent of all the reefs and atolls of the Coral Sea Islands Territory. It is not considered to be part of any island group in the Territory. Mellish Reef is situated as 17° 24' S and 155° 52' E (Gazetteer of Australia place names search, 2013).
60. The *St. Paul* was a French merchant vessel carrying 317 Chinese gold-seekers from Hong Kong to Sydney, when she hit a reef near Rossel Island (Yela) on the eastern tip of the Louisiade Archipelago, off the 'tail' of eastern Papua New Guinea, on 30 September 1858. After landing the crew and passengers on Adele Island, the captain and nine European crew left in a boat. After a journey of some 1,000 km they reached Cape York where they left behind the ship's twelve year old boy Narcisse Pierre Pelletier. Pelletier had wandered off alone and was found and cared for by Aborigines. He was 'rescued' by force in 1875 by Captain Fraser of the brig *John Bell*, and taken to Somerset on Cape York, as a prisoner. Pelletier had no wish to leave his adopted people, but he was sent back to France. The remaining crew of the *St Paul* were picked up at sea and were taken to Nouméa. The Governor of New Caledonia sent the *Styx* to Yela to rescue the Chinese but only one was found. Desparmet provided a version of the survivor's evidence (Desparmet, 1983: 142). The account presented by Desparmet can be compared with the eye-witness record by Victor de Rochas who was on the *Styx* during her voyage to Yela. Rochas' (1861) account was reprinted in Armstrong (1928: 192-203). See also *Colonist* (1859: 3), Wichman (1910: 104-105), Anderson (2009: 35-37), Nicholson (1996: 35-36) and Guillou (1981).
61. Details about the escape of the convicts, William and Mary Bryant, can be found in Stephens (1792).
62. Details of the voyage of the *Pandora* can be found in Edwards (1789-1791) and Hamilton (1915). Summaries can be found in Flinders (1814, I: xvi-xxiii) and Logan Jack (1922, I: 104-11).
63. The account of the crew from the longboat from William Bampton and Matthew Alt's expedition in the *Shah Hormuzeer* and *Chesterfield* can be found in Anonymous (1795) and Flinders (1814b, I: xxxv).
64. Reference to the voyage of the *Morning Star's* boats can be found in Nicholson (1996: 35).
65. Reference to the wreck of the *Governor Ready* can be found in Nicholson (1996: 112-113) and Haddon (1935: 8).
66. Reference to the wreck of the *Charles Eaton* can be found in Brockett (1836), Haddon (1935: 8-11), Lewis (1836), Mullins (1995: 22-23), Nicholson (1996: 122-123, 125-128) and Weymiss (1884).