

SPAIN

Madrid, April 28

With the greatest determination, and with no regard for fatigue or injury, all measures are being taken to enhance as much as possible the interest of the circumnavigation of our globe to be undertaken at the beginning of July by two corvettes of the Real Armada, departing from Cádiz. These ships, which will have to endure four and a half years on the inconstant element, have been deliberately constructed in the manner most advantageous for the intended enterprise. The leader of this expedition will be Commander Don Alessandro Malespina, and the second-in-command Lieutenant Don Alessandro Belmonti [1]. The Marine Guards and officers assigned to the expedition are meanwhile sparing no effort in increasing their understanding of the nautical sciences, particularly astronomy. All the materials for their various tasks, such as glass and crystal baubles, and instruments made of iron and other metals – which are most sought after by the uncivilised natives – have been gathered in profusion, with the intention of being able to tickle and satisfy their vanity, thus combining the idol of fancy with the development of the arts necessary for life, and useful to society and for the advancement of culture. Although the project we are talking about was conceived in the reign of Charles III, our present Monarch wishes to make it more admirable and profitable by including in the expedition painters and philosophers much versed in natural history. Of particular interest are our colonies, the primary purpose being to delineate accurately the American coasts washed by the two oceans, Atlantic and Pacific. The highest latitudes will not be omitted, as far as conditions in the icy regions allow. As our trade with Asia, carried out by the Company of the Philippine Islands, means that our ships sail more frequently in that part of the world, it is advisable to take particular care over the creation of exact charts for sailing from the Mariana Islands to Luzón by way of San Bernardino Strait; as well as a careful survey of the coasts of the Island of Mindanao, laying out the easiest passage between the Celebes and Moluccas to the north of New Holland. Our Argonauts having precise orders to sail along the coast of that great island, in itself a new world, and having also to visit New Zealand, the Friendly Islands, the Society Islands and the Sandwich Islands, and seeing that in all this

immense area of the globe the same language is spoken, with little variation, it should be pointed out that serious consideration was given to taking on board our ships one of those four Spaniards who, according to the famous Cook in the account of his last voyage, stayed for ten months in the year 1773 on the island of Tahiti, living amicably with the islanders, from whom they learned the language of the Pacific Ocean, which is common to innumerable nations. There is no question, in the meantime, that all tasks undertaken will conform with the character of the venture in such a way as to confer great glory on our Spain, and to render the name of our Monarch Charles IV ever more honoured and respected for centuries to come.

[1] The article seems to confuse this Italian friend of Malaspina, who later became administrative head of the Port of Rimini, with the expedition's joint leader [José de Bustamante y Guerra](#).

[Facsimile](#) courtesy of Robert King. [Text](#) by John Black.