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Spanish history of Gabriola Island

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Errors and omissions:

p.23, fn.35. It is very unlikely that Francisco Gil, viceroy of Peru, was Pantoja's mentor.

pp.31–32 I'm not sure that saying "Gaviola" refers "to a place where small hammers were made" is correct. It much more likely meant that it was a place where a small water-driven trip hammer (*martinete*) was used for the manufacture of sheets of unfinished wrought-iron.

Later references:

Doe, N.A., [Simón Gaviola's family connections](#)—18th-century placenames in the Strait of Georgia, *SHALE* 26, pp.10–18, November 2011.

Doe, N.A., [Notes on Simón Gaviola's family](#)—supplement November 2014.

Doe, N.A., [The original Gabriola in the Spanish Basque country](#)—supplement December 2014.

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The origin of Gabriola's name

by Nick Doe

In the first issue of *SHALE*—seems a long time ago now—I wrote:

“Something that continues to puzzle me is the origin of the island's name, ‘Gabriola’. That it derives from the Spanish ‘Gaviola’, which because the Spanish ‘v’ is pronounced like a ‘b’ is the same as ‘Gabiola’, there is no doubt. But what or who was Gaviola?

“The conventional wisdom is that Gaviola, which first appears as *Punta de Gaviola* [Point Gaviola] on a 1791 chart, is a misprint for ‘Gaviota’, which means ‘seagull’. I don't buy that for one moment. Firstly, why only one seagull? Shouldn't the Flat Top Islands, perceived as a point by the 1791 expedition, have been called *Punta de Gaviotas*, or perhaps *Punta de las Gaviotas*, with ‘Gaviota’ plural?

“[Secondly, you have to] ...accept that *Gaviola* is a spelling mistake. I don't because Galiano and Valdés didn't. They used the name *Punta de Gaviola (Gabiola)* in their journal and on their charts [in 1792] without a hint that they or their editors thought the name was wrong.”

SHALE 1, p.42, November 2000.

Over the years, I have become even more convinced that the “Seagull Island” idea is a silly one. It's just too feeble to be true—why would experienced Spanish naval officers, thousands of miles from home, wish to record that they had seen a seagull?

True, seagulls do congregate on the Flat Top Islands in the herring season, as they do at many other places, but not notably so in July when the Spaniards were here.¹

¹ The term “gaviota” is unspecific, just as “gull” is in English. The mew gulls we see locally, for example, *Larus canus* (1758), are *gaviota cana* in Spanish.



Cassandra Gaviola, actress, producer, and agent, most recently producer of the *Last Goodbye* starring Faye Dunaway in January 2004. Excellent living proof that “Gaviola” is a real name.

Nobody has ever come up with a chart, or a sketchmap, or a document in which it seems to me that the word “Gaviola” might in fact be “Gaviota”.

The only reason the “seagull” proposal remains in vogue is that it was made by the deservedly highly-regarded historian, Henry R. Wagner, in a book of his published in 1933.² Everyone since has simply repeated what he wrote, even though a few years later, Wagner no longer sounded entirely convinced of his own idea when he wrote in another book:³

² Henry W. Wagner, *Spanish Explorations in the Strait of Juan de Fuca*, p.40, AMS Press: New York, 1933.

³ Henry W. Wagner, *The Cartography of the Northwest coast of America to the year 1800*, p.458, University of California Press, 1937.



Given that *Punta de Gaviola* was first sighted by the Spanish from the Whalebone Beach area in 1791, it must have been the Flat Top Islands they were looking at, as seen here, including, appropriately enough, Gaviola Island, so named by the Geographic Board of Canada in 1944. Law Point on Gabriola Island is scarcely visible at a distance from any angle.

“GAVIOLA. See , Gaviota.

“GAVIOTA—gull; Gaviola, if such was the real name was probably a family name.

“GAVIOTA, PUNTA DE (south point of Gabriola Island off the harbor of Nanaimo, Vancouver Island). The name, probably given by Narváez in July 1791 appears on Eliza’s map of that year and looks something like ‘Gaviota’, a common name in Spanish, but as Galiano in the following year called it ‘Gaviola’ it seems possible that that was its real name. It has been butchered into ‘Gabriola’ and is now applied to that island.”⁴

⁴ Wagner’s butchering of “Gabiola”, namely the adding of the “r”, was the work of a British cartographer who was using information supplied by the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) to produce the 1858 edition of Admiralty Chart #1917. See *SHALE* 3, pp.9–12. The mistake was possibly an allusion to the unrelated “Gabriel”, which Microsoft spellcheckers used to be fond of. The same cartographer recorded “Porlier” incorrectly as “Portier”, which he ought to have got right as there was nothing wrong with it on the earlier edition of

Wagner came to his “seagull” conclusion after an extensive search for somebody with that name who could be considered a candidate for the honour had failed. And Wagner was an expert in such matters; nobody else who has attempted the same task since, and there have been several, has come up with a plausible suggestion either.

So it’s time to look again, but we’ll start with the assumption that we’re looking for something more than a lone seagull. I’ll also discard the ideas that “gaviola” (Italian: “gabbiola”) is a small topsail, and that “gaviota” is a set of topsails. Usage of these nautical terms is rare, is obscure in this

the chart. We have to conclude from this that the cartographer was a poor copyist. The HBC couldn’t be at fault because they didn’t use the name “Porlier Pass”; to them it was the “Cowichan Gap”.

The family name “Gabriola” used to be very rare in both Spain and Italy but it appeared in Mexico in the late-18th century, presumably also from “Gabiola”, and it has since popped up elsewhere in the Hispanic world, notably in the Philippines.

context—the Flat Tops as topsails to the mainsail Gabriola?—and was obsolete even in the late-18th century.⁵

Also rejected is the idea that the name is derived from the Vulgar Latin “gaviola” from the Latin *caveola*, diminutive of *cavea*, a “cage”, or “hollow”, though honeycomb holes in our sandstone might spring to mind if we were simply being whimsical.⁶

Who named the *punta*?

Responsibility for naming *Punta de Gaviola* at the south end of Gabriola is usually assigned to José María Narváez y Gervete, (again, unthinkingly following Wagner), but there are several others who had an equal opportunity to do so. There is nothing in the historical documents that would suggest that they did not.

Narváez was a 26-year old *piloto*⁷ in command of the small schooner SANTA SATURNINA (32 tons), which, together with the longboat of the cargo ship (*paquebot*) SAN CARLOS (196 tons), made the first

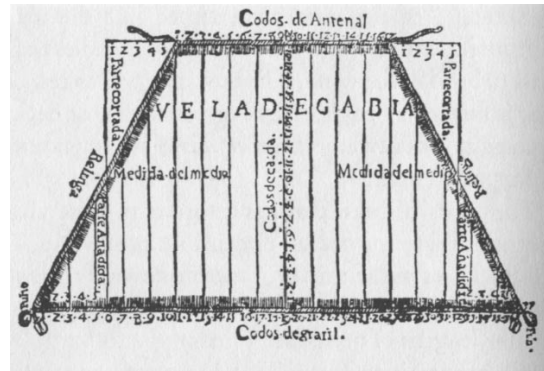


Diagram of a *vela de gabia* (topsail) from a 16th-century sailmakers' manual. A few early nautical dictionaries list *gabiola* or *gabiota* as tiny fair-weather sails set above the topsails—“kites”, the British might have called them—but the usage was rare and is not noted in later dictionaries.

recorded European voyage in the Strait of Georgia in July 1791.⁸

Narváez had with him two other young naval officers, José Antonio Verdía and Juan Carrasco, both of whom were of near equal rank to Narváez and could just as well have been in command. We can imagine that most decisions were made by consensus among these three young men, it only being necessary for Narváez to assert his temporary rank when agreement could not be reached, or when decisions needed to be made with no time for consultation. There was also along a small contingent of soldiers (Company of Volunteers from Catalonia) under the command of Miguel Zieras.⁹

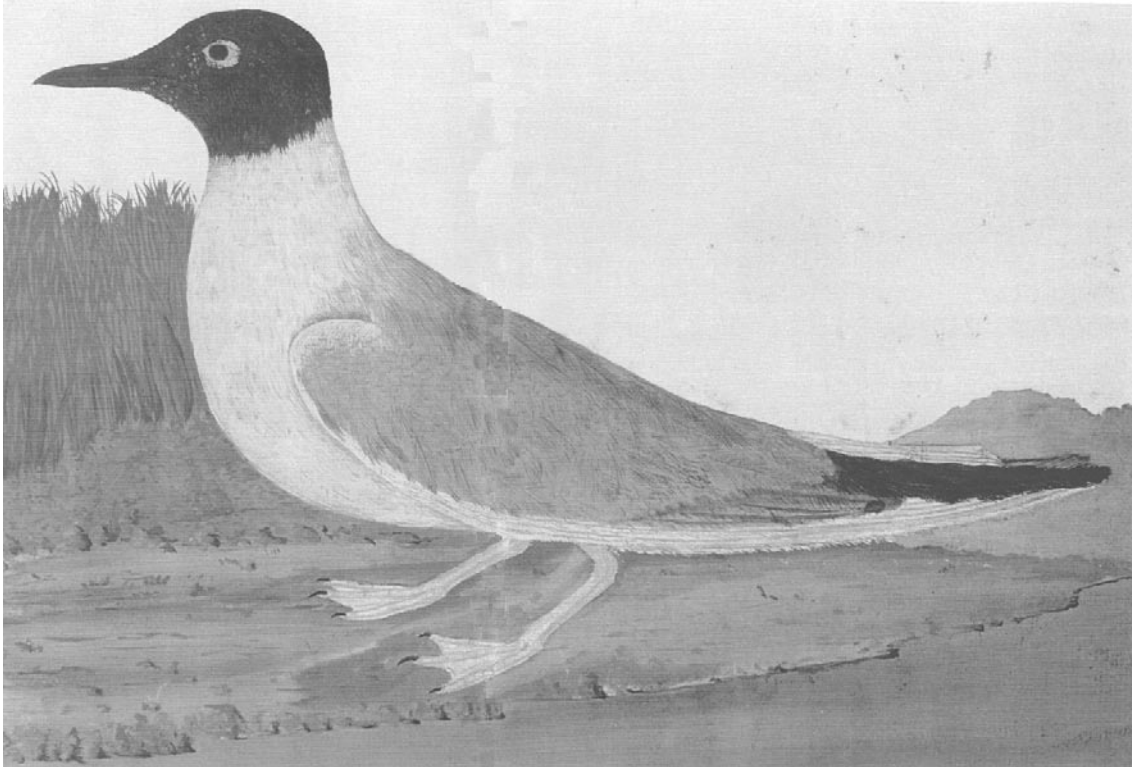
⁵ The terms were only found in *Velazquez Spanish and English Dictionary* under “gavia”; and *Dizionario de Marina—medievale e moderno*, Roma, 1937. Other references consulted that did not list these terms included Pedro Manuel Cedillo y Rujaque, *Vocabulario marítimo...*, Sevilla, 1772 (first ed. 1728); and Johann Hinrich Röding, *Allgemeines Wörterbuch der Marine in allen Europaeischen Seesprache...*, Halle, 1793–8.

⁶ The word *caveola* developed into Old French “gaiole” and “jaiole”, meaning “small cage”, which gave English “gaol” and English-Canadian “jail”.

⁷ A *piloto* could take command of a small vessel, or act as a second master (*segundo piloto*) or master's mate (*pilotín*) aboard a larger vessel. The captain of a warship would be a *capitán de fragata*.

⁸ A good account is to be found in, Tomás Bartroli, *Genesis of Vancouver City—Explorations of its site 1791, 1792 & 1808*, pp.29–51, 1997 (available at Page's Marina on Gabriola). There are no surviving records of Narváez's report of the exploration. The SATURNINA was also known as the HORCASITAS, one of the viceroy of New Spain's several names.

⁹ Wagner, *Spanish Explorations ...*, op.cit., pp.154. There were around 40 men in total. Most were Spanish-Mexicans, and, unlike British naval expedition crew members, often illiterate and in



A painting based on a drawing by José Cardero y Meléndez, who visited Gabriola Island in 1792, entitled: *Gaviota*, '*Larus melano cephalos*' (MN 3159). Although it looks like one of our Bonaparte gulls, *Larus philadelphia* (1815), closer inspection shows it to be a Laughing gull, *Larus atricilla* (1758), from Mexico. Another of Cardero's drawings *Golondrina de mar* (MN 3165) shows a tern (wanderers, only occasionally seen here), and his drawing (MN 3086) shows a "a gull from Ecuador", *Gaviota [...] de Guayaquila*. Unfortunately for Seagull-Island fans, none of Cardero's drawings is of a seagull (*gaviota*) that is common in the Strait of Georgia.

Courtesy Museo Naval, Madrid

While this trio were the only naval officers to have visited *Punta de Gaviola*, two others received fresh, firsthand accounts of the exploratory party's adventures. These were Juan Pantoja y Arriaga, another *piloto*, and Francisco de Eliza, the then commandant of the Spanish naval post at Nootka. Both of these gentlemen were aboard the SAN CARLOS, which remained at anchor in *Puerto*

official records, nameless. Of the *Voluntarios de Cataluña* over half would have been born in New Spain, and of those that were not, only one or two, if any, would have been Catalonians. René Chartrand, *The soldiers of Nootka*, in Robin Inglis (ed.), *Spain and the North Pacific Coast*, pp.111–118, Vancouver Maritime Museum, 1992.

de Quadra (Captain Vancouver's Port Discovery on the Olympic Peninsula) while the SANTA SATURNINA and longboat were exploring the Strait of Georgia.

I'll add one more name at this point—you'll see why later—that of Gonzalo López de Haro. López de Haro was also a *piloto*, well acquainted with Narváez and the others, and he, together with Carrasco, had explored the Juan de Fuca Strait as members of the Manuel Quimper expedition in 1790.¹⁰

¹⁰ Wagner, *Spanish Explorations...*, op.cit., pp.135–6.

Putting “the” 1791 chart together

Following the rendezvous of the SANTA SATURNINA with the SAN CARLOS in the Juan de Fuca Strait, the SANTA SATURNINA was obliged by inclement weather to make its way directly back to San Blas in present-day Mexico rather than sail north to Nootka as planned.¹¹ It did so under the command of Carrasco, and it arrived in San Blas on November 9. The SAN CARLOS meanwhile returned to Nootka with Eliza, Narváez, Verdía, and Pantoja on board, arriving there on August 30.¹²

The evidence from the Spanish journals is that the three *pilotos*—Narváez, Verdía, and Pantoja—worked at Nootka on the task of transferring their field sketches to a composite chart of southern Vancouver Island (including the Strait of Georgia).¹³ In October 1791, the completed (draft) charts were sealed in tin tubes and sent down from Nootka to San Blas with Pantoja and Ramon Antonio Saavedra y Giraldes in the SAN CARLOS.¹⁴

¹¹ Nick Doe, *British Columbia's Mexican connection*, pp.4–7, BC Historical News, vol. 34, 4, fall 2001.

¹² Wagner, *Spanish Explorations ...*, op.cit., pp.152–3 and pp.194–5. This was two days after the Malaspina expedition had left.

¹³ Nick Doe, *Some anomalies in a Spanish chart of Vancouver Island, 1791*, pp.7–20, Lighthouse, Journal of the Canadian Hydrographic Association, Fall 1997.

¹⁴ Eliza remained at Nootka until July 1792, when he also left for San Blas in his frigate NUESTRA SEÑORA DE LA CONCEPCIÓN, presumably in the company of the pilot Narváez who had been assigned to this vessel. What Verdía did after he assisted in preparation of the chart at Nootka in 1791 is not known to me other than at some point he returned to San Blas. Wagner, *Spanish Explorations ...*, op.cit., pp.181. Since Galiano arrived in Nootka on May 13,

Upon the composite draft chart's arrival in San Blas with Pantoja on December 22, Carrasco made a fair copy of it. The fair-copy (the *Carta Que Comprehende...*) is identified by the Henry Wagner¹⁵ as #779 and a particularly good reproduction of it can be found in a publication by the Naval Museum in Madrid.¹⁶ Many book-sized, black-and-white reproductions of this beautiful chart, including the one shown here, give a very poor indication of the work that must have gone into compiling it, or of the fascinating detail that it contains.

Putting Gaviola on the map

There were thus three opportunities for *Gaviola* to appear as it does on the final chart:

- it could have been put on the field sketches by Narváez, Verdía, or Carrasco (an on-the-spot naming)
- it could have been added to the composite chart at Nootka by Eliza, Narváez, Verdía, or Pantoja (a team decision)¹⁷

1792, he must have had an opportunity to talk directly with Narváez and perhaps Verdía too about the 1791 expedition.

¹⁵ Wagner, *The Cartography...*, op.cit.

¹⁶ Maria Dolores Higuera Rodriguez, *Northwest Coast of America—Iconographic Album of the Malaspina Expedition*, pp.28–9, Museo Naval de Madrid, 1991. The Naval Museum has two copies which differ very slightly (Higuera Rodriguez, *Catálogo crítico de los documentos de la Expedición Malaspina del Museo Naval*, 1985-1990, Ref: III.E [1 bis] #1739). Historian John Crosse in Vancouver has long suspected that the “rough copy” is the chart carried by the Galiano and Valdés expedition in 1792 and I'm sure he is right, which rules out any possibility of the *Carta Que Comprehende...* having been drawn in Spain. There was no time for that.

¹⁷ Traditionally, the right to assign names belonged to the discoverer, but in reality a junior officer would

- it could have been added to the final version by Carrasco (working with Pantoja and López de Haro)¹⁸ in San Blas at the request of a senior officer (one that outranked Eliza). This would be the commandant of San Blas, Juan Francisco Bodega y Quadra Mollinedo,¹⁹ possibly in consultation with the viceroy of New Spain (1789–94), Juan Vicente de Güemes Pacheco Padilla Horcasitas y Aguayo, Conde de Revilla Gigedo.²⁰

At the time of Pantoja's arrival in San Blas in late 1791, Bodega had already been appointed the new commandant of Nootka charged with the heavy responsibility of negotiating its status with the British in the coming summer of 1792, so he obviously

always run his ideas by his superior officer first. Pantoja acknowledges this when he says the general naming at Nootka was done “in the presence of the commander, chief of the expedition [Eliza]”. Wagner, *Spanish Explorations ...*, op.cit., p.198.

¹⁸ López de Haro returned to San Blas in the PRINCESS ROYAL (Sp. PRINCESA REAL) (69 tons) arriving there on November 13, 1790. On February 29, 1792, he left San Blas with Bodega to return to Nootka as an officer of the frigate SANTA GERTRUDIS. Warren L. Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire*, p.358, Yale University Press, 1973.

¹⁹ Bodega's parents were Tomás de la Bodega y de las Llanas and Francisca de Mollinedo y Losada. Neither was named Quadra, but his father was related to the prestigious Quadra family and Bodega's sponsor, Antonio de la Quadra, allowed Bodega to use the name. Javier de Ybarra y Berge, *De California a Alaska: historia de un descubrimiento*, pp.13–8, Graficas Uguina, 1945.

²⁰ Freeman Tovell, *Bodega y Quadra returns to the Americas*, Vancouver Conference on Exploration and Discovery, SFU, November 1990. One of the advantages of having lots of names was that you got to have lots of places named after you. I've minimized the possible role of Carrasco in adding names in San Blas, despite his right as co-discoverer to do so, because he was a junior officer there.

would have been very interested in, and involved with, Carrasco's drafting of the *Carta Que Comprehende...*

The little charts

Now in principle, it is very easy to sort out at what stage the *Punta de Gaviola* name got added to the chart. All we have to do is look at the field sketches and the draft of the composite chart drawn at Nootka. But if tasks like this were that simple, researching local history wouldn't be very challenging.

None of these required documents have survived. Instead, what we have to work with is three *cartas pequeñas*—little charts.

One “CP” is by Narváez [Wagner #784, 1791],²¹ one by Pantoja [Wagner #796, 1791], and one by López de Haro [Wagner #813, 1792].

“Little charts” (CPS) are roughly-drawn sketchmaps—about twice the size of the reproductions included here—drawn by young naval officers to accompany their what-I've-been-up-to-lately letters to family, friends, and, most importantly, their military-career sponsors and mentors.

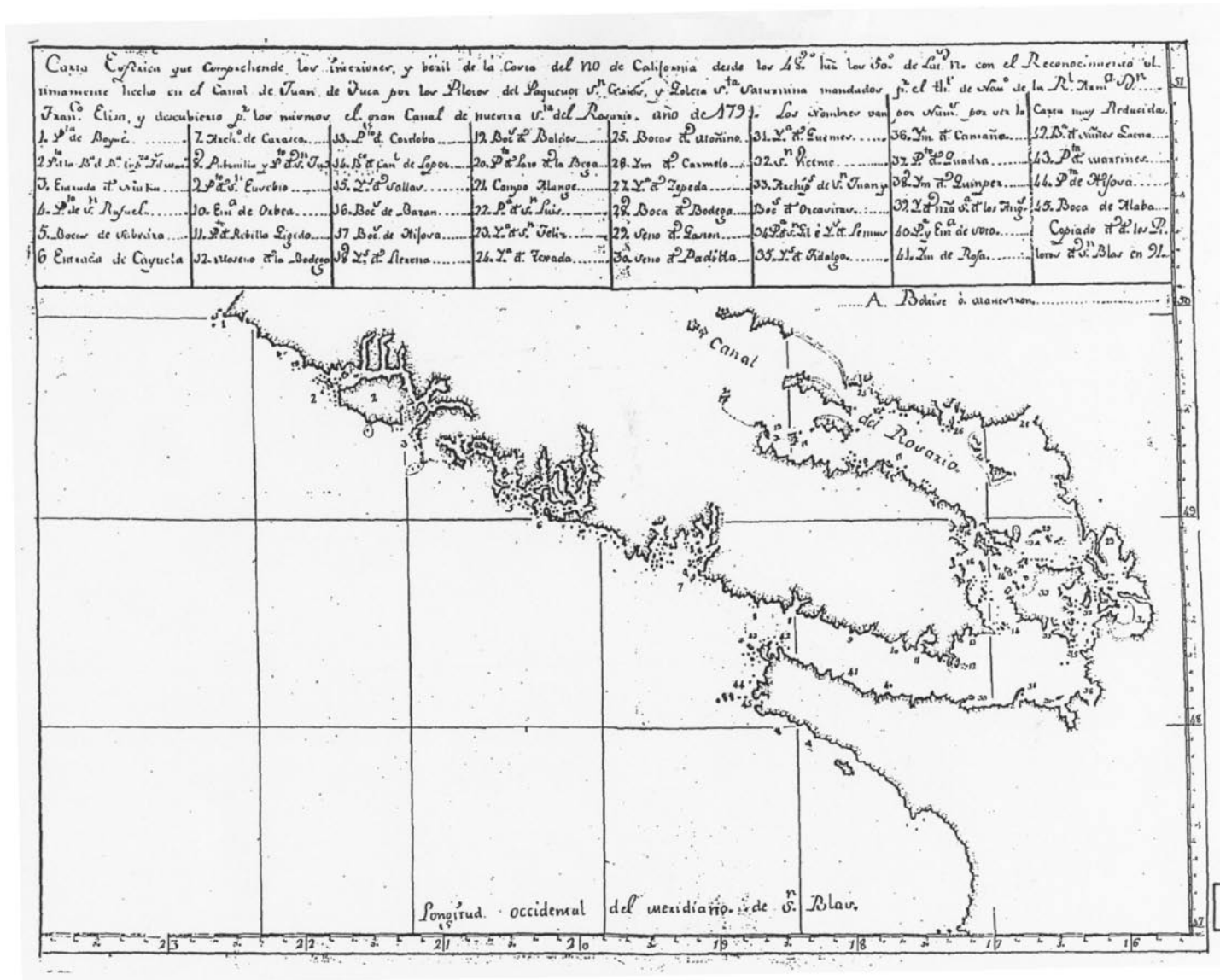
Often the sketchmaps were drawn in the manner of the field sketches, with numbers rather than names indicating places referred to in the accompanying text. When drawn this way, the officers added a key to their CP. The placenames in these keys are interesting because they are often the proposals for names by the expedition members themselves, and not all such names survived the multi-step process of being officially approved for publication.

²¹ Identified as such by Jim McDowell, *José Narváez— the forgotten explorer*, pp.66–7, Arthur H. Clark, Spokane, 1998.

Map 1: Narváez's *carta pequeña*.

Punta de Gaviola is not in the list of placenames—the closest, #17 is *Bocas de Hijosa* which looks as though it might be the entrances to Nanaimo Harbour. The chart shows surprising detail around Gabriola, including Entrance Island, Snake Island, Protection Island, and the Northumberland Channel. Narváez evidently explored the area around Gabriola visited by Galiano and Valdés the following year (1792).

Courtesy the Hannold Library, Claremont, California.



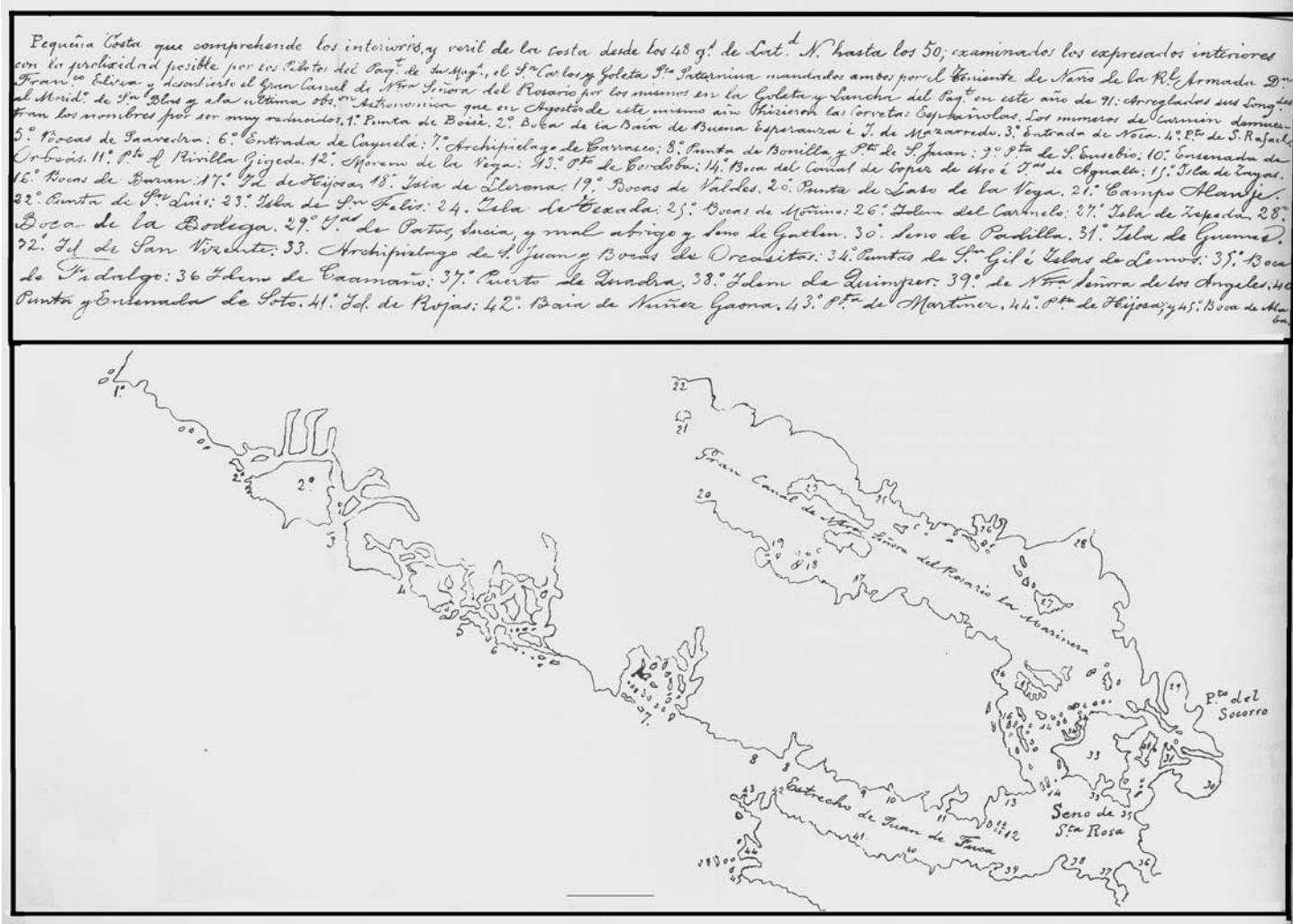
Map 2: Pantoja's carta pequeña.

Almost certainly a copy of Map 1. Note the absence of scales.

Punta de Gaviola is again not in the list of placenames; moreover, Pantoja has moved, #17, *Bocas de Hijosa*, up the coast, which leads me to suspect that Wagner's identification is wrong and that Narváez intended this name to be applied to the entrances to Nanaimo Harbour.

It is unlikely that Narváez would ever have used the additional name *Casatilli* for a geographical feature so close to the *Bocas de Hijosa*.

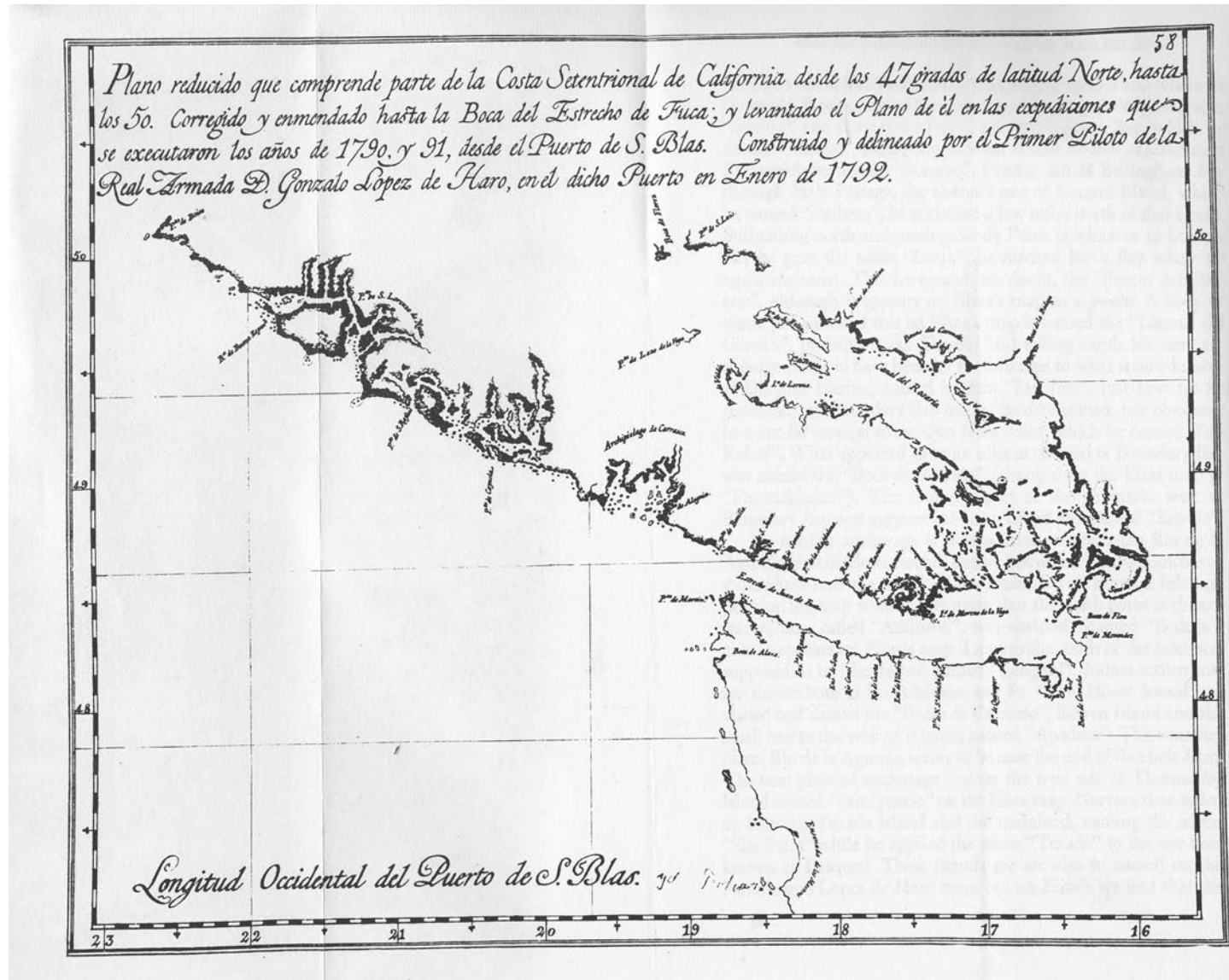
Courtesy Bancroft Library

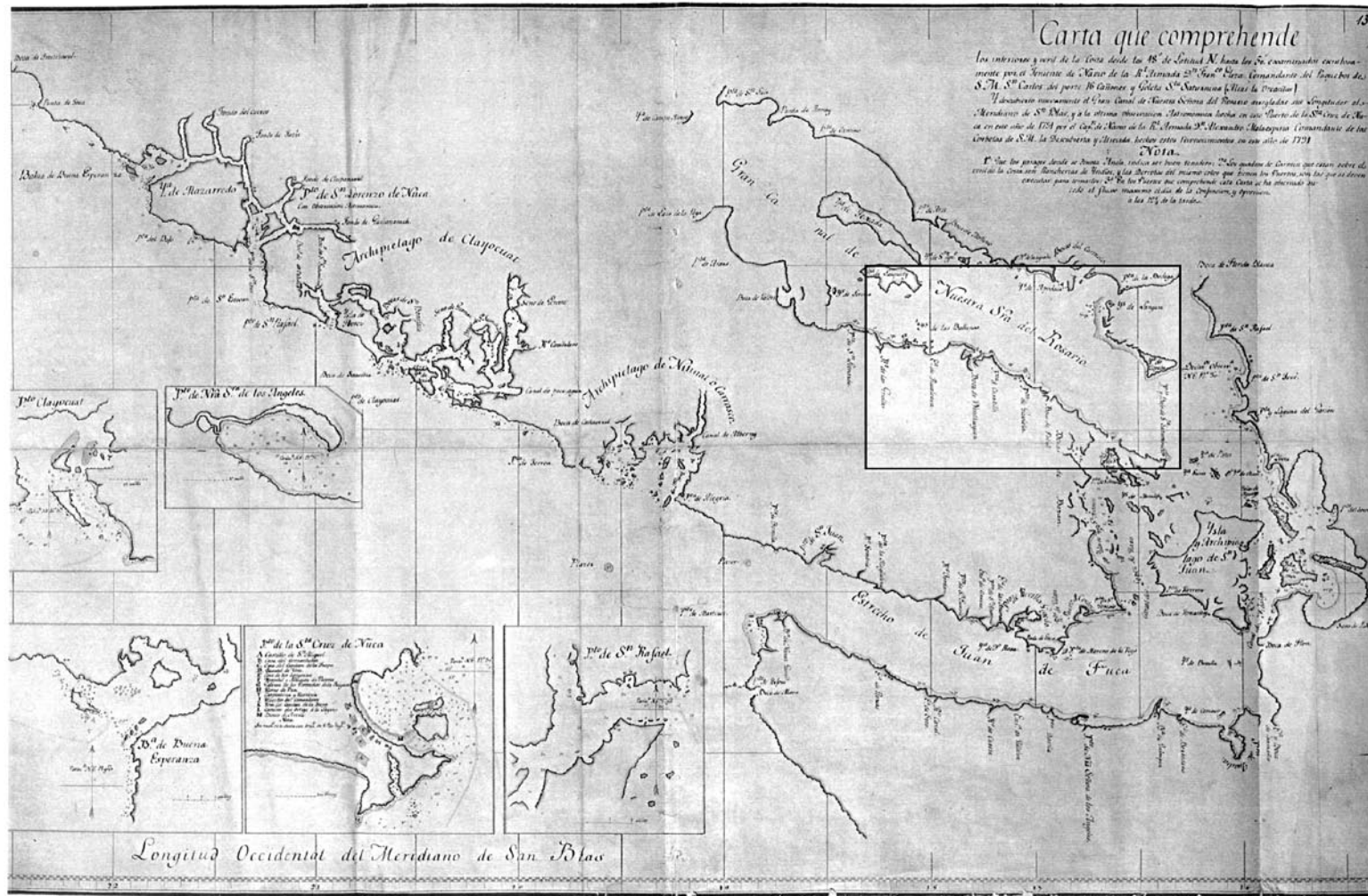


Map 3: López de Haro's *carta pequeña*.

This chart is interesting because it was drawn in San Blas during the time that Carrasco was preparing the final version there. In spite of this, it has more in common with Narváez's *carta pequeña* drawn, and presumably retained in Nootka than Carrasco's. One good explanation for this is that the draft sent down from Nootka (which has been lost) did not include some of the changes that only appear in the final version, and that this chart, drawn in January 1792, was based on the Nootka draft. Like the others, it does not name *Punta de Gaviola*.

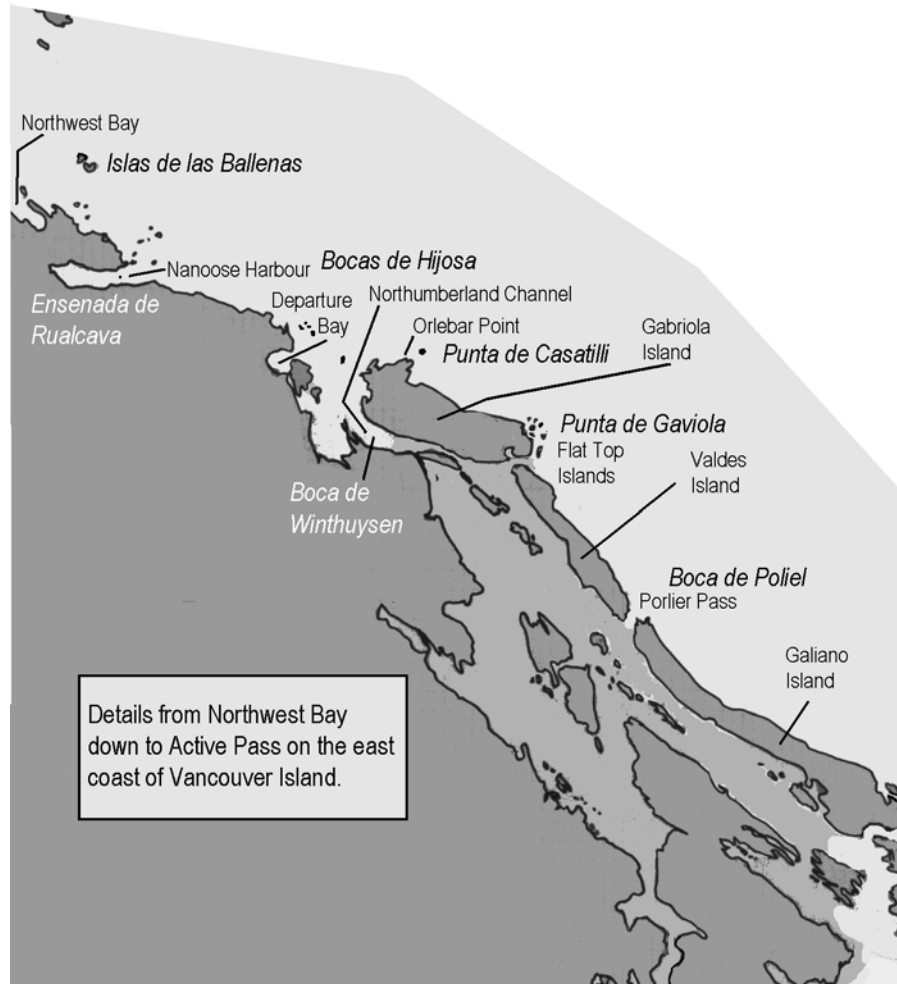
Courtesy Museo Naval





Map 4: Carrasco's chart. See SHALE 3, p.8 for the detail in the rectangle *upper right* (my highlight). The chart shows the west coast of Vancouver Island, starting near Nootka (*Nuca*) *top left*, sweeping down to into the Juan de Fuca Strait, up through the San Juan Islands *bottom right*, and into the Strait of Georgia (*Gran Canal de Nuestra Señora del Rosario*). The original is × 5 bigger. Courtesy Museo Naval, Madrid

Right: Map 1 (Narváez).
17 is *Bocas de Hijosa*—
Nanaimo Harbour.



Above: Map 2
(Pantoja).
17 is *Bocas de Hijosa*—
Northwest Bay.
Probably a
copying error.

Left: Map 3
(López de Haro).



Above: Map 4 (Carrasco) showing *Punta de Gaviola*. The name *Bocas de Hijosa* is not used.

Modern name	Narváez Map 1	Pantoja Map 2	López de Haro Map 3	Carrasco's completed chart Galiano's 1792 use bold	Named after...
? Cape Mudge or Mitelnatch Island	Campo Alange (21)	Campo Alange (21)		Isla de Campo Alange	Bernardo Tortosa, Conde de Campo de Alange (gov't)
Texada Island	Isla de San Felis (23)	Isla de San Felis (23)	Isla de San Felis	Isla de Texada	Felix de Tejada (navy)
Lasqueti Island	Isla de Texada (24)	Isla de Texada (24) (no number on map)	Isla de Texada	Isla de Lasqueti	Juan María Lasqueti y de Roy (navy)?
Cape Lazo	Punta de Lazo de la Bega (20)	Punta de Laso de la Vega (20)		Punta de Lazo de la Vega	Antonio Cordoba y Lasso de la Vega (navy)
? Longbeak Point on Denman				Punta de Araus	Juan de Araoz y Caro (navy)
Baynes Sound	Boca de Baldés (19)	Boca de Valdés (19)	Boca de Valdés	Boca de Valdés	Antonio Valdés y Bazan (navy)
Hornby & Denman	Islas de Llerena (18)	Isla de Llerena (18)	Isla de Lerena	Islas de Lerena	Conde de Lerena (gov't)
west end of Qualicum Beach				Punta de San Leonardo	Marqués de San Leonardo, Pedro Stuart (navy)
Englishman River				Río de las Grullas	[descriptive]
Nanoose Harbour				Ensenada de Rualcava	? Rualcava (or Rubalcava) (military-navy)
Ballenas Islands				Islas de las Ballenas	[descriptive]
? Northwest Bay		Idem de Hijosa (17)			Francisco Hijosa (administrator)
Nanaimo Harbour	Bocas de Hijosa (17) (? Northwest Bay)			Boca de Winthuysen (Northumberland Channel)	Francisco Javier de Winthuysen (navy)
Orlebar Point on Gabriola				Punta de Casatilli	Francisco Javier Everardo Tilly, Marqués de Casa Tilly (navy)
Flat Top Islands				Punta de Gaviola	?
Porlier Pass				Boca de Poliel (Porlier)	Antonio Porlier (gov't)

Modern name	Narváez Map 1	Pantoja Map 2	López de Haro Map 3	Carrasco's completed chart Galiano's 1792 use bold	Named after...
? Sutil Channel			Boca de Flórez		Manuel Antonio de Flores (gov't)
? Hernando Island	Punta de San Luis (22)	Punta de San Luis (22)	Punta de San Luis	Punta de San Luis	San Luis Rey (August 25) or San Luis Obispo (August 19)
? Savary Island				Punta de Romay	?
? Harwood Island				Punta de Camino	[descriptive ?]
? Cockburn Point				Punta de Arze	Antonio de Arce (navy)
Agamemnon Channel	Bocas de Moniño (25)	Bocas de Moniño (25)	Bocas de Moniño	Boca de Moniño (Mazarredo)	Conde de Floridablanca (gov't)
Thormanby Island				Isla de San Ignacio	Saint
? Wilson Creek				Río de la Aguada	[descriptive]
Bowen & other islands				Islas de Apodaca	Sebastian Ruíz de Apodaca (navy)
Entrances to Howe Sound	Idem de Carmelo (26)	Idem de Carmelo (26)	Bocas de Carmelo	<u>Bocas de Carmelo</u>	Nuestra Señora del Carmen (Saint's day, July 16)
? Stanley Park	Boca de Bodega (28)	Boca de la Bodega (28)	Boca de la Bodega	Punta de la Bodega [also <i>punta</i> in Eliza's rpt.]	Juan Francisco de Bodega y Quadra (navy)
? Fraser Valley				<u>Boca de Florida Blanca</u>	Conde de Floridablanca (gov't)
Kwomais Point				<u>Punta de San Rafael</u>	Saint
Point Grey				Islas de <u>Lángara</u>	Juan Francisco de Lángara (navy)
Point Roberts	Isla de Zepeda (27)	Isla de Zepeda (27)	Isla de Zepeda	Isla de <u>Zepeda</u>	Felix de Cepeda (navy)
Birch Point				Punta de San José	Saint

The tables above show a selection of placenames occurring on the three CPs and on Carrasco's final chart. The placenames are the 16 most northerly places on the east side of Vancouver Island, and the 16 most northerly places on the mainland side of the Strait of Georgia.

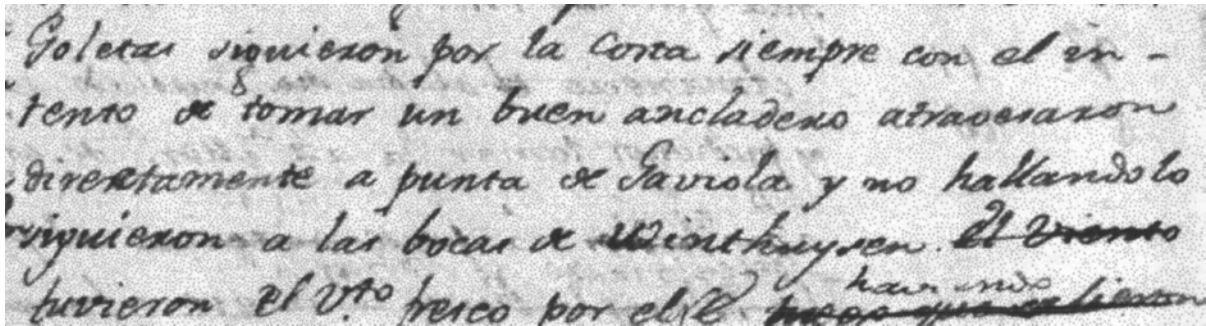
In the middle four columns, the shading indicates the first occurrence of a placename on the assumption that the earliest (surviving) chart is Narváez's, followed by Pantoja's, followed by López de Haro's, followed by Carrasco's. The bold underlined names in Carrasco's column are names used on the charts of the Galiano and Valdés expedition the following year.²²

Conclusions we can draw from the tables are:

- the historical evidence that the Pantoja CP was a copy of the Narváez CP is supported. The number for *Isla de Texada* is missing on Pantoja's CP; and the *Bocas de Hijosa* (inlets of ...) have been mis-located. The unusual abbreviation "idem" (ditto) used by Narváez in (26) has been copied by Pantoja, even though he was not out of space at that point in his legend
- the historical evidence that the López de Haro CP was a copy is supported. There is nothing in this selection that does not appear in other charts other than the *Boca de Flórez*, which is a very poorly defined geographical feature at the northern end of the strait that ended up with no name
- the evidence from the López de Haro CP (*Isla de San Felis*, and *Isla de Texada* applied to Lasqueti Island) is that it was based on information from Nootka and *not* on Carrasco's final chart. In other words, the draft that came down from Nootka, which we don't have, was significantly different from the final version²³
- López de Haro's CP could not have been based on information supplied by Pantoja because Pantoja's CP lacks latitude and longitude scales
- the name *Punta de Gaviola*, along with several others, was added by Carrasco in San Blas, and it was not, as commonly asserted, a choice of Narváez
- descriptive names: *Islas de las Ballenas* (Islands of Whales), *Río de las Grullas* (River of Cranes [? herons]), and *Río de la Aguada* (watering place) were added late in the process and not, as might be expected, on-the-spot.

²² *Carta esferica...*(three). Derek Hayes, *Historical Atlas of British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest*, Maps 127 [1792], 128 [1792, pub. 1802], and 129 [1795], Cavendish Books, Vancouver, 2002. An interesting detail in these maps is the botched attempt at erasing the name of the disgraced José Moniño y Redondo, Conde de Floridablanca. Map 127, Galiano's draft, shows his name retained in *Canal de Moniño*, but Maps 128 and 129 show it changed to *Bocas de Mazarredo*, after the senior naval officer, José María Mazarredo y Salazar. Maps 127 and 128 duly show no sign of *Boca de Florida Blanca*, but it pops up again in Map 129. No doubt these editing shenanigans were made in Madrid. Also noteworthy is Galiano's failure to make any use of the name *Punta de Casatilli* on Gabriola, even though he saw that *Punta de Gaviola* was really an *archipiélago*.

²³ Another hint that there is a "lost chart" is provided by Lt. Joseph Baker, who was with the 1792 Vancouver expedition. He included in his copy of Spanish charts details of the coast of Vancouver Island from Cape Lazo up to Oyster River (?). These details could only have come from the 1791 Eliza expedition, presumably via Bodega y Quadra at Nootka, yet no surviving Spanish chart contains them. Nick Doe, *Some anomalies...*, op.cit., pp.16–7. I should add however that John E. (Ted) Roberts felt the Oyster River feature was fictitious "padding", *A Discovery Journal*, p.312, Trafford, 2005.



An extract from one of the several documents in the Spanish naval archives dating back to the 1790s that contain a reference to *punta de Gaviola*—look for it here in the middle of the third line. Note the difference between the “l” in *Gaviola* and the “t” in *punta*. Another example of both an “l” and a “t” is in the first word of this extract *Goletas* (schooners). While it might be easy to mistake a “t” for an “l” in modern writing and printing, there is no example I’ve ever seen in the Spanish documents where the word *Gaviola* looks anything like *Gaviota* (seagull). The complete absence of the use of *Gaviota* in this context is proof enough that nobody at the time thought *Gaviola* was a spelling mistake. As Monty Python would say, “this seagull’s dead”.

MUSEO NAVAL ms 144 f.439 recto

Taking this last point first, it is interesting that on the 1791 expedition into the strait, three other descriptive names were proposed, namely: *Isla de Sucia* (Foul Island, referring to the surrounding reefs); *Isla de Patos* (Island of Ducks); and *Isla de Mal Abrigo* (Island that makes a bad harbour, now Matia Island). All these proposals were made by Pantoja. Given that the use of descriptive names was limited in the 18th-century Spanish navy, it is tempting to surmise that it was also Pantoja that proposed the names *Islas de las Ballenas*, *Río de las Grullas*, and *Río de la Aguada* at San Blas after everyone else had run out of ideas for worthies to be honoured.²⁴

Pantoja never visited these places, but he nevertheless had ample opportunity for long conversations about them with those that

had, especially Carrasco who was with him in San Blas. To be perfectly honest, I have to add here that if one did think the “seagull” idea was right (*Punta de Gaviota*), it would be supported by this evidence. Perhaps this is why Wagner was persuaded.²⁵

A second point is that if the name *Punta de Gaviola* was assigned at a late stage, as it appears it was, then it makes it *less* likely that the name was of somebody well known to the expedition members, but otherwise fairly obscure; and *more* likely that it was the name of a person relatively well known to the senior officers at San Blas and hence the world in general. In other words, it’s

²⁴ Eliza says nothing about the wildlife, but Pantoja’s reports reveal a keen interest. He notes, for example, “many gulls, seals, tunny [?] and whales of great size” while exploring the San Juan Islands. Theed Pearse, *Birds of the early explorers in the northern Pacific*, pp.132–4, self-published, 1968.

²⁵ Wagner was also without doubt familiar with the use of *Gaviota* as a placename—one that is still in use. It first occurs in the diary entry of Juan Crespi for August 24, 1769. This missionary was with the Portolá overland expedition to what is now San Francisco Bay in California. The story is that some off-duty soldiers were fooling around at their camp and one of them successfully shot a seagull.

unlikely that we're looking for the name of some sailor's girlfriend here.²⁶

To counter that argument however, we have to note that on the mainland side, *Punta Loera* (Sandy Point), was named after Nicolàs de Loera, the *capellán* (chaplain) of the frigate CONCEPCIÓN, then at Nootka, and added to the final version.²⁷ Also, although *Bocas de Hijosa* was dropped in the final version, this was not because Francisco Hijosa, the *comisario* (commissary) at San Blas, was "merely" a civilian administrator, but because his name had already been used and appears elsewhere on the final version of the *Carta Que Comprehende*....²⁸

One more point, and I'm jumping ahead a bit here but I'll make it nevertheless, the table shows that *Punta de Gaviola* and *Boca de Porlier* (now Porlier Pass) were likely added at the same stage in the charting

process. Antonio Porlier was a high-ranking government official (*Fiscal del Supremo Consejo de Indias*) and also, as it turns out, an old friend of the Bodega family.²⁹ It is reasonable to suppose therefore that Porlier's name, and by association, Gaviola's, were indeed added by Carrasco at the bidding of Bodega in San Blas.

All of which leads us to the next step. Exactly how high up the ladder did you have to be to get yourself a placename?

Named after...?

The column on the far right of the table lists the honoured worthies. These names come mostly from Henry Wagner's meticulous research.

Of the selection of 32 names on the east coast of Vancouver Island and mainland opposite added in 1791:

- 14 were high-ranking naval officers or military officers with naval connections,³⁰
- 5 were members of the Spanish government at the time³¹
- 5 were saints (all on the east side)³²

²⁶ By chance, we do know the fiancée of Bodega. In 1787, he writes to Antonio Valdés y Bazán, *ministro de marina*, "...During the lengthy period of my career devoted to exploration of the northern coast of California, I attempted to marry a girl of one of the principal families of the town of Tepic, the daughter of Lieutenant Colonel Don Miguel Marin del Valle, and Commander of the militia which garrisoned the Port [San Blas] and the ships. But the difficulty in obtaining permission at that distance and my constant voyages at the time stood in the way of my desires. With this in view I came to Europe and although I brought the papers attesting to her birth and circumstances, my few financial resources obliged me to postpone the marriage until time would allow me some independence". They never did marry. Freeman Tovell, op.cit., pp.9–11.

²⁷ I'm not sure he was a member of the Eliza expedition though. Cook, op.cit., p.306 & p.313 mentions the chaplain as being José Villaverde who already had a placename in California. The name "Loera" became corrupted in the published work of Galiano to "Lara", but it appears correctly in his field notes (for example MUSEO NAVAL ms 288, f.83).

²⁸ *Punta de Hijosa*, Cape Alava just south of Cape Flattery.

²⁹ OM-Caballeros-Santiago, Exp.1119/1/Verso 19–Recto 22, Archivo Historico Nacional.

³⁰ According to my rough reckoning there are one commander of the navy (*general de marine*), three admirals (*capitán general*), two vice-admirals (*teniente general*), one rear-admiral (*jefe de escuadra*), two post-captains (*capitán de navío*), two commanders (*capitán de fragata*), two senior lieutenants (*teniente de navío*), and one unknown.

³¹ A prime minister (twice), a chancellor of the exchequer (*ministro de hacienda*), a minister of war (*ministro de la guerra*), and a "government attorney" (*fiscal*).

³² Only two being named at Nootka, both with a saint's day within the timeframe of the expedition.

- 4 were descriptive (including one ?)³³
- 2 were rejected in the final draft, and
- 2 were persons unknown.³⁴

The odds are therefore that Gaviola was a serving high-ranking naval officer, and if not, a member of the government.³⁵

It's fairly easy to check this out in the Spanish archives—particularly in the Archivo General de la Marina in the Museo Naval in Madrid—as has been done by myself and others far more skilled at such research than I, and the result is a blank.

³³ *Camino* just means “road”, although “...del Camino” is sometimes used in Spanish speaking countries as part of a placename. Perhaps an allusion to the pilgrim's path through the Basque country, “Camino de Santiago”, or, equally unlikely, a poorly-charted reference to the long stretch of white cliffs on the south side of Savary Island. See the reference cited in footnote 13 for an analysis of the problematic Spanish mapping of the Strait of Georgia in 1791.

³⁴ Gaviola and Romay. The only noteworthy Romay I've found is Tomàs Romay y Chacón, a famous late-18th, early-19th century scientist in Cuba, the birthplace of viceroy Revilla Gigedo. In 1779–84, Spanish naval resources were transferred from San Blas to Havana to aid in the war against Britain during the American Revolution, and Eliza, Narváez, and Bodega were in Cuba at that time. It's possible Bodega met Romay in Havana, but he would then have only been 20-years old and not yet well known.

³⁵ It's interesting to note here that one of the rejects in the table, *Boca de Flórez*, after the former viceroy of New Spain (1787–9), Manuel Antonio de Flores, was not the only viceroy-naming to be left out. Also failing to make the final chart for some reason was Pantoja's naming of Waldron Island in the San Juan Islands, his CP (34), *Isla de Lemos* and *Punta de San Gil* after his former commander, the viceroy of Perú (1790–6), Francisco Gil de Taboada Lemos y Villamaria. Possibly an oversight by Carrasco as there's room on the chart. Bodega was born in Perú so you would have thought he would also have been keen on this one; however, Malaspina, who met Carrasco in 1791, had had [mild] differences with Gil. John Kendrick, *Alejandro Malaspina—Portrait of a Visionary*, pp.49–50, McGill-Queens, 1999.

The hard fact is that nobody fits this description. Without loosening the specification somehow, we're going to be stuck.

Family connections?

My first approach to the problem of finding the elusive Gaviola was to see if, despite the evidence that it was not the general rule, he (I'll assume a he) was a little known relative of one of the several people who could have selected him for the honour. It was time to hit the genealogy pages on the Internet.

What makes the task somewhat simpler than it might have been is that “Gaviola” (or “Gabiola”) is not a common name. It's a Basque name, and most people in the 18th century with that name were from the Basque coastal provinces of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa.³⁶

A second great help is the Spanish custom of retaining both parents' family names in their own family name, with precedence given to the male line.

All of Bodega y Quadra's³⁷ immediate family names—Bodega, Quadra, Mollinedo, Llanas, and Losada—are Basque too, and they are also from Vizcaya. The Vizcaya connection doesn't stop there however. Both of Bodega's predecessor *comandantes* of the Naval Department at San Blas—Ignacio de Arteaga y Bazán (1774–83) and Bruno de Hezeta y Dudagoitia (1783–9)—were born in Vizcaya.

Can we add to that? Well, Vedía (Bedía) is a common 18th-century Basque name,

³⁶ See *SHALE* 8, front and inside front cover. The name also appears in small numbers in all of the Spanish-speaking countries of the new world, but, so far as I can tell, rarely before the 18th century.

³⁷ Also spelled “Vodega” and “Cuadra” and all combinations thereof.

though Narváez's colleague called himself Verdía, with an "r", (Gabriolan's can relate) which is common outside the Basque country (around La Coruña),³⁸ so that particular investigation didn't get very far. Haro however is a city bordering the southern Basque province of Alava, and it is possible that López de Haro's family were Basque, although again no interesting family connections were found.³⁹

The family connections I was most interested in were between anyone named Gaviola, Bodega, or Quadra. All in all, I investigated over a hundred records for such connections in the 18th century including connections via the female line which are not obvious from the family names beyond the first generation.⁴⁰ I found none, though I did come across three Gaviola-Arteaga connections.⁴¹ I also engaged the help of the Basque Museum and Cultural Center in Boise, Idaho, and the Provincial Toponymist, Janet Mason, in Victoria; but they could find nothing either. I spammed too, sending out dozens of e-mails to people with the name Gabiola or Gaviola, mostly in

³⁸ The mysterious "Romay" is a common family name in La Coruña too. I did find a Quadra-Vedia family connection, but details are too few to make anything of it.

³⁹ I should note here that according to Basque Studies Newsletter 57, 1998 (University of Nevada), the Basque city of Bilbao was "founded in the year 1300 by Don Diego López de Haro". Another Basque name in the selection of names in the tables is "Apodaca" for Bowen and nearby islets.

⁴⁰ Mostly from FamilySearch® International Genealogical Index™ v4.01.

⁴¹ The christening of daughters of Simón de Gabiola and Magdalena de Arteaga Malax Coba in Amoroto, Vizcaya, in 1759 and 1761; and the marriage of Pedro de Gabiola (b. 1621) and María de Urkiaga (b. 1631), daughter of María Perez de Aretxaga y Eguigure. Ignacio Arteaga sailed with Bodega and Pantoja to Alaska in 1779.

the United States, but some in Europe. This was several years ago now. The result?...nothing.

So at this point, the project stalled again.

Knights of the Order of Santiago to the rescue?

Since then I have been sending out the occasional enquiry and keeping messages on genealogical bulletin boards on the Internet up-to-date. But wonderful though these services are, not all family records are posted there. I know that some churches, especially Roman Catholic Churches, are happy enough to make personal information they hold available to visitors and researchers interested in specific families, but they are adamantly against putting everything they have in the public domain.

Progress in local history is made in peculiar ways;⁴² and in this case it was made because Jenni Gehlbach, my wife, joined Gabriola's Dragon Boat Society last year. This medal-winning team of women was in search of a name,⁴³ and mulling this over, she came up with the idea of the "Gabriola Gryphons", based on the theme of the *Gaviola* family crests that appeared on the cover of *SHALE* 8. Going back in my files to find out more about this I came across the following in a bundle of notes that I had received from Demosthenes Papaeliou, Basque Library Assistant, at the University of Nevada in October 2003:

⁴² Barrie Humphrey has written about this; see his *Researching pioneer family history*, *SHALE* 3, pp.4-6; and *Dombrain family history*, *SHALE* 2, p.36; *SHALE* 5, pp.42-3; and *SHALE* 6, pp.23-4.

⁴³ The Gabriola Sounder, *Paddles up!*, p.11, June 20, 2005.

“Simón Gabiola y Zabala, natural de Egoibar, Pagador de la Armada de la Guardia de Indias y Caballero de la Orden de Santiago, en la que ingresó el 31 de Marzo de 1632.”⁴⁴ [*my emphasis*]

Knight of the Order of Santiago (*Caballero de la Orden de Santiago*)... Now, where had I seen that just recently?

It had been while refreshing my memory in preparation for the visit of Alex Malaspina and his family to Gabriola,⁴⁵ and sure enough, still on my desk was the reference. In his book, Michael Thurman writes:

“...Juan de la Bodega y Quadra was much younger than some of the pilots and other officers, and thus he was better able to cope with the rigors of military life at San Blas.”

“...Bodega was Bruno de Hezeta's junior officer during the expedition of 1775, and he immediately distinguished himself—as did Francisco [Antonio] Mourelle [de la Rua], the pilot of Bodega y Quadra's vessel—by his skill and daring.⁴⁶ In 1776, the young officer from Callao [Perú] was promoted to full lieutenant and was awarded the military title of Knight of the Order of Santiago.”⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Alberto y Arturo Gracia Carraffa, *Diccionario de Apellidos*, p.133, 1953.

⁴⁵ Flying Shingle, *Malaspina was here*, p.1, vol. 33, 11, July 2005.

⁴⁶ Bodega was in command of the SONORA (59 tons), a small 36-ft. schooner, and Hezeta was in command of the frigate, SANTIAGO (226 tons). The vessels sailed from San Blas for Alaska, but only Bodega reached there after conniving with Mourelle to avoid receiving the order to turn back at about the latitude of Vancouver Island. Mourelle, who was only 19-years old at the time, had a successful career, and he too was later made a Knight of the Order of Santiago. He was from Galicia.

⁴⁷ Michael E. Thurman, *The Naval Department of San Blas*, p.185, Arthur H. Clark, 1967. The king actually approved the award in December 1775.

So here at last we had some sort of connection between the person who likely put Gaviola on the map, and an actual person called Gaviola. In most respects the connection is strong:

- Gaviola and Zabala are names of Basque families as are Bodega, Quadra, and Mollinedo⁴⁸ Both Bodega and Gaviola were *hidalgos* [of noble birth, literally *hijos d'algo*, “sons of something” rather than *hijos de nadie*, “sons of nobody”]
- both Gaviola y Zabala, and Bodega y Quadra, were awarded the prestigious military title of Knight of the Order of Santiago⁴⁹
- Bodega had a preference for naming geographical features after important naval officers and government officials. Gaviola y Zabala, as a treasurer (*pagador*) of the fleet protecting the trade routes to the Americas (*Indias*), was both.

There is one other point that can be added, though I do not want to make too much of this one. The evidence is that Narváez may have intended to name the Nanaimo Harbour entrances *Bocas de Hixosa* after Francisco Hixosa (Hixosa). His own little sketch map, *carta pequeña*, shows that. However, Hixosa's name had already been used and had appeared on charts by López de Haro and Pantoja who were both working with

⁴⁸ “Zabala” brings to mind Zaballos on the west coast of Vancouver Island. That name comes from Ciriaco Cevallos, a senior lieutenant (*teniente de navío*) on the Malaspina expedition. I don't think there's much of a connection other than the family names likely having a common origin.

⁴⁹ *Santiago* (San' Iago) is the English “Saint James”, and the patron saint of Spain. Equivalent orders in England were the Orders of the Garter and of the Bath, and in Scotland, the Order of the Thistle.

Carrasco on the final version. Now Michael Thurman says this about Hijosa:

“During the first year [of operations at San Blas]...the supply functions of the Department...were entrusted to Francisco Hijosa, who was appointed *comisario* by José de Gálvez [*visitador-general*, the King's representative] in May 1768. However, the first assignment which Hijosa actually completed in connection with San Blas supply service was as Treasurer of the Elizondo Expedition to Sonora. In April 1768, Francisco Hijosa embarked from the Port of San Blas aboard the packetboat CONCEPCIÓN, carrying treasury drafts plus some 70,000 pesos in bullion. After six months in Sonora, during which time he supported the military expedition of Colonel Elizondo, Francisco Hijosa returned to San Blas and assumed regular duties as *comisario*.”⁵⁰

In other words, Hijosa was for a time, just like Simón de Gaviola, a treasurer, a *pagador*, and so Gaviola's name was a very appropriate substitute for Hijosa's.⁵¹

At this point, I would say we were home and dry but for one thing. The date. Bodega only used the names of people who at the time were in the service of the navy in one way or another. The name Gaviola y Zabala comes from an earlier century, and as such, use of this name by Bodega, if accepted as a reality, is an anomaly that has to be addressed. It was time to find out a little more about Juan Francisco Bodega and Simón de Gaviola y Zabala.⁵²

⁵⁰ Michael E. Thurman (ibid) , pp.84–5.

⁵¹ Of course, it would be nice to be able to say right here that the name “Hijosa” is Basque, but it isn't.

⁵² Just as “Gaviola” can also be spelt *Gabiola*, “Zabala” can also be spelt *Zavala*, *Cabala*, or *Cavala*.

Applying to be a knight

Several (actually six) months later, two parcels arrived from the *Archivo Histórico Nacional* in Madrid. One contained 133 pages of microfilm photocopies relating to Simón, and the other, 364 similar pages relating to Juan Francisco. These were the papers prepared by notaries, probably at considerable expense, for the two applicants to the Military Order of Santiago. Here surely would be all that one could want to know about the lives of the two gentlemen concerned. But if it were to be that simple, researching local history wouldn't be very challenging—or did I already say that?

What I had imagined that the papers would be were responses to the very open question, why do you think this person should be afforded the honour of a knighthood?

Instead, the papers were the testimonials of dozens of witnesses to the following ten very-closed questions—I've cut out most of the legalese and fine print and summarized the detail that went with every question:

1. What is his name; how old is he; where was he born; who were his parents, grandparents, neighbours, and where were they from
2. Is he well thought of by his friends, in-laws, acquaintances and has he been well brought up, or is this testimony from an enemy and has there been any attempt at bribery to suppress the truth
3. Were his parents and grandparents all legitimate
4. Were his parents and grandparents Spanish and spotless characters with no trace of there being any Jews or Moors in his family background. If there are rumours you have heard please relate them⁵³

⁵³ Intermarriage between Christian, Jewish, and Moorish communities had not been uncommon in Spain in earlier centuries.



Left: The Military Orders of Santiago, Calatrava, Alcántara, and Montesa were formed during the four-hundred year long crusade to drive the Moors from the Iberian peninsular. Initially under Papal control, they later became agents of the Spanish Crown. Membership today is purely honorific.

www.chivalricorders.org

5. Are or were his parents and grandparents well-established (old) Christians and not recent converts
6. Was the applicant or his father ever a merchant or money-changer, or have they ever held a dirty (*vile*) or servile (*mecanico*) position⁵⁴
7. Does the applicant own a horse and can he ride it
8. Has the applicant ever been accused or challenged (to a duel) and if so how was the matter resolved
9. Has the applicant ever been involved in any shady business, or is he widely regarded as a gentleman among his peers. Please tell all
10. Can you assert that none of his family had ever been in trouble with the church (*santo oficio de la Inquisicion*), that there has been no suspicion of heresy, no misdeeds, no visits to prison (*cadahalso*), and that the family are all good practising Catholics?

⁵⁴ I guess in modern terms, this means that members of the working class needn't have applied. One or two witnesses for Simón said they knew his family were not merchants because they didn't pay *alcabala* (sales taxes).

The witnesses also had to say how they knew what they were saying, where they had heard it, how long ago, and—an indication that nothing much changes—that they had not been influenced by the applicant or applicant's agents paying their travelling, hotel, or restaurant expenses.⁵⁵ The idea!

Practically all of the witnesses simply replied to these questions in the same way—yes, I knew his father and mother and their names were, and so on—offering the basic minimum of information, but using as many words as the notaries could muster (or so it seems).

In the case of Simón de Gaviola, most of the fifty witnesses had no difficulty remembering accurately the names of all four grandparents. It was practically the same for the many-more-than-fifty witnesses for Juan Francisco Bodega, except that because he had been born in Perú—he was a *criollo*, that is of Spanish blood born in the Americas, in this case Lima—there were some gaps. Maybe it was because of this (wild guess) that Bodega felt obliged to trace his lineage, both paternal and maternal, back to his great-great-grandparents by engaging investigators to examine church records from Vizcaya showing baptisms and marriages dating back to the mid-17th century.⁵⁶ These were meticulously recorded, even to the extent of sometimes noting where to find the key to the room where the records were kept and which shelf they were on.

⁵⁵ *Gasto en el camino* including *carruajes*, *hospedaje*, *posada*, *mesón*, *monasterio*...or equivalent, all carefully spelled out.

⁵⁶ According to John Kendrick, there was a mutual distrust and dislike between *gachupines* (people sent to the Americas from Spain) and *criollos* (creoles). J. Kendrick, *The Men with Wooden Feet—the Spanish exploration of the Pacific Northwest*, p.21, NC Press, 1986.

PRimeramente si conocen a *Simón de Gaviola* y que edad tiene, y de donde es natural, y cuyo hijo es, y si conocen, o conocieron a su padre y a su madre, y como se llamauan y llamaron, y de donde son vezinos y naturales, y si conocen o conocieron al padre o a la madre de la madre del dicho.

PRIMERAMENTE, si conocen al dicho *D. Juan Fran. Bodega* Pretendiente, y que edad tiene, de donde es natural, y cuyo hijo es, y si conocen, o conocieron a su padre, y a su madre, y como se llamaban, y llamaron, de

The opening lines of the questionnaire required to be completed by anybody testifying as to the merits or otherwise of an applicant (*pretendiente*) to be a member of the Order of Santiago. The wording in the two questionnaires is practically identical. The upper one is for *Simón de Gaviola*, an application made in 1632; and the lower one is for *Don Juan Francisco Bodega*, an application made in 1775. This common experience was possibly a contributing factor to Bodega's choice of Gaviola as a placename.

We know a lot about the life and career of Bodega—there are journals, letters, a *curriculum vitae*, a diary, a pending biography,⁵⁷ and many websites—so it is not such a disappointment that the Santiago papers contain only cursory allusions to Bodega's accomplishments. The fact that he was a naval officer is mentioned, but only two witnesses go on to say that he is at present in Mexico and “involved in (*se allara*) discovering the Californias”.⁵⁸

What we do get however is as-complete-a family-tree as you'll see anywhere (p.29), and it is clear from this that he did not have any “direct-descent” connection with the Gaviolas even though the various ancestral homes were often only tens of kilometres apart (map, p.30). There was never a great expectation that there would be. It was just

a thought. Placenames were seldom assigned to family members.⁵⁹

In contrast, we know little about the life and career of Gaviola, so it is disappointing that the papers are totally pre-occupied with his family background, social standing, and religiosity. Again, it is possible to construct a family-tree (p.29), but the real bonus was confirmation in several entries that although *Simón de Gaviola* was born in Elgoibar, his grandfather, and possibly his father too, were from the small town of Mendaro in Guipúzcoa. As you will see from the accompanying maps, Mendaro is the location of the ancestral home of the Gaviolas and so, having made the link, we can say something more about his family history.

⁵⁷ By Freeman Tovell of Victoria, currently with UBC Press.

⁵⁸ OM-Caballeros-Santiago, Exp.1119/1/43 Verso and 95 Verso, Archivo Historico Nacional.

⁵⁹ A rare exception would be that Captain Vancouver named Point Sarah and Point Mary, at the entrance to Desolation Sound, after his two sisters.

p	Juan Franciso de la Bodega <i>Lima, Peru</i>
p1	Tomas de la Bodega <i>Musques, nr. Bilbao, Vizcaya</i>
p0	Francisca de Mollinedo <i>Lima, Peru</i>
p11	Juan de la Bodega <i>Musques, nr. Bilbao, Vizcaya</i>
p10	Augustina de las Llanas <i>Musques, nr. Bilbao, Vizcaya</i>
p01	Manuel de Mollinedo <i>Bilbao, Vizcaya</i>
p00	Josefa de Losada <i>Chancay, nr. Lima, Peru</i>
p111	Juan de la Bodega <i>Musques, nr. Bilbao, Vizcaya</i>
p110	Isabel de la Quadra <i>Musques, nr. Bilbao, Vizcaya</i>
p101	Tomas de las Llanas <i>Musques, nr. Bilbao, Vizcaya</i>
p100	Maria de Barbadun <i>Musques, nr. Bilbao, Vizcaya</i>
p011	Antonio de Mollinedo <i>Bilbao, Vizcaya</i>
p010	Lorenza de Ordeñana <i>Bilbao, Vizcaya</i>
p001	Juan de Losada <i>San Salvador, Galicia</i>
p000	Juana de Mendoza <i>San Salvador, Galicia</i>
p1111	Pedro de la Bodega y Yañez de Puerto
p1110	Francisca de Salazar
p1101	Francisco de la Quadra y Llano
p1100	Isabella de Medrano y Foncerrada
p0111	Felipe de Mollinedo
p0110	Marina de Larrauri
p0101	Pedro de Ordeñana
p0100	Therisa (Teresa) de Amesola
p0011	Pedro de Losada y Aquero
p0010	Juana de Albares y Pedrosa
p0001	Antonio de Mendoza
p0000	Margarita de Retes
p11011	Juan de la Quadra y Mazo-Abanto
p11010	Magdalena del Llano

Left: Family-tree of Bodega in 1775, the end of many hours of genealogical research, found among the papers of the Knights of the Order of Santiago* provides conclusive evidence, that at the time of Bodega's application, he had no known family connection to Simón de Gaviola. Bodega's family came from the Somorrostro valley just west of the city of Bilbao and from Bilbao itself, whereas the Gaviola's came from east of the city.

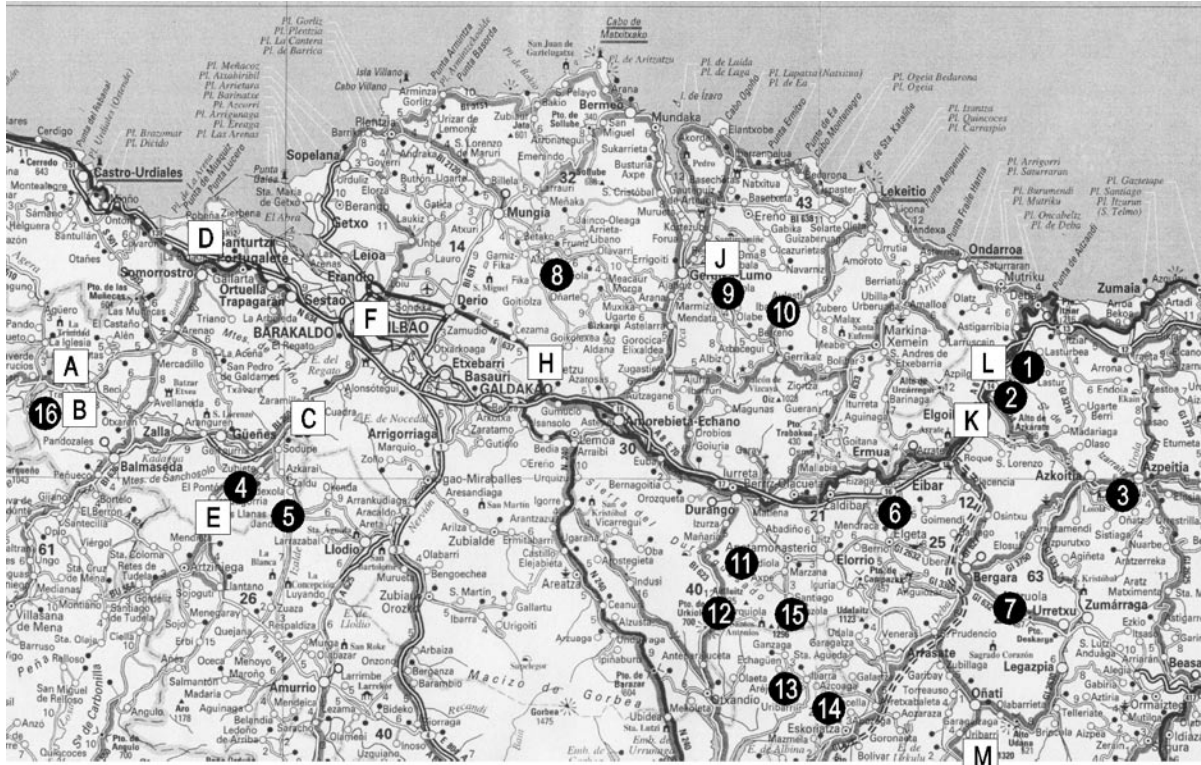
* OM-Caballeros-Santiago, Exp.1119/1/99 Recto, Archivo Historico Nacional.

Below: Family-tree of Simón de Gaviola in the papers of the Knights of the Order of Santiago*. It was these papers that gave the first clue that the Gaviola ancestral home was near Mendaro. On page 96 of the papers (my count), and a few others, it mentions that Simón, who was then about 54 years old, was working in Seville in 1632. This makes perfect sense given his job, in which case, Simón Antonio de Gaviola y Sarrikolea, *natural* de Sevilla, who joined the Order of Alcántara in 1635, might have been his son. There is also mention of a Francisco de Gaviola, possibly a cousin (son of Pascual?).

* OM-Caballeros-Santiago, Exp.3192, Archivo Historico Nacional.

key: p=person('s), 1=father('s), 0=mother('s). For example, p10 = person's father's mother

p	Simón de Gavíola <i>Elgoibar, Guipúzcoa</i> Juan Perez de Gaviola (<i>brother</i>)
p1	Antonio de Gavíola <i>Elgoibar, Guipúzcoa</i> Pascual de Gaviola (<i>uncle?</i>)
p0	Isabel de Zabala <i>Elgoibar, Guipúzcoa</i>
p11	Rodrigo de Gavíola <i>Mendaro valley, Guipúzcoa</i>
p10	Juana de Arríola <i>Elgoibar, Guipúzcoa</i>
p01	Simón de Zabala <i>Elgoibar, Guipúzcoa</i>
p00	María Martínez de Inurrigarro <i>Vergara, Guipúzcoa</i>

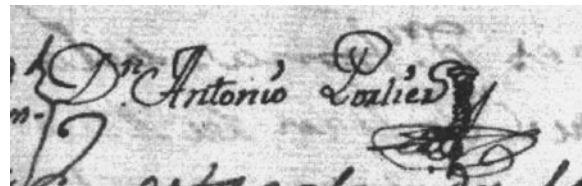


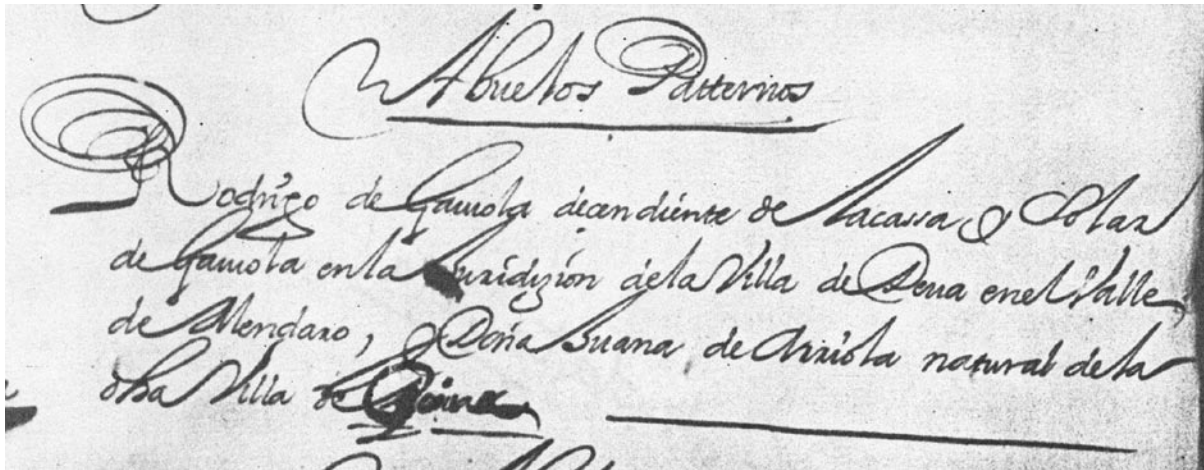
About 80 km (the span of the southern Gulf Islands) of Spain's Atlantic coast from just west of Bilbao (F), the provincial capital of Vizcaya, east to the border with province of Guipúzcoa (L). It is about 40 km from the righthand side of the map to the border with France.

The numbers in black circles indicate some of the placenames in this area that have the ending *-ola* beginning with our own Gaviola (1) and then: Altzola (2), Loiola (3), Gordexola (4), Jandiola (5), Aixola (6), Antzuola (7), Botiola (8), Loyola (9), Ibarrola (10), Mendiola (11), Urquiola (12), Aréola (13), Zabola (14), Arrazola (15), Górgola (16). There are more.

The letters in white squares indicate the location of some of the sites of stately homes of the families of Gaviola and Bodega, the naval officer who may have chosen the Gaviola name; and of the viceroy of New Spain, who would have approved the choice. [A] Arcentales; Horcasitas, viceroy's grandmother, [B] Mollinedo, Bodega's mother, [C] Quadra, Bodega's great-grandmother, [D] Musques, Bodega's father, [E] Llanas, Bodega's grandmother, [F] Bilbao: several of Bodega's ancestors, [H] Larrabetzu: Sarrikolea, probably Simón Gaviola's wife, [J] Zabala, Simón Gaviola's mother, [K] Elgoibar, Simón Gaviola's birthplace, [L] Mendaro, Simón Gaviola's grandfather, and [M] just south of map Arriola, Simón Gaviola's grandmother.

Right. The signature of Antonio Porlier on Bodega's application papers for membership of the Order of Santiago. Porlier Pass is between Valdes and Galiano Islands and the name is adjacent to *Punta de Gaviola* on the 1791 chart. On that chart, Porlier is spelt "Poliel", and in Galiano's field notes in 1792, it is spelt "Polier"; suggesting that Porlier was not a familiar figure to anyone but Bodega. I suspect the same might be true of Gaviola.





The link between the family name *Gaviola* and the area around Mendaro. An extract from the papers for the induction of Simón de Gaviola into the Order of Santiago. There are several other such examples in the papers. It reads:

Abuelos Pat[er]ernos

Rodrigo de Gaviola de[s]cendiente de la cas[s]a y Solar de Gaviola en la Jur[i]s[diz[cc]jón de la Villa de Deva en el Valle de Mendaro, y Dona Juana de Arriola natural de la d[ic]ha Villa del Goivar.

Paternal Grandparents [of Simón de Gaviola]

Rodrigo [Roderick] de Gaviola, descendant of the House* of Gaviola in the Jurisdiction of the town of Deba in the valley of Mendaro, and Juana de Arriola, born in the said town of Elgoibar.

* *de la casa y solar*, a phrase indicating “from a noble family with a stately home”

OM-Caballeros-Santiago, Exp.3192, Archivo Historico Nacional, side 7 (my count).

Etymology of “Gaviola”

Gaviola or *Gabiola* was originally a placename but it became, first the name of a stately home—a manor or mansion (*solar*)—and then a family name, probably in the 15th century when it was common for people of standing in society to describe themselves as being “so-and-so *de* (from) the place of their birth”. The original *Gaviola* was in the Kilimon valley in the Basque country in Spain. The name is

derived from two Basque words *gabi* and *ola*.⁶⁰

Gabi or *gavi* means in Basque “a hammer” or “mallet”, and, while not proven beyond doubt, some experts consider it to be the

⁶⁰ The ending has no etymological connection with the Spanish word *ola* (wave). The earliest record of the name I could find is “Ochoa de Gabiola”, a *gamboino* from Mendaro who took part in some sort of fracas between the *oñacinos* and *gamboinos* (clans or brotherhoods) at Arrasate in 1448.

origin of the English word *gavel*, “a mason’s maul” or “the mallet of a presiding officer”.⁶¹

The Basque placename ending *-ola* has come to mean “place where things are made or done”, but originally it meant specifically a “forge” or “foundry” and, even earlier, “hut” or “cabin”, especially a shepherd’s seasonal shelter high in the mountains. Other examples of Basque *-ola* placenames that have become family names are *Mendiola* and *Loyola*. The Basque word *ikastola* means “place where learning is done”, a “school”. The *-ola* placename ending is not common, even in Spain, but it is in villages around the border between the Basque provinces of Vizcaya⁶² and Guipúzcoa.

In the Middle Ages, *Gaviola* was a place where there were smithies making, among other things, small hammers. Iron ore was brought there by river via the port of Deba from Vizcaya, which has rich deposits of the stuff. In the 19th century, these deposits became the basis of a substantial steel-making and iron-ore exporting industry centred on Bilbao and the city is surrounded by industrial ruins from that time. Back in the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries, Vizcayan iron was being used for making nails, spikes, and the chains, belaying pins, anchors, and many other metal fittings required by the then-thriving Basque shipbuilding industry.⁶³ Given this

environment, it is easy to imagine a small tool-making village specializing in the manufacture and sale of small hammers. Armorers especially used many different kinds of hammers to shape the wrought iron into weapons and knightly apparel.

There were five foundries in the Mendaro area: *Plaza*, *Aurteniola* (*Artañola*), *Goiko-ola* in Mendaro itself, and *Gabiola* and *Lasalde* in the nearby Kilimon valley. *Gabiola* became a flourmill (*fábrica de harinas*) in the late-19th century, but the “old factory” was closed in 1924 and a new hydroelectric-powered one opened elsewhere. It too closed in the 1960s.

The names *Gabiola*, and *Gabiola Txiki* (or *Gabiolatxikia*) meaning smaller or lesser *Gabiola*, still appear on detailed maps of the Mendaro area (*see maps on page opposite*).

⁶¹ Basque Studies Newsletter 18, 1978. University of Nevada, Reno.

⁶² “Viscaya” is familiar to English speakers as “Biscay” as in the Bay of Biscay; another example of the interchangeability of the “b” and “v” in old Spanish. I’m told “b” and “v” mustn’t be confused these days.

⁶³ Carla Rahn Phillips, *Six Galleons for the King of Spain—Imperial Defense in the Early Seventeenth Century*, p.139, John Hopkins University Press, 1986.



There may be only two places in the world with the placename “Gaviola” or “Gabiola”.

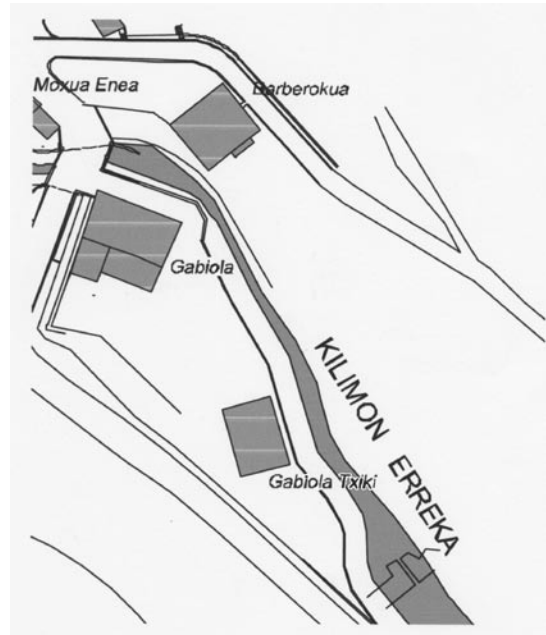
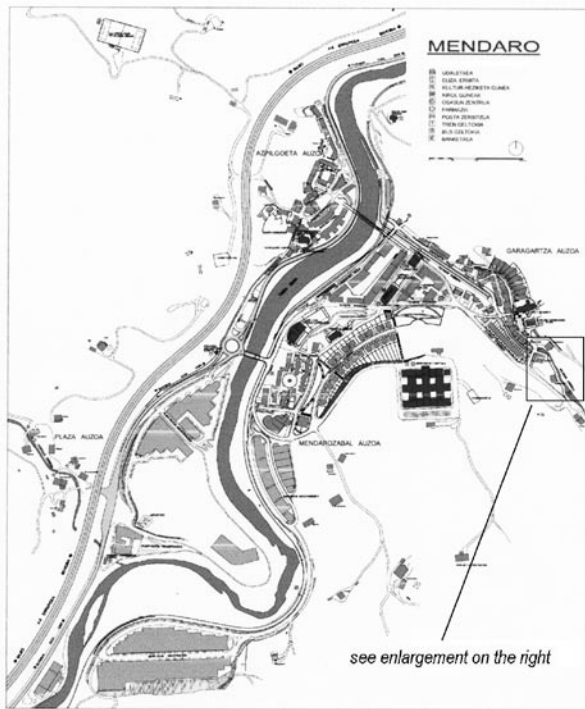
One is in the Flat Top Islands, just off the northeast coast of Gabriola Island; the other is in the Kilimon valley, just to the east of the small town of Mendaro in Spain.

It is very likely that these two names, together with Gabriola's, share a common origin that dates back to the Middle Ages.

Left: Mendaro is about halfway between Bilbao and San Sebastián in Euskadi (Spanish Basque country).

Bottom left: Mendaro town map. The ibaia (river) is the Deba.

Below: Gabiola and Gabiola Txiki (Gabiolatxikia, smaller or lesser Gabiola). Kilimon erreka (creek) is a tributary of the Deba.





A view of Mendaro. The white arrow (*bottom left of centre*) indicates the site of the original foundry called *Gabiola*, which means, “place where iron mallets are made”.

Most medieval smelters could not reach high enough temperatures to melt iron, so it had to be “wrought” (beat, bent, or twisted) into shape while still red-hot. Water power was widely used to rhythmically hammer lumps of iron free from the slag, and to drive the bellows for the furnace, so it was common for foundries to be situated, as was the one at *Gabiola*, near the banks of swiftly running streams where there was also a plentiful supply of wood. The main river through Mendaro, the *Deba*, was kept open for navigation.

Mendaro still manufactures machine tools and other steel products including razor blades, scissors, screws, nails, and cutlery. It is rather better known however for its chocolates, nougats, truffles, and other confections made in a traditional, 18th-century manner.

Photograph and maps of Mendaro are from the Ayuntamiento de Mendaro website: www.mendaro.net

Bert Hall, *Medieval Iron and Steel—Simplified*, Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology, University of Toronto <www.the-orb.net/encyclop/culture/scitech/iron_steel.html>

Douglas Alan Fisher, *Precursors of the Blast Furnace*, excerpt from *The Epic of Steel*, pp.2629. Harper & Row, 1963 <www.davistownmuseum.org/toolPreBlastFurnace.html>

The non-crusade

One might get the impression from reading the Santiago papers for Bodega that he was particularly religious. However, anyone familiar with the Spanish explorations of the Pacific Northwest at the end of the 18th century will know that religion was not the major focus of the explorers' daily dealings with the Native people.

"Malaspina had limited enthusiasm for the Church", reports biographer John Kendrick.¹ In his voyages, Bodega sometimes travelled without a priest, and in 1779 was unable to perform acts of possession because he had nobody aboard to say mass.² José Mariano Moziño in his "Notes at Nootka" reported in 1792 that "ministers of the Gospel have not taken the opportunity to plant the Catholic Faith among them [the Mowachaht]".³ This is in contrast to the spin often put on the explorations published in Spain at the time, for example:⁴

Madrid, March 24, 1776

The spirited attempts made in compliance with his Catholic Majesty's [Carlos III] commands arising from the laudable intention of spreading the knowledge of the Gospel to the utmost bounds of his extensive empire, especially those directed to the remote parts of the Continent North of California, where the inhabitants are still supposed immersed in the darkness of paganism...

My feeling is that it is unlikely that Bodega would have disapproved of the Catholic Church's turning over the little church at Nootka (Yuquot, Friendly Cove) in the 20th century to the Native people.

1. Kendrick, *Alejandro...*, op.cit., p.62.
2. Wagner, *The Cartography...*, op.cit., p.192.
3. Iris H. Wilson Engstrand (ed.), *Noticias de Nutka*, p.85, Douglas & McIntyre, 1970.
4. Wagner, *The Cartography...*, op.cit., p.184.

What do we know about Simón de Gaviola y Zabala?

In summary, not much. We know that he was 55 years old in 1632 making his birthdate *circa* 1577. He was born in Elgoibar into the noble Gaviola family whose seat was in the Mendaro valley; his mother was a Zabala, also an aristocratic family.

He and his wife very likely had a son, although the only evidence for this is indirect, and all contained in the single quote:

...Simón Antonio de Gaviola y Sarrikolea, natural de Sevilla, que ingresó en la Orden de Alcántara en 1635.⁶⁴

The evidence, assuming that the supposition is correct, is:

- Simón was the name of Simón Antonio's father
- Antonio was the name of Simón Antonio's paternal grandfather
- Simón Antonio's father was living in Seville (*Sevilla*), where Simón Antonio was born, in 1632
- the requirements for membership of the Military Order of Alcántara were the same as for the other three orders, including the Military Order of Santiago, except that it required, in addition, that all four grandparents were from families that originally possessed a *casa solar* (ancestral stately home). Unless we are willing to contemplate two such families with the name Gaviola, Simón Antonio must have been very closely related to Simón.

⁶⁴ Endika de Mogrobojo, *Blasones y Linajes de Euskalerría*, p.147.

Accepting the supposition to be true would mean that we know part of the name of Simón de Gaviola's wife, namely, "Sarrikolea", which, not surprisingly is the name of a noble family from Vizcaya. Basques are everywhere in this story.

It is possible that Simón Antonio de Gaviola, like Simón de Gaviola, had a career in the Spanish navy, in which case, we would have to have Gabriola Island join Burrard Inlet and other placenames in having a "family" name.⁶⁵

One thing to note here, especially for the benefit of future researchers, is that a plague killed a half of the city of Seville's population of 160,000 in 1649, so it is possible that the Gaviola's association with Seville ended around that time.

Simón was the paymaster (*pagador*) of the Armada de la Guardia de Indias, and we know a little about that.

The Armada de la Guardia

The *Armada de la Guardia* were the armed galleons that accompanied the fleets of merchant vessels carrying treasure and merchandise back to Spain from the Caribbean (*Indias*). There were two regular convoys involved, one travelling to New Spain (Mexico) and the other to Tierra Firme (Colombia and Venezuela). The Tierra Firme fleet also called at Panamá to pick up shipments from the port of Callao

⁶⁵ Burrard Inlet is generally considered to have been named by Captain Vancouver in 1792 after Harry Burrard, who later rose to the rank of admiral as Sir Harry-Neale Burrard, but "young Harry" had an uncle "Sir Harry" also "of the navy" and so he too has to be counted as a contender. This very serious matter is debated in two articles: Gerald Burrard, *The naming of Burrard Inlet*, BC Historical Quarterly, vol. X, pp.143–50, 1946; and W. Kaye Lamb, *Burrard of Burrard's Canal*, BC Historical Quarterly, vol. X, pp.276–80, 1946.

near Lima in Perú. The merchant vessels operated on a two-year cycle, sailing out in one year and returning the next, but the *Armada de la Guardia* frequently accompanied one fleet out and the other back in the same sailing season.

By the late-16th century, the galleons of the *Armada de la Guardia* increasingly took on the job of carrying the most valuable cargoes themselves, mainly as a protection against French corsairs and English pirates, but also to make it easier for royal officials to enforce registration (and hence taxation) and thwart smuggling.

Pagadors

The royal officials supervising the fleets—the official inspector (*veedor*), chief notary (*escribano mayor*), comptroller (*contador*), paymaster (*pagador*), and purveyor (*proveedor*)—were not office-bound bureaucrats. They sailed with the fleets to sea and were not exempt from the perils of the voyages.

Simón de Gaviola lived in Seville, which was the homeport of the fleets (the *puerto y puerta de Indias*) even though a hundred kilometres from the sea up the Río Guadalquivir. It remained so until bigger ships and silting of the navigation channels forced transfer of the "port and gateway of the Americas" to Cádiz in 1717.

Carla Philips in her book about the Spanish Navy in the early 17th-century gives us a glimpse into the duties of a *pagador*, such as Simón. In 1625, the crown (Philip IV) awarded a contract to Martín de Arana for the construction of six galleons, which at the time were used as both military and merchant ships. The Aranas had a long history of involvement in the ancient Basque shipbuilding business, and Martín was a member of the Military Order of Alcántara.

...[the money for paying the bills] was kept in a traditional Spanish *arca de tres llaves*, a chest with an intricate lock and three keys. One key was held by the *proveedor* (purveyor), a royal official charged with provisioning and overseeing the construction of ships on the north coast. Another key was in the hands of the *pagador* (paymaster), who was in charge of logging the funds in and out. The third was held by Arana [the contractor] himself. The box could be opened only by the simultaneous action of all three keys.⁶⁶

Summary and conclusions

Gabriola's name is derived from the Spanish, *Punta de Gaviola* (Point Gaviola), which, at the time, was frequently written without distinction as *Punta de Gabiola* with a "b". There was originally no "r"; this addition was a careless copying error made by a British cartographer in the mid-19th century.

The name first appears on a Spanish naval chart drawn in San Blas in what is now Mexico in 1791. Although the name *Gaviola* is often said to have been assigned by Narváez, who actually visited the island, there is no proof of this, and it is more likely that it was assigned in San Blas by the *comandante* of the naval establishment there, Bodega y Quadra.⁶⁷

There is not a scrap of evidence in the historical records to support the notion that the word *gaviola* was a corruption of *gaviota*, meaning "seagull". This idea is a 20th-century myth. It is unlikely that experienced naval officers would choose a

name like, "Seagull Point", and just as unlikely that, even if they did, such a name would be approved of by both the high-ranking commandant of San Blas and the viceroy of *Nueva España*.

Gaviola is the family name of aristocrats (*señorios*) who originally came from the Mendaro Valley in the Basque province of Guipúzcoa in Spain. This is just a few kilometres from the border with the Basque province of Vizcaya. This family name is not common, but a few examples are to be found everywhere in the modern Hispanic world. The word itself, *gaviola*, is a composition of two Basque words that appear in modern dictionaries. It is impossible that Bodega y Quadra and other Spanish naval officers would have found this family name in any way unusual, even if they did not personally know or know of anybody from that family.

Both Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya have long naval, sea-faring, and ship-building traditions. The first man to sail around the world, Juan Sebastián Elcano, was Basque. Many of the Basque fishermen and whalers off the east coast of Canada in the 1500s were from Vizcaya. The placenames Ingornachoix, Port au Choix, and Port aux Basques in Newfoundland are all Basque.

The list of names of naval officers who served at San Blas and became famous for their part in the exploration of *Alta California* in the years from 1768 to 1798 is generously sprinkled with the names of aristocratic families with ancestral homes in Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya. An example is "Bruno de Hezeta y Dudagoitia", the leader of the 1775 expedition from San Blas to Alaska.

⁶⁶ C. Phillips, *Six Galleons...*, op.cit., p.55.

⁶⁷ San Blas was founded in 1768 by the Spanish government specifically for the purpose of exploring and maintaining the Spanish claim to sovereignty over the entire Pacific coast of North America from Mexico to Alaska.

The viceroy of *Nueva España* in 1791-2, Revilla Gigedo, who very likely gave final approval to proposed placenames, included in his own name, "Horcasitas", (his paternal grandmother). HORCASITAS was also the second name (alias) of the SANTA SATURNINA, the vessel that visited Gabriola under the command of Narváez in 1791. Horcasitas is also the name of a noble Basque family from Vizcaya.

All of Bodega y Quadra's family names are the family names of aristocrats from Vizcaya. The ancestral home of the Mollinero's, which was the name of Bodega y Quadra's mother, is just a few kilometres from the ancestral home of the Horcasitas.

The Gaviola and Zabala families from Guipúzcoa were of equal rank to the noble families of Vizcaya.⁶⁸

Simón de Gaviola y Zabala, after whom the island is probably named, was a member of the Order of Santiago (he was a knight, and had he been English would have been called "Sir Simon"). Admitting applicants to this Order was a valued means of honouring the nobility and rewarding servants of the Crown who had distinguished themselves. Bodega y Quadra was admitted to this same Order in 1776.

It was the common practice of the Spanish navy, as it was of the British navy, to select as placenames the names of eminent officials in either the government or the navy. Simón de Gaviola, as paymaster (treasurer) of the fleet protecting the trade routes to the Americas (*Indias*), was both, and so was well qualified for the honour of having a geographical feature named after him. Although we have as yet no details of

⁶⁸ Luis Maria Ecenarro, *Las casas de Carquizano y Zabala de Elgóibar*, pp.345-408, Real Sociedad Vascongada de los Amigos del Pais, 31, 3 & 4, San Sebastián, 1975.

the career of Simón de Gaviola, it was common practice in his era for paymasters to go to sea.

I would contend that the evidence that the island is named after Simón de Gaviola is just as strong as the evidence of origin of several other placenames in the Strait of Georgia, now accepted without question, and so the mystery of the origin of Gabriola's name has, at least pending the results of on-going investigations, been solved. The only other contender for the name, Simón Antonio de Gaviola y Sarrikolea, who was probably Simón de Gaviola's son, has no known connections to the navy.

Further research? Perhaps an all-expenses-paid trip for Jenni and me to Spain is called for. After all, somebody from Gabriola has to do it.

Acknowledgements

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