

Journal of Léon Brèvedent

(Book 1)



Sea Journal of Léon Brèvedent

(Book 1)

Archives nationales de France, série Marine, 5JJ56

Physical Description

Manuscript: Bound with parchment

Cover: (carries the wording) Brèvedent Departure from France my embarkation on the *Naturaliste* on 9 vendémiaire, Year 9 (followed by his signature with, on the right, the initials) NNN

Dimensions: 19.5 x 24 cm

Contents: 12 unnumbered pages, written on both sides of the paper [24 handwritten pages] + 5 pages of observations of latitude and longitude at the end of the manuscript, also written on both sides of the paper

Period covered

27 vendémiaire Year IX [19 October 1800] – 13 prairial Year XI [2 June 1803]

Comments

This is in fact a summary of his journals (which had been damaged and discarded overboard), commencing on departure from Le Havre and finishing at the second stopover in Kupang (Timor).

A note placed at the conclusion of the narrative states: “This is merely a summary of my journals, which had been soaked and had disintegrated on board the schooner *Casuarina*. I would have wished to have had the time to copy them word for word, but our arrival at Isle de France forced me to throw them overboard.”

Translation

Malcolm Leader

Validation

This translation has not yet been systematically checked against the original French text. Anyone wishing to verify the accuracy of a particular passage of this English translation is invited to contact the Baudin Legacy team (see the web site for contact details).

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Note on the Translation

Brèvedent appears to have written this document in some haste (possibly because, as he notes, this text is only a summary of the original, which was damaged and discarded in Mauritius) and without paying much heed to punctuation, grammar or clarity of expression. The translation attempts to render (in complete sentences where possible) the meaning of what Brèvedent has to say, but in view of the state of the source text this has inevitably involved a degree of guesswork. Only the most notable or problematic instances have been footnoted. Spelling of place names, etc, has, where possible, been updated to conform to modern English usage. Footnotes inserted by the translator have been identified as such – all others are as contained in the transcribed manuscript.

As with the French transcription of this journal, the observations of latitude and longitude that appear at the end of the manuscript have not been reproduced; page numbers (unnumbered in the manuscript) are shown in square brackets; words added between lines have been enclosed in < > marks; deleted words have been struck through; words, notes and sketches added in the margins have been shown in the text by an asterisk referring to the bottom of the page.

Sample page of the manuscript

[Not available]

[Cover]

Brevedent

Departure from France

My embarkation on board the *Naturaliste*

9 vendémiaire Year 9

NNN

[Title page]

**Notes or extracts relating to the voyage of Commander Baudin on board the
corvettes *Géographe* and *Naturaliste***

compiled by me, Léon Francois Brevedent, helmsman on board the *Naturaliste*,
embarked 18 fructidor, Year 8 of the French Republic, as a memorial and for my own
use.

[1]

297 vendémiaire, Year 9 [19 October 1800]

As the winds were favourable we cleared the port at 09h00 in the morning, with the band playing and everyone very happy. The same day we were inspected by an English frigate, and the American flag of truce vessel that had accompanied us continued on its way. Fine weather on the 28th, but in the evening a fog sprang up and we lost sight of our consort. Rallied again at about 4h00 the next morning, after having made a number of signals. With the wind veering to a strong west-north-westerly, we progressively took all the reefs in the topsails, took in the mizzen topsail and remained all night under reefed topsails and fore and mizzen staysails. Reasonably fine weather on the 30th [vendémiaire, 22 October] and on 1 brumaire [23 October]; calm. Moderate breeze on the 2nd and 3rd [24 and 25 October], strong on the 4th [26 October]. Spent the night under the two reefed topsails. On the 5th [27 October] the NNW breeze veered to a fresh north-easterly. Same weather on the 6th and 7th [28 and 29 October]. Sighted three merchant ships. Same <weather> up to the 10th, when land was sighted. The same day an English privateer observed us all day and at night, but in light of our composure it decided on the 11th [2 November], at 10h00 in the morning, to leave us be. At 1h00 in the afternoon we dropped anchor in the harbour at Santa Cruz. During our stopover there I had pleasure in visiting a number of persons I had known on my first voyage with citizen Baudin. Took on some stores, notably wine.

Unmoored on the morning of the 23rd [brumaire, Year 9, 14 November 1800] and got under way at noon with a moderate breeze, heading south-west. Nothing new on the 24th, 25th, 26th or 27th [15, 16, 17 and 18 November]; moderate breeze, speed 7-8 knots. On the 28th [19 November] we were put on $\frac{3}{4}$ water rations. Our reckoning put us abeam of Cape Verde, distant approximately 20-25 leagues.

Calm weather on the 29th and the 30th [20 and 21 November], making 2-3 knots. Sighted many fish but took only one bonito. Flat calm on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th frimaire [22, 23, 24 and 25 November]. Excessively hot on the 5th [26 November]; stormy weather with lightning lighting up the sky and some claps of thunder. The storm broke at 10h00 in the morning and lasted until 2h00 in the afternoon. A considerable amount of rain fell during these four hours, which gave us a good deal of pleasure since for about 7 or 8 days we had been suffering a lot from the small quantity of water allocated to us. So, even though it tasted foul we collected as much rainwater as possible. There was wind during the storm only – as soon as it had finished, calm conditions returned.

Another storm on the 6th [27 November]; strong winds from ESE; remained under reefed topsails and foresail. The storm only lasted two hours and was followed by calm. During fine weather on the night of the 8th [29 November] some porpoises, no doubt attracted by the sound of violins, swam ahead of the ship and seemed to wish to imitate us – two of the most enthusiastic even came aboard, interrupting the dancing for a time. A fairly heavy squall hit at about 10h00 in the morning. The boatswain spiked a bream which, in escaping, was taken by a swordfish. Squally weather on the 10th with periods of calm. Same weather and headwind on the 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th [2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 December]. For several days now we had remained approximately 40 leagues from the Line, without being able to cross it. On the 16th [7 December] a strong west-north-westerly squall hit, but unfortunately it only lasted $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour. On the same day the Commander struck his fore topmast, which had probably been damaged, then sent it up again. We swayed out our small dinghy to go alongside his ship. A substantial squall on the 17th [8 December]. Rain all day on the 18th [9 December]. At 5h30 in the evening on the 19th [10 December] wind mixed with rain, lasting

until 2h30 in the morning and followed by a whirlwind that fortunately did not come closer than a pistol shot, since otherwise it would certainly have caused considerable damage. The ships almost collided as we had different winds to deal with, and had we not taken the precaution of changing tack some accident would certainly have occurred. Fine weather on the 19th. Crossed the Line on the 20th [11 December]. On the 23rd [14 December] we were hit by a very considerable squall which obliged us to strike our topsail and clew up the mainsail. The crew on watch received a tot of eau-de-vie.

[2]

24 frimaire, Year 9 [15 December 1800] en route for Isle de France

Moderate easterly winds enabled us to make some progress in latitude. A south-easterly course was set. Similar weather on the 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th [16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 December]. On the last of these days the *Géographe* broke its bowsprit boom, which it sent up again on the morning of 1 nivôse [22 December]. We did the same during a light squall that hit during the night; we immediately sent up another. No new developments on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th or 5th [23, 24, 25, and 26 December]. Our dead reckoning put us at approximately 20 leagues from Ascension Island. Fine weather and south-easterly winds on the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th [27, 28, 29, 30, 31 December and 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 January]. Fine weather and easterly course on the 16th and 17th [6 and 7 January 1801]. Nothing new on the 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd and 24th [8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 January]; moderate breeze and south-easterly course. Moderate wind on the 25th, 26th and 27th [15, 16, 17 January], making 7-8 knots on an east-south-easterly course, with winds S-SSW. The Commander struck down his mizzen topgallant mast between 27 nivôse [17 January] and 3 pluviôse [23 January]. Calm; sighted some albatrosses, petrels and sea-larks. Strong south-westerly winds from the 3rd to the 4th [23-24 January]; steering an easterly course and making 9-10 knots from the 4th to the 13th [24 January- 2 February]. Nothing of note on the 13th and 14th [2-3 February]. The Cape of Good Hope was sighted at 9h00 in the morning, distant about 20 leagues; we had noticed the previous day that the sea had changed, with strong winds and very heavy sea. We observed that the heel of our main topgallant mast was rotten. At 2h00 in the afternoon we sighted a vessel heading for the Cape. Nothing of note on the 15th, 16th or 17th [4, 5 and 6 February]. On the 18th we changed the main topsail and repaired our mainsail. On the 19th [8 February] the winds were strong east-north-easterlies and we spent the night under the two fully-reefed topsails and foresail. The wind abated on the 22nd [11 February]. The sea was very rough over these three days. Fine weather on the 23rd [12 February], with a swell running; sighted a small whale. Light winds on the 24th [13 February]; easterly course. Nothing new on the 25th, 26th or 27th [14, 15 and 16 February]; sighted some porpoises; course ESE. Calm on the 28th, 29th and 30th [17, 18 and 19 February].

On the 1st, 2nd and 3rd ventôse [20, 21, and 22 February] we maintained our course. As wine was in short supply we were given 2 meals with <eau-de-vie> and one with wine. Set a course SE¼E on the 4th [23 February]. Nothing new to report from the 10th to the 12th [1-3 March]. Inspected the boats on the 13th [4 March]. The sea running a swell. Thick cloud, forming in the south-west and gradually spreading around us, confirmed us in our expectations. At 4h00 the wind sprang up with some violence; we immediately took in the topgallants, staysails, standing jib, mainsail and mizzen topsail and took a reef in the topsails, but as the <main topsail> starboard tackle had failed and splicing had taken a long time, the sail blew out, a consequence of its age and constant flapping.

We finally clewed it up and struck it so it could be unbent. We then wanted to board the main tack to replace the main topsail, but the same thing happened and we were obliged to take it in. Took the third reef in the mizzen topsail which we immediately trimmed so the ship would steer better. At 7h00 in the evening we again bent a main topsail, and immediately took in all the reefs and trimmed it. At 8h30 we unbent the mainsail. At 10h00 the main topsail's preventer sheet and tie failed and it was clewed up and struck, as was the mizzen topsail. At the same moment we wore ship on the Commander's manoeuvre, during which time the ship rolled considerably and shipped sea over the gunwales. Soon afterwards the fore staysail halyard failed, along with the mizzen mast catharpings. We remained under the foresail and fore topsail. The ship very slack, with a bobstay missing. The wind was steadily freshening and the sea was extraordinarily rough, and as the constant and violent seas we were shipping had smashed the bulwark we were forced to bring to under the main staysail and mizzen staysail. The ship behaved very well under these sails. During the blow the winds varied from SW to NW, passing through E and swirling from ENE to NNW. At 2h00 in the morning on the 15th [6 March] the wind veered north and slackened. We spent the morning under the two reefed topsails and the foresail, and passed the day re-rigging the ship. We were then at latitude 30°S and longitude 53°. Sighted several bonitoes and sea bream. From 16 to 21 ventôse [7-12 March] the weather was fine and the breeze moderate; course NE¼N and NNE, speed a constant 8-9 knots, putting us about 30 leagues off Isle de France. Nothing new on the 22nd and 23rd [13-14 March]. Land was thought to have been sighted in the afternoon of the 24th [15 March], during a light breeze. Then on morning of the 25th [16 March], with a moderate to light breeze, land was confirmed. We left *Isle ronde*, *Isle aux serpents* and the *Pain de sucre* to starboard and the *Coin de mire* to port, having approached quite close to the latter.

[3]

26 ventôse, Year 9 [17 March 1801]: moored at Isle de France

As we were becalmed we were only able to drop anchor in the SSE of the port, in 14 fathoms water. The next morning we half-masted the flag to call for a pilot and hoisted out our boats. At 7h00 a port official came aboard, hailing us from a long way off to enquire who we were. After we had satisfied him he left a pilot with us, and another with the *Géographe*, and we got under way for the *Deux frères* (the main harbour) where we dropped anchor. On the morning of the 27th [18 March] longboats from the port came alongside and towed us into the inner harbour of North-West Port, where we took a mooring buoy forward, with one of our anchors, and placed a single anchor aft, despite the fact that we were swinging towards the open sea.

During our stopover we unrigged and then rigged the ship so it could be thoroughly checked over. We also took on stores. As the greater part of the crew had deserted, the Commander decided to anchor in the main harbour, which was accomplished on the morning of 25 germinal [15 April]. We had great difficulty assembling full crews for the ships and were obliged to take on some Blacks and Malays. Finally on 5 floréal [25 April], at 7h00 in the morning and with a light south-easterly breeze, we got under way and set a course to pass to the south of the island. As soon as the *Morne Brabant* had been rounded we sailed close-hauled and steered a south-easterly course, to the extent possible. Fine weather on the 6th, 7th and 8th [26, 27 and 28 April], with moderate east to south-easterly winds. Calm on the 9th [29 April]. Rain during the morning on the 10th [30 April]. At 4h00 we lost sight of the *Géographe*, but sighted it again at 10h00. Strong wind in the

after[noon]. Under the 5 main sails, fully reefed. Fine weather in the morning of the 11th [1 May]; under full sail. Same weather until the 19th [9 May], when the wind freshened considerably. Struck down the topgallants and remained for 36 hours under the two fully reefed topsails and the foresail. Running before the wind, with the sea very rough, we made very good way over six days. Calm on the 26th [16 May]. Nothing of note from then until 6 prairial [26 May] when land was sighted at 8h00 in the morning, distant approximately 10 leagues. We stood in for it and coasted along in a northerly direction, continuing to survey. At 9h00 in the evening on the 10th [30 May] we dropped anchor in a hitherto unknown bay. Sent a dinghy ashore the next day to look for a watering place, but had no success. Sighted fires along the coast. Two days later I went ashore with the [word apparently missing]. Sighted clear traces of inhabitants, but found no water. Got under way on the 19th [8 June] and anchored in the far reaches of the gulf, sheltering from a heavy blow. After having swung on our cable for half a day and signalled to the Commander that we could not possibly get under way, we repeated the signal then lashed the main tackle. At 2h00 the anchor shank, quite twisted, came to the hawsehole, although not without much effort. Observed latitude of the anchorage was 33°36'S, longitude 112°41'48" east of the Paris meridian.

At 8h30 in the evening on the 20th [9 June], with our boats back alongside, the wind freshening considerably and the ship having dragged its anchor during a wind gust, the captain decided to get under way. At the same instant the *Géographe* signalled the order to do so. At 10h30 the anchor was weighed, and was found to be missing one of its bills. At 1h00 we were under sail, tracking WNW with light south south-easterly winds. By midnight the wind was a strong north-easterly. We hoisted in the large dinghy and remained all night under the two topsails and the foresail. During our stay in the gulf, which was named Geographe Bay, we investigated many parts and saw natives on many occasions, although without being able to win their friendship despite giving them gifts. They are black, very strong and courageous, and have thick curly (but not woolly) hair. They paint their faces in various colours such as black, white and red. Some are tattooed. They all go naked except for an animal skin worn around the shoulders, and some wear a belt. For a weapon they carry a spear, which is a stick about 6-7 feet long, sharpened at one end and fire-hardened. They seem to be nomadic and live on roots and fish, which they catch with nets* and using stakes which they intertwine with grass as the sea rises.

[4]

Stopover in Geographe Bay, prairial, Year 9 [May-June, 1801]

The fish pass over the stakes and are trapped when the tide goes out. In the far reaches of the bay – the only part in which the Natives seem to live – we found firstly a salt-water lake and some holes, dug by the Natives and containing fresh water. There was also a salt-water river that we followed upstream for about three leagues, where the water was brackish. The shallowness of the draft prevented us from going any further, but I believe it would be possible for a small craft to complete a ship's daily water there. As I was an oarsman in the small dinghy I was able to go ashore on several occasions. The first time was the 10th [30 May], with the Captain, when we had strong south-easterly <winds>. We coasted along the southern shores of the bay from 8h00 in the morning until 5h00 in the

* Translator's note: the transcription given ("à la fouine") is unclear in this context. "Fouine" has been taken as "seine."

evening, with our oars constantly out of the water. The only things I noticed in this area were many rocks and gumtrees, which I shall not describe because I know nothing about them. At 7h00 in the evening on the 12th [1 June] we sighted a fire to the south-west. The wind was a southerly; light at first and then fresh. We got under way, but as the current was against us we drifted quite a lot. At about 8h00 we dropped the grappling anchor so we could unstep the mast and ship the oars, but it fouled and after we had heaved on it with a parbuckle, unsuccessfully, the dinghy was shipping water at the bows. We took the decision to cut the cable – unbeknown to the Captain who still thinks that it broke. One of our oars was lost during this work, but that did not prevent us from continuing on course. However we were losing way and at 2h30 in the morning we altered course and headed for the ship. The wind was however no more favourable (it seemed it was deliberately setting out to exasperate us) and it was only after eight hours of intense rowing that we arrived back at the ship, well and truly tired out. At 7h30 in the morning on the 15th [4 June] I was sent off once again, under the command of citizen Herrison, to the NE sector. This is where we found water and some inhabitants. We saw many teals, some pelicans, many other seabirds that I did not recognise, budgerigars, parrots, black cockatoos and various other small birds. We brought back a good deal of celery and samphire. We returned aboard in the evening. On the 16th [5 June] at 4h30. I was once again despatched, accompanying the Captain to the same place. On arrival ashore we set off, with the Captain, towards the eastern part of the bay. Some scientists and officers from the two ships were also present. Motivated by a desire to see the Natives and the hinterland, I left these gentlemen and headed inland, initially following a small path which led me to some huts, where I found nothing except fireplaces at the entrances. I walked around aimlessly for a long time, without seeing anything. Estimating that it was about 2h00 and the Captain might have returned, I made my way back towards the boat and by 4h00 I had arrived at the large dinghy, where I met Mr S^t Cricq. I asked several persons that the Captain be informed. As we were preparing to leave we sighted two persons in the distance, whom we initially took to be members of the expedition. However when they were at about 100 paces from us we saw that we were mistaken, as indeed did they. One of them made off very quickly but the other, who was a pregnant woman, fell down as if in a swoon. We attempted to help her up, but it was to no avail; her legs could not support her. She was naked and carried a skin bag on her shoulders, containing some roots similar to fern roots. Both of these persons carried a small spear, made more for leaning on than for defence. We left a number of gifts for the woman, and five minutes later we saw her drag herself into the bushes. We arrived back alongside at nightfall. The wind was fresh by then and it strengthened further during the night, so I was not unhappy to be back on board. While I was thus enjoying a good night, the dinghy in which I should have been was however having a very bad time. It had left the same <evening> as us, without any provisions, and the wind and sea had worked together to heap suffering on the crew. A number of the men were so weak that they were unable to do anything. They finally arrived alongside at 4h00 in the evening the next day, after 24 hours at sea. They reported in the first instance that...

[5]

Geographe Bay, prairial, Year 9, contd

...the *Géographe's* longboat had foundered and was full of sand; that they had met with Natives and that several of the scientists had asked to land so they could speak with them; that this permission had been given reluctantly; that they had not gone 30 paces into the woods when, they said, “we saw them return, pursued by 7 Natives armed with

spears who threatened them, brandishing their weapons and uttering threatening, shrill cries." Seeing this, the Captain went to meet the Natives and offered gifts, which they picked up, studied and then threw back down on the ground. A mirror was given to them, and the first one who looked at it dropped it in surprise. Eventually, seeing that they continued to <gesture> towards us either to go away or to fight, the Captain returned to the dinghy. They had a dog with them.*

On the 18th [7 June] I went ashore at the same place, under the orders of Mr Milius. Several other boats also made the trip. The carpenters and caulkers, who went to inspect the longboat, judged that it could not be righted. Strong south-westerly winds. Heaved the dinghy by rope for some 7-8 miles, after which we embarked, although with great difficulty and in the fear that we might suffer the same fate as the longboat. The sea was so rough that it was impossible to beach the dinghy. The grappling anchor with a hundred-pound pigiron bar attached was dropped and an oar was used to send a lead line ashore which, after we had made fast under the armpits, we used to pull ourselves on board. The same technique was used in the large dinghy, but rather more clumsily and a certain Vase [Vasse], from Dieppe, was knocked over several times and finally disappeared. He had apparently neglected to secure himself, seemingly relying on his swimming ability. Two men who were still ashore searched along the beach for a considerable time, but found nothing. We arrived back alongside, and as we were coming aboard a gust of wind made the ship drag its anchor, luckily for us. The bad weather continued on 21 prairial [10 June]. We remained under reefed topsails, main staysail, mizzen staysail, mizzen, fore staysail and sometimes foresail. On the 22nd [11 June] the winds varied from N to WNW. We changed the mizzen topsail which was braced full, all reefs taken, as was the case with ~~all~~ the topsails and courses. The topgallant masts were struck down. Everyone took a watch. During the night we made longer tacks than usual and everyone was given coffee on several occasions. The strong wind continued on the 23rd [12 June], with the sea becoming increasingly rough. We lost a kedge anchor. The *Géographe* had not been seen since the 21st [10 June]. On the 24th [13 June] violent squalls forced us to remain under close-reefed main topsail, foresail, jib and mizzen staysail. At daybreak the winds shifted from NE¼N to SW and abated considerably. We rigged the booms and set a course for Rottnest Island, where we hoped to find the Commander. At 10h30 <on the 25th> [14 June] we dropped anchor off Rottnest Island in 9 fathoms water, bottom of grey unmixed sand. Latitude ~~of the island~~ of the island 31°59'42", longitude 113°39'30." Our large dinghy, which set off that morning with a flag for Rottnest Island, returned on the evening of the 26th [15 June]. During this time we fetched a bower anchor and a kedge from the hold. On the morning of the 27th [16 June] our large dinghy was despatched to investigate the entrance to Swan River, but returned in the evening without having been able to do anything, due to bad weather. The ship dragged its anchor during a squall and we immediately dropped the sheet-anchor, which had just been stocked. At 4h00 in the morning the large dinghy <was> despatched with provisions for six days to investigate Swan River, while the small dinghy and a flat-bottom were sent to Rottnest Island. The first was under the command of sub-lieutenant Herisson and the second, with me in it, under sub-lieutenant <Freycinet.> The third was under the master's command. At 8h00 the longboat, under the command of Lieutenant Milius, set off for a small island to the south-east of Rottnest. Let us leave them there for a moment. ~~When we arrived ashore~~ There being a strong swell...

* Translator's note: the absence of punctuation and unclear grammar make this paragraph, and the next, particularly opaque.

[6]

At anchor at Rottnest Island, messidor, Year 9 [June-July 1801]

...and with the winds setting inshore, we made this passage fairly promptly. As we arrived we believed that we would be disembarking on a bank of soft mud, but we touched rocks for some moments. Some of us got into the water and we hauled ourselves away, finding sand a few *toises* farther away. However as we had only some pigiron bars to hold us, the dinghy dragged and came full broadside, immediately filling with water so that all our provisions – 6 meals – were damaged, notably the sea biscuit. During this stay – which was actually due to a plank’s having become loose – the rain and wind proved of concern since we had nothing to provide sheltering. However misfortune sometimes has its bright side and the rain served to remove the salt from the sea-soaked biscuit, so we subsequently recovered as much as we could. On the very first day I went hunting bears* and was lucky enough to shoot one, which we ate. On the second day I was taking a walk when I came across a small cave which could provide shelter from the weather for two people. I immediately set about cutting wood and making a large fire at the entrance ~~to my abode~~, and invited Mr Faure, the geographer, to share my bed with me – which he accepted with pleasure. I made a sort of screen at the opening ~~entrance~~ as protection against the rain and wind coming from that direction. The island seems to me to be reasonably fertile. There is a salt-water swamp in the middle. We saw and killed a small species of kangaroo as well as several oystercatchers, but we found no fresh water on any of our walks. On the fourth day, 2 messidor [21 June], as we were at work refitting the dinghy, we saw a flat-bottom coming towards us. Repair work on the dinghy got under way immediately and in the space of two hours the carpenters and caulkers had finished. We launched the dinghy and headed for the ship. As the flat-bottom that had come with us had beached to leeward of a headland, it had set off for the ship the next day and had reported our <position> to the Captain. We learned from the flat-bottom that the longboat had foundered and that three planks had been stripped away on each side, as well as some timbers and beams. The carpenters and caulkers went ashore to fother for bringing back to the ship, which occurred on the 5th [24 June] and it was immediately hoisted in. The previous day the large dinghy had arrived alongside after having proceeded some 20 leagues upstream. A ridge of rocks just below the surface makes the passage at the river mouth dangerous. After that is a large harbour, home to a considerable number of swans. About 7 leagues upstream from the mouth there are some sandy and muddy shallows; the boat had been able to pass, but not without scraping the bottom in the process. They subsequently found plenty of depth although the river was quite narrow and difficult to navigate because tree trunks obstructed the passage, making for frequent changes of direction. Eventually, seeing that the water was undrinkable where they were even though it was fresh at low tide, they discovered a fresh-water stream as they were coming back downstream. They ~~touched bottom~~ touched bottom on the muddy shallows and were obliged to build a raft and push the dinghy a long way. They also reported in one of their [?]** that they <had heard> the cry of an animal which <had> so alarmed them that they had immediately re-embarked to spend the night in the dinghy, leaving their mess equipment ashore. Soon afterwards they had heard a heavy-

* Translator’s note: sic. The French word is probably shorthand for “ours de mer” – fur seal.

** Translator’s note: the source term “louchée” is unclear in this context.

footed animal, howling as it ran through the bushes and shallow water near the shore. NB When it is windy the seabirds head for land, then disappear with fine weather.

[7]

Shark Bay

On 9 messidor [28 June], after having waited in vain for the *Géographe* which on 29 prairial [18 June] we had sighted about 8 leagues out to sea, we secured our masts and got under way with a moderate north-easterly breeze, laying a course for Shark Bay. Nothing remarkable until the 13th [2 July] when at 1h30 in the afternoon the lookout sighted some reefs ahead and to seaward of the ship. We immediately made for the offing and, with the wind strong from NNW; took all the reefs in the topsails. On the 14th [3 July] the wind was strong, with violent squalls; we hove to under staysails. We caught many cape pigeons and petrels on hand lines. Same weather on the 15th [4 July], but on the 16th [5 July] the wind shifted west north-westerly. We set a course to the NE and during that day repaired many ropes that had failed during the bad weather. On the 17th [6 July] sailors named Augé and Fanfan each received 12 lashes for insubordination. Land was sighted from the masthead. We hove to for the night, with a moderate breeze. Fresh breeze on the 18th [7 July], with gusts and rainsqualls that forced us to reef the topsails. On the 19th [8 July] we stood in for the land, which was to leeward of the ship, and brought to at midnight, filling the sails again at daybreak. Sighted the Abrolhos Islands on the 20th [9 July]. Up to the 23rd [12 July] soundings returned between 24 and 36 fathoms at approximately 8 miles offshore. Constant rain on the 24th, 25th and 26th [13, 14 and 15 July], with overcast weather and a fresh breeze. On the 27th [16 July] we sighted the dangerous passage at Shark Bay. On the 28th [17 July] we dropped anchor off the northern tip of Dirk Hartog Island and launched rockets and fired several guns during the night. <That morning> we caught enough fish on our lines to feed the whole crew for <two> days. The boats were despatched to take soundings in part of the bay. From the large dinghy we sighted so many fish to landward of some shallows that we could have filled the boat in less than two hours if we had had any lines or nets. On the 29th [18 July] the large dinghy was sent ashore on the Dorre Islands to plant a flag and leave a letter for the Commander. Sighted many small kangaroos, as well as lobsters and other fish.

On 1 thermidor [20 July] we caught a giant shark, as well a several small ones and many other fish. With the ship dragging, we dropped the small bower. It was weighed the next day, along with the other, for inspection and we found the shank broken some six feet from the bills. The other was dropped immediately. The flat-bottom was despatched to Dirk Hartog Island with provisions for 4 days, under the command of the master helmsman, with Citizen Villain the zoologist on board in addition to Bourgoies and me. Citizen Villain, together with Bourgoies, was to observe the tides and my job was to assist the zoologist. We found a good quantity of fine shells, and also a lead plaque placed on the NW headland by the *Endrak* navigators in 1616 and by William [Vlamingh] in 1697, both of them Dutch. In the hinterland were some shallows where – judging by the crust formed on the surface - I believe that fresh water can be had when it rains. We saw many rats and kangaroos, a considerable number of dogfish on the shore, many birds of prey and other small birds, heard cries similar to those of wild animals and on the edge of a large hole we observed traces of a clawed animal, similar in size to the tracks of wolves and the largest dogs. We had fine weather during our expedition, which lasted until 2h00 in the afternoon on the 6th [25 July], and we arrived back

alongside on the 7th [26 July]. I later returned to the same island, but much further south. We caught a lot of fish, took to the boat again at 6h00 in the evening and got under sail for the ship, with cross winds. At night the weather clouded over and the wind changed without anyone noticing, because we could see neither the land nor the ship, nor indeed any star. The breeze was fresh and after having sailed for 4 or 5 hours without any compass we realised that we were not on course...

[8]

Shark Bay, contd

...because we were faced with the need to cross a large sandbank at about 11h00 (we did not have any watches), in 3-4 fathoms water. We dropped the grappling anchor in about 30 fathoms water. During this time the sky cleared and the moon appeared, saving us from more trouble since we were able to use its position to determine the four points of the compass. At about 1h00 the Captain, who was with us, had the anchor raised and we sailed before the wind for about three hours, when we saw the lights from our ship. By 4h00 we were on board. It was just as well that we had dropped anchor, since we had been tracking in the opposite direction from that we needed to take. On the following day, 8 thermidor [27 July] I returned ashore with a flag and a letter for the Commander. On the 9th [28 July] the large dinghy arrived alongside after having surveyed part of the bay. That morning, 10 thermidor, I was ordered to ready myself, along with Bourgoies, to spend 15 days ashore on Dirk Hartog Island to keep watch in case the *Géographe* came to the anchorage while the *Naturaliste* was anchored in the far reaches of the bay, 12 or 13 leagues away. In a bay of this size it would be possible for two ships to be present without being able to see or hear each other. We set off with provisions for 15 days, consisting of bread, meat and [illegible] eau-de-vie plus 10 days' supply of water, and this despite all my submissions to him that he had not provided us with what he had been ordered to provide. I am speaking here of Citizen Freycinet, who at that time was the officer in charge of supply. Such are some men, believing themselves to be knowledgeable because they occupy a position that in truth they do not know how to hold, and preferring to do an injustice rather than retract an order given - often without any thought. Eventually, seeing that I had nothing to gain except the contempt of a man who gives nothing to ingrates, I sought out the Captain who promptly did me no more justice and told me to be off - although the next day he sent me the remainder of what was due to me, and even a little more. The crew of the large dinghy which had taken us ashore set up our tent in an unsatisfactory location, not sheltered and without any wood. This obliged us to break camp the very next day and to haul all our gear, which amounted to no small load, keeping us busy all that day and part of the next. After three days we were very well set up. We had no fear of the damp because we had placed branches and grass at one end of the tent, making it weatherproof. That is where we placed our bread, powder case, weapons and in general anything that need to be sheltered from the rain. We also set up a canopy so we could collect rainwater. On the fourth day we dined on excellent and plentiful oysters, found only a mile from our tent. We also killed some sea birds. On the fifth day we dined in similar fashion. We ventured farther afield, as far as the salt marsh which is home to a number of birds. On that expedition we collected several live cone shells, one of which was two feet in diameter, and also found some pearl oysters, though without any pearls, some [?] and some dead hammerhead sharks. On the sixth day we dined as we had the day before. We saw some turtles and went to see if we could capture any. Soon after our arrival we spotted one along the shore and we immediately hid and remained for a long time without its going to ground. I tired of that, got undressed and took

to the water at some distance from it, taking care not to move too much. When it finally put its head above water I found myself to seaward of it, in about 2½ feet of water. I grabbed a flipper, but even though I am no weakling it was pulling me along when my travelling companion...

[9]

Departure from the bay and crossing to Timor

...got into the water and helped me to beach it – not without difficulty since it weighed between 4 and 500 [pounds?]. We immediately cut off a flipper, which we took back to our tent and which provided several excellent meals for us. The remainder became prey for rats and flies, even though we had taken the precaution of burying it in the sand. Nothing new to report up to the 25th [13 August], when the small dinghy came for us. However we did not leave until the next day, battling an unfavourable moderate easterly wind which strengthened in the evening and forced us to put in again. The wind was strong and it rained all night, and we had nothing to shelter us. The dinghy was safe, but our provisions were due to run out that day, the 26th [14 August]. Same weather on the 27th [15 August]. We had about 4 ounces of sea biscuit and the tenth of a bottle of water. Same weather on the 28th [16 August] and even less food than the previous day. On 29 thermidor [17 August] we had not eaten an ounce of biscuit by 5h00 in the evening when we encountered the large dinghy which had come for us, restoring both our stores and our spirits. During our privation we took delight in locating the remains of our turtle's flippers that the animals been unable to eat, as well as some fish thrown up by the sea and some oysters. That was the sum of our stores. The next day a 15-day excursion was being proposed and I found myself once again an oarsman in the large dinghy. However I felt a lot easier because I was sure of a good boat, one that sailed very well. Our mission was to investigate the northern part of the bay. We had a hard time of it on the first days due to the shallows to be found everywhere in this area. On 5 fructidor [23 August] we sighted a new island, named Auteuil Island, and continued to sail along the coast. On the 7th, after having completed the scheduled work we returned to the island, where we dined. Imagine our joy, as we arrived, in seeing the beach lined with turtles, swimming around lazily. We immediately beached the dinghy and set to catching the specimen closest to shore. In the space of an hour we caught 17 of them, 8 of which (weighing 350-400 [?]) we took alive. We cut the flesh from 5 others, and left the remainder. They were so abundant that we could have taken 4 times as many before nightfall. I do not know whether they normally stay in this place, but they all had small eggs inside their bodies, making it probable that they were going ashore to deposit them ~~their eggs~~. The island is heavily wooded and low-lying and is a sanctuary for a multitude of crows. None of us went inland and I cannot say anything for certain about it. On 13 fructidor [31 August], after having been forced to put in several times because of the bad weather, we came back alongside. We found that the longboat had been repaired, and on the 17th [4 September] we got under way to round Dorre Island by the south. This we did before nightfall, then set a course to the north. On the 26th [13 September], when we were at the latitude and longitude of a sandbank discovered in 90 we sounded on the half hour – Dampier Rocks were also in this vicinity. Spent part of the night hove to. At 9h00 in the evening on the 28th [15 September] we sighted the island of Savu. At midnight we stood off and at daybreak steered for a strait formed by a small island to the south-west of Savu, encountering strong currents on the way. This island offers a charming aspect, its coconut and palm trees providing shade and making it most agreeable. We saw some

natives, including one who seemed to us to be European – his hat and his mount set him apart from the others. On the 3rd Complementary Day [20 September] we sighted the islands of Roti, Picos, Semau and Timor and at 10h00 on the 4th [21 September] we dropped anchor near the *Géographe*, which we greeted with a six-gun salute and thrice-repeated cries of “Long Live the Republic;” the greetings were returned in similar number.

[10]

Stopover in Kupang, Timor Island, brumaire, Year 10 [October-November 1801]

Kupang lies at latitude 10°9'S and longitude 121°49'46" east of the Paris meridian. It is well watered, very fertile and its harbour is reasonably safe except in the hurricane season. The bottom provides good holding and some 20-30 fathoms water for large ships, sitting at most one mile from shore. There is a great abundance of poultry, pigs, goats and buffalo, all at very cheap prices. It sets high store by glassware for trading purposes, as well as all sorts of hardware useful in agriculture. There are many Chinese here, and they are the most Jew-like people I have ever come across, knowing no truthfulness or honour in their commerce.

During our stopover the English frigate *Virginie* came to investigate us. We sent a boat alongside to let her who we were, and having had this information she headed out to sea again. At that juncture the inhabitants had taken up arms. The rajas, or kings, each armed with a rifle and a sabre carried by a slave, arrived from everywhere followed by their slaves, some of whom carried sabres, some bows, others lances and yet others spears. Most of the free Malays had rifles, as did the Chinese. This all took place in disorder and disarray, but with the frigate's departure everything returned to its normal state. A young Englishman, who had escaped from the frigate at night, swam over to us. After having swum some two leagues and spent the night on a deserted island without any food or drink, he took to the water again to swim the additional league that separated him from our ship. The Commander, who wished to speak with him, went ashore that evening. As soon as the Malays learned that the sailor was English they wanted to kill him, even while he was with us, and only the night-time saved him.

During this stopover the Commander and most of the two crews were very ill, and several died from dysentery. As for me, I owed my health to my sobriety and to large intakes of tea and coffee, which are very healthy. A promotion parade was held during this stopover. The senior officers of both ships were promoted one grade, except for one who remained at level. For my part, I was promoted to midshipman second class. We weighed anchor at 5h00 on 22 brumaire [13 November] and set a course to the north of the island of Semau and thereafter SSW. On the 26th [17 November] the island of New Savu was sighted, as was Benzoard Island; fires could be seen on the latter. The bowlines remained hauled from 26 brumaire to 27 frimaire [17 November-18 December], with constant moderate south-south-easterly <winds>*. Dysentery claimed several members of our crew, and it was a similar story on board the Commander's ship. The wind veered to a fresh west south-westerly and course was set SE¼E. At noon our observations put us at latitude 29°11'S, longitude 99°. On 13 nivôse [3 January 1802] we were at latitude 34°4'30" and longitude 108°28'30" The wind, which had veered back the next day <28 frimaire> to S and SE, shifted to WNW at 8h00 in the evening, variable SW-NW, blowing moderate and even

* In the margin adjacent to the last four lines are the words “I will not give you my reckonings – that would be too tiresome.”

strong up until 23 nivôse when we sighted the cape of Van Diemen's Land. On the 24th [14 January 1802] we dropped anchor in the Great Cove in the d'Entrecasteaux Channel, in 28 fathoms water, muddy bottom. As we were heading towards the anchorage we found ourselves running before the wind directly for some rocks lying between wind and water. We were about 2-3 cable lengths away when they were sighted and we immediately went close-hauled on the starboard tack, which did not prevent us from finding ourselves among the seaweed attached to the rocks. On the 25th [15 January 1802] I went ashore with several of the gentlemen. We saw about a hundred Natives – men, women and children, who were without any visible weapons and were almost all completely naked, except for some who had a kangaroo skin around their shoulders. It appears that the women are responsible for...

D'Entrecasteaux Channel, contd, nivôse, Year 10 [January 1802]

...providing food for their husbands and children, and in general for all domestic duties. Most of them carry a small string bag in which they take when looking for food. The children follow along with them up to the age of 7 or 8, after which they go with the men. One of them had three children with her, one at her breast, another – aged about

[11]

two – whom she was carrying in a bag on her back and a third who was about 5 or 6 years old and walking beside her, but who was also asking to be carried. She made signals, asking me to put this one on her shoulders, which I did and she promptly headed off into the bush with the others. In the afternoon, since we were letting* them do as they pleased, they began stealing some effects from the dinghy. As we moved to prevent this they perhaps thought we wished to harm them and they departed, but in doing so they threw a spear at a midshipman who had wrestled with one of them and had come out the stronger – I assume that the spearing was the price of his victory. However his injury was not serious. On the 26th [16 January] I was despatched in the large dinghy, with engineer-geographer Faure on board, to take soundings in the southern part of the Great Cove, between the channel's eastern and western headlands. We finished our work at 7h00 in the evening and immediately returned to the ship, almost capsizing twice due to the very strong and gusty wind. On both occasions the dinghy was half filled with seawater. On the 27th [17 January] we got under way for NW Port, after having sought in vain to complete our water in the Port of Swans. There we were very well received by an old man. It seems he had fond memories of General d'Entrecasteaux, who had offered him some gifts. He invited us to eat some fish that were cooking on coals. We dropped anchor in NW Port on the 28th [18 January] and I was immediately despatched in the longboat to complete our wood. I arrived back alongside at 7h00 in the evening, with a fully laden longboat. On the 29th [19 January] the large dinghy set off for the Northern River with provisions for four days, to set up an observatory onshore. On 1 pluviôse [21 January] the Captain, Mr Leschenaut, Bailli and I [set off] to look for watering places, and we succeeded in finding a river in a pleasant cove, teeming with excellent oysters. They provided us with a hearty meal and we took many back to the ship. On the river banks we came across sawn timber and trees that had been chopped down with axes. On the 2nd [22 January] we returned to the ship and the oysters were distributed among the crew. The large dinghy arrived alongside at 10h00,

* Translator's note: "faissoit" in the transcript has been taken as "laissoit."

having discovered a watering place and many black swans. On the 3rd [23 January] I set off with Mr Faure in the large dinghy to survey North and Frederik Hendrik bays. On the 4th, in fine weather, we coasted along the southern part of Frederik Bay and discovered a cove that was sheltered from onshore winds, with a very fine stream and very good anchorage in 8-10 fathoms water. Strong winds forced us to overnight there. On the 5th [25 January], after having investigated a number of inlets we discovered that the claimed strait between Marion and Federick Hendrik Bays exists only on paper, <that is to say on charts,> but the bays are only separated by some land 50-60 *toises* <wide> and about 15 high. On the 6th [26 January] strong west south-westerly winds forced us to put in on a sheltered headland. We made some excursions inland and saw an arm of the sea that we initially took for a river. On the 7th [27 January], with the strong winds continuing, we returned to explore our so-called river. The coxswain was ordered to sail upstream if the <wind> allowed, even while I was away. After having walked for some four hours, skirting the sea arm, we were able to see its extremity from atop a hill. We then set off for the dinghy, hoping to find fresh water there, but on returning we found that the dinghy had gone, forcing us to return to the river...

[12]

D'Entrecasteaux Channel, contd; arrival at Furneaux Islands, Year 10

...where we found the boat aground, compelling us to ford the river. As the sea had risen we made the dinghy fast on a small island, where we passed the night. It was made up <entirely> of a great many oyster shells, although that did not prevent trees from growing there. The next day, the 8th [28 January], we followed the river in the dinghy upstream as far as it was navigable and then continued <on foot> for about 4 miles, where we came upon several freshwater ponds which in the rainy season flow into this channel. We filled our water casks and saw kangaroos, parrots, cockatoos, crows, ducks, cormorants, swans, turtledoves, partridges etc. We spent the night in the dinghy rather than ashore as usual, because the Natives set fire to the countryside all around us. On the 9th [29 January] we made our way back down the river and overnighted on the same island at the river mouth. At 4h00 in the morning, with the tide high and the wind offshore ~~illegible the bar~~ we got under way and crossed the bar with ease – we had about 5-6 feet of water, even though the coxswain had told me it was mountain-high. As soon as we had left the mouth we sailed close-hauled so we could round a headland behind which a current was setting at about 4 knots. [?] We dropped anchor at the entrance since we could make no headway with either sails or oars. The current forced us to traverse most of the bay, which offers nothing of interest. We spent the night in the far reaches of the bay and the next day took advantage of the ebb tide to move off, traverse the Northern Bay and verify the Tasman peninsula. We then overnighted in a bay whose mouth is hardly more than a cable wide, and in which we killed two swans, either young or having lost their plumage. We saw many pelicans and rays, including some enormous ones, and on the 13th [2 February] we returned to the ship. On the 28th [17 February] we cleared NW Port after many attempts and headed for Maria Island where, at 4h15 in the afternoon on the 30th we despatched our large dinghy to investigate the Schouten Islands. On 1 ventôse [20 February] the longboat went ashore on Maria Island to bury Citizen Maugé. This island is inhabited by people similar to those on Van Diemen's Land, but they are not quite so primitive. They live in the same way; here they bury their dead after having incinerated them, making a sort of grave which they <cover> with bark. The ground is very stony. In 4 hours, three of us caught 80 excellent, large lobsters. On 9 ventôse [28 February], with the boats having returned, we got under way and set a course to skirt the east coast. The weather was extremely foggy, to the point where we were obliged to fire shots from the swivel guns and sound the bell very

frequently. On the 14th [5 March], at 3h00, we saw an eclipse of the moon. On the 15th [6 March] the Commander launched a dinghy. On the 16th [7 March] his ship was not in sight and on the 17th [8 March] we lost contact with each other. On the 18th [9 March] we sighted the schooner *Endeavour*, out of Port Jackson, drawing some 24 tonnes with a crew of 14, engaged in fur hunting. We sighted the Furneaux Islands. Strong westerly winds. On the 19th [10 March], with the wind having abated, we set a course for Bass Strait. There we found an English brig, also engaged in fur hunting, as well as the *Géographe's* dinghy which had also become separated from the ship. The current was setting ESE-WNW at two knots, [?] at the neap. On the 21st we provided the *Géographe's* dinghy with provisions for 5 days and instructed it to complete its survey and to see whether the ship was searching for it. Citizen Faure and I set off in the large dinghy to survey from Swan Island to <Cape> Portland, but since <the dinghy> had orders to return to the ship we were unable to do anything before nightfall, and spent the night quite agreeably ashore on a headland. The dinghy returned for us the next day, bringing along the astronomer who was to determine the position of Cape Portland. On the 22nd [13 March] I visited Swan Island and the small green island. On the 22nd [13 March] I received an order to set off in the large dinghy to take engineer-geographer Faure to the Furneaux Islands to conduct a survey. I was supplied with provisions for three days and set off 9h30...

[13]

Furneaux Islands, contd and Bass Strait

...in a very light breeze and overcast weather, the sea running a swell. Having been becalmed, and with the onset of night meaning we could do nothing in any case, we dropped anchor off the north-east headland of Clarke Island. However very strong easterly and east-south-easterly winds forced us to get under way again. An extremely dark sky threatened bad weather, but as we were out of sight of land we hove to under the jigger and hoped for the best. At daybreak we filled the reefed storm-sail and foresail. The foremast snapped during a squall. We stepped the mainmast and filled the jigger, and under these sails we managed to grip on to a small cove on Preservation Island, where we remained, hoping for fine weather. We discovered the remains of a ship of 250-300 <tonnes>, huts made from branches tied together with rope-yarn and a great number of geese, penguins, crows and kangaroos.

On the third day we got under way and beat to windward all day until we came to the far reaches of the bay, which we investigated without going ashore. We spent the night on Clarke Island, where once again we found the [remains] of a ship. The next day we headed for our ship, but it was no longer at the anchorage. We continued on towards Swan Island, in accordance with the orders we had received, and there we found the *Géographe's* large dinghy and four of our crew who did not know where to go. The ship had broken its cables in bad weather and had got under way, bringing to immediately. It had not been sighted since the 24th [15 March]. On the 26th [17 March], after we had eaten, the two dinghies made their way together to ~~Swan~~ Waterhouse Island (the rendezvous point), where we arrived at nightfall after having sailed around some of it without sighting any ships. Concern mingled with my surprise and I <took the> necessary precautions to conserve what remained of our sea-biscuit - this amounted at the most to five pounds for the 22 of us. As an initial measure we went without supper. As soon as it was light I sent a man off to reconnoitre, and at 9h00 he reported to me that a ship was in sight. I immediately embarked in the dinghy and pressed towards it. As the *Géographe's* dinghy had not followed we were <obliged> to wait for it. As soon

as it was alongside we headed for Schouten Island, skirting the coast in the hope of finding the *Géographe* there. However we sailed around until 8 germinal [29 March] without sighting it. On the 11th [1 April] we dropped a kedge anchor in <Bass> Strait so we could ride out the tide, which was against us. On the 12th [2 April] I set off in the large dinghy, commanded by Citizen Herisson, accompanied by the *Géographe*'s large dinghy under the command of midshipman Maurouard, with orders to circumnavigate Waterhouse Island and to search for any instructions or letters that the Commander may have left for us. We overnighted and next day continued our search, partly on foot and the rest in the dinghy. We saw many wild geese, of which I killed five, and an enormous quantity of fur seals which were very easy to approach. We met up with the other dinghy, which had also sent men ashore but like us had not found the slightest trace. As soon as we arrived [back alongside] it was despatched under Citizen Freycinet's command to convey Mr Faure to survey Port Dalrymple. On the 16th [6 April] we too got under way for Port Dalrymple. On the 17th ~~at 10pm~~ the large dinghy was hoisted in and we steered a course for Western Port and set about investigating Wilson's Promontory. On the 19th [9 April] we hoisted out a dinghy and Citizens St Cricq and Boulanger set off, with provisions for 15 days, to fix the position of the promontory and the surrounding small islands.

On the 20th [10 April], when we were within sight of Western Port, we hoisted out the large and small dinghies. The former was under the command of Commander Milius while I was in charge of the latter, both of us subordinated to geographer Faure who was to conduct a survey. I will say no more than that it would be an excellent port, very well sheltered and where 200 ships of the line could anchor in its various channels, in 10-16 fathoms over a <muddy> bottom,...

[14]

Arrival in Port Jackson, stopover and departure for Isle de France

...were it not for the fact that it is cluttered with mud banks, and some sandbanks. It has two large, well-wooded islands that have fresh water. There are swans and some extremely wild pelicans. On this expedition I killed four swans, and would have killed many more if I had had more time and some good shot. We saw some Natives who invited us to approach, but they disappeared as soon as they saw us come nearer to them. They were almost all smeared in white and red, and had a small bone through the cartilage between their nostrils. On the 27th [17 April 1802], with the boats back alongside, we filled the sails and set a course for Port Jackson. We hove to for the night and on the 28th [18 April] we rounded Wilson's Promontory, standing very close inshore, then skirted the coast until 4 floréal [24 April] when we sighted the port entrance. On the 5th [25 April], with a pilot on board, we entered the port. During the stopover we took on some provisions and completed our water and wood. On 20 floréal [10 May] Captain Flinders came aboard and told us that he had met the Commander on the south-west coast. On the 21st [11 May] a whaler gave us news of the general peace in Europe. These two pieces of news gave us great pleasure. We got under way on the 27th [17 May] and the same day an English soldier, who was trying to desert, almost drowned. We rescued him and immediately placed him aboard the watch vessel. That evening a sailor named Bouteillé reported with a dangerous stab wound he had received from the midshipman in charge of the dinghy in which he was an oarsman. Strong wind on the 28th [18 May]; under the four principal sails. On the 29th [19 May] the winds were strong and very gusty, WSW-SSW. Sailed close-hauled on the starboard tack, with two reefs taken in the fore topsail and one

in the main topsail. We took in the mizzen topsail and the main staysail, struck down the topgallant masts and took down the rigging and yard winding tackle. Bouteillé died from his wound and we also discovered an English soldier. We re-bent the fore staysail that had come adrift in the strong wind. Headwind on 30 floréal and 1, 2 and 3 prairial [20, 21, 22, 23 May]. We stood off and on, choosing the most favourable tacks. Fresh south-easterly winds on the 4th [24 May], with an overcast sky and very rough sea. At 8h00 the wind veered S-SSW, blowing strongly in violent squalls. At midnight we clewed up the main topsail so two reefs could be taken in it. We took in the mainsail, the mizzen topsail and the fore topsail which had blown out. The wind continued to increase in strength up to 4h00. The port bumpkin was dislodged in a heavy swell. Constant rain. On the 5th [25 May], with the wind having abated, we repaired the fore topsail and the bumpkin. Fine weather on the 6th [26 May]. Northerly wind on the 7th [27 May]; starboard studding sails set. Wind W-SW on the 8th [28 May], fresh and gusty; sailing close to the wind on the starboard tack under the mainsails. The main topsail blew out as it was being bowsed; it was unbent for repairs and at noon it was bent once more.

On the 9th [29 May] we were close to the wind on the starboard tack, under close-reefed lower sails and topsails on the cap, hauled up and down with each squall. The port bumpkin* was carried away and the fore staysail blew out. It was hauled down for repairs, and the standing jib was rigged. On the 10th and 11th [30 and 31 May] the winds were variable in strength and direction. Same weather on the 12th [1 June]. Fresh north-easterly winds on the 13th [2 June]; steering south-west under full sail. Strong easterly and north-easterly winds on the 14th [3 June]; under the 5 main sails, tracking SW with easterly and east-south-easterly winds. On the 15th [4 June] course was WSW, making good way. Moderate headwind on the 16th [5 June], with a rough sea. Strong and squally west and WSW winds on the 17th [6 June]; under the four main sails, with topsails reefed during the heavy blows that hit the ship. Towards midnight saw St Elmo's fire on the foresail yard.

The foresail blew out as we were wearing ship. On the 18th [7 June] the wind abated and shifted W-NNW; the weather still overcast, the sea rough and the wind cold. Overcast weather, rough sea and cold on the 19th [8 June]. Sailing close-hauled on the starboard tack, with strong NNW-NW winds. Took in the mizzen topsail. The fore staysail halyard failed in a light rain squall and the sail blew out, taking all the rings. We clewed up the main topsail to repair its sheets and parrels, which had been damaged. .At noon on the 19th [8 June] we were at latitude 46°55' and longitude 135°17'. The Captain assembled the senior officers and, after he had informed them of the situation regarding provisions and the state of the ship it was unanimously decided to put into port. At noon on 20 prairial [9 June] the mainsail tack failed and the sail blew out. At 2h15 we altered course, with strong west-south-westerly winds. Remained all night under the foresail and the two topsails. Fine weather on the 21st [10 June], so we set a mainsail. On the 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th [11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 June] there was a light breeze, squalls and overcast weather. We sailed close-hauled with winds varying S-SSE.

* Translator's note: "de rechet" in the source text is unclear in this context. It may in fact be "derechef" – "once again".

[15]

Second stopover in Port Jackson

Van Diemen's Land was sighted from the deck at 4h00 on the 3rd [messidor – 22 June 1802]. At noon the Furneaux <Islands> were in sight. Strong westerly-south westerly winds. Clewed up the main topsail for repairs to its reefs and sheets; ditto for the fore topsail. Fine weather on the 4th [23 June], with Camel Mountain in sight. At dawn on the 5th [24 June] a three-masted ship was sighted on the opposite tack. It remained in sight all day. Fresh N-NNW winds on the 6th [25 June]. Took a reef in the topsail. Same weather on the 7th [26 June]. We were at the latitude of Port Jackson, but the weather was not conducive to our standing in for it. We remained abeam of the port on the 8th [27 June] and then stood in for it on the 9th [28 June] and at noon we anchored at the port entrance in 5 fathoms water, bottom of sand and also probably some rocks because one of our cables was cut on the seabed. The *Géographe* had been in port for 10 days, with many of its crew suffering from scurvy – seven had died. At midnight on 12 messidor [1 July] a large vessel came alongside, probably in order to take away our favourable wind. But when it was close we hailed it, and as there were many on deck it hoisted its sail again and went downwind. At the same moment another vessel launched a rocket. We immediately despatched our large dinghy to the buoy of our kedge anchor, but it saw nothing. On the 13th [2 July] we raised the bower anchors and heaved on the warping line. On the 14th [3 July] we dropped anchor and moored in Sydney harbour, next to the *Géographe*.

To my readers: like many others I have the right to bore you, but I do not wish to avail myself of it, so I will leave this to these gentlemen, the botanists and others, who have taken their good time to visit the countryside, towns and villages, and I will say only a few words.

This part of the world is very fertile, and the vegetables, fruit and grains of all sorts known in Europe grow very well there. ~~He~~ horned beasts proliferate every day. In the early days of the colony a herd of cattle that escaped multiplied considerably, the more so as the Natives are afraid of the beasts. Poultry is abundant, as are pigs, but export is prohibited (although we were allowed to take some). During our stopover the *Géographe* was careened, while the *Naturaliste* cleared its decks to get rid of an enormous number of rats that had been chewing at everything on board, and also to prepare to return to France carrying the results of our work. Purchase was made of a small ship, drawing 22-24 tonnes, which had been under construction. It was launched on 15 messidor [4 July] and I was ordered to remain aboard to supervise its rigging. On 1 vendémiaire Citizen Lieutenant Louis Freycinet was appointed my captain. On 9 vendémiaire [1 October] we moved to the outer harbour. On the same day a French schooner put to sea to go fur sealing to the south of New Holland. The settlement has a group of men who do nothing but this, and has small ships that come and go two or three times a year. The furs sell very well in China. During our stopover many ships arrived with provisions and merchandise of all sorts. On the 27th [19 October] our rudder was in place, and we got under way the same day, with a light breeze. The ship handled very well. We set off on the 28th [20 October], with a strong breeze. The ship was griping so much that it would not steer, so we moved the masts and riggings forward and placed more ballast aft. Got under way again on the 29th [21 October], with the ship behaving much better. A pilot came aboard on the 30th [22 October] and we set a course for Botany Bay. On 1 brumaire [23 October] we dropped anchor at the port entrance. We

took some fish, including a swordfish, using lines. On the 2nd [24 October] we dropped anchor in Botany Bay, and on the same day reached Port Jackson. We continued to complete our wood and water and to embark our stores for the expedition. On the 13th [4 November] a promotion parade was held, and on the 17th [8 November] the Governor came aboard the *Géographe*.

On the 22nd [13 November] the brig *Venus*, belonging to and manned by Mr Bass, arrived from Tahiti. On the 25th [16 November] the lieutenant-governor came aboard. On the 27th [18 November] we put to sea with the *Géographe*, the *Naturaliste*, an American three-master and another small schooner of our size, which we lost sight of during the night.

[16]

Departure from Port Jackson and arrival at Hunter Islands, Year 11

On the 27th [18 November 1802] we got under way with winds backing SSE-S, light at first and then strong. We took in the topsails and flying jib and took a reef in the mainsail. Same weather on the 28th [19 November], but on the 29th [20 November] the wind veered to the north. A schooner en route from Bass Strait informed us that the French schooner *Surprise*, captain Lecorne [Lecorre], had been lost in that strait, that all Frenchmen except one apprentice seaman had been lost, and that all Americans were safe. This particular detail would appear to call for careful examination. On the 30th [21 November] the trestle-trees of our fore topmast failed, and the mast was unrigged. Moderate <breeze> from N-SW by the west. Several seams let go in the bad weather. We are now making 7-8 <inches> water per hour. On the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th frimaire [22, 23, 24 and 25 November] the winds were constant southerlies, with the weather reasonably fine.

On the 5th [26 November] the wind was uncertain and the weather stormy and rainy. At 8h30 a strong squall hit the ship, taking our master – who was in charge of the watch – by surprise. It broke our main topmast as we had not had sufficient time to clew up so the courses could be struck. Water was already coming through the main hatch. We hove to under the forestaysail. Same weather and same sail settings on the 7th [28 November]. We filled the sails in between the squalls. Reasonably fine <weather> on the 8th [29 November], with a moderate wind and calmer sea. En route for Bass Strait. The Furneaux Islands were in sight on the 9th [30 November], when we were ordered to pass astern and were given fresh bread. Light and variable breeze on the 10th, 11th and 12th [1, 2 and 3 December]. On the 12th [3 December] the wind was strong from the WSW, and the sea rough. Wilson's Promontory in sight. Same weather on the 13th and 14th [4 and 5 December]. Continued to beat up against the wind so as to round the Sugarloaf, which we had orders to leave to the south. We completed the manoeuvre the same day at 10h00 in the evening, with only one boat length to spare. The wind shifted suddenly during the night, veering to a fresh east-north-easterly. Set a course to the south-west. At 6h15 in the morning on the 15th [6 December] we sighted a small rocky island forward of the ship, distant 3 miles. At noon we sighted King Island, bearing NW. We hove to, the wind having shifted suddenly to a strong south-westerly, then filled the sails at 4h15 and coasted along the south-eastern part of the island. We found the *Géographe* and the *Naturaliste* anchored in Elephant Bay, and we dropped anchor near them at 7h00. Stripped the foremast so we could repair the crosstrees, which were... * At

* Translator's note: the sentence is incomplete. Brèvedent reached the end of the line and forgot to include the adjective prior to commencing a new sentence on the following line.

1h00 in the morning on the 16th [7 December] I went to say goodbye to my former shipmates, anticipating that I would not have time to do so the next day. At 1h30 in the afternoon we got under way to survey the Hunter Islands. We sighted them on the 17th [8 December], but calm conditions prevented us from approaching; ditto on the 18th [9 December]. On the 19th [10 December] we dropped anchor between Long and Three Hummock Islands. At 1h30 in the afternoon on the 20th [11 December], with a favourable tide, we got under way to investigate a sand bank that stretches some three miles to the north of Long Island. On the landward side of the bank there is a channel about half a mile wide in which we stood off and on, but since the tide was no longer favourable we bore away to Three Hummock Island, where we spent the night. The wind shifted easterly during the night and at dawn on the 21st [12 December] we got under way and made for Long Island, where we surveyed the north-eastern, northern and north-western coasts and as far down as the south-western coast. All of this latter part is full of reefs and protruding rocks, with even more of them just below the surface, making the area extremely dangerous. The wind was constantly freshening, making the sea very rough. As we passed over a sand bank we almost touched, and indeed on occasions the keel dragged, so that at noon we were forced to bear up all the time. We were obliged to come to or to bear up because of the rocks under the surface. By 1h00 we were out of danger, but the strong and squally wind forced us to heave to under the forestaysail and storm sail. The thunder, lightning, wind, rain, hail, rough sea and the pump that needed to be worked almost continuously all meant that we spent one of the worst nights possible, especially if you add that the ship laboured so much that we were almost as soaked in our bunks as when we were on deck.

[17]

Departure from Hunter Islands and arrival at Kangaroo Island

On 22 frimaire [13 December 1802], with the wind a little more manageable, we stood in for Van Diemen's Land in order to survey it. On the 23rd [14 December] the horizon was dark to the south-west, the sky overcast, with stationary clouds that seemed the forerunners to a blow. The wind was alternately calm and gusty, from the south-west. We stood out to sea for the night. At 1h00 in the morning on the 24th [15 December] the wind was a strong north-easterly. We hove to. At 6h45 the clouds were racing across the sky; the wind suddenly veered NNW, strong with violent gusts; the sea was extremely choppy. Then there were rain squalls and hail from the west and west-southwest – we were making 10 inches of water an hour. The wind abated a little on the 25th [16 December] and we made sail between the squalls, always being careful to strike the sails as soon as more rain threatened. At 1h30 in the morning, finding ourselves near a large rock, we stood out to sea for the remainder of the night. Same weather on the 26th [17 December]; we stood in for the islands once more and at 5h45 we dropped anchor at the first anchorage point. On the morning of the 27th [18 December], in similar weather, the shipped dragged its anchor considerably. We dropped the small bower anchor and raised the other one – which we found had lost its stock. At 23h00, with the tide running to windward, <we got under way> under courses, with the wind still strong and the sea so rough that it drenched us from fore to aft and prevented us from making way. Same weather on the 28th [19 December]. We dropped <anchor> in about the same place. Got under way again on the 29th [20 December] and suffered the same fate. At 4h00 in the morning on the 30th [21 December], with the weather having fined up, we got under way with a light north-easterly breeze and proceeded to investigate a large indentation formed by the mainland of Van Diemen's

Land and closed by the ~~Furneaux~~ Hunter Islands. It provides a reasonable anchorage although it is necessary to remain at the mouth because the other parts contain many shallows. After having navigated for some time in 3 and 4 fathoms water we eventually went aground <and> were obliged to pump out the water casks and to make a raft for our kedg anchor. After two and a half hours we passed clear and made for Three Hummock Island, which we proceeded to survey. On 1 and 2 nivôse [22 and 23 December] we surveyed the portion of coast between the Hunter Islands and Round Cape. To the west of this cape we found a sheltered and closed bay in the far reaches of which is a channel that we followed for approximately four miles, at which point we touched bottom. The headwind forced us to stand off and on, and since night had fallen we bore up on the entrance. This channel extends for about 15 leagues inland. It is lined by high ground and there are sand and mud banks along its shores, with a ridge of rocks at the entrance.

On the 4th [25 December] we set a course for King Island, where we dropped anchor at 7h00 in the morning on the 5th [26 December]. We learned from the English who conduct fur hunting on the island that the *Géographe* had been searching for us but had been obliged by bad weather to get under way. We sighted the ship the next day, the 6th [27 December] and immediately got under way and set a course to join it. We were ordered to proceed to Kangaroo Island. We lost sight of our consort on the 7th [28 December], in overcast and foggy weather and with a fresh breeze. During the night we sighted a rock about 3 or 4 cable lengths from the ship, and immediately changed course to the west. The ships joined up again on the 8th [29 December] and the course <was signalled> NW¼W. Maintained our course on the 9th and 10th [30 and 31 December]. On the 11th [1 January 1803] we changed course to NNW, and sighted land. On the 12th [2 January] we sighted Kangaroo Island and on the morning of the 13th [3 January] we received an order to stand in for the coast so we could investigate it and see if there was any anchorage. We did so, but contrary winds forced us to stand off and on all night, as well as on the 14th and 15th [4 and 5 January], and we lost sight of the Commander. On the 16th [6 January] we sighted a large fire that we assumed had been lit by our people. The *Géographe* was sighted on the morning of the 17th [7 January] and on the same day we dropped anchor alongside it. The ship was unstowed so we could fetch the anchor that was on the keelson. The strong wind and very rough sea made the ship drag, so as soon as the anchor was readied it was dropped. The *Géographe* having sent over our third anchor along with four barrels of water, we weighed our large anchor and immediately stowed it, along with the water.

[18]

Survey of the Gulfs

On 18 nivôse [8 January 1803] the caulkers and carpenters came aboard to see to our repairs. The mainmast was unrigged so the crosstrees could be reset. On the 19th [9 January] the ship was ready. We got under way at 8h00 on the 20th [10 January], with engineer-geographer Boulanger on board, and set a course for the ~~large~~ small gulf. On the 21st [11 January] we skirted the starboard coast at a distance of 6 miles. The land is low-lying and sandy on the shore, but 12-18 miles further along it is very elevated. Soundings consistently returned 2-4 fathoms. At 1h00 in the afternoon on the 22nd [12 January], seeing [nothing] remarkable and with the channel becoming very narrow and with no more than 3-4 fathoms water beneath us, we beat up against the wind and went across to investigate the other coast of the same gulf.

We spent the nights of the 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th [13, 14, 15 and 16 January] at anchor, getting under way as soon as the tide was favourable. At the southern end of the small gulf's western extremity we found a sand bank, some of which remains uncovered and close to which, on the 28th [18 January], we left an anchor.

The stretch of coast separating the two gulfs is low-lying and lined with shallows. On the same day we sailed close to an island forming the southern extremity of the large gulf's eastern headland. At noon on the 29th [19 January] were at the latitude proposed for commencing our survey, so we skirted the coast and spent the night standing off and on, under light sail. We recommenced the survey at first light on the 30th [20 January], and favourable winds enabled us to accomplish a good deal. But when night fell the strong wind and rough sea, combined with the fact that land was close by and to leeward of us, led to our spending a difficult night under sail. Continued our work on 1 pluviôse [21 January], still with a strong wind. We had the same concerns as before at night, with the courses reefed and the sounding lead at the ready. On the 2nd [22 January] we continued to track north until noon when the channel became increasingly narrow and we abandoned it, beating up against the wind in a channel that was navigable for no more than two or three tenths of a mile, dropping anchor when the tide rose and getting under way as soon as it fell. This channel is full of banks, with 12 or 13 fathoms nearby and a current swift enough for me to believe it was a reasonably large river. The channel is lined with more elevated land than I have seen anywhere in New Holland, except for the Blue Mountains that fertilise the perennially green countryside in the English settlement at Port Jackson. This land appears to be inhabited, judging by the fires we saw in the foothills and even on the hilltops, from which several streams seem to flow. Same manœuvre on the 3rd [23 January]. On the 4th [24 January] we continued to beat against the wind (constantly SSW), skirting the western part of the gulf. Same weather and same work on the 5th and 6th [25 and 26 January]. At 7h00 in the evening we got under way with an easterly breeze to proceed to anchor off a headland where we had taken our last bearing. From this anchorage we could see a stretch of water and a small opening over some low-lying land. I am not certain it was an island, but a ship would be very safe if there is sufficient water there. At daybreak on the 7th [27 January] the wind shifted from north to north-westerly, blowing very hot and hard. We got under way under reefed courses. In the afternoon the wind shifted to a fresh southerly again. On the 8th [28 January] we dropped anchor in the port discovered by Mr Flinders on his last <voyage.> On the 9th [29 January] we took several bearings and headed for Kangaroo Island. This port provides a very good anchorage and is a very pleasant site.

Same course on the 10th and 11th [30 and 31 January] and at 2h00 in the afternoon we sighted the *Géographe*. On the 12th [1 February] we steered W¼SW, changing to NW on the 13th and 14th [2 and 3 February]. At 2h18 in the afternoon of the 15th [4 February], when we were at about the longitude fixed by the Commander for the St Francis Islands, we changed course to north at and stood in for the land,...

[19]

Crossing from the gulfs to King George Sound, Year 11

...which was not then in sight. We turned westward again at dusk and remained on that course until 8h00, when we hove to. We filled light sails at midnight to alleviate our drift. Eventually daylight arrived, but only to show that the longitude given by the Commander is incorrect, or else that our chronometer is not working properly. On the

16th [5 February 1803] we sighted some sandy land that appears to be part of the mainland. Also sighted some islands from the masthead, bearing SE. Stood off and on all day, and also on the following days, the 17th and 18th [6 and 7 February]. The entire crew was put on rations of 15 ounces of sea biscuit and a bottle and a quarter of water. Continued to stand off and on throughout the 19th [8 February], without having advanced more than 4 miles in 4 days. That night, at a distance of 15-20 miles offshore we sighted a reef ahead of the ship, obliging us to bear up to clear it. It was about half a mile long. At noon we were at longitude 131°29'19" and latitude 32°44'. On the 20th [9 February], in light of the small amount of water remaining on board, the captain decided to make for King George Sound. The steady, fresh easterly winds and rough seas enabled us to make very good way compared to the ship's normal daily rate, which is always mediocre. Same weather on the 21st and 22nd [10 and 11 February]. On the latter night a barrel passed alongside; we assumed it had come from the *Géographe*. Continuing fine weather on the 23rd and 24th [12 and 13 February]. At 8h00 in the evening on the 23rd [12 February], as we reckoned to be 2½ degrees from the port, we struck all sails and continued under bare poles. At 6h30 in the morning on the 24th [13 February] land was sighted through the fog, distant some 8 miles. At noon we were abeam of Mount Garner [Gardner]. At 1h30 we dropped anchor in 22 fathoms, muddy bottom, behind Seal Island in King George Sound, with the sea running a swell and a fresh breeze blowing. On the morning of the 25th [14 February] our Captain and Mr Boulanger, the geographer, went ashore to look for a watering place. They spent the night ashore and were back alongside at 6h00 in the morning on the 26th [15 February]. I set off immediately afterwards to Seal Island to plant a flag, and brought back with me a medal and inscription left there by Mr Flinders. I killed several geese on the island, but was only able to retrieve one of them. Saw many fur seals and small parakeets, plus some very large lizards. On the 27th [16 February] we dropped anchor in a pleasant small cove, with a very fine stream, and sent our water casks ashore. On the 28th [17 February] we beached in Princess Royal Harbour, where we set up a tent, mended our sails, completed our wood and repaired the ship. At 7h00 in the evening of that day we heard a cannon shot and sighted several rockets, to which we responded. At dawn on the 29th [18 February] the Captain went off to go aboard the *Géographe*. On the 30th [19 February] I had a good look around the whole of Princess Royal Harbour. I found several freshwater streams, fires in the hinterland and some lakes that I was unable to visit because, being ill with scurvy, I was too fatigued. I killed a number of teal ducks during this expedition. The same work continued on board on 1, 2, 3 and 4 ventôse [20, 21, 22 and 23 February]. In the final days we surveyed the port. With the sails repaired and our wood completed we refloated the ship, reloaded everything and returned to our initial anchorage. However calm winds and a contrary current forced us to drop anchor earlier. When a light northerly breeze sprang up we got under way again and at 0h30 we dropped anchor in our small cove. An American brig stopped over while we were there, and got under way again on the 8th [27 February]. We set off on the 10th [1 March]. During the stopover we had surveyed the port environs. On the 11th [2 March] the strong south-westerly wind and heavy seas broke our flying jib mast. Same <weather> on the 12th, 13th and 14th [3, 4 and 5 March]. We beat up against the wind in short tacks, standing close in to shore. We were ordered to investigate an area of the coast that seemed to form a port. We did so on the 15th [6 March], but found nothing remarkable. Sent a number of recognition signals, but received no response from any of them.

[20]

Departure from King George Sound and our arrival on the North-West Coast

On 16 ventôse [7 March 1803] we skirted the coast near Cape Leeuwin, but without sighting it. Passed to the landward of St Allouarn Island without seeing it, mainly because of the fog and overcast weather. Fresh south south-easterly breeze all night. At 8h00 in the morning on the 17th [8 March] Geographe Bay was in sight. We stood off and on all day and the next in order to survey the bay and the portion of coast between it and Rottneest Island. Same work on the 19th [10 March]. On the 20th [11 March] we dropped anchor to the north of Rottneest Island, which was the rendezvous point. I went ashore the same day and also the next, and found two or three small springs around some large salt ponds. There are many different species of game on the island, including medium-sized kangaroos, turtledoves, parrots, swans, ducks and several other sea birds. In one of these ponds, where I ventured to retrieve a duck that I had just killed, I suddenly fell into a hole, sank to mid-calf level and would surely have perished had not the bottom at one side of the hole been of the consistency of ordinary sand. This hole, which seemed to have been formed by the sea, is no doubt one of the channels that feed the ponds – this seems all the more probable in that I believe the ponds are lower than it. There is a constant bubbling, and the sand that it moves about – and which I brought back in my clothing – is identical to the sand in the bays outside. At dawn on the 22nd the *Géographe* was sighted in the offing. We immediately got under way and joined it, then set a course for Shark Bay. Sailing right before the wind until the 25th [16 March] when we sighted Dirk Hartog Island; dropped anchor the same day off the peninsula. On the 27th [18 March] we were ordered to take soundings in the northern part of the bay. We executed this order on the 28th, 29th and 30th [19, 20 and 21 March] and at 4h50 in the evening on 1 germinal came to anchor near the *Géographe*. On the 2nd [23 March] we got under way and set a course for the northern part of New Holland. On the 4th [25 March], when we were some minutes' distance north of William River we sailed close-hauled on the starboard tack to fix its exact position, but after having stood off and on until noon on the 5th [26 March] we saw nothing resembling a river, and thus were further north than it. On the same day we sighted an island stretching approximately NNE-SSW, about 12-15 leagues long. There are some small islands at its southern extremity, while in the north we skirted around a sand bank. Sighted two small islands on the 7th [28 March]. Many fish and turtles, excessive heat and little wind – many periods of calm. Same weather on the 8th [29 March]. We skirted the coast, standing very close inshore so we could survey. The land in sight seems to me very arid and treeless – there are only some grasses, turned yellow by the heat which is greater here than we experienced on the equator. I do not know whether it is (as I assume) the shallow water or the reflection on the sand, but it is certain that much further north it is a lot less hot. The land in sight is just a jumble of islands, which offer a number of good anchorages. Throughout the afternoon we were within sight of Admiral Island, so named by the Commander because he came across many shells of this name. Spent the night under bare poles. On the 9th [30 March] we continued the survey, with soundings varying from 10 to 16 fathoms out to sea. Anchored in 10 fathoms water for the night, some 4 leagues from any land. On the 11th [1 April] we were sailing in 10 fathoms water, out of sight of land although we did see some smoke. On the 12th [2 April] we sighted some very extensive, low-lying land where several plumes of smoke could be seen. We also sighted some sand islands, with an enormous quantity of turtles swimming around them. We (*Casuarina*) sailed to the south of one of the largest of the islands, while the Commander passed to seaward. At 8h00 in the evening we rallied again, passing over a bank where we had...

North-West Coast of New Holland

...only 4 fathoms beneath us, and the *Géographe* only 3 – which caused it some excitement. The Commander immediately hailed us to make towards the ENE, sounding continuously, and to let him know by signal whether there was adequate depth or not. Not having found less than 6 fathoms, we returned on the 13th [3 April 1803] and at 1h00 in the morning we dropped anchor near the *Géographe*, in 6 fathoms water, sandy bottom. Got under way at dawn with south south-easterly winds and went on the eastern tack, with land out of sight. Soundings returned 6-16 fathoms water, often over a muddy bottom. At 3h00 in the afternoon the *Géographe* passed with just 14 feet of water. We again spent the night at anchor. On the 14th [4 April] we got under way and sailed all day without sighting land, in 24-28 fathoms water. On the 15th [5 April] we stood in for the land, passing over shallows where there was very little water. Sighted land at 8h00 in the morning, but by 9h00 it was no longer in sight. On the 16th [6 April] we saw smoke, as well as many turtles. Dropped anchor for the night, as usual. Land was in sight on the 17th [7 April]. The wind was extremely variable, several times shifting around the compass. At 4h30 we sighted a ridge of sand and rocks in the offing and to windward, seemingly attached to the land or at least providing very little water for us. We bore away to attempt to pass to landward of the bank, which we succeeded in doing. But it was a close thing. We headed towards the *Géographe*, which was 3 leagues to windward of us. As the calm and the currents were against us we dropped anchor in sight of land, but out of sight of the *Géographe*. At first light on the 18th [8 April] we got under way and made for the *Géographe*; remained all day half way between land and the Commander, and joined up at nightfall. He dropped anchor at 8h00, and we did the same. On the 19th [9 April] we continued our work along the coast before being forced by the calm to drop anchor at 10h15 in the evening, 3 miles from the Commander and the same distance offshore. Same work on the 20th [10 April]; saw some Natives on the shore. The land in this area is – like the rest of the coast- very low-lying and seems to me more wooded than elsewhere. Sighted two striations in the sand that I took to be two streams. Sighted many fires in this part. Latitude at noon was 17°8'54" and longitude by the chronometer was 121°11'. At 4h30 we left <the coast> to join the Commander. The breeze was very light and the weather as hot as can be imagined. At 7h30 in the evening, with the current having driven us inshore and not far from a ridge of rocks, and with the wind being extremely light and contrary, we dropped anchor in 7½ fathoms over a sandy bottom, half a mile offshore. We got under way at daybreak on the 21st [11 April]. A sounding taken as we were apeak returned only 5 fathoms, leading me to conclude that the tide rises and falls at least 12 feet in this region. We headed for the Commander, who was then steering NNE to distance himself from a sand bank some two leagues long, situated at approximately the same distance from us. Land not in sight on the 22nd [12 April]. At 8h00 in the morning on the 23rd [13 April] it was visible from SE to ENE; flat calm. On the 24th we sighted a long ridge of rocks stretching some 3 leagues into the offing. That night, like all the others (that is to say, since the 21st [11 April]) we dropped anchor in deep water. During the night of <the 25th> [15 April] we lost an anchor, which had been cut on the floor as the ship passed the night athwart the tide in a strong and squally wind. The rain, thunder, lightning and heavy sea that covered us from stem to stern meant that we passed a fairly unpleasant night. It was only at 5h00 that we realised that our cable had been cut about 20 fathoms from the clinch. The tide was setting at 1.7 knots. I believe that the *Géographe* had no more luck than we did and that it also lost its

port anchor. Land was in sight, but far off in the distance. Sighted a ridge of rocks off the land in the morning, with other isolated rocks scattered around it.

[22]

North-West Coast, contd

The sea extremely dirty and cloudy. Enormous banks of seaweed covered the surface and seabirds perched on the weed, so that at first we took it for rocks. The large number of branches and uprooted trees led me to believe that we were at the confluence of a fairly large river. Shipped our oars to join up with the *Géographe*. Soundings every ten minutes showed no ground with 30 fathoms.

On the 26th [16 April 1803] we sailed out of sight of land, in deep water. Remained under sail that day, and also on the 27th and 28th [17 and 18 April]. That night a storm developed in the east, bringing a lot of rain and fresh winds for a short time. We sent up a rocket in answer to three from the Commander. Light west-south-westerly winds on the 29th [19 April], flat calm on the 30th [20 April]. Towards nightfall we dropped anchor near the *Géographe* and the surgeon came aboard to visit some scurvy sufferers. He told us that the Commander was unwell and that there was also some scurvy on board the *Géographe*. Moderate westerly winds on 1 floréal [21 April]. A group of small islands in sight. Spent the night at anchor. Almost dead calm on the 2nd [22 April] and also on the 3rd [23 April]. Communicated with the *Géographe*, which gave us a grappling anchor to replace our own, plus a small 140-fathom hawser. Dead calm on the 4th [24 April]. We got under way at dawn but dropped anchor near the *Géographe* when we saw that it had not got ready to sail. At 4h00 in the evening the Commander hoisted out a large dinghy, which headed for the closest small island. Observed latitude at noon was 13°20'46", and longitude by the chronometer was 123°21'32". On that afternoon we tightened the shrouds and backstays, which had become very slack in the heat. On the afternoon of the 5th [25 April] the dinghy returned, and set off again with us for the same island. At 8h00 we dropped anchor a mile off the island, which was abeam of us from the *Géographe's* anchorage. We were going to investigate some prows that our dinghy had sighted during the day. We got under way at 5h30 on the morning of the 6th [26 April] and headed for a group of small islands. At 6h15 we had 14 prows in sight, some of them under sail and others at anchor. At 1h30 we were obliged to drop the grappling anchor some 0.7 miles from a rock onto which the tide was taking us. At 5h00 the dinghy arrived alongside and informed us that it had spoken to the commander of this fleet, who said he was from Makassar, had about 20 prows under his command and had come to fish for a black slug some 10 inches long and with the circumference, when alive, of a 10-year old child's arm. When dry it diminishes considerably in size and length. This slug is highly prized by the Chinese and is worth 90-100 piasters per quintal. He said that during an expedition to the mainland to complete their water they had had a scuffle with Natives, who had forced them to set off again without water, even though there was plenty available. One man had been killed during the expedition and several others had been wounded. Each prow has a crew of 25-30 men, 4-5 canoes and a longboat. The dinghy's crew had noticed a small bronze cannon in one of the prows. They had promised to visit the island where we were to overnight, but they did not come. The next day we got under way and headed for the *Géographe*, which we reached quite early, and as soon as the Captain had returned from making his report aboard the *Géographe* we got under way and set a course NE¼N so as to round an exposed sand bank.

Stopover in Timor

As calm and the night overtook us we followed the Commander's lead and dropped the grappling anchor. We got under way at dawn on the 8th [28 April 1803], with a breeze varying SSW-S. At 8h00 in the morning we sighted the bank that had been seen the day before, and which now bore NE. Steered a northerly course all day in order to round it. Almost flat calm all day. Latitude at noon was 13°20'46" and longitude by the chronometer was 123°21'32". Soundings returned extremely variable depths. Dropped anchor for the night, and remained at anchor on the 9th [29 April]. On the 10th [30 April] we got under way with a light WSW-SW breeze and set a northerly course. Same weather on the 11th [1 May]; no ground with 35 fathoms. Course NNW, observed latitude 11°8'. Same course on the 12th [2 May], with winds varying SE-ESE. At dawn on the 13th [3 May] elevated land on Timor was visible, stretching N-NNW. Skirted the coast all day, so far as the wind allowed, and stood off for the night under light sail.

At dawn on the 14th we skirted the coast at a distance of 3-3½ <leagues>. The area through which we travelled is heavily wooded and extremely elevated, almost always covered in white clouds which seem to sprawl across the summit and account for the area's famed fertility. At 9h00 in the evening we sailed close-hauled and stood off and on all night to avoid entering the strait at night. At dawn we bore up to the Roti Strait, which by 2h00 in the afternoon we were threading with the help of a moderate southeasterly breeze. Spent some of the night standing off and on. The *Géographe* was a long way to leeward of us, so we bore away towards it, before the wind, for about an hour. On the 16th [6 May] the breeze was light and variable, ENE, SW, NW and SE before finally settling in the ESE. Stood off and on at 7h00 in the evening with a contrary tide up to midnight, when we dropped anchor for the night. At dawn on the 17th [7 May] we shipped our oars and came to anchor opposite the town, where we moored the same day in 4 fathoms water over a muddy bottom, with our large anchor onshore and the grappling anchor to seaward. During my stay I made several expeditions into the interior of the island, that is to say at a distance of 2-3 leagues from the port, and I shall report on what I noticed in one of these trips. I left the ship very early in the morning, carrying my rifle, and killed a number of birds as soon as it was light. Once the heat arrived, however, I was unable to approach any more of them, so I sat down near a stream and ate a piece of bread that I had brought along. I had only just finished when I saw several Malays approach. These men told me that there was a *rajah* close by, and they took me to him. I found him seated under a group of tamarind trees, accompanied by his family and some slaves. After the usual civilities and some unimportant questions, several herds of buffaloes, steers and sheep arrived. A young buffalo was chosen and his hock was cut. Several Malays immediately seized hold of it, brought it to ground and held it firm while another one cut it up, alive. Its liver was torn out and brought to the *rajah* who inspected it, turning it over and over before passing it to some old men who were there and who proceeded to discuss it. While this was happening I saw – with surprise mixed with horror – that the slaves and even the *rajah's* son (who was about 15 years old) were eating the steer's raw flesh, even while the animal was still quivering. The liver was lightly cooked and eaten by the *rajah*, as were the kidneys (which were not cooked). Everyone seemed to have an excellent meal, except me; I drank a glass of eau-de-vie with them but did not eat, even though I was invited to do so.

[24]

Second stopover in Kupang

On the morning of 11 prairial [31 May 1803] I was ordered to proceed ashore and report to the Commander, who ordered to me join the crew of the *Géographe* and to perform the duties of sub-lieutenant Ranconnet, who was to replace me on board the *Casuarina*. I doubt this change pleased everyone, but for my part I accepted it with joy, for a number of particular reasons that it would not be useful to go into here. On the 12th [1 June], with departure preparations complete and our boats hoisted in, we got under way. On the morning of the 13th [2 June] our stern dinghy, which had been sent ashore, was back alongside. Three sailors were absent from the muster the day we got under sail. One was caught, but escaped that night.

NB. This is merely a summary of my journals, which had been soaked and had disintegrated on board the schooner *Casuarina*. I would have wished to have had the time to copy them word for word, but our arrival at Isle de France forced me to throw them overboard.

[Signed: Brevedent]