

The impenetrable shield: HMS *Nautilus* and the Namib coast in the late eighteenth century.

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Documentary accounts of precolonial Namibia are rare, and few sources are known from the time prior to the commercial penetration of the country during the mid-nineteenth century. One of the most important early accounts dates from 1786, when the British Admiralty ordered an evaluation of the Namib coast for settlement. The journals of HMS *Nautilus*, published here in full for the first time, are a rich source of information on the coast and its inhabitants.

INTRODUCTION

The name *Namibia* comes from *namib*, said to mean *shield*, and was chosen for the country because the Namib desert protected the people of the interior and kept colonialism effectively at bay until late into the nineteenth century (Mbuende 1986:1). Nowhere is this better illustrated than by the voyage of the British ship *Nautilus* in 1786, when the British Admiralty ordered the investigation of the Namib coast with a view to establishing a penal colony at a convenient harbour where British *ladiamen*, or naval ships, could refit. The shield of the Namib repulsed the would-be colonisers, and the scheme was still-born.

Although the reports submitted to the Admiralty scotched the plans for a convict settlement, they are, however, filled with information of use to modern researchers interested in that period. In this paper, I present the reports verbatim after attempting to place them in context by discussing the circumstances which surrounded the voyage. The most important and detailed account of the investigation is the narrative report written by Captain Thomas Bolden Thompson who was in command of HMS *Nautilus*. This report I have transcribed from an illustrated contemporary longhand copy. The eight watercolour sketches which depict curiosities of the voyage enhance the value and interest of this narrative. Thompson's report is accompanied and corroborated by a separate narrative written by Lieutenant Home Riggs Popham, marine surveyor for the voyage. Popham's account I have transcribed from the original. In both, the variable orthography and idiosyncratic punctuation have been retained. Endnotes to each report clarify potentially confusing observations, or offer illuminating additional material. In spite of the occasionally

derogatory tone of some of the descriptions of the indigenous inhabitants, the narratives are worthy of publication because they are relatively dispassionate examples of their genre, the detailed eyewitness account of early contact between indigenous Namibians and the vanguard of colonialism.

Reasons for the voyage of the *Nautilus*

One of the problems which confronted Britain after the conclusion of the American Revolution in 1783 was that she could no longer send to America the great numbers of convicts sentenced to transportation. Until a new locality could be found, her policy of deporting convicts was temporarily impossible.

During the course of the American war, both the French and Dutch had taken America's side against Britain. Although the year 1783 brought peace, the French and the British were still contending for monopoly of the lucrative trade with the East Indies. The Dutch East India Company controlled the strategic halfway house at the Cape of Good Hope, and a French garrison had been established there during the war. The British had found their stopovers at the Island of St Helena, and at Rio de Janeiro, both in the Atlantic Ocean, had put them at a disadvantage in the Indian Ocean, where their enemies had been able to take convenient shelter. American whalships were increasingly using the Cape of Good Hope as well.

Under these circumstances, it seemed desirable for Britain to establish a new penal settlement in a strategically advantageous situation. On 25 May 1785 the Beauchamp Committee, consisting of members of the British House of Commons, met to hear proposals for the location of a new penal settlement (Vigne

retreated to the Orange, and the islands presumably were shoals' caused by the movement of sediment. In April, when the *Nautilus* was there, the river would have been very low, and therefore difficult to pick up.

Another of Edward Thompson's informants was Colonel Hendrik von Prehn who retired from command of the Dutch garrison at the Cape in 1780, and was succeeded by Gordon (Vigne 1988 : 2). Von Prehn's information evidently did not include an accurate reflection of Gordon's discoveries and must have been based on earlier, less reliable sources. Had Edward Thompson searched for earlier hydrographic information on Das Voltas Bay, he might have come across the journals of the Dutch ships, *Grundel*, of 1670, and *Boode*, of 1677. These two journals contain reasonable navigational information on the Namibian coast, a little specifically on Das Voltas Bay which pre-empted Gordon's later observations.

However, both Captain Thompson and Lieutenant Popham comment in their narratives that the maps they had marking Das Voltas Bay had been compiled on land. A small number of inland expeditions sanctioned by the Dutch Governors had penetrated southern Namibia from the Cape of Good Hope. These included, for example, those of Rhenius in 1724; Hop and Brink in 1761/2; Wikar in 1779; and Gordon in 1777, and again in 1779/80. The most helpful account would have been Gordon's, but von Prehn had evidently not conveyed to Thompson the relevant observations on the Orange River mouth (Das Voltas Bay).

The reality of the Namib coast

Both Thomas Bolden Thompson's and Home Kapp Popham's narratives are imbued with disillusionment and frustration. Instead of being able to honour the memory of Commodore Thompson, they found erroneous all the information he had furnished. They could not find Das Voltas Bay, or the great river said to flow into it; they could not obtain water, and were shunned by the people at *Angra Pequena*. They were understandably relieved to have some contact with the inhabitants of Walvis Bay, but although these people evidently owned large herds of cattle, the Royal Navy men were unable to discover where the animals were kept, or the source of the water which sustained them.

Edward Thompson had described Das Voltas Bay and the surrounding countryside in glowing terms. It was said to be fertile, with excellent grazing and forests. Wild sheep, horses and cattle abounded. The people were docile and friendly, the masters of vast herds of cattle. Precious stones were to be found in abundance on the coast, and mines of iron ore in the mountains. Unlike the unhealthy climate of northern Africa, the air was reputedly clean and wholesome (Vigne 1988 : 2). The crew had observed the area of St Helen's Bay at the Cape of Good Hope, and what they saw probably confirmed the likelihood of Edward Thompson's expectations.

The Namib coast and its people came as a surprise quite beyond the sea-farers' experience. Where Thompson was hoping to find an agricultural community in a fertile environment, he found a barren sandy waste. "So inhospitable and so barren a Country is not to be equalled except in the Desarts of Arabia, at least from the appearance of the Shore . . ." (p. 54).

Yet Popham found the spoor of vast droves of cattle at Walvis Bay. The people who lived there were evidently skilled pastoralists. The Royal Navy men had been instructed not to give offence to any of the inhabitants they might encounter, but to make friendly overtures and to report in as much detail as possible their character and disposition. This, both Thompson and Popham attempted to do.

Much favourable information about the Walvis Bay inhabitants can be derived from Thompson's personal observations. The derogatory sentiments he also expresses are typical of social attitudes current at the time. These disparaging attitudes towards the indigenous inhabitants of Africa were held almost universally by colonizers and have been discussed in an illuminating way by a number of authors, for example, Guenther (1980); Schrire (1980, 1984, 1988); Trigger (1980). Schrire (1984 : 4-5) explains how the eighteenth century European concept of the past accommodated exotic and primitive peoples. Belief in the Great Chain of Being held that all life was created in a single instant with each form set in relation to the next. At the pinnacle of all creation was man. Since it was evident that men and apes were fairly close together in the chain, and that all men were not equal, different types of men could be graded

between civilized man and the apes. Seafarers and travellers to Africa and America coming across curious peoples unknown to Europe could furnish numerous possibilities. During the same period, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the philosopher whose writings strongly influenced the theories of the French Revolution and Romanticism, represented the "Noble Savage" as living a pure and moral existence in contrast to corrupt Western society. However, the merit such philosophy attributed to primitive peoples was too easily overshadowed by the unfamiliar realities of field observations. In spite of the difficulties in being faced with strange and exotic people, an American whaler, Edmund Gardner, visiting Walvis Bay in 1803 managed to write a more sympathetic description of the Bay's inhabitants (see endnote no. 45 for the full transcription). Gardner confirms many of Thompson's observations but also captures the people's natural grace and charm (Gardner 1803).

The fact that the people of the Namib were successful pastoralists in an arid area alone accounted for their appearance which, to the sea-farers, seemed so strange, savage and filthy. There was not enough water for drinking purposes, let alone for washing. The presence of large numbers of cattle inevitably attracted flies and other pests, just as, in the same way the *Nautilus's* hold was probably teeming with rats. In spite of the limited sources of water, the pastoral economy thrived, allowing the people to use quantities of butterfat as a cosmetic which kept their skin supple and protected them from the cold. The pastoralists were also already involved in a complex network of exchange where they traded with the far north of the country, and probably into Angola, as Thompson himself surmised.

Separating the emotive colour of the descriptions from their content leaves the historical researcher a substantial amount of useful information on late eighteenth century pastoralists at Walvis Bay. Considering the journals in their entirety also casts light on contemporary social attitudes which made contact between the local people and the colonizers so fraught.

The journals as historical sources

The seventeenth century journals of the *Grundel* and the *Boode* are earlier and better

known than the journals of the *Nautilus*. As well as information on coastal navigation, the former contain descriptions of groups of indigenes who were encountered on the shores. However, these seventeenth century contacts were characterized by violence and misunderstandings which cut short the interaction between the sea-farers and the coastal inhabitants.

Thereafter, little more was written until early nineteenth century travellers and explorers published their adventures for a Victorian readership. Captain Thompson's 1786 investigation of the Namibian coast augments the information from the *Grundel* and *Boode*, and also provides a coherent counterpart to the explorations of the interior. It is a detailed narrative with specific attention focused on the resources of the coastal bays and the demeanour of the indigenous inhabitants, complemented by the independent account kept by Popham. Both these narrative reports are corroborated by Thompson's daily journal, which was kept as a separate log.

The voyage of the *Nautilus* has apparently been known by historical researchers for some time (e.g. Vedder 1934), but until recently (John Kinahan 1989), the journals themselves have not been plumbed as sources of information on eighteenth century Namibian pastoralists, or on the contact between the pastoralists and the agents of capitalism.

The existence of various contemporary copies of Thompson's journal is a potential source of confusion. The original written by Thomas Bolden himself is entitled "Narrative of a Voyage performed in His Majesty's Sloop *Nautilus*, under my Command, for the Purpose of investigating the Western Coast of South Africa, from Latitude 33°00'00"S to 16°00'00" South". This was Thompson's report on the investigation which he sent off to the Admiralty immediately upon arriving at Spithead. Marked "Received 24 July 1786" on the title page, it is housed in the Public Record Office at Kew (Thompson 1786a). The narrative contains two sketches by Thompson, one of the Portuguese padrao at Angra Pequena, and one of a wooden cross erected by the French at the same bay.

Bound together with the narrative in the same quarto binding, and with the same reference number, is Thompson's daily journal. This is titled: "Journal of the Proceedings of His

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Myrry's Sloop *Nautilus*, under my Command, in a voyage from the Island of St. Thomas's on the Line to St. Helen's Bay, on the Western Coast of South Africa, in Latitude 12°41'43" South along the Coast of Caffraria, to Latitude 16°00'00" South, to the Island of St. Helen's, and back again to England". Thompson made daily entries in this journal, and recorded navigational details, punishments meted out and the number of sick, as well as a substantial amount of other information of more general interest. Daily entries on the *back* page vary in number from 3 to 10. The *left* hand pages record, in columns, the *date*, winds, course, distance covered, latitude and longitude, and bearings at noon. The right hand pages bear closely written text. Thompson illustrated the daily journal with elevation sketches of several noteworthy landmarks such as, for example, Dassen Island; the entrance to St. Helen's Bay; the two rocky *cliffs* in 28°40'S; the entrance to Angra Pequena showing the *padrão*; the Frio Mountains. In some cases, the drawings stretch right across both pages and were evidently done to assist navigation. There is only one copy of Thompson's daily journal, but some of the elevation sketches were reproduced on charts subsequently compiled and published by the Hydrographic Office (Dalrymple 1789, 1791; Hydrographical Office 1828).

Two other contemporary copies of Thompson's Narrative also exist. The copy that is reproduced in this paper is owned by Mr Quentin Keynes of London who kindly loaned it to the State Museum for research purposes. This copy is of exceptional interest because it contains eight watercolour sketches illustrating the narrative. Two of these are duplications of those in the Public Record Office original, of the *padrão* and the French cross at Angra Pequena. There are small differences between the drawings, for example, in their proportions and amount of detail, and the style is very much neater and more careful. All eight of the sketches bear Thompson's initials, or signature (very neatly executed), whereas the original drawings are neither signed, nor initialled. The reason for the latter is presumably because they were executed by Thompson himself, whereas the other sketches were not. The practice of the day was for a Royal Navy captain to authenticate drawings done by his subordinates. He would initial or sign the drawing to confirm that it was an accurate

representation of the facts (Captain R.J. Campbell, pers. comm.). Possibly Thompson made rough sketches and notes on shore, to be worked up later. In view of his responsibilities of managing the ship, it is unlikely that the captain would have had the time to write up and then to copy and illustrate his narrative on board. He most probably instructed a scribe, or clerk, to copy the narrative and to work up the sketches. Thompson then would have signed the copy, and initialled the sketches to validate them. Indeed, there is a loose sheet of paper in the illustrated version of the narrative, bearing rough notes on each of the drawings and written hurriedly and apparently in different hand.

Randolph Vigne (1988:8) has suggested that the eight illustrations may have been done by Popham. Although this is possible, it is difficult to muster unequivocal supporting evidence. As surveyor, Popham would have been involved in draughting, but these skills would not have been his alone. Navigation was the ultimate responsibility of the captain; Thompson would have taken the daily sights, and recorded observations, together with other important information, in the captain's daily journal. It is reasonable to assume that Thompson himself drew the unsigned elevation sketches in this journal. When these sketches were reproduced on later charts, they were acknowledged as views "by Captain Thompson" (e.g. Hydrographical Office 1828). However, five of these fifteen elevation sketches appear, quite extensively re-worked, on Popham's chart of the voyage entitled "Coast of Caffraria" (Hydrographic Department 1786). See figure 1 for a reproduction of this chart.

The two young men, who had served together under Edward Thompson for two voyages, must have been close companions. It is possible that, as the elder by 4 years (he was 24), Popham supported and assisted Thomas Bolden. Thomas Bolden, however, was himself competent, educated and well-trained, and probably had draughting talents equal to Popham's. Indeed, Thompson's sketch of the French cross at Angra Pequena (in his original report) is more detailed and finished than the schematic line drawing of the same cross in Popham's narrative (see figure 2). The watercolour of this cross in the illustrated copy of Thompson's narrative was clearly based on Thompson's sketch rather than Popham's: the

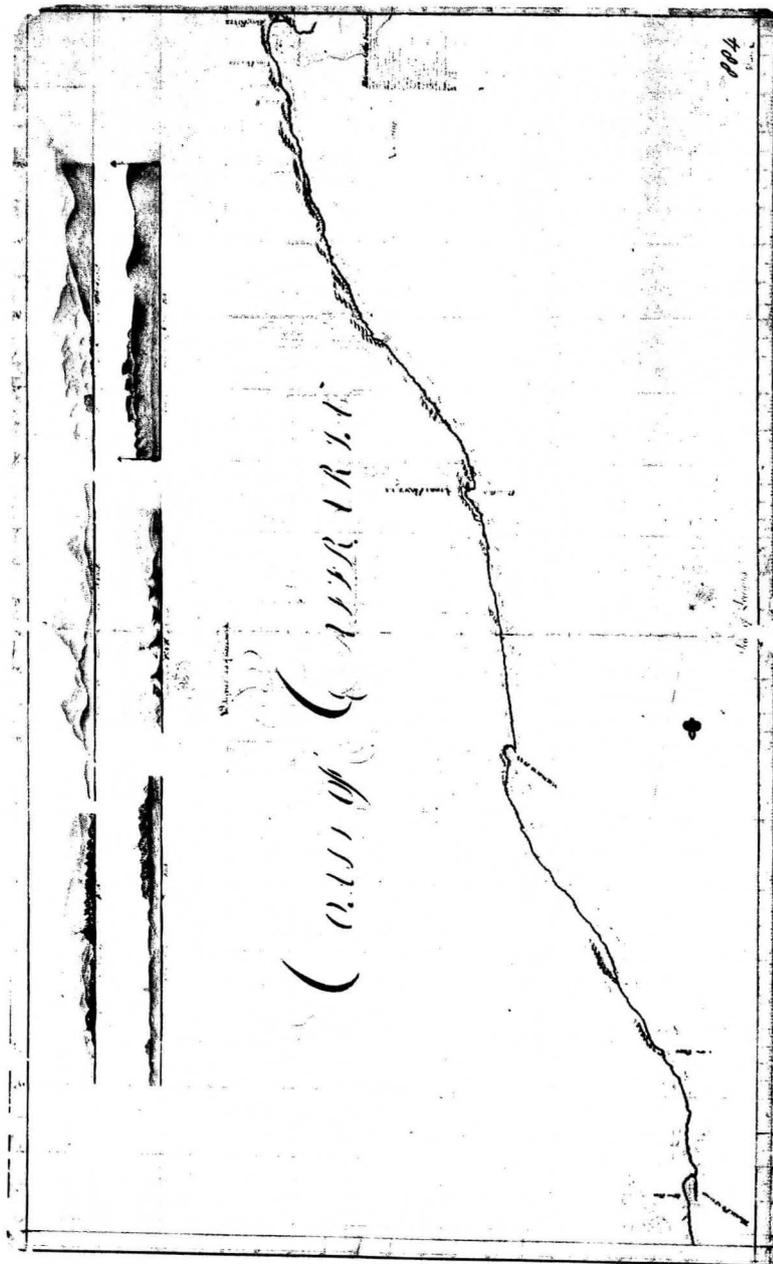


Figure 1. Lieutenant Home Riggs Popham's chart "Coast of Caffraria".

Hydrographic Department, England: 884 C.

The elevation sketches are, top, from left to right: "Entrance into Angra Pequena ↓ bearing $E \frac{1}{2} N$ "; "Remarkable Hummocks in Latitude $28^{\circ} 40' S$ bearing $NNE \frac{1}{2} E$ "; "Entrance of St Helens Bay. St Martins point $EBS \frac{1}{2} S 4$ leagues".
 Bottom, from left to right: "Land to the Southward of Walwich Bay ↓ bearing $E b N$ "; "Pedestal Rock ↓ $ENE 4$ leagues"; "Inland Cape in Latitude $31^{\circ} 42' 57" S$ Bearing $E b S$ ".

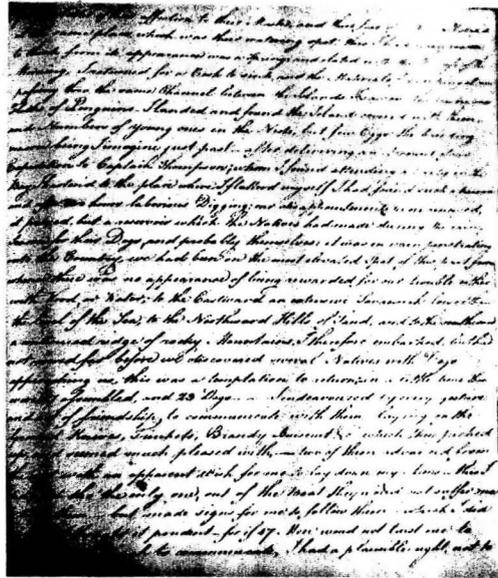
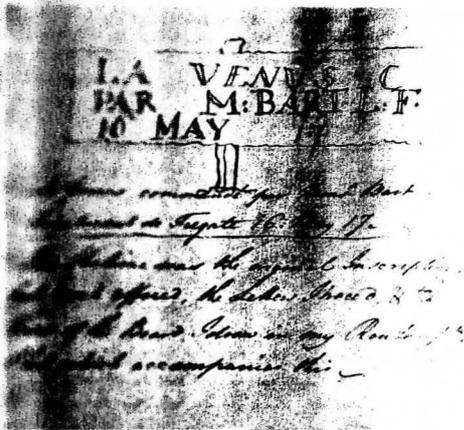


Figure 2. Rough sketch of the French cross at Angra Pequena and page of text from Popham's narrative. By courtesy of Quentin Keynes.

shape of the board and the nails affixing it to the spar are faithfully reproduced, whereas neither of these details are in Popham's sketch.

Either Thompson or Popham could have written the rough notes on the watercolour sketches on the loose sheet of paper inserted near the illustrated narrative. In these notes, the spelling "jackall" is used, an unconventional orthography repeated in Popham's narrative but not used by Thompson. However, orthography is not a reliable indicator, variant spellings being used by the same writer. In his narrative, for example, Popham uses the orthography "jacks" and "platts", while in the rough notes, the word is rendered as "plats". Some of the phrases used to describe the Walvis Bay inhabitants in the notes on the sketches are very similar to phrases used in both Thompson's and Popham's accounts.

Popham's responsibilities as surveyor kept him regularly involved in mapping. Although he did visit the village in the dunes and might have had the opportunity, it is more likely that Thompson made the rough notes on shore, and charged a copyist with the task of working up the drawings for his final approval. Indeed, Figure 2 (in litt.) has offered the information that Thompson was himself a competent painter

(some of his pictures having remained with the present baronet, Sir Lionel Thompson); and that Commodore Edward Thompson had a painter on his personal staff in 1785 whom he used to summon at odd hours to record impressions of the scenery (Laird Clowes 1898: 19–20).

It seems that Thompson must have made a second copy of his narrative as well. The reasons for two copies being made additional to the original are not clear, but bearing in mind the importance laid upon the investigation, Thompson might have forwarded one copy of his report by a second vessel, just in case misfortune should befall the *Nautilus*. It is also possible that he wished to keep a personal copy. Although there is no explicit mention in the original of copies having been made, two copies exist, both acquired by Keynes. The illustrated version comes from the library of the 14th Earl of Derby, who was under secretary for the colonies in 1827–8 and colonial secretary in 1833. (See figure 3 for a reproduction of a page from this manuscript). The other comes from an early nineteenth century collection.

The second copy is not illustrated. As well as detailed logs of the whole voyage, it contains information additional to that in the original

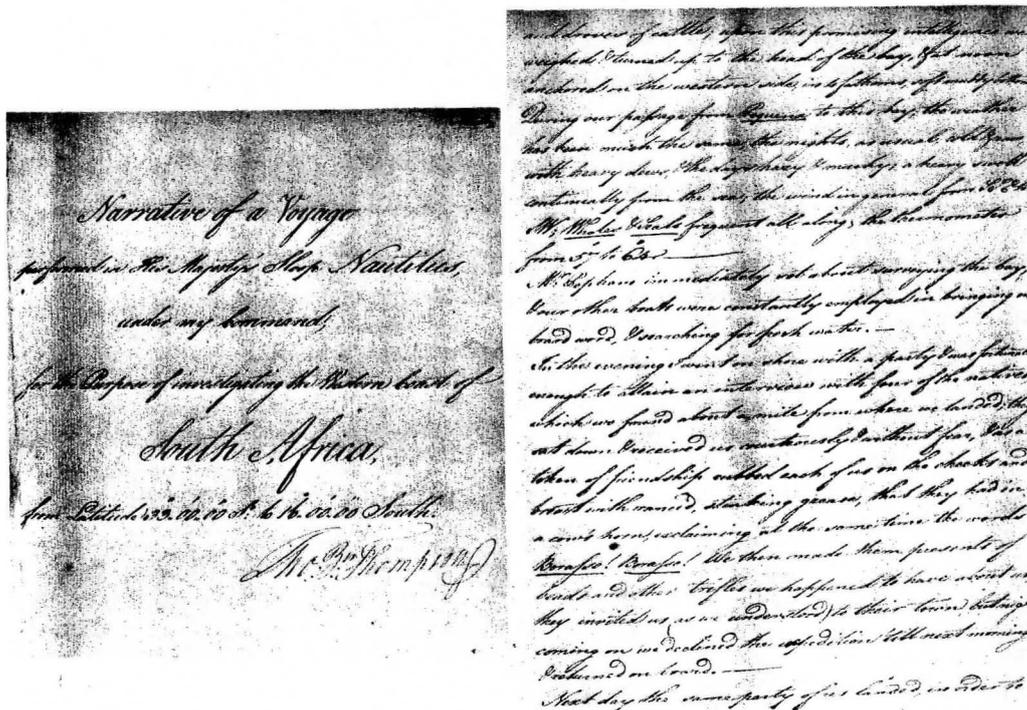


Figure 3. Title page and page of text from Thompson's illustrated narrative.
By courtesy of Quentin Keynes.

and in the illustrated copy. After comparing the second copy with the illustrated version and annotating the differences, Keynes sold it to Mr Colin Legum as he could find no institution which was then interested in purchasing it. Legum subsequently sold it to Antiquariat am Klosterberg. The Brenthurst Library in Johannesburg, South Africa, now holds the manuscript (Thompson 1786b).

The existence of three versions of Thompson's narrative naturally brings their individual authenticity into question. It is clear that the narrative in the Public Record Office must be the original report which Thompson submitted to the Admiralty immediately upon his return; once it had been received as an official document, it remained part of the Admiralty archives. A comparison of the Public Record Office original with the illustrated copy has yielded some interesting leads.

The copperplate of both narratives looks similar and is apparently standardized, so that comparing the handwriting of the two is generally unrewarding. Distinguishing a

particular author's handwriting is further hampered because in the same text, the same letter can be written with different forms. For example, in the title of the original narrative, the capital c of "Command" is an open letter, while that of both "Coast" and "Caffraria" is a looped cursive. A further example from the narrative is lower case d, where it is written either in conventional cursive style with a slightly backwards-sloping downstroke, or with a forward-leaning curlicue. No apparent rule seems to determine when the different forms are used. Nonetheless, comparing the original text of the narrative with that of the illustrated copy supports the speculation that a scribe wrote out the latter. The writing is more compressed and spiky than that of the original; the punctuation and paragraphing have been adjusted; words which in the original are written out are abbreviated (or vice versa), and, on the first page of the original, a word which has been inserted later with a caret, has been incorporated into the sentence in the copy.

Comparing the copperplate of the unillustrated copy of the narrative with that of the other two

... yields the impression that the original and the unillustrated copy might have been written by the same person, while the unusually neat writing of the illustrated narrative seems to single it out as that of a copyist. However, there are small differences between the original and the unillustrated copy. For example, "St. Helen's Bay" of the original appears as "St. Hellen's Bay" in the third copy; "daily" appears as "dayly". There are also differences in the forms of some letters, for example, capital *v* of "Voyage"; capital *w* of "Western". Most of the nouns of the unillustrated copy are written with capital letters, while this is not the case in the original. There are some indications that the unillustrated version of the narrative was copied from the Public Record Office original. For example, in two different places near the end, several lines of the text have been left out, as sometimes happens in a transcription, so that the sense of the narrative is disrupted. The writer has evidently discovered this and subsequently inserted the missing lines. However, in spite of these considerations, the version of all three versions is very similar. The additional information in the unillustrated copy which Keynes noted, and which I have reproduced as endnotes, could only have been furnished by the captain himself, or conceivably by Lieutenant Popham. This information was inserted with carets, after the manuscript had been written out, as it appears between lines of the text, or on blank facing pages in what appears to be slightly different handwriting. It is quite possible that these additions were made by Thompson in neater hand when he subsequently checked the manuscript, or by Popham, as this version of the narrative contains the most detailed navigational information.

Although Thompson's signature is quite characteristic, it also varies. The original narrative is signed on the title and end pages with the abbreviated signature Tho: B: Thompson, but other bona fide examples of his signature appear as Thomas Bn: Thompson, or Tho: Bn: Thompson. The signatures in the illustrated copy of the narrative are different from all the others in that the capital *t* has a loop which flicks back to the left, while none of the others bear this characteristic. This leads me to wonder whether the scribe might not have copied Thompson's signature as well, especially as those apparently authenticating

the watercolours are unusually neat and careful. While comparing the eighteenth century copperplate may be inconclusive, it is quite certain that all three versions of the narrative are contemporary, and were approved by Thompson himself.

While the original narrative and daily journal have been re-bound by the Public Record Office, the illustrated narrative has been appropriately bound for Lord Derby's library. At some stage, the volume was re-backed, and the end-papers are correspondingly newer than the pages of the narrative.

Lieutenant Home Riggs Popham's account of the same voyage was also acquired by Quentin Keynes from the library of Lord Derby. (See figure 2 for a reproduction of a page from this manuscript). Although according to Popham's notes, his journal was submitted to the Admiralty together with his charts, it subsequently found its way into private hands. No copies exist. The account substantially corroborates the information in Thompson's narrative, while it also provides supplementary information. Popham's spelling is slightly more idiosyncratic than Thompson's, and the grammar sometimes less formal. The two young men often must have discussed events of the voyage, as some of the observations and sentiments recorded in their journals are expressed in the same words. In a note, Popham states that he drew a view of the French cross at Angra Pequena in his "Route of the Ship" which accompanied his narrative (see endnote no. 4, Popham's manuscript). The fate of this document is unknown.

The charts which Popham produced are presently housed in Taunton, in the Hydrographic Department of the Ministry of Defence. These include a chart of the whole coastline from St Helen's Bay to Fish Bay; and separate charts of Angra Pequena (see figure 4) and Great Fish Bay (Hydrographic Department 1786). Although there is currently no chart of Walvis Bay by Popham in the Hydrographic Department, he certainly must have compiled one. Dalrymple, then Hydrographer to the East India Company, published a chart of Walwich [sic] Bay in 1789, using Popham's observations and, from Thompson's daily journal, a sketch of the entrance to the Bay, showing the sandspit and the *Nautilus* within (Dalrymple 1789).



Figure 4. Lieutenant Home Riggs Popham's chart of Angra Pequena (Lüderitzbucht). *Hydrographic Department, England: r65, Africa folio 2.*

Together the narratives, daily journal and others form a cogent record of this eighteenth century investigation, and offer an impression of the people prior to commercial and colonial exploitation of the country. In the middle of the following century, merchants from the Cape and abroad pierced the shield of the South at Walvis Bay and Angra Pequena, and made roads from the south into the interior.

THOMPSON'S NARRATIVE

Narrative of a Voyage
performed in His Majesty's Sloop Nautilus,
under my Command,
for the Purpose of investigating the
Western Coast of South Africa,
from Latitude 33° 00' 00" S
to 16° 00' 00" South.
[signed] Tho. Bn. Thompson

Narrative

February 1st. 1786—Having received from the Compass as much provisions as she could well spare, and completed our water, we weighed from Francisco Bay in the Island of St. Thomas's, and after a passage of fifty two days, in which time we had not seen a vessel, we made the coast of Caffraria¹, about six leagues to the northwd. of Dassen Island.

We experienced no material change in this voyage, till within 50 leagues of the coast, when the water began to alter its colour to a dark green, but without bottom, the first soundings we struck being 105 fathoms, muddy bottom, at the distance of 8 leagues from the land; we were at the same time surrounded by various sea birds, as Albatrosses, Allegranzas, Sheerwaters, Petrels, & Sea Swallows; the nights were raw and cold, attended with a heavy dew, and the thermometer fell from 72° 00' to 63° and 58°.

After making Dassen Island I stood in for Saldanha Bay, and opening the entrance of it shaped a course along shore for St. Helen's Bay², at the distance of 4 miles from the beach, which appeared rocky and steep to, with a heavy surf, & the land barren & dry, clothed in partial spots with a kind of heath. We found from 25 to 50 fathoms, rocky bottom, to St. Martin's Point, which forms the southern extremity of St. Helen's Bay, off which lies a long reef of rocks above water, called the Pater Noster, to which we gave a good berth, and at Sun set on the 24th of March anchored in 15

fathoms, in St. Helen's Bay, mud, and sandy bottom.

In the morning of the 25th I dispatched Lieut. Popham, the Surveyor, to investigate the bay, and ascertain the situation of Berg River, of which I had received some information; he returned with an account of it, but to our mortification it proved of salt water.

However we weighed the anchor, and shifted our situation further into the bay, and moored in 4 & a half fathoms, sandy bottom, abreast the river, 4 or 5 miles from the shore, Saint Martin's Point bearing by compass NWbN, and a large square clump on the eastern side of the bay due east.

The first object of our search was for fresh water, but we were informed that none was to be procured from Berg River, as it ran salt up 50 or 60 miles: This we learned from a Dutch Fisherman, whom we found on the beach, with 3 or 4 Hottentot Servants, drying & salting fish for the Dutch markets at the Cape of Good Hope, which he told us he did once or twice a year, & transported them over land in waggons; he also told us we were the only ship or vessel that had anchored in that bay for the space of 30 years.

I was much chagrined at these accounts, for to have been obliged to seek water 50 or 60 miles, was a source, which with the Ship's boats only, would not supply our daily consumption; but I was relieved from my anxiety the next day by a visit from a Dutch Farmer, who was resident on the banks of the river, and who offered to supply us with water & bullocks, but represented that he would be obliged to transport the water from the spring near his house, (which was at least 30 miles from the beach,) in waggons: Difficult as this was we were made happy at the idea of procuring water at any rate, and he immediately set about putting his promise into execution.

We were now employed cutting wood, of which we found but a small quantity, and repairing the wants of the rigging &c., Lieutenant Popham was busy in the survey of the bay, & the Botanist, Mr. Howe³, made many excursions into the country, & was tolerably successfull in finding some new plants, principally Bulbous roots.

The seine was hauled as often as circumstances would admit & we were pretty successfull in taking Mullet, Bream, Rays, & a fish called in

these seas, the Elephant Fish, which is a kind of Cat Fish, & only different in having a long proboscis. I look upon St. Helen's Bay to be the northernmost of the Dutch settlements from the cape of Good Hope, by a land mark, with the arms of the States, erected on the southpoint which forms Berg River⁴.

The inhabitants are very thinly scattered, there being none nearer the beach than 30 miles, and no neighbour within 4 or 5 of him.

The soil is a loose white sand on the low land which extends about 4 miles on each side of the river, after which it rises into high, barren, rocky mountains.

The low land produces many shrubs, but none more than 9 feet high, which grow very thick & among them were found a few Pheasants⁵, Hares, Wood Pigeons, Tortoises, & a number of Deer⁶, some of which were killed & found good eating. I was told also that Wolves⁷ & Jackals are plenty, but I heard of but one Jackal being seen while we remained here.

The bay abounds with Whales & Seals, one of the former we found on the beach in a state of putrefaction, which we supposed to have been driven on shore by a gale of wind.

Allegranzas⁸, Cormorants, Gulls, Mews, & various other common sea birds in abundance, & on the banks of the river are found Flamingos, Pelicans, Curlews, Storks, Cranes, Grey Plover, & a variety of other small birds of the water kind.

On the 2nd of April we had with much difficulty procured from the Farmer, four good oxen, a few sheep, goats, cabbages, & onions, and nine tons of water⁹, which last was brought to the beach two butts at a time, in waggons drawn by ten oxen each, thro' a thick underwood, over a loose sand, in which ye cattle were nearly up to their knees: These were embarked, & we got ready for sea¹⁰.

By this time Mr. Popham had completed the survey; he found the bay clear and clean, surrounded with a sandy beach to the eastward, but to the southward & westward a rocky bottom and stony beach, but regular soundings from 17 fathoms to three- and half twain.

It is well protected from southerly winds, but those from the northward blow right in from the offing, & from every appearance of the beach, bring in a great sea; we had, in general,

hazy, raw foggy weather, with the sea breezes, which came on at dark, & lasted 'till noon next day: They always brought into the bay a heavy swell, which created a high surf on the beach, & thickened the water from a light green to a dark, muddy brown, but the SW trade when it came on cleared the atmosphere, & the water.

Berg River lies on the South side of the bay, but the beach is so low that you cannot distinguish it, till very near the shore; it is not more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile broad, & winds to the southward; there is a bar at the entrance of it which is dry, & impassable at low water, & a regular tide which rises about seven feet.

I was told the rains came on in this country the latter end of this month (April) and lasted 'till September, in which season Berg River was fresh, and at that time Sea Cows¹¹ and River Horses¹² were plenty¹³.

By a mean of several observations taken by Lieut. Popham the latitude of St. Helen's Bay was found to be $32^{\circ} 41' 43''$ S.

Longitude $17^{\circ} 55' 00''$ Et. of Greenwich. Variation of the compass $21^{\circ} 30'$ West. The thermometer was from . . . 58° to 61° ¹⁴.

On the third, having got every thing on board in the morning, we weighed, & at noon passed the northern point of Saint Helen's Bay, which we name cape Deseada from its likeness to that Island, & proceeded along shore to the northward at the distance of 2 or 3 miles from the beach, which appeared a white sand with a very heavy surf, without any break or inlet, with soundings from 60 to 20 fathoms, sand & shells.

We found the land in general covered with bushes to the latitude of 31° South, from thence the hills become an entire barren, loose sand, rocky beaches & cliffs, & a straight shore tending nearly NNW & SSE, with irregular soundings and deep water.

The land carries with it a general sameness to the latitude of $28^{\circ} 45'$ S, where stand two remarkable, square, rocky clumps about $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile from the beach, and about 4 or 5 miles from these runs off a bank on which there is white water, the land at the same time trenching into a small curve¹⁵.

I concluded this must be the bank laid down off cape Voltas¹⁶, or in the bay, I therefore sent Mr. Popham in shore, as I had frequently done, to sound & search for it, but he return'd

with an unfavourable account as before, having found regular soundings from 16 fathoms, sandy bottom, at the edge of the bank, to 8 fathoms within a mile of the beach, which was a clean, low sand, on which run ~~was~~ a high surf, but without any opening.

The bank extended about 8 miles & a half, or 7 miles from the shore, & about the same distance north & south, and we found from 28 to 40 fathoms, muddy bottom, close to its near edge¹⁷.

We had been so often disappointed in our searches for de Voltas, that I now began to despair of there being such a place, tho' from the draughts I had seen of it, it appear'd a large, open bay with a broad river, but as these draughts were all made from the land, they have been very liable to errors, and I am led to believe, that as this bank lay to the westward of a small curve in the shore, those who have made them may, from the hills, have conceived it called this the bay of de Voltas, but as to the maps which they lay down, I can only say that our utmost endeavours have proved fruitless in the searching for them, & I have every reason to conclude they do not exist¹⁸.

From this bank in latitude 28° 40' S the shore runs nearly NWbN & SEbS to the bay of Pequena, with a rugged, rocky shore, high mountains, & high broken, barren mountains of rock & sand, steep to, and irregular soundings from 70 to 30 fathoms, 2 or 3 miles from the shore.

On the 11th we discovered the bay of Pequena, by a small pedestal¹⁹ on a rocky point, & having sent a boat in to investigate, we were about to double this point, & enter the bay, when it came on to blow with such violence as to oblige us to wear & stand off shore.

We remained under our courses, & storm staysails, making short boards, the wind from the S to SSW with a heavy swell, 'till the 14th at noon, when the wind abating & the weather being settled, we stood in, & anchored in the bay, in 8 fathoms sandy bottom, the northernmost land bearing by compass NbE, & the point on which the pedestal stood, which we named pedestal point²⁰, SW½S.

Before I proceed it is necessary to mention that in our passage from St. Helen's Bay we had in general hazy weather, with cold raw dews; that we were obliged to stand off during the night, the shore being so straight & steep to,

with such deep water, & such a heavy swell running as to render it impossible for any ship to anchor; but that we always fell in to windward of the land left, consequently no part of the coast was left uninvestigated, nor was any past by in fogs or hazes, at which times the ship's head was thrown off shore, 'till the return of clear weather gave us an opportunity of proceeding.

The damp weather and dews occasioned colds & sore throats to be general amongst the Ship's company, some were attacked with Rheumatizms, & one or two with agues.

The wind was generally at SW, & the thermometer was from 57° to 59°. The Surveyor was employed here as usual, & every boat was busy in searching for fresh water; the Botanist also made daily excursions into the country.

The soil about Pequena consists of loose sand, & beds of marble, chiefly white with red veins, without the least appearance of vegetation, excepting a few stunted Geraniums²¹, which grow in the crevices of the rocks.

However barren as this country is, Mr. Popham the second day after our arrival here gave us an account of his having seen & conversed with, a number of the natives, who had with them a large pack of dogs, and that he by following the dogs to a place where they drank, had to all appearance found a spring of fresh water.

We were elated at this discovery, & got a cask prepared to sink to form a well, but in digging the next day to put this in execution, we to our chagrin found it to be only a reservoir formed by Nature, in which a small quantity of water had lodged.

Whilst Mr. Popham was employed in this business, the natives came down near to where the boat was lying, without the least signs of fear, but all the persuasions he could make use of by presents of knives, beads &c could not induce them to come within reach.

The next day I went myself to the same spot & they came as usual to the number of 20 down towards the boat, followed by 15 or 20 dogs, they approached us boldly 'till within 10 or 15 yards, here they stopped; I threw them a knife, with which they seemed pleased, but would not approach us nearer, & when any of us

advanced toward them, tho' singly, they retreated²².

They indeed made the same signs to me as they had done to Mr. Popham the day before, to go with them & put off the boat, but this I did not think prudent to do, or to suffer any one else.

They did not seem inclined to part with any thing in return for what we gave them, therefore after spending an hour in a fruitless interview I left them, & they wandered with their dogs over a chain of sandy mountains to the NE.

They were rather a small race of people with the smallest feet I ever saw; very active; of a dark copper colour, which they appeared to have darkened by a black dye, their cloathing was the skin of some animal hung over their shoulders, & another hung round their waist; with a number of thongs tied about their necks & middle; their hair appeared long but woolly, & twisted into rolls behind, which extended across the back of the neck from ear to ear, but they had nothing about them by which I could discover their having had any intercourse with Europeans.

From their arms, which were short club sticks, & small poles sharpened at one end like lances, they must have had communication with a country that produced wood, but as far as we could penetrate into the country, or discern from the tops of the highest hills, we did not discover the smallest appearance of vegetation; besides the sticks I have mentioned they carried each a smaller one, with the brush of some animal affixed to one end.

From the little I saw of these people they appeared to me to be cunning & savage, & I conclude them to be a wandering party of the tribe of cannibals called Jaggas²³, with which this country is said to be inhabited from the latitude of 27° S. to Angola.

The language they made use of was very disonant & harsh, & pronounced thro' the nose; it consisted of monosyllables; all I could recollect was Koo, Kee, Koo, Ka, He ta²⁴.

The dogs were in general of the cur kind²⁵, & some large; I caught one which pressed by drought, had fallen into the hole we had dug in searching for fresh water.

The bay of Pequena is not very extensive, but clean, having regular soundings from 15 to 4 and 5 fathoms sandy bottom; it is formed by a

rocky neck of land to the westward, and a stony point to the eastward, $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile off which lies a rock²⁶ always seen above water, & steep to, there being $4\frac{1}{2}$ & 5 fathoms, within half pistol shot of it: This forms the western point of the harbour.

The bay is surrounded with a sandy beach & high, rocky hills, that shelter a ship from southerly winds, but it is entirely exposed to the northern gales, which by the appearance of the beach, the sea weed, & the quantity of Whales' skeletons cast on shore, blow hard, & occasion a high sea.

We were fortunate among these to find a large tree of the iron wood kind, in good preservation, that yielded us good fuel; this was a very acceptable thing to us, our fire wood being quite exhausted.

The mouth of the harbour of Pequena is formed to the eastward by three small rocky Islands, which lie nearly north & south from each other, from which it is formed on both sides by a steep barren shore, & bare, rocky, & sandy mountains; it runs nearly north & south, & extends to the southward about 6 miles, when it is bounded by a clean, flat, sandy beach; the entrance is about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile broad, & it continues its breadth all the way up; the soundings are clean, & regular from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 fathoms, muddy bottom, very sticky and tough.

The northernmost of the three Islands²⁷ on the eastern side of the harbour is covered with Seals, from the wash of the Sea to the summit, in such quantities as hardly to be conceived, & some very large, if I may judge to the size of 5 or 6 cwt.: The middle Isle²⁸ is full of Penguins, & in the same abundance, we killed a number of each, the former for the skins, the latter for fresh food, which were esteemed tolerable: The southernmost Isle²⁹ lays close to the main land on the east side of the harbour, & will hardly admit of a boat to pass between it & the continent, but there are clear channels between the other Islands, with 2 or 3 fathoms; within these Isles & the land to the eastward is a good bay, with a clean, flat beach, surrounded with bare, sandy mountains, & soundings from two to four fathoms; it was in this bay we had the interview with the natives.

Upon the westernmost point which forms the bay of Pequena, (which I named Pedestal point) stands a cross, wrought of the natural

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MAN IN PEQUENA BAY



Figure 5. "Man in Pequena Bay" shows one of the eighteenth century inhabitants of the southern
Nauyasian coast wearing a sealskin cape, and carrying an ostrich eggshell in one hand, and an oryx
spear in the other. Thompson describes the hairstyle in his journal. (For contemporary rough
notes on the sketches, see endnote no. 53). By courtesy of Quentin Keynes.

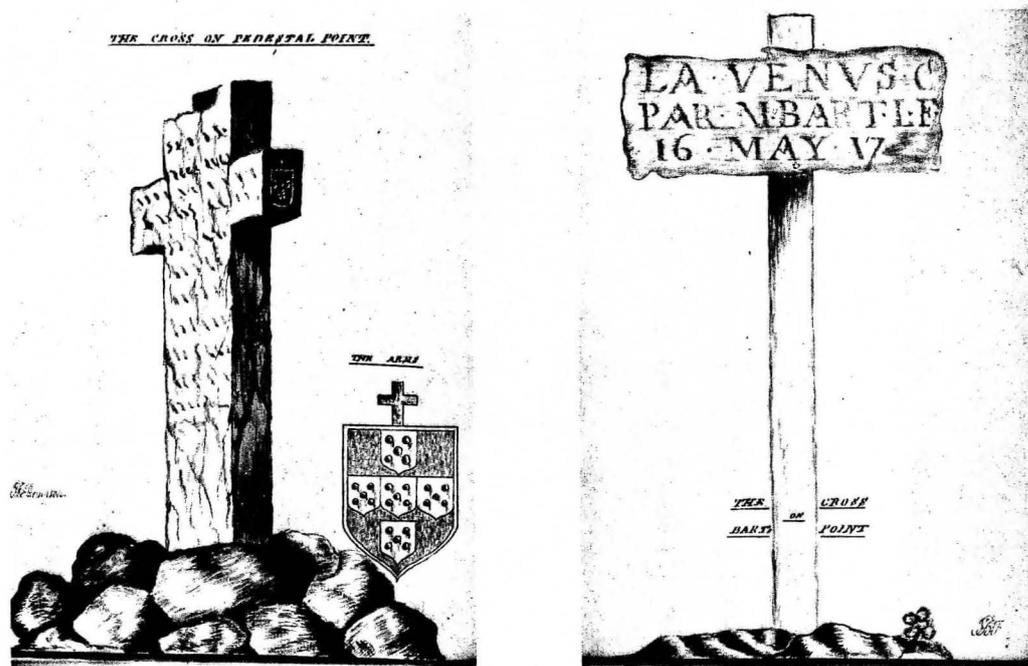


Figure 6. These illustrations of the cross on Bart's Point and the padrao on Pedestal Point are duplications of drawings in Thompson's original report submitted to the Admiralty. Popham likewise drew the oak board with French inscription. *By courtesy of Quentin Keynes.*

marble of the country, the face of which is to the westward, & is pretty conspicuous to a ship running along shore, on the eastern & western sides is an inscription neatly carved in old Roman characters, but the marble of which the cross is made, being of a very brittle quality by age, the inscription is wholly defaced; but on the end of the arm which points to the south, I plainly made out the arms of Portugal, tho' also somewhat injured by pieces of the stone having dropped off; the carving of this pedestal is far from being rude, & it must have cost some time in erecting; the foundation of the stone (which is secured by a cement of mud & sand) is so mouldered by age, that tho' marble it may be crumbled to dust by the finger³⁰.

Upon the western side of the harbour, just within ye entrance, we found erected upon a pine spar, 19 or 20 feet high, a small piece of oak board with an inscription carved thereon, which, tho' much defaced by the weather, I pieced out to be, LA, VENVS, C, PAR, M, BART, L, F, 16, MAY, 17-, La Venus, commandé par Monsr. Bart, Lieutenant de

Fregate, 16th May 17—but the remainder of the year is quite defaced, however this served to corroborate an account which I had heard of Monsr. Bart's having visited this place in the Venus, French Frigate, in the year 1733, and had made a survey of the bay, & harbour, & which was lately published by Mr. Dalrymple from the original manuscript³¹.

In the bay & harbour of Pequena we found many Whales, but not in such quantities, as we had seen them to the southward; sea fowls are much the same.

Mr. Popham in one of his excursions shot a Teal, from a pair which were the only ones seen, much similar in plumage, & quite as good as the English.

The rocks of the shore produce Limpets of a very large size, and from shells I found they also abound in Lobsters & Cray Fish, but we saw none alive.

The seine was hauled frequently, but with little or no success.

The sandy hills are covered with enumerable tracks of wild beasts; I found the den of one, &

from the far I found in it I am led to believe it
changed to a Wolf³², the more so as the
incident in an excursion the day before, had
not been not far from that place.

Mr. Howe's botanical researches were
attended with no success, the only plant
discovered here being a small Geranium of which
I have before spoken; indeed it is much to be
wondered that so fine a harbour as Pequena
should be formed by such a barren, unfruitfull
and apparently doomed to everlasting
sterility.

On the 18th Mr. Popham had finished the
survey, & by a mean of many observations
made by him the latitude of Pedestal Point was
determined to be 26° 36' 50" South.
The longitude of ditto . . 15° 16' 30" Est. of
Greenwich.

The variation of the compass . 21 45 00 West.
The thermometer was from 57° 20' to 58° 10'
during our stay here.

We were preparing to sail on the same day, but
were detained by a thick fog, till the 19th on
which day, at noon, we weighed but at 4 in the
evening the fog returning we were obliged
again to anchor, where we remained 'till the
20th when at 7 am we weigh'd, & stood along
shore to the northd. at the distance of 2 or 3
miles.

On the 23rd upon an examination we found
the stock of water so much reduced, & the
appearance of the country so unpromising for a
supply, that we were under the necessity of
allowing an allowance of one quart each man
per day.

The land from Pequena bay towards the north
is an entire, barren, loose sand, with
perpendicular broken cliffs³³, without the least
traces of vegetation; the beach is alternately
smooth & rocky, but always a high irregular surf
running on it, & the shore is straight, tending
generally NNW & SSE, with irregular soundings
from 7 to 17 fathoms, within a mile of the
land.

Near the latitude 24° 33' S lies a small rocky Isle,
about 2 miles from the main land, steep to,
with soundings 16, 13 & 12 fathoms all round it; this
island is covered with Booby Birds, from
which I gave it the name of Booby Isle³⁴.

From this the coast is straight and fair, in a
NW direction, with flat, sandy hills and
valleys, & the soundings more regular, being

from 28 to 26 fathoms, mud & sand, to the
latitude of 23° 40' S³⁵ when the land becomes
very low, with a low sandy beach, which is
hardly perceptible for the high surf, to a bay
named in the charts Walwich Bay³⁶, here we
anchored in the evening of the 27th, in 7
fathoms, mud & sand.

The next morning Lieutenant Popham
proceeded up the bay, & returned before
noon, with an account that wood was here to
be got, & that he had seen the tracks of natives
and droves of cattle; upon this promising
intelligence we weighed & turned up to the
head of the bay, & at noon anchored on the
western side, in 4 fathoms, soft muddy
bottom.

During our passage from Pequena to this bay,
the weather has been much the same, the
nights, as usual, cold & raw, with heavy dews,
& the days hazy & murky; a heavy swell
continually from the sea; the wind in general
from SSE to SW; Whales & Seals frequent all
along; the thermometer from 57° to 64°.

Mr. Popham immediately set about surveying
the bay, & our other boats were constantly
employed in bringing on board wood, &
searching for fresh water.

In the evening I went on shore with a party &
was fortunate enough to attain an interview
with four of the natives, which we found about
a mile from where we landed; they sat down &
received us courteously & without fear, & as a
token of friendship rubbed each of us on the
cheeks and breast with rancid, stinking grease,
that they had in a cow's horn, exclaiming at the
same time the words Borasso! Borasso!³⁷ We
then made them presents of beads and other
trifles we happened to have about us; they
invited us (as we understood) to their town,
but night coming on we declined the
expedition 'till next morning, & returned on
board.

Next day the same party of us landed, in order
to pay them the promised visit, & on our
landing were met by the same four, &
conducted by them over a chain of barren hills
of loose sand, in which we were sometimes half
leg deep, about 4 miles inland south from the
ship, here we arrived at their village, which we
found placed in a vale in the midst of some
small stunted trees³⁸, the first we had yet seen
in the country, the largest of which was not

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thicker in the stem than a man's leg, & not above 20 feet high.

Their habitations are formed by the boughs of these shrubs stuck in the sand and meeting at the tops, where they are confined together, and resemble the halves of bee hives, with the backs next the wind, which is generally one way, & brings with it clouds of sand off the surrounding hills; the village consists of about 20 of these huts, each hut containing a family, but I found a great disproportion in the sexes, the whole village consisting of 8 women, 3 female children, 49 men, & 25 boys, under 10 years of age³⁹.

The men were all active, & well made, but in general rather inclined to be small of stature, & of a dark copper colour; the women⁴⁰ were small, & appeared in general old & wrinkled, amongst the whole I only saw two which I could suppose to be younger than 50, & yet the oldest had twin children at the breast.

Both sexes are very ugly, having thick lips, flat noses, low foreheads, bad teeth, small eyes, & high cheek bones, they have all short woolly hair, which they begrime with stinking grease, & decorate with beads & small shells, plastering the wool into small lumps, & powdering it with a dust, the colour of brick dust⁴¹; they also rub their skins with grease and any filth they can find, & stink most intolerably & the dirtier they are, the more elegant they feel themselves.

The dress of the men & women are nearly alike, & very similar to that of the people we saw in Pequena Bay, being the dried skin of a seal, bullock, or any other animal, tied round the neck & hanging over the shoulders, covering them below the hips, with an apron of the same round the waist, which in the women is much longer than the men & more confined between the legs; both sexes keep the hairy side of these Skins outward all day, & shift them next their flesh in the evening; they also wear sandals made of dried hide, which I observed were put on only when they came to a loose sand, where they answer the purpose of mud pattens, which I have seen people make use of on the mud flats in England.

Their ornaments are beads, & shells made into necklaces & ear rings, with bracelets of ivory round the wrists & arms; round the neck & waist they tie a number of thongs of raw hide, to which they hang a knife, a bodkin, & a small

box (in which they keep beads & other trinkets) all made of ivory or bone; one or two I saw who wore each a cap made of dried skin, tied under the chin, with two goat or deer's horns sticking out on the forehead, & the man whom I supposed to be the chief of the village had, among the beads & ornaments about his wool, the bladder of some animal blown up & fastened on one side of his head, with 2 or 3 others which were not blown up.

Their arms are short sticks, bows, & arrows pointed with bone, which they carry in quivers made of hide, the points of which are dipped in some gummous substance, which I understood to be poisonous, a club about 18 inches long with an oval lump on the end, made of a dark, heavy wood, & long spears, some pointed with the horns of deer, & others with iron, from which & the beads of glass & copper I found amongst them I am convinced they have had some intercourse with Europeans, probably these articles may have come to their hands thro' the different tribes from the Portuguese Settlements of St. Philip de Benguela, & St. Paul de Loando, to the northward.

The food of these people is for the most part the fruit of a small thorny plant which the Botanist found to be a kind of Cucumber⁴²; this plant grows on the sandy hillocks, & we found also, between the hills, a few reeds & a kind of couch grass, these & the shrubs beforementioned comprehend the whole vegetable productions of their country, & are found but in partial spots; they also use animal food⁴³ & possess herds of horned cattle, their drink is mild & brackish water, but I could not find out where they procured this last article, neither could any of us come at a sight of their cattle⁴⁴.

We dug in many places round about the village, & found indeed water, but it was little fresher than that of the ocean.

They possess a number of dogs, there were at least thirty about the village & what is very extraordinary, among the whole but two males, a direct opposition to that of their own species.

These people are slothfull, dull, & filthy to a great degree, I had a proof of the latter in seeing a Woman assiduously employ'd in picking the lice from her husband's clotted wool, & eating them with vast pleasure & satisfaction⁴⁵.

WOMAN IN WALWICH BAY, CAFFRARIA.



Figure 7. "Woman in Walwich Bay, Caffraria" shows glass beads woven into her hair, her anchor button earring, and a bone !nara knife and bodkin suspended around her neck. *By courtesy of Quentin Keynes.*

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Figure 8. "Man in Walwich Bay" is a portrait of a man with bow and arrows. In his hair he wears an inflated bladder with three others, as well as glass beads. Around his neck hang two small bone boxes, a Inara knife and bodkin. *By courtesy of Quentin Keynes.*

They expressed no astonishment at the sight of many of them taking little or no notice of us, & on our parting shewed no regret, but they were passionately fond of the buttons off their cloaths, brandy & tobacco, which I found they were acquainted with, & knew the use of: I saw an old woman who drew the smoak of it, thro' a small tube made of hide, in large mouthfulls & swallowed it 'till her stomach was full of smoak, when she lay down gasping & reaching in a state of intoxication & let it gradually evaporate from her mouth & nostrils.

The eyes of these people, & also those of their dogs are all sore & running with water, & the eye lashes eaten away, this is occasioned I observed by a small fly which this country is full of, & the eye is the first place they attack, 'shho' to prevent this they have always in their hands a flapper made of a Fox or Jackal's brush, affixed to the end of a stick; the sand also if there is the least wind is always swept along in great & thick drifts, which annoys the eye greatly, & they live & sleep in the midst of

the smoak of a fire which they keep continually burning in the middle of their huts.

Their language is very disonant, & consists in a great measure of monosyllables, each word being preceded by a click⁴⁶ in the speech, which is effected by an application of the tongue to the roof of the mouth, as thus, r'Gus- a cow⁴⁷; r'Ding Houi- good day, or how do you do⁴⁸; r'Mare- milk⁴⁹; &c.

I found they had among them some clay utensils and callibashes, these last I imagine must have come a long way out of the country⁵⁰.

I look upon them to be a wandering people, & only take up their abode in partial spots, where they may chance to find the trees which I have beforementioned growing, & when they are expended by fire, & other occasions, they move & search for another place of residence, as a proof of this I saw two or three spots, which bore the appearance of worn out deserted villages⁵¹.

I saw but one land bird here, which resembled ye English house sparrow⁵².



Figure 9. These two figures illustrate the descriptions in the narrative of the people and their apparel. The man holds in his right hand a fly-whisk made from a jackal's brush; he wears a cap with antelope horns and an inflated bladder. *By courtesy of Quentin Keynes.*

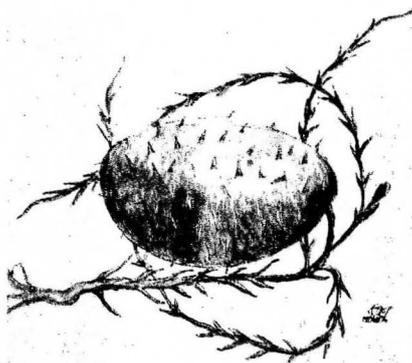


Figure 10. Probably the earliest drawing of a !nara melon, fruit of *Acanthosicyos horrida* which is endemic to the Namib coast. The !nara melon is exceptionally nutritious, especially the flesh, boiled and then dried, and the seeds. *By courtesy of Quentin Keynes.*



REPL. OF THE CAFFRARIAN VILLAGE IN WALWICH BAY

Figure 11. Probably an idealized version of the eighteenth century village in the Walvis Bay dune-fields. The trees would have been *Tamarix usneoides*. By courtesy of Quentin Keynes.

After making these observations & buying a calf which we found in the village I returned on board, & the next day another party of officers & men paid them a visit, and were fortunate enough to buy from them a fine⁵³ young heifer, which we killed & served to the Ship's Compy. & was fat & good beef.

We were at the same time not idle in digging & searching for fresh water, & procuring wood, but our endeavours to attain water proved all fruitless.

On the 30th I again paid a visit to the natives, attended by a party, in hopes of purchasing some more cattle, but I was disappointed, however we penetrated 2 or 3 miles into the country to take a view of it, tho' not without much murmuring among the Natives.

We found no alteration of the soil in this excursion, the whole face of the country being one loose, barren sand, with high mountains: The wind being rather fresh during this walk, the sand which flew in great clouds was very troublesome & almost blinded us, and we were very happy to get again on board.

We were employed 'till the 1st of May in the survey of the bay, & supplying the Ship with wood; this we found in great plenty, dead, & cast up on the shores, but where it can have come from I am at a loss to conceive, I am positively assured it could never have been the growth of this part of the continent of Africa, tho' some people who have before visited a part of Caffraria have said that it appeared to them to have been a country worn out by time,

& had once been fruitful; I am rather led to think it was thus created, & the wood which we found to have been swept out of the rivers to the northward, & cast up here by northerly winds, for all the places which we have seen give strong proofs of the force of the NW gales.

Whilst we lay here the seine was hauled every day when the surf would permit, & we were pretty successfull in taking Rays, Catfish, & Sand Eels, which last are sweet, but very full of bones.

Walwich Bay⁵⁴ is formed by a low, sandy neck to the SW, which bears the appearance of being entirely under water in particular seasons, probably in the northerly winds & is bounded to the eastward & northward by the main land; it is about 7 miles broad, & runs from the entrance to the southward about 6' or 7', & soundings from 12 fathoms to 6 feet, soft, muddy bottom.

The head of this bay is full of sand flats, & indeed the whole is surrounded by swamps, from which arise thick fogs & putrid exhalations, they are full of Flamingos, Pelicans, & many other sea birds; it is well sheltered from all winds & you lay in it as in a mill pond.

The nights⁵⁵ & mornings here were calm, cold, raw & damp, 'till the fogs were dispersed by the SW trade, which seldom set in 'till 10 oclock, & died away again towards Sun set; this weather caused agues to be very frequent & general amongst us, however every care was taken against its attacks, & the Peruvian bark⁵⁶ administered, which had a good effect.

Whales & Seals are found here, but not in such quantities as to the southward.

The tide in Walwish bay flows 8 feet.

On the 2d. of May Mr. Popham had completed his observations, by which we found the situation of this bay to be,

Latitude 22° 53' 57" South.
Longitude 14° 40' 00" Et. of Greenwich.
Variation of the compass 21° 20' West.
The thermometer was generally from 59° to 64°.

The same day having completed our wood, we weighed and continued our researches close along shore to the northward, but at 8 the same evening it being nearly calm & the current &

well setting us forcibly right on the shore, which appeared broken, with high irregular breakers. I was under the necessity of anchoring in 15 fathoms sandy bottom, about a mile & a half from the beach.

The swell ran very high & hollow, & there being no wind we lay in this disagreeable situation till the 4th when at noon a breeze springing up, we weighed & proceeded along shore as before.

The land from Walwish Bay bears the same appearance as the parts I have before described, however, sandy mountains with a high surf on the beach, straight, & tending nearly NW & at the latitude of $18^{\circ} 45'$ S where lie some high, broken, rocky mountains, to which the charts have affixed the name of Frio Mountains, from thence the land tends more westerly with high land to the latitude of $17^{\circ} 30'$ where commences what is laid down in the charts as Tyger Island, but we find it to be only a sandy peninsula, so low & with such a surf to the seaward, that no land is to be seen, however we ran close along by the breakers, touched round the northern extremity of the peninsula & anchored mid channel between it and the main in 10 fathoms, mud & sandy bottom.

The soundings on the coast during our run from Walwish Bay to this place have been more shoal & more regular than we had before found them, having in general sandy bottom, from 10 to 15 fathoms, within a mile of the shore.

The weather has been much the same & the complaints of the ague as frequent.

This last bay which we find bears the name of Walwish Bay⁵⁷ is very clear, clean, & extensive, Tyger Peninsula, which forms the SW point, being a low flat plain, composed of white sand & broken shells, with a clean beach.

The peninsula is about 4 miles broad, in the broadest part, but at the head of the bay where it joins the mainland it is not above $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile, & on the northernmost part it is about 2 miles.

Mr. Popham in his researches up the head of the bay, found the tracks of natives, but saw none, nor any verdure, upon the northern coast of the peninsula he found a large piece of Stamp leather, & the runner tackle of a large boat, the blocks of which were painted green,

& did not appear to have been exposed there above a year.

The NE side of the bay is bounded by the main land, which is a high wall of high sandy mountains, it is about 9 miles broad & runs up in a north & south line, 22 miles from the entrance & is well sheltered from most winds & smooth riding; where we lay we were only open to the sea from NBE to NWbN.

The head of the bay is full of sand banks & lakes left by the tide; there are regular soundings from the western to the eastern shore from 15 to 7 fathoms, mud & sandy bottom.

The tide rises here nearly 9 feet.

Whilst the survey of the bay was completing I used every endeavour to find fresh water, but in vain, I also penetrated with a party as far as possible into the country, but to my mortification beyond every hill we persevered to ascend, we still found one which rose higher, nor did I perceive the least sign of vegetation: In this excursion I met with a bird marked between the wings, on the back, white, but every where else black, & in all respects resembling the European crow⁵⁸; this was the second land bird I had seen on the coast since our leaving St. Helen's Bay: The tracks & dung of wild beasts were also frequently seen.

This bay possesses an abundance of fish, of a great variety & all excellent in their kinds; Mullet, of a large size, Soals, Breams, Snappers, King Fish, Albacores, Jew Fish, Skait, Thorn-backs, Rays, & various others of the inferior, bad, kinds as Sharks, Monks & Catfish; the seine was constantly hauled once or twice a day, & fish taken in such profusion that great quantities were obliged to to [sic] be thrown overboard.

Turtle were also seen of a large size, but we caught none.

The Botanist here, as in most of the other places we had touched at, found no subject for investigation.

We however replaced our late expence of wood, which we found here cast up as in Walwish Bay, & Mr. Popham having finished the survey, & every investigation being made, on the 16th May we weighed & proceeded with a fresh breeze, close along shore in 10 & 15 fathoms, towards cape Negroe.

The latitude of Fish bay was ascertained to be $16^{\circ} 29' 45''$ S.

Longitude . . . $11^{\circ} 33' 48''$ Et. of Greenwich.
Variation of the compass . . . $21^{\circ} 16' 00''$ West.
The thermometer whilst we lay there from 65° to 69° .

Amongst the many various errors we found in all the charts respecting this coast, none can be more egregious than their description of cape Negroe, which they lay down as a long cape, stretching to the westward, with a river, & the situation of it to be from $16^{\circ} 04'$ to $16^{\circ} 27'$ S Latitude.

From our leaving Fish bay we sailed close in with the shore, & Lieut. Popham kept, within the Ship, in a boat close to the surf to the latitude of $16^{\circ} 00'$ S. The Sun was now setting, which was in general the clearest time upon the coast, & we could see at least 5 leagues to the northd. but could discern no projection of the land, nor any opening or inlet, but a continued straight shore, barren sand hills, & dark hummocks, with a flat beach, & a high surf, as it had been from Fish bay.

Here in compliance with my orders & instructions, my researches terminated, & I hauled to the westward, nor did any man feel a regret at leaving so dreary a coast, along which we had sailed nearly 1 200 miles in a direct line, without seeing a tree or procuring a drop of fresh water, altho' every effort & every diligent attention was exerted by all, & every one, employed on this occasion.

I steered as far southerly as the wind would allow, hoping to fall in with the shoal of Anthony Viana, which is with much uncertainty laid down off this coast, but as we did not pass within 10 leagues of its reputed northernmost latitude we did not see it, consequently I made the best of my way for the Island of St. Helena, and on the 6th day anchored in St. James's Bay, where we found riding the Dutton, one of the Et. India Company's Ships, & a French Bark belonging to Nantz, who was bound to Angola for a cargo of slaves; he had put in here in some distress having made the island by meer chance, when he supposed himself by his reconing to be 60 or 70 leagues to the eastward of it.

I observed after we had ran 50 leagues from the coast of Caffraria, we got rid of the moist thick weather which we had always experienced during our stay there, & entered a clear, serene

atmosphere, with brisk, wholesome breezes; this change in the weather made a sensible one in the healths of our people, & on our arrival at St. Helena, we had got the better of all our little complaints, and there remained but two, which had been violent attacks of the ague.

On the 1st. of June we had completed our Water & the Rigging, upon which I weighed & steered to the NW; the Dutton Indiaman intending to sail next morning.

It has been generally understood that Ships bound to Europe from Saint Helena touch at Ascension, it laying so directly in the way, to refresh their crews with Turtle which is there in abundance; this would have been a very gratefull thing to us, to whom fresh provisions had not been frequent, but my orders being so pressing for my return, I relinquished every consideration, & made the best of my way for England.

I crossed the Equator in Longitude $19^{\circ} 45'$ and carried the SW trade to the latitude of 4° North: It is invariable that between the meetings of trade winds you must have calms & baffling weather, this we proved 'till the NE trade reached us; but in this passage when to the Northward of 10° North latitude, you may look upon yourself as clear of any, but Periodical, calms.

The NE trade lasted but to the latitude of $22^{\circ} 00'$ North, when it was succeeded by a SW wind, but with calms, light light [sic] winds, & variable baffling weather.

I passed 20 leagues to the Eastward of St. Mary's, one of the Azores; and about 4 or 5, by my reckoning, which I had every reason to believe was correct, to the Westward of a rock which is laid down in the charts 25 leagues due East of that Island, but did not see any appearance of it.

We had light winds & changeable weather 'till the 10th of July, when we were met by an ENE wind, against which we contended, and beat into the Channel, struck soundings on the 20th and anchored at Spithead on the 23rd after a tedious passage of 53 days.

During this voyage I am happy to say I have not lost a man, by sickness, accident, or otherwise, and on our arrival at Spithead had not one on board but whose complaint would be perfectly eradicated by his native Air.

[signed] Tho. Bolden Thompson^{sr}

Recapitulation of the Latitude & Longitude of every Bay, Cape, or Head Land
beforementioned, with the Variation of the Compass, and the Degrees of Heat.

Names of Places	Latitude South	Longitude East from Greenwich	Variation of the Compass	Extremes of the thermr.
St. Martin's Point, St. Helen's Bay	32°41'43"	17°55'00"	21°30'	58° to 61°
Berg River, St. Helen's Bay	32°50'47"	18°12'00"	"	"
Cape Deseada, St. Helen's Bay	32°20'15"	18°13'00"	"	"
Inland Cape	31°42'57"	"	"	"
Rocky Clumps	28°45'00"	"	"	"
Pedestal Point. S. Part of Pequena Bay	26°36'50"	15°16'30"	21°45'	57° to 58°
Bird Island	24°33'00"	"	"	"
Walwich Bay. NW Point	22°53'51"	14°40'00"	21°20'	59° to 64°
Iron Mountains	18°45'00"	"	"	"
Tyger Peninsula. N. Point	16°29'45"	11°33'48"	21°16'	65° to 69°

¹ Parts of the south-eastern Cape Province, South Africa, are today still known as "Kaffraria". On early eighteenth century maps, the area in south-western Africa between approximately the Tropic of Capricorn and the Cape of Good Hope was recorded as "Caffaria" (e.g. A Chart of ye Coasts of Cimbebas and Caffaria from Mt. Negro to ye C. of Good Hope, 1701; reproduced on the cover of Cimbebasia vol. 10, 1988).

² Now known as St Helena Bay.

³ The botanist, Mr Anthonio Pantaleon Howe is referred to as Hove in Vigne (1988) and Frost (1980). Vigne (1988: 6) states that Hove was a Polish gardener from Kew, accompanying the voyage on the instructions of Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society.

⁴ In 1683 Berg River had been established as the limit of the farming frontier (Elphick 1977: 221), but at the time of the voyage of the *Nautilus* over a century later the colonial boundary had been extended considerably further north.

⁵ Grey-wing, and Cape, francolin.

⁶ Quentin Keynes's annotation from the unillustrated copy of the narrative reads: "of the antelope kind".

⁷ Brown hyena (*Hyena brunnea*).

⁸ Following the suggestion made by Richard Brook, of the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute, University of Cape Town, that the name *allegranza* could be from medieval Portuguese, Eric Axelson (in litt.) commented that there is no such word in the Portuguese language, nor any bird's name which begins with the letters *gr*. However, *alcatraz* is the generic name for large birds; *allegranza* could possibly be a corruption. Axelson further offers the information that Johann Forster, chief naturalist to James Cook, in *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster 1772-1775* (Hakluyt Society, 1982) identified all birds seen in Cape waters and made no reference to any bird resembling *allegranza* in name.

⁹ In the entry for Monday 27 March in the daily journal, Thompson mentions that he sent 4 half barrels of gunpowder to the farmer to help pay for the water and refreshments.

¹⁰ Quentin Keynes's annotation from the unillustrated copy of the narrative adds: "Much has been said by voyagers of the Cape Sheep and of the weight and size of their tails, and all equally erroneous. I procured some here of the largest breed, they are long legged and with short wool, without horns; their *Tails* are very short and taper off from the Buttock, to a point, and the largest I ever saw when skinned did not exceed five pounds in Weight."

¹¹ Hippopotami.

¹² Hippopotami.

¹³ Quentin Keynes's annotation from the unillustrated manuscript adds: "These and the Ostridges with which this country abounds at certain times of the year comprehends the chief part of the

- trade of the Dutch farmers. The Hippopotamus, they kill for their skin and Ivory—which is whiter harder and of a closer texture than that produced by the Elephant. And the Manatee or Sea Cows flesh I am told equals that of an ox”.
- ¹⁴ Quentin Keynes’s annotation from the unillustrated copy of the narrative adds: “on board. Taken on shore it rose 3° 10’”.
- ¹⁵ These two rocky clumps which Thompson sketched in his daily journal did indeed mark Cape Voltas, cf Colonel Robert Jacob Gordon’s journal entry for 16 August 1779: “. . . Saw the two little rocky mountains mentioned before at a distance of half a quarter of an hour to our left. . . . The easterly one is the larger. We named them ‘De Twe Gebroeders’. Apart from [knowing] the latitude, these [mountains] are the only signs by which one could discover the mouth of the Orange River, since they are close to the shore, the smaller one pointed, three miles S of the mouth, as I saw from the mountain. There the sea extends directly northwards and forms a fair-sized inlet, after which the land at the mouth extends NW.” (Raper & Boucher 1988: 264).
- ¹⁶ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, confusion seemed to reign over the position of Das Voltas Bay. The name came from the Portuguese voyages of discovery during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A map compiled c. 1489 by Henricus Martellus Germanus records Volta das Angras at the mouth of the Orange River. The bay of De Voltas which Thompson was searching for was undoubtedly the bay a short distance south of the Orange River mouth. Present south latitude for the Orange River mouth is 28°38’20”S; for Alexander Bay 28°40’24”S (with “North Head” and “South Head” either side of the bay); and for Cape Voltas 28°43’00”S. The rocky clumps in 28°40’S that Thompson sketched were the landmarks to look out for when searching for the bay (cf endnote no. 15).
- ¹⁷ The following extract comes from the daily journal of the *Boode* (Moritz 1915: 45): “. . . we had, below the southern point of Agoa das Voltas, drifted onto a sandy shelf that lies some two miles to the south and runs along the coast from the southern point of Agoa das Voltas to the northern point. The water on this shelf is extremely foamy and turbulent, and along this reef, a long half mile from the coast, we found 11, 12 to 13 fathom deep sandy bottom. At noon, we found we had reached 28° 37’ southern latitude. This above-mentioned bay, Agoa das Voltas, runs mainly NW and SE and has an extremely shallow foreshore, and the surf on this shallow foreshore begins far from the coast.” [Translated by P. Reiner, Language Service, Ministry of Education].
- ¹⁸ Colonel Robert Jacob Gordon’s description of the Orange River mouth (23 August 1779) explains the difficulties involved in finding the mouth from the sea: “I measured the latitude: 28°33’. . . . With the boat I went into the mouth, into the breakers. In the mouth was a narrow channel in which I found three fathoms of water, in the breakers about one fathom and right inside in front of the mouth a sandbank, so that to the innermost part on either side was a gully three fathoms deep. [This], however, did not extend into the breakers which, for as long as we have been here now, are very strong outside. The deepest part, or the strongest current, of the river is close to the right bank. There I found a narrow channel two-and-a-half fathoms deep, [with] sand and also mud [but] nothing like a rock, which ends far upstream on a sandbank at our outspan. However, almost no current can be discerned except at ebb-tide, on account of the broad vlei which the river forms here. I am completely convinced that no boat can enter here, unless on a single occasion when the river is full, which is generally in January or February; but then the sea, which is here very wild because of the flat beach, must be dead calm, and at high tide. But I still doubt it and, even knowing the latitude, how would anyone find this small, shallow mouth?” (Raper & Boucher 1988: 276).
- ¹⁹ The padrao erected by Bartolomeu Dias in July 1488 on the present Dias Point at Lüderitzbucht. See figure 6.
- ²⁰ Now known as Dias Point.
- ²¹ *Pelargonium* spp.
- ²² This caution leads one to think that the local people must have had some unpleasant experiences with sea-farers, although Thompson goes on to state that they had about them no material evidence of intercourse with Europeans. However, according to Stackpole (1953: 164) American whalers were hunting the Southern Right whale from the Gulf of Guinea down the West African coast to Walvis Bay and Table Bay during the 1780s. Walvis Bay, Angra Pequena and Saldanha Bay on the south-western coast were most popular with the whalers who used to leave the United States with a supply of trade goods to pay for fresh provisions (Booth 1964: 281). It seems that in 1786 the whalers had not yet begun their trading activities at Angra Pequena.
- ²³ The Jaggas were a fierce and warlike people, properly called the Imbangala, from the Katanga region of the Congo and Lunda in Angola. They pillaged settlements and allied with the

- Portuguese in slave-raiding as they pushed through Angola to the coast, reaching the Kunene River in the late sixteenth century (Jill Kinahan 1989: 36). The Jagga are often recorded on maps of the eighteenth century, but never further south than approximately the latitude of Cape Negro (16°S). Thompson's seems to be an isolated reference to their occurring as far south as 27°S.
- ³⁴ The Nama language bewildered the English sailors. Nama has four different clicks: the dental (/), the lateral (/l/), the palatal (/ɲ/), and the alveolar (/!/), each with five variant releases. These unfamiliar sounds no doubt led Thompson to hear it as "disonant & harsh". Professor W. Haacke of the African Languages Department, University of Namibia, finds quite acceptable Thompson's description of the language as monosyllabic. He explains that, strictly speaking, Nama roots are disyllabic, but that many do sound monosyllabic because of contraction (Haacke, in litt.). The fact that vowels in Nama can be oval, or nasalized, probably led Thompson to describe it as "pronounced through the nose".
- ³⁵ Quentin Keynes's annotation from the unillustrated copy of the narrative adds: "but well formed & swift of foot".
- ³⁶ Angra Rock.
- ³⁷ This island, named by Thompson, is still known as Seal Island.
- ³⁸ Still known by Thompson's name of Penguin Island.
- ³⁹ Now adjoined to the mainland, Shark Island first appeared under its current name in 1828 on Admiralty Chart no. 632.
- ⁴⁰ This detailed description of the padrao when it was still standing has been used by researchers in attempts to reconstruct its appearance (cf Kinahan 1988).
- ⁴¹ For a reproduction of Dalrymple's map see Kinahan (1988: 54). The original manuscript is housed in the British Library, reference no. Maps 147 e 17. Bart's original manuscript survey has not been traced.
- ⁴² Brown hyena.
- ⁴³ Although it seems reasonable to assume the cliffs were named by Thompson "Easter Cliffs" because the *Nautilus* sailed past them over Easter (the date in the daily journal is given as Sunday 23 April), Greg Roberts of the South African Astronomical Observatory has worked out that Easter Sunday would have fallen on the 16th April, the Sunday before. The name "Easter Cliffs" appears on Popham's chart "Coast of Caffraria".
- ⁴⁴ Listed in Thompson's table at the end of his journal as Bird Island; now known as Hollam's Bird Island. Booby birds are Cape gannets.
- ⁴⁵ The entry in the daily journal for Thursday 27 April gives the latitude as 23°16'30"S and states that the ship was running along shore 4 or 5 miles off, with large quantities of blubber floating by. This evidence of whaling activity in the vicinity of Walvis Bay (23°S) points to the likelihood of American whalers being in these waters (cf endnote no. 22). When the British took over the Cape of Good Hope in 1795, the sloop *Star* re-surveyed the south-western coast and found British whaleships at Angra Pequena whose captains revealed their sound knowledge of the coastline.
- ⁴⁶ The present Walvis Bay. The English corrupted the spelling of the original Dutch name "Walvisch"; to the American whalers of the eighteenth century it was known also as Woolwich Bay. The original spelling in the manuscript was "Walwish Bay", but it has been subsequently corrected in dark brown ink to "Walwich Bay".
- ⁴⁷ Professor W. Haacke, and Pastor E. Eiseb, of the African Languages Department, University of Namibia, suggest that the Nama would have been *borosa*, meaning "anointed", from the verb *boro* meaning "to anoint", and the adjectival suffix *sa*. cf Popham, who reports the word as *Barossa*, or *Morassa* (p. 67).
- ⁴⁸ Tamarisk trees, *Tamarix usneoides*. See figure 11.
- ⁴⁹ cf endnote no. 44.
- ⁵⁰ Keynes's annotation from the unillustrated copy of the narrative reads: "I observed each of the Women had one joint of the little finger cut off."
- ⁵¹ Red ochre (haematite); still used as a cosmetic today by Himba pastoralists in Kaokoland.
- ⁵² Thompson's is the earliest description and illustration of the !nara plant, *Acanthosicyos horrida*. See figure 10.
- ⁵³ Quentin Keynes's annotation from the unillustrated narrative adds: "As we found by their eating part of some Beef we brought for our days subsistance on our last visit."

⁴⁴ The reason for this is advanced by John Kinahan (1989: 154). Because of the restricted availability of waterholes in the !Khuiseb Delta, the village Thompson visited was the central pastoral encampment. During the dry season, the pastoralist's animals would have been dependent upon the waterhole which serviced the camp, but when water was available at a distance from the camp, animals would have been kept at outlying stockposts, and not at the village. Several subsequent historical sources mention the long delays that were necessary during the bartering of cattle, because the animals were brought from inland, e.g. Alexander (1838). There are also indications that the inhabitants of Walvis Bay were familiar enough with sea-farers to employ caution, and keep their women and cattle out of harm's way.

⁴⁵ Compare Edmund Gardner's (1803) description of the inhabitants of Walvis Bay (idiosyncratic spelling and grammar have been preserved):

"... left for the West Cost of Africa, where we arrived in the 6th Mo. 1803. While on the south and West of Africa was in the dominions of Hotentots, saw many of them, had some communication with them. In the later part of one day, saw some of the natives on the shore not far from the ships, there were several ships in Walwich Bay at the time, a boat was sent from each ship. The boat from our Ship I was in, I had never seen any of this singlar people before. I looked at them, talked with them (by signs) the number of them were three, an old man, one old, and one young feemales. They talked incessantly nothing could we understand, after a little time, some one made a noise like the lowing of cattle, when the young woman repeted the sound, and then laid her head on her hand shuting her eyes immitating sleep, then pointing and folowing the sun 'till down, then going through the sleeping sign, and when the sun arrose the third day, the Bullocks, Sheep, and Goats would be there. True to the signs they came, with quite a number of them to drive and care for the stock. Nearly all, or quite all, was purchased by the different Ships in the Bay. They wanted nothing in exchange for the stock, but Backasaw, and Tentabar, which was *Tobacco*, and *Iron*, which was of more value to them than anything offered. The feemales had bracelets on their arms of iron, and brass, some of them, must been young, when they had them put on as 'twould been difficult to get them over their hands.

There was one thing peculiar to them, that was the many dogs. I several times counted them and the persons with them, and on an average 'twas twenty dogs to each person. Their manners were singlar for seldom or ever do they walk, if the distance is not more than ten feet, they run. When approaching strangers, as soon as they can be heard, call out "ting-hoigh," and continue calling till quite clost when they stick their spear in the ground, call, "or' tinghoigh" and always seeme glad to see strangers.

This singlar people have peculiar propencity for filth, they have little clothing, a skin arround their loins, the covering for the remainder of the body is made up with filth, and greesy substances to close the pores of the skin, they seem to suffer from cold nights. Theirs another thing peculiar to them, the manner of their sitting, their uniform practice is to sit, or bend down on their feet, through the whole night arround a little fire, for fewell is scarce with them. At the time Ships are taking Whales and fresh carcasses drive on shore, they prefer those that have become stale and putrid to fresh ones. Having put my finger on one of their arms which had been well basted with their *waterproof* the stench was so great that after twice washing my hands with soap, found 'twas not possible to eradicate the stench by washing, had recourse to smoking with a strong smoke. Their collour was not african, but a shade or two darker than the Indian, hair curly with many beads wrought into their hair. The Beef they brought to market was fresh in compare with our long salted provisions, but 'twas not well fleshed neither was it sweet, as new Beef generally is, the mutton was better, but not equal to Southdown they must had scanty pasture. Nothing is to be seen of the serounding Country but sand hills, the only green thing near is at the Gardens (so called) north of the usual anchorage where Samp here is to be obtained, by soaking in fresh water, 'tis made pickles of, in place of something better. The natives all have spears neetly wrought from Iron, which would seeme impossible to have been wrought without some peculiar process."

⁴⁶ See endnote no. 24.

⁴⁷ Nama for cow is *gomas*.

⁴⁸ Although this phrase is repeated by Edmund Gardner (1803) as *or' tinghoigh*, Professor Haacke and Pastor Eiseb of the African Languages Department, University of Namibia, can offer no current equivalent. Haacke suggests that it could be either *!gâi //goas* "good morning" or *!gâi !oes*

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"good evening". Eiseb claims that the people did not know these expressions originally, as they are of European idiom.

*¹⁰ *Mama* for "milk" is *daib*.

*¹¹ *Grown* by agricultural communities, calabashes would have come into the possession of the Walvis Bay pastoralists by trade, presumably with people from the far north of the country. (cf. Thompson's opinion that the Walvis Bay pastoralists must have had trading links with Angola.) As the calabash is exotic to Namibia, it must have reached Africa from America prior to the latter end of the eighteenth century.

*¹² Thompson was, of course, instructed to observe the appearance, habits and lifestyle of the indigenous people living in the vicinity of any natural harbour he might find, so that the area could be evaluated for settling British convicts.

*¹³ Probably the Cape Sparrow, or the Great Sparrow, found in more arid areas.

*¹⁴ Between two pages here is a loose sheet written in a different handwriting and ink from that of the text of the journal with comments on the sketches which read: "The mantle is either the Hide of a Wild Beast or Seal, tied with Thongs round his neck, the Head Covered with rather a hairy wool Platted with Grease & Red Earth, Ears large thick Lips Large flat Noses like Negroes but rather more homely, their feet and hands not larger than of a Boy of 12 Years old, the Colour dark Copper, Club pointed in his hand, peice of Ivory round wrist, holds an ostrich's Egg. [See figure 6].

*¹⁵ *Woman*

hair woolly, Ear anchor Button, the hair filled with Beads of Colour, small plats in same manner, pieces of Ivory abt. her Neck like an Ivory folder. [See figure 7].

*¹⁶ *Man*

hair more woolly braided up Sheeps bladder in his hair & smaller ones. Oval peice of Ivory with Marks uponit, dark Mulatto almost black. Seal Skin." [See figure 8].

On the back of this loose sheet:

*¹⁷ *Walwich Bay*

Right hand Stick with Tail of Jackall to brush the flies from their Eyes which are generally sore. Front peice thick hide as a safeguard. [See figure 9].

*¹⁸ *Huts* made of Boughs of Cypress or Speciss of that Nature.

*¹⁹ *Trees* abt. Thickness of mans thigh from 12 to 14 Feet high.

*²⁰ *Huts* 4 Feet high sufficient to contain 4 or 5." [See figure 11].

*²¹ This sheet is the same type of paper which makes up the journal, but is smaller, i.e. 185 × 236 mm as opposed to 204 × 265 mm. Both Thompson's original report in the Public Record Office, and Popham's account, are written on paper approximately the size of this loose sheet. The ink appears to be the same colour (dark brown) as that of the corrections made to the text, which is written in grey-black ink.

*²² *Walwich Bay* "has been corrected to "Walwich Bay" in dark brown ink.

*²³ *"nights"* originally read "night" and was corrected in dark brown ink to "nights".

*²⁴ *Peruvian bark* was the bark of the South American cinchona tree, a natural source of quinine.

*²⁵ *Quinine* was used in some Royal Navy ships as early as 1690, (Campbell *in litt*). but as the disease of malaria was not properly understood until 1896, quinine was one of a number of alternative remedies for "fever".

*²⁶ *Known* subsequently as Great Fish Bay, and currently as B. dos Tigres.

*²⁷ *Pied crow*.

*²⁸ *Kyynes's* notes for the unillustrated narrative read as follows:

Signed at title and end of narrative; includes log page*; 45 pages of ms bound in full vellum.

to [the unillustrated] manuscript:

Following last page* as it appears in Derby manuscript are 11 pages of routes of the Nautilus, with detailed latitude and longitude readings etc. neatly ruled in several columns.

Headings are as follows:

"Route of His Majesty's Sloop Nautilus, in a Voyage from the Island of Saint Thomas's along the West Coast of South Africa, and back to England."

Sub-heading:

"From Saint Thomas's towards Saint Helen's Bay"

"From Fish Bay to the island of St. Helena"

On opposite page from above sub-heading the following has been added (?later?): "Note. That in page 54 the Route continues along the Coast of Caffraria —and ought to have followed the time of leaving St. Helen's Bay."

Next sub-head:

"From St. Helena towards England"

There is then a blank page and the next heading:

"Route. From St. Helen's Bay to Angra Pequena".

On blank left-hand page is written (?later?): "N.B. As the Coast of Caffraria trenced nearly upon a north and south line, the Latitude is only marked on the *Route*; for the Longtude, and E. and W. curves of the Land I refer, to the General Chart".

Next Sub-head:

"From Angra Pequena to Walwich Bay"

then:

"From Walwich Bay to Fish Bay"

Next main heading:

"Latitudes and Longitudes of different Places on the North and South Coasts of Africa, ascertained by Lunar Observation, & a Time Piece made by *Kendal*".

Sub-head:

"North Africa"

END

POPHAM'S NARRATIVE

Voyage to So. Africa

On the dawn of the 21st. of March we made Dassen Island on the West Coast of Caffraria, about 8 Leagues to the NW, we sounded 105 Fathoms black Mud; it is in Latitude of 33°25'S and is the best landfall for Ships, bound to the Northward along this Coast, Our passage from St. Thomas was long from a continued succession of SE Winds, we regularly decreased our Variation from 19 Wt. to 8°49' in the Latitude 23°2'S, 13°14' Wt. Longitude; afterwards increasing to 21° 18' Wt. the Evening before we made the Land. To the Northward of Dassen Island, there is a large, and to appearance a well sheltered Bay from every Wind: (Saldanhas) but it not being within the Limits of Captain Thompsons Orders, I had no oppertunity of satisfying myself of its interior resources, or the protection it gave to Shipping in the Northerly gales; In the Year 1601 the French took possession of this Bay but soon abandon'd it; whether from Compulsion, or it not answering their purpose I cannot determine; but I beleive the former to be the Case.

Cape Francois, its northern promontory lies in the Latitude of 33°8'14"S off which there are a few small rocks above water; but no distance from the Shore; after standing close into the entrance of this Bay Captain Thompson brought too a sufficient time for me to take the bearings of some of the projecting Points, to determine the trenching of the Coast; and then sailed along shore in search of St. Helens Bay where we anchored the same Evening.

Our Scene was now much altered; a diversity of Sea Fowl about the Ship and the Surface of the Water almost covered with Whales, and Seals; as to the Specie of the Former, I only assert from those peoples Opinion, who had been in that Fishery, few of them exceeded 70 Feet in length, and were seen in greater numbers than pairs; they were not alarmed at the Ship, but seemed to approach and investigate a Body, assuming a prorogative on their Element, and of superior size to themselves; their numbers to us, was not particularly satisfactory, after our Curiosity was once gratified; had the Land promised as much for this Voyage as the Sea did for the establishment of a Spermaceti Fishery in this Country, our hopes of success in the undertaking woud have been much heightened, little had we to expect, from the barren like Aspect of this Ironbound Shore, on which a heavy Surf must ever set.

The Coast to St. Helens Bay tho' rocky, is without any hidden danger, every thing that can possibly hurt a Ship, appearing above Water. From Cape St. Martins the Land runs low terminating in a Point, and about 4 leagues to the WSW lie the Pater Noster Rocks there appeared to be no foul Ground to seaward of the outermost Rock—Two are considerably larger than the rest, the one to the Northward the other to the Westward, appearing white and of conical Figures; and the easternmost lies about 1 and 3/4 Mile from the Shore. To the Westward of St. Martins point there are two small Bays, but so open to the Sea, that no Boat can land with any degree of safety. The

western part of the the [sic] Bay is rocky and the Land Mountainous, to the NE of Berg River there is a flat sandy Beach, but on the Northern part of it tis dangerous land.g from an irregular Surf that breaks upon the Beach.¹

I went in the Boat about 30 Miles up this River to search for Fresh Water, where I was met by one Jacobus Laubschar who guided me to his House, he was the nearest Inhabitant and inform'd me that the River was equally salt, nearly as much higher up as I had already come, but from the Spring at his House, which was half a Mile from the landing Place, I might be supplied with some Water, for the Use of the Ship; tho' the getting it to the Boats, was not to be accomplish'd without the Assistance of his Waggon. he likewise sent others to the Sea Side for our empty Butts that no time might be lost in procuring (tho' with such difficulty so valuable an Article. This Farmer informed me that if we had been here during the Winter or rainy season, we should not only have watered with ease, but reaped the advantage of procuring whatever necessaries we wanted without going so great a distance from the Ship; as he then lives in the Houses situated on the Hill on the West Side of the Bay, where he continues till the return of the dry Weather; In going up the River I saw Flocks of Flamingos and Ostriches the latter I find is a part of the Trade of the Farmers about this part of the Country; where they abound; they kill them in the Season when their Plumage is the most perfect, which is November and December. The Country is sandy throughout the places or patches (there being no enclosures) where the Corn was sown, seemed little better than the common Grounds, and the only difference was the Manure from the Cattle of the Farm I saw no Trees, except a Plantation of Poplars near the House, but vast quantity of Heath, and large Bushes, which make excellent cover for the Deer and Game; the Country abounding with both, there are two sort of Partridges, the one the size of the Partridge on the North Coast of Africa; the other which they call Namaqua's Partridge, is not larger than the Common Dove; their Pheasants and Hares are plentiful, and superior in size to the English they have likewise in the Winter abundance of Snipe, and Woodcock. The only wild Beast I saw was a Jackall, but I learned that they are much troubled with Wolves, which travel in large Packs by Night, and sometimes carry off their

Cattle from the Pens when they get near the Farm undiscovered.

The remaining seven Days that we were here I was employed when the Weather was favourable; making Observations for ascertaining the Latitude Longitude the Variation of the Compass and set of the Tide.

I found the Bay spacious and clear the Soundings gradually decreasing, from 25 Fathoms, mid. channel between Cape Deseada and St. Martins Point to within 2 Cable's length of Berg River, where there is 9 Feet, the particular situation of which with the distances of the different points &c. are expressed in the partial Chart of the Bay.

Off its Entrance there is a Bar, which is almost dry at low Water; but a little trouble would remove it, being occasioned by a Number of large loose Stones lying off the Rivers Mouth. The Tide rises about 7 Feet on the Springs; the flood setting in the Bay NNE and the Ebb about SWbW making high Water at 1/2 past 2 Full and Change, but this Set of the Tide rise &c. must be almost totally subverted in the rainy Season When I was told the freshes run from the Mountains (near 200 Miles up the Country, where the River takes its rise) with such rapidity as to overflow its Banks, repel the Water from the Sea and make the Bay quite fresh—bringing down at the same time numbers of Hippopotamus's and Manatees, these Animals in general keep between the two Waters, but I imagine they must retire from the Bay in the rainy Season for Food, unless they change their diet at that Time—for they chiefly live on the Young Reeds or the coarse Grass that grows on the Side of the Rivers and are killed by the Inhabitants (from the Banks when they are feeding; for their flesh which is superior to that of Oxen; their teeth which are whiter; and of a closer texture than the Ivory produced by the Elephants; and their Skin.

The Commencement of the rainy Season is in April, it lasts till the latter end of August, and sometimes September; the pluvial resources then diminish; the regular Course of the Ocean resumes its situation, in the Bay; but seldom forces itself into the River till the middle of January—and before that Time, I was inform'd by the Farmer that Ships may water with the greatest Ease, & purchase every kind of refreshment.

Fish is in vast abundance in Berg River to the Mouth of which the Dutch Farmers come down (at least those whose Farms are not sufficiently large to occupy their whole time) to cure Fish for the Cape Markets—this River I believe they look upon as the Boundary of their possession to the Northward as they had a terminating land Mark on the Wt. Side.

We had several foggy Days, and every Night a heavy Dew; at times the Wind was Northerly for a few hours, in the Morning; pressing in, a heavy Atmosphere from the Sea but the Land Wind, which seemed almost a prevailing trade, instantly relieved us. As the Bay during our being here, was never without Whale, I think there could be no place more convenient for the South Fishery Men to touch at, they may with ease boil down the Blubber, on Shore, while the Ship is situate in a most plentiful Spot for the destruction of those Fish.

On the 3d, we weighed, and about two the same Evening passed Cape Deseada at the distance of 3 or 4 Miles, approaching the Shore as we went to the Northward; about 6 leagues from Cape Deseada there was a small Inlet and 5 leagues further to the Northward another which I take to be Quecoma, & Elephant River their entrance was full of Rocks, and so high a Surf beat over them, that the approaching with a Boat, was an impossibility; The Night advancing fast, and no likely wood [sic] of obtaining safe Anchorage we haul'd off Shore; untill the following Day, sounding every Hour, and keeping that proportion of Sail to prevent our falling to Leward of the place we left. Nothing particular happen'd (Captain Thompson sending me on every appearance of a point in Shore with the Cutter) 'till the Morning of Saturday the 8th. as we stood in for the Land we shoald our Water, much faster than we usually did; the Land making a ragged Point to the Northward, and a Bight in the Shore with the appearance of a Bay . . . off the point there was a Bank, the Water on it being white and looking much shoaler than it really was. We now had not a Doubt of having found the Bay of Das Voltas—so much and so highly spoken of by the different Inland Travellers from the Cape, I immediately went in Shore in the Boat not a little elevated with the Hopes of returning the Harbinger of good News; but from the result of my Expedition, I began much to fear the making any favourable reports on this part of the Coast. I sounded all over the Bank, having from 16 to 8 Fathoms,

then being nearly in the break of the Surf, I sailed along shore sometime at that distance, not wishing to pass a fathom of Land in a part where a River was described, so well calculated for the purpose of a Colony wanting but Inhabitants to till its fertile Banks.

Such a River as Das Voltas, does not empty itself into the Sea, in the dry Season, this I alledge not only from a Confidence of there being no such River on this Shore² (Captain Thompson having used every exertion to find it had there been such a place;) but by the improbability of a Rivers keeping its Course without being choak'd by the Drifts of Sand from these immense Mountains, which without doubt shift their Situation, at least diminish themselves, and add to others with every breeze. So inhospitable and so barren a Country is not to be equalled except in the Desarts of Arabia, at least from the appearance of the Shore.

The Interior parts may answer the description that those Gentlemen have given, who made their Excursions from the Cape; but I am at a loss to account for the Bay, laid down in this Latitude [?] in a Chart under this Name³ by Mynheer Van Hop—10 Leagues deep, two Islands and a Navigable River, If in the rainy season an Arm of this River empties itself near this Bank, he might have construed this small Bight in the Shore, (which will appear greater to a person on the Land) to an extensive Bay; and the Bank from its colour; to an Island overflowed by the freshes of the Season. No Possibility of anchoring, or attempting to land, to strike a little Way into the Country, we made Sail, passing to Day several small Islands, and one about 6 Leagues in length, trenching with the Coast, its southern Point, forming a Channel with the Main; a heavy Swell rolling in without a Lee outlet; the Northern part being rocky, and the Ground being foul between it & the Main⁴; without making any fruitless Delays we continued our course, and in the Evening brought too;—As the Coast was in general steep with a heavy Swell, anchoring every Night was an impossibility, we regularly stood to Seaward in the close of the Evening always regaining in the Morning a situation to the southward of that we left; and with every Fog or Haze that prevented the most minute Investigation of the Coast, the Ship was either brought too, or sail carried sufficient to keep her to Windward, till the favor of the Weather, enabled us to prosecute

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the Voyage—On the 12th. Captain Thompson discovered upon a round Rock a Cross; to the Westd. of which there was one or two small Islands, he immediately dispatched me in a Boat, to examine the place, on doubling the westernmost Point, I found a clear Bay from 9 to 6 fathoms within half a quarter of a Mile from the Beach; as I saw the Ship might anchor here with safety; without losing any more time than was necessary to sound for the kind of bottom; I immediately landed to satisfy myself about the Cross for the information of Captain Thompson, who ordered me to bring it on board if practicable, this I was soon convinced could not be done in an Instant; for after walking over the Neck of Land that formed the Western part of the Bay, I found it was a Pedestal of Marble fixed on the Eminence of a round Rock the most conspicuous as a Mark to Seaward; On one of the Squares was engraven the Arms of Portugal, and on another some old Characters, but both defaced by the Injury of the Weather, and the length of Time it had probably been erected. being so far satisfied I returned to the Ship, and Captain Thompson immediately made sail in for the Bay, I was sorry I could give him no hopes from the appearance of the place I had landed on of the Probability of getting Wood and Water, it being a kind of Marble Rock with a few miserable looking Shrubs, before he could anchor, it came to blow fresh, and the Weather looking unsettled, he wore and stood to Sea—after plying four Days under the Courses and sometimes close reefed Topsails the Weather abated, and we anchored in eight and a half Fathoms, Mud and Sand, I immediately commenced my business of investigation first steering for a Rock that appeared above Water with Breakers round it bearing from the Ship S 88° 15' E and lying off a point, I found a good Channel between the Rock and Point, having 4½ fathoms close to the Breakers; and 5 fathoms Mid Channel, the Bottom Mud, and no dangers but what were pointed out by the Breakers

Upon the Main point. I saw a square Board nail'd on a Spar about 24 feet long—this I immediately landed for, to get the piece of Board for information and the Spar for Fuel, which was now become a very valuable Article.⁵ at the same time I took the advantage of a View of the Country and Bay from the Summit of a very high Rock. I found this to be the eastern Point of the Bay, and the Western

one of an extensive Harbour trenching to the southward, and to the eastward three Islands forming Bays and apparently Channels between them. I did not delay commenting on the excellent appearance of the Harbour and Bays, and the barrenness of the Country, but immediately went up the Harbour, and about 2 Miles from the NE point I found a small Mud Cove, with 6 to 9 feet Water, and some small Rocks at its entrance. On the Northern part of this Cove I observed in 26°38' 49" South. The same kind of Marble was here in abundance as I found near the Pedestal, and some Geraniums growing in those Crevices of the Rocks that have probably been filled by the drifts of Sand from some of the Hills, as the Harbour was formed with high ragged Rocks on both Sides; but there were several places where Boats may land particularly on the West Side, it is terminated about 7 Miles from the NW part by a savannah which to appearance is overflowed with high Tides. I saw several prints of human Feet (which did not exceed the size, of those of a Boy of ten years old, and some of wild Beasts; their Track was across the Savannah, going to the eastward, but no sign of Hut, Habitation, Smoke, Wood, or Water, could be seen from the adjacent Hills; this was unwelcome News for me to take to Captain Thompson, but these disappointments being so common, it could only impress him with a worse opinion of the Country than he had before entertained; In the Harbour were several Seals and many Sea Birds; on my return a couple of Teel flew across the Harbour, the only specie of wild Fowl that had been seen, one I shot, it differed little in Plumage from the Summer Teel of England. I was sorry to find when I joined the Ship, that Captain Thompsons researches for Water were equally luckless. he told me he had been to the Cross, and had made out the Arms to be those of Portugal; the Characters old roman and much defaced, and the Pedestal worked from the Marble of the Country.

The next Morning I proceeded to make further investigations and stood towards the Islands, I passed to the Southward of the Centre Island and found a good Channel between it, and the southern One, having 4½ and 5 fathoms; when I got near the Main. I saw a Man with several Dogs attending him, he seemed not to alter his path, walking over the Hills to the southward; I landed and endeavoured to get an interview; which he as attentively avoided; tho'

the Dogs came very near us; these I followed expecting they might lead to the Habitation of the Natives, but the craving of Nature got the better of their affection to their Master, and their fear of us, they all stop'd at the same place, which was their watering spot; this I had every reason to think from its appearance was a Spring; and elated with the Success of the Morning, I returned for a Cask to sink, and the Materials for sinking it; on passing thro the same Channel between the Islands, I saw on the Centre one Flocks of Penguins—I landed and found the Island covered, with them, and Numbers of young ones in the Nests, but few Eggs; the breeding season being I imagine just past—after delivering an Account of our Expedition to Captain Thompson; whom I found attending a party in the Bay, I hasten'd to the place where I flattered myself I had found such a treasure and after two hours laborious Digging; our disappointments were renewed, it proved, but a reservoir which the Natives had made during the rainy Season for their Dogs, and probably themselves; it was in vain penetrating into the Country, we had been on the most elevated Spot of this part from whence there was no appearance of being rewarded for our trouble either with Wood, or Water; to the Eastward an extensive Savannah lower than the level of the Sea, to the Northward Hills of Sand, and to the southward a continued ridge of rocky Mountains, I therefore embarked, but had not rowed far before we discovered several Natives with Dogs approaching us, this was a temptation to return; in a little time there were 17 assembled, and 23 Dogs. I endeavoured by every gesture and act of friendship, to communicate with them, laying on the Ground Knives, Trinkets, Brandy Biscuit &c. which they picked up, and seemed much pleased with, two of them advanced from the rest with an apparent Wish for me to lay down my Arms—this I did, and tho' the only one, out of the Boat they would not suffer me to touch them. but made signs for me to follow them —which I did as far as I thought it prudent —for if 17 Men would not trust me to approach near enough to communicate, I had a plausible right, not to trust myself, to the power of those 17, without the reach of my party's Assistance.

I lost nearly two Hours in fruitless Arguments with these savage Hunters (Excepting One) (who was the headmost in advancing, with every cannibal low cunning) they were of low

stature, of different casts as to their Complexion; but none quite so black as the Negroes, thick Lips flat Noses; and are the ugliest fellows I ever saw making themselves still more so by the addition of Grease, and Dirt, which they rub on their Skins, and plaister their platts of Hair with, each had a Hide of a Beast for his Garment, tied with thongs, besides a covering to the lower part of their Belly, & had for their defence a clubbed Stick, some Bows, others Spears, but I could not get near enough to determine what they were pointed with; being satisfied with everything but their behaviour, I stood towards the Northermost Island, which seemed covered with Seals—on drawing near their Noise resembled much, that of a Number of Calves.—but their sizes were superior to anything I could conceive, I beleive some of the larger ones weighed near six Hundred Weight, the Island was covered from the waters Edge to the summit; and so inactive and foolish were they on land, that with a Stick they suffered us to kill them with great Ease, they were literally speaking innumerable. This Isle (which was named Seal Island) forms a most excellent Bay to the Eastward having a channel of $3\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms, between it and the Centre one which Captain Thompson had also called Penguin Island. The following Day he went with a party to the place I had first seen these People anxious to find out their sources for fresh Water, they came to the Boat, received every Trinket he offered (which was done by leaving it on the Beach, and retreating with the Boat when they took it up) but would not either part with any thing, or suffer him to hold an intercourse with them, altho' he made every sign of amity, and shewed them Knives Beads &c. This Day I made another trip in the Harbour to finish sounding it & round the southern Island, it was situated close to the Main, and the passage was difficult for a Boat to pass thro'; altho the Northern point forms so excellent a channel with Penguin Island.

This Isle was totally deserted, both by Seals, and Birds—not the Mark of either on any part of it—a few Geraniums grew on it, and on the Rocks were some Limpets the eastern part formed a Bay with the Main, but not so large or deep as the other, tho perfectly clear, having $3\frac{1}{2}$ Fathoms the same sticky bottom as I generally found in every part of this place, On the west Side of the Harbour nearly opposite the Cove, I found a large Tree, which had been

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shown up, some feet above high Water Mark, of what Country it was a Native, I cannot pretend to assert tho' I am confident it must be an Exotic here, however it equally answer'd our purpose for fuel, which was an Article growing every Day more valuable; near this place I saw two brace of Hares; not near so large as those of St. Helens Bay, having much the appearance of English Rabbits and little larger. This place afforded us little refreshment scarce any Fish and no Flesh; The Ship's Company eat the Penguins and reported them excellent, I wish my palate could have agreed as theirs did, but I thought them much too, fishy to eat as fowl.

On the 19th. at Noon after every exertion to find Wood and Water to render this most excellent Harbour a habitable Spot, had proved abortive, we weighed, but were obliged to anchor again off Seal Island the Weather being too hazy to allow our proceeding; The following Morning it clear'd and we got underweigh, the face of the Country as far as the Eye could discern being covered with Sand—By the Mene of the observations I made in Angra Pequena, and reduced to Pedestal point it lies in Latitude $26^{\circ}36'50''$ South Longitude $15^{\circ}16'30''$ East of Greenwich, the Variation of the Compass $21^{\circ}20'$ on Shore and $21^{\circ}45'$ on board the Ship.⁶

Running along Shore, at the distance of about 4 Miles, we crossed a Bank with very irregular Soundings, from quarter less ten, to seventeen Fathoms, rocky; and with the appearance of foul Ground, lying some distance from the Land I went in the Boat to sound this Reef, it run in a direction with the Coast (which was steep) to the edge of the Surf. The next Day at Noon we were a breast a small Bay with a large Rock in the Centre⁷; bound to the Northward by perpendicular rugged Cliffs which were named Easter Cliffs, and from our Latitude I imagine it is, what has been laid down in the Charts for the Gulf of St. Thomas, equally erroneous with the other Geographical Descriptions of this Country.

The Shore from this was steep to the Beach; and the Country Mountains of Sand—we were now delayed some time by the Fogs, but seldom out of the Sound of the Surf In the Evening of the 25th, we saw a rocky Island—I found it steep, except on the SW Side, where there is a small Reef, and lying at the distance of about 2 Miles from the Shore in the Lat. of

$24^{\circ}33'$ South, it was covered with Booby Birds, and named Booby Isle; from this the Land ran much lower, and nearly on a Meridian with a steep Beach and sandy Cliffs On the 27th. in the Evening on the appearance of a Bay, over a low point of Land, I was immediately sent to sound in the Boat, the Ship keeping some little Distance without me, I did not see anything to prevent her Anchoring which she did about 7 o'clock in eight Fathoms. The next Morning I proceeded to examine the head of the Bay, and at Sunrise landed on a Beach, covered with large Eels, and some Torpedo Fish, which I imagine the falling tide had left I went a little distance from the Boat and was happy to find that this place was more likely to furnish our wants, (at least in part) than any one we had yet been at; there being a quantity of Wood, on, and near the Beach; which tho' not the produce of this Country; and had probably been many Months in the Sea, I found sound; and fit for the purpose of Fuel, On the Savannah which back'd the Beach there were Tracks of large droves of Cattle, and the print of the Natives feet, formed in a regular path to the Southward. I heard the blaying of a Calf, that was too distinct to be far off, and from the top of a sand Hummock we saw it; as this was a strong proof of Cattle being in the Country, I carried it on board When Captain Thompson got underweigh, and worked to a convenient situation in the head of the Bay, for the purpose of Wooding the Ship. In the evening a party of the Natives came to the Water Side, and suffered us to join them; saluting us according to the Custom of the Country by rubbing our Faces with some rancid Fat, which they had in the horn of a Cow, and exclaiming at the same Time (Morassa or Barossa) they had each a stick in their Hands, some of them a Club of about 2 feet, and made of very heavy Wood; and the Tail of a Fox or Jackall fastened to a smaller stick; these they exchanged with us for the Buttons of our Coats—and seemed to be partial both to Brandy, and Tobacco, some had Ivory Rings on their Wrists, but from their appearance they must have been put on when they were Young; as they were cut out of the solid, and it was impossible to get them over their hands; On our parting with them to go on board, they made signs by pointing inland, which we took to be an invitation to their Town—This Captain Thompson with a party attended to the following day, and I was employed making observations and surveying.

high in some places, to obscure the Land from the Ship, at Noon on the 12th. I discovered the entrance of a Bay, which appeared deep, as I could not see its termination to the Southward, I imagined it to be Fish Bay, altho I was positive there could be no channel that we had passed, to form an Island.¹⁰ I returned to the Ship with this intelligence to Captain Thompson, and in the Evening he anchored. I began to sound the NE part and the following Day, I commenced from the spot I left of at examining from the NE to the southward, I could not positively ascertain to Day, that it was not an Island, as I had not seen it join to the Main.—but the next Day I landed in several places, and on the very Part which joined it to the Continent—this was little more than a quarter of a Mile broad, and covered with Wood thrown up by the Surf from the West part. There were tracks of the Natives, and their Dogs in every place I had landed, but what their Business could have been in this place I cannot suggest for it certainly was the most barren Spot, I had seen on the Coast. On my return to the Ship, I found Captain Thompson had been digging without success in several places for Water, and had penetrated over the Hills on the NE part of the Bay but found the same unfavourable Country each Hill before him appearing higher than the one he had ascended, and all a loose dry drifting Sand. I went the succeeding Day to the point of the Peninsula, where I found the Runner and Tackle of a Boats Mast, and a large piece of Pump Leather, the blocks had been painted green, from which I imagine they were not English—On the 16th I had finished my Observations in this Bay, that well deserves the Name of Fish Bay, from its produce which the Ship's Company were well supplied with (King Fish, Cavally, Mullet, Skait, Bream &c) in the greatest profusion. The Bay is clear except on the South East Side where there are some Flatts run off, but so little distance from the Shore as not to affect the Safety of a Ship, and to these, the Soundings are regular, Tyger

Peninsula which is the Western boundary is about 22 Miles in length, nearly North and South the North Point, by the Mean of several Observations is in Latitude 16°29'45"S Longitude 11°33'48" Et. of Greenwich on the Point the Variation of the Compass was 20°36' and in the Bay 21° 16 West, At Noon we weighed, I preceded the Ship along shore to the Latitude of 16°00' at Sun set with the advantage of a clear serene Evening I could see some Leagues, but not discern from the Mast Head, any part of the Land to the Northward, that formed a Bay, Cape or head Land; therefore the determining what part of this Coast others had fixed on as Cape Negro was impossible. the Coast run nearly North and South, the Land was a loose barren Sand with a few black Hummocks. the delaying another Night without the possibility of its answering any purpose, would have been in our distressed situation for Water, hazarding the Loss of a favourable fresh Breeze to run us off from a Coast along which we had sailed nearly 1 200 Miles, without being able to procure a drop of Fresh Water or seeing a Tree, On these Considerations Captain Thompson hauled to the Westward, much to the Satisfaction of every Person on Board.

We hauled to the Southward with the View of making the Shoal Antonia de Viana that I might be able to determine its situation; which is variously laid down—it certainly exists and must be a very dangerous Bed of Rocks.

We left the heavy Atmosphere as we increased our distance from the Coast & came into the clear trades when the few aguish Complaints began to recover.

On the sixth Evening we made the Island of St. Helena, & anchored the following Day in St. James Bay—where we used every dispatch in watering and equipping the Ship for her Passage to England.

[signed] Home Riggs Popham

¹ On the left-hand page opposite this page is written: "In this place I was swamped in the Boat while I was attempting to Land to take some Angles, and had it not been for the Alacrity of the Boats Crew in obeying my Orders we must have been all inevitably lost; we were then 9 leagues from the Ship, the Sun near setting, every person in the Boat, wet through; all our provisions & water lost, drove out by the Violence of Wind in the Night to Sea, & did not rejoin the Ship for near 24 Hours after".

² The text here is written: "in the dry season, of there being no such River on this Shore this I alledge not only from a Confidence (Captain Thompson . . .) . . .". Popham has drawn lines marking out the phrase ". . .this I alledge . . ." as the first, and ". . . of there being . . ." the second.

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