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The Bodega Miwok as Seen by Mikhail Tikhonovich Tikhanov in 1818¹

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In 1818, a Russian scientific expedition, under the direction of Vasilii Golovnin, visited Bodega Bay (called Port Rumiantsev by the Russians). Apart from the written accounts of at least three members of the expedition concerning the native people there, the expedition artist, Mikhail Tikhonovich Tikhanov, produced five known paintings picturing the life of the people. These remarkable paintings are the only ones known of the Bodega Bay Miwok people near the time of early contact with Europeans. What makes the drawings even more valuable is that they were done by an artist specifically commissioned to render detailed ethnographic drawings of peoples encountered on the expedition. Because of their association with the Russians headquartered at Fort Ross, some authors have mistakenly identified the individuals pictured in Tikhanov's paintings as Pomo. Thanks to some contemporary Spanish accounts and mission records, we can piece together additional details of the individuals and what was going on at the time, especially the fact that the expedition was at Bodega Bay at the time of a shift in the leadership of the Bodega Miwok people due to the death of the old chief.

ON September 21 (October 2 in the Gregorian Calendar), 1818, the Russian naval ship, *Kamchatka*, under the command of Vasilii Golovnin, arrived at Bodega Bay, renamed Port Rumiantsev by the Russians (Fig. 1). It was bound around the world on a scientific expedition. Three of the junior officers on the voyage (Matvei Muraviev, Fedor Lütke, and Baron Ferdinand Wrangel) were later quite successful in the Russian Navy and Russian-American Company Administration and continued to be involved with Russian America. Apart from the account rendered by Captain Golovnin (1979), there were two other detailed journals by Lieutenant Fedor Lütke (Dmytryshyn et al. 1989:257-285) and Collegiate Secretary Fyodor Matiushkin (1971).

However, of greatest importance for the purposes of this article was the presence on the expedition of a freed serf named Mikhail Tikhonovich Tikhanov, born about 1789, who had been sent to the Russian Academy of Arts in 1806 to be trained as a painter, thanks to the patronage

of his owner, Prince D. N. Golitsyn. His painting, "The Shooting of Russian Patriots by the French in 1812," had received an award, and in 1815 he finished his academic training and was put on a state stipend (Safaraliev 1990:33). In recognition of this, he was freed from serfdom by his owner (Pierce 1990:506). Two years later, he was recommended for the Golovnin Expedition and sailed from Cronstadt in August 1817 on the *Kamchatka*.

Tikhanov's assigned duty was to record in drawings native peoples of the various places visited. Paintings of indigenous peoples were to be done both full face and profile to fully capture the ornaments, tattoos, etc. The five drawings known from the visit to Bodega Bay are particularly notable because they are the only known drawings of Bodega Miwok people (in contrast to other, better known drawings by Louis Choris in 1816 of coastal Miwok closer to San Francisco Bay). At the time of the Golovnin visit, the Spanish *asistencia* of San Rafael was only a year old and had not gathered in the

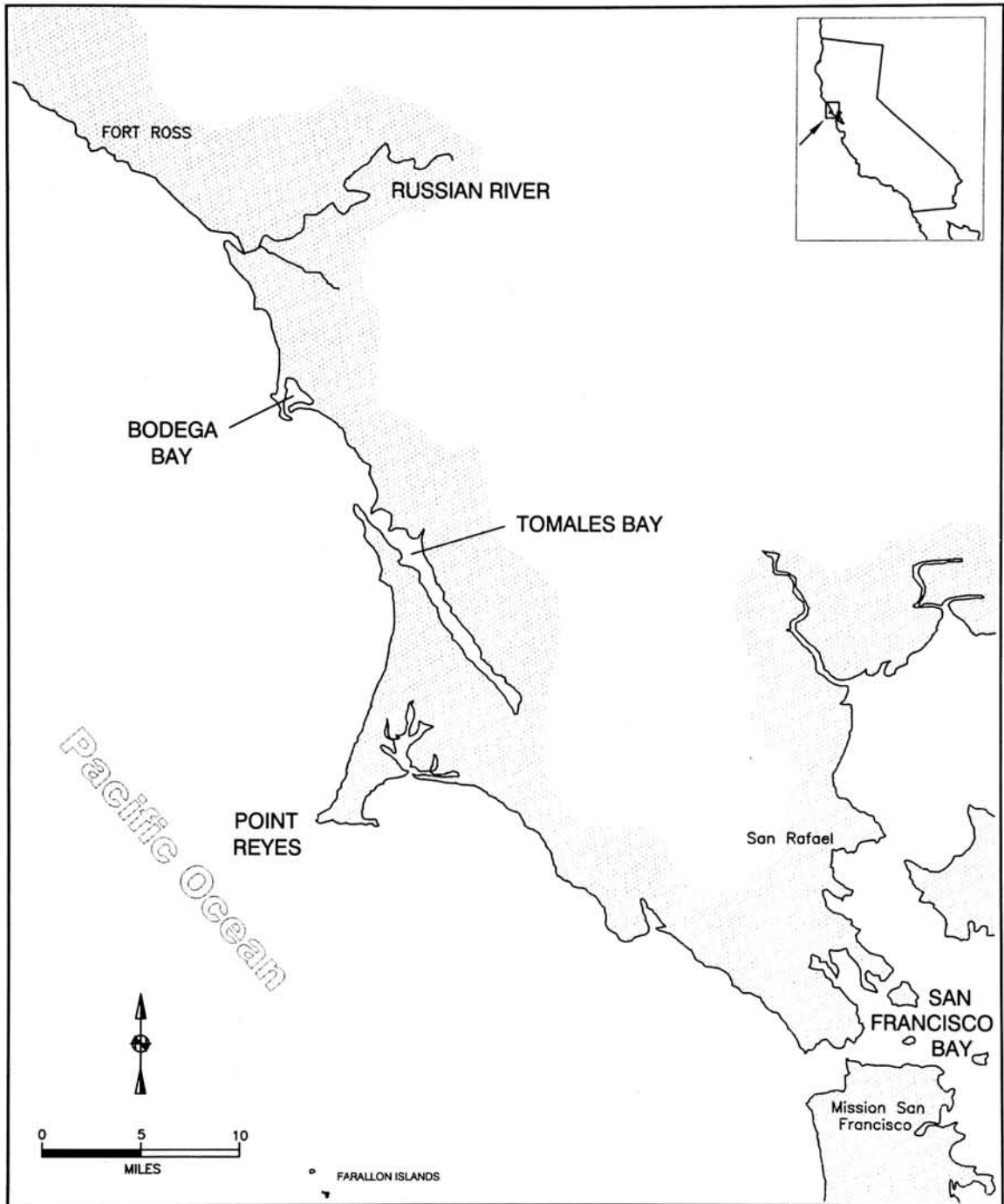


Fig. 1. Location map of Bodega Bay (illustrated by Larry Felton).

people of Bodega Bay, although some may have been taken to Mission San Francisco de Asís as early as 1808 (cf. Milliken 1995:260).

The five paintings by Tikhanov included two portrayals of a young man identified only as Valtazar. In one scene, he is seated (Fig. 2) and



Fig. 2. Full face and profile view of a young man named Valthazar. (Original color version of Tikhanov's painting is at the Collection of the Scientific Research Museum of the Academy of Arts, St. Petersburg, Russia.)

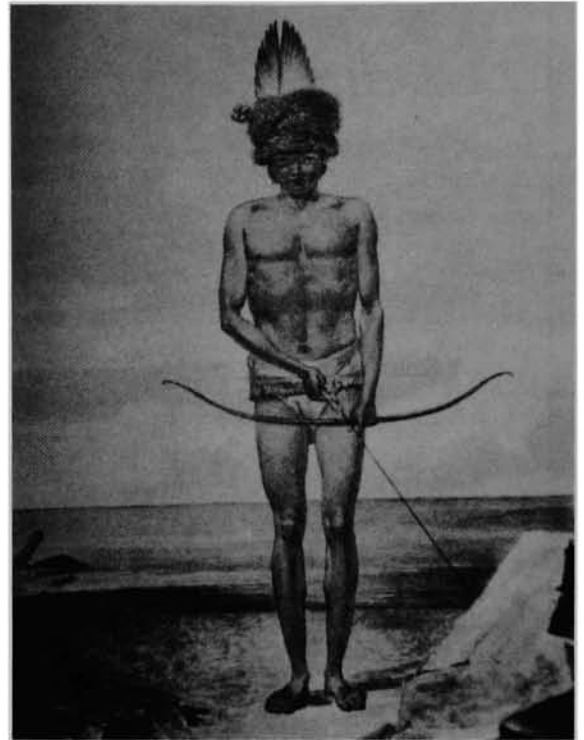


Fig. 3. View of Valthazar standing with a sinew-backed reflex bow and arrow. (Original color version of Tikhanov's painting is at the Collection of the Scientific Research Museum of the Academy of Arts, St. Petersburg, Russia.)

in the other he is standing, bow and arrow in hand (Fig. 3). In both he is wearing a fur headpiece, probably of sea otter skin, with a pair of feathered bird wings sticking up at the right rear, held in place by a thong of some material. To my knowledge, this headpiece is unusual for California. A loincloth girds his waist. Whether this was a part of his normal apparel or a nod to western modesty is uncertain. It is also possible that the young man may have been influenced by missionaries and have adopted the loincloth. He is standing on the beach very near to the waterline with a pelican playfully included in the water.

A third painting is of a young woman holding a large, finely woven carrying basket apparently filled with fish, probably surf smelt, freshly netted (Fig. 4). In addition to wearing an incised bird bone tube through her pierced earlobe

(see Kelly 1991:175 for an example from the Russian collections), she also has two strands of a clam shell bead and magnesite necklace and a skin wrap draped around her hips. No tattoos are visible on the woman, in contrast to the tattooing on the older woman in Figure 6 (discussed below). A small child is pictured in the background, crouched down on his hands and knees seemingly by a bush, another indication of Tikhanov's playfulness.

In addition, there are two remarkable views set in the interiors of houses. One of these is a composite of "everyday life" showing many activities which probably did not go on simultaneously (Fig. 5). These include a man smoking a straight pipe, a woman using a pestle to pound



Fig. 4. Young woman holding a basket of fish. (Original color version of Tikhonov's painting is at the Collection of the Scientific Research Museum of the Academy of Arts, St. Petersburg, Russia.)

seed (described as "threshing wild rye"; see Golovnin [1979]) in what appears to be a hopper mortar, and another woman nursing a child with a second child in a cradleboard behind her. In front of this woman is a basket of mush or *atole* being stone boiled with a fire for heating the rocks nearby.

The second interior drawing is of a more serious subject, the death of the old chief (Fig. 6). In this painting, we see the back of a head and form of a body lying on its side with a woman in grief next to him. Her hair is cut short in apparent mourning and around her shoulders is a rabbit skin blanket. She has a tattoo around her neck of two rows of a zig-zag plus two parallel lines, and another tattoo of the same design on her upper arm. However, there are no tattoos on her face. Some Coast Miwok sources have associated tattooing with coming of

age (e.g., Kelly 1991:175). None of the men pictured are tattooed. In the foreground are two naked men squatting down. One of them is wearing a hair net and in his hands he holds, with apparent reverence, a feathered headdress, possibly that of the dying (or deceased) chief. This headdress is interesting in that it looks very much like one used by the Yokuts (Wallace 1978:458) and somewhat like one found in the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in St. Petersburg, Russia (Kelly 1991:167), which may well have come from the Bodega Bay or Fort Ross areas. The latter was said to be made of brown pelican feathers. He is also holding a string of large cylindrical beads, some of which were probably magnesite (based on their yellow color), which was highly valued by the Indians. A second man with somewhat disheveled hair is squatting next to him.

By some good fortune, we have a description of Tikhonov at work by his expedition mate, Matiushkin (1971), who said he went ashore at Bodega Bay and walked along the shoreline.

About a mile beyond the anchorage I saw a puff of smoke from behind a small promontory. I climbed it and saw a band of New Albion nomads. They all looked at me, but since I was aware of their peace-loving nature and special affection toward Russians, I approached them boldly and soon noticed our painter in their midst. Surrounded by savages, he laughed and played with them, while drawing their pictures. Most of all, he amused them when they saw some one of them on paper. Mikhail Tikhonovich drew many of them just for pleasure, and from these he made two paintings. One represents their chief, lying in a hut of branches and reeds, at the point of death. His wife is in tears, and several men surround his bed. One of them, with a bunch of feathers, seems to be acting both as a physician (for he is pulling straps across the sick man's stomach) [*sic?*] and as a priest, telling the sick man's fortune. The other painting shows a woman cooking food [Matiushkin 1971:66-67].

Although I do not believe that the version of the death scene which has come down to us is the exact one that Matiushkin described, it is



Fig. 5. Interior scene of family activities in a hut. (Original color version of Tikhonov's painting is at the Collection of the Scientific Research Museum of the Academy of Arts, St. Petersburg, Russia.)

clearly based on the same event. Several points in Matiushkin's description are particularly important. He identified the individual lying down in the death scene as none other than the old chief. This individual was further identified as Tóllo² (or Toion, a Siberian term for leader frequently used by the Russians to refer to a native chief) in the account by Fr. Mariano Payeras ([1822] Payeras 1995). In 1822, Payeras reported that Tóllo had died and had been replaced by Vallí-éla. Given the sad look on the face of his wife and her short, disheveled hair, this painting is probably a remarkable rendering of the scene closely following his death. It was common for California Indian women to cut their hair short when they were in mourning. The two men shown squatting in the painting seem to be reverently witnessing the event, with the one wearing the hair net holding a plume of feathers and

strings of black, white, and yellow cylindrical beads. This individual may possibly be Vallí-éla, the man about to replace the dying Tóllo as chief.

VALTHAZAR, TÓLLO, AND VALLÍ-ÉLA

The young man shown in two of the paintings was identified by Tikhonov as Valthazar. It is intriguing to note that in December 1821, a young man of 18 years of age was baptized at Mission San Rafael under this same name. He was said to come from the village of *Tauyomi* (San Rafael Mission n.d.:Baptism 627). His parents' Miwok names were Catcat (San Rafael Mission n.d.:Baptism 625) and Bohomen (San Rafael Mission n.d.:Baptism 626). They were baptized at the same time, whereas his sister was



Fig. 6. Death scene of the old chief at Bodega Bay. (Original color version of Tikhonov's painting is at the Collection of the Scientific Research Museum of the Academy of Arts, St. Petersburg, Russia.)

baptized about two years earlier, in February 1820 (San Rafael Mission n.d.:Baptism 370). Although I do not have positive identification of where the village of Tauyomi was, it may well have been associated with the village of *Tókau*, near the Russian establishment at Campbell Cove in Bodega Bay, or perhaps with a campsite about three-quarters of a mile north of Bodega Bay called *Tauwakpulok* (Kelly 1991:74).

Two Bodega Miwok men, Vicente and Rufino, are shown in the San Rafael *asistencia* records as having been baptized in 1819 and 1821, respectively (San Rafael Mission n.d.:Baptisms 304 and 535). Thus, they may well have been at their village on Bodega Bay at the time of Golovnin's visit. They were certainly at San Rafael at the time that Fr. Payeras interviewed them in October 1822 (Payeras 1995:335; Santa Barbara Mission Archives n.d.). Each one had

a child, both of whom were baptized simultaneously (San Rafael Mission n.d.:Baptisms 79 and 80) on April 5, 1818, about five months before the arrival of the Golovnin expedition at Bodega Bay. Information provided by Vicente and Rufino (Payeras 1995:335) identified the former chief of the village near Bodega Bay as *Tóllo*, but "now" (in 1822) that *Tolló* had died, his son, *Vallí-éla*, had succeeded him. This latter chief, identified as *Valenila* by Golovnin (1979:165) in 1818, is undoubtedly the same one. Golovnin (1979:165) reported his interaction with the Bodega Miwok chief as follows:

The chief of the people living next to Port Rumi-antsev came to see me when my sloop was anchored there. He brought gifts consisting of various parts of their regalia, arrows, and household items, and asked to be taken under Russian protection. An Aleut who had lived over a year among these people acted as interpreter.³ This

chief, called Valenila, definitely wanted more Russians to settle among them in order to protect them from Spanish oppression. He begged me for a Russian flag, explaining that he wanted to raise it as a sign of friendship and peace whenever Russian ships should appear near the shore. In view of all this, it would be contrary to justice and reason to assert that the Russians occupied land belonging to someone else and settled on the shores of New Albion without having the right to do so.

Another, more jaundiced, description of the chief comes from Fedor Lütke (Dmytryshyn et al. 1989:275-276):

There is no evidence that they [the Indians of Bodega Bay] revere God, and in general it seems that not only do they have no understanding of God, but that they never even wonder how and for what purpose they and everything else around them were created [!]. Nevertheless there was one among them who called himself their leader, and whom our people by custom refer to as a toion. But we could not determine how extensive his power is over all the others. We did not even see any exterior indications of respect shown him by the others, and he would not have looked any different from the others if some of our people had not given him two shirts the day before, both of which he wasted no time in putting on. It appears that this position is hereditary, because his father was also a toion.

In a separate account of Golovnin's visit (Matiushkin 1971:66-70), we learn more of Valenila:

The very day we weighed anchor the Indian chief sought to pay us a visit. He came out to us in a longboat, wearing two shirts (given as a present to him for some service) and a garland of intertwined grasses. Looking over our ship, he was impressed by its size. Although our captain [Golovnin] gave him some axes, knives, etc., most important of all for him was a Russian military flag, which he was told to raise as soon as he saw a ship like ours. On such occasions he was promised valuable gifts from our fellow countrymen. This Indian, Valennoela, who visited us, is not an elder of the settlement here, but because of the chief's illness, he was chosen by his comrades on account of his bravery.

Vallf-éla appears again in the historical record in a lengthy report by Mariano Vallejo

(1833) of his visit to Fort Ross and to Bodega Bay in late April and early May of 1833. At Bodega Bay, Vallejo encountered the chief of the Indian village across the bay from the Russian port establishment. He gives the name of the chief as Gualinela:

A chief of the Christian Indians lives nearby [the Russian settlement at Bodega Bay] on his rancharia, Tiutume. At present his band numbers only 43 men and women. Their objective is to guard the Russian buildings because the Russians ensure that they are not to be bothered by outsiders while they remain on their rancharia. Before the arrival of the Russians, it was the opposite case. Gualinela is the name of the chief of the rancharia. He told me that a few days prior to my arrival there were 200 armed men, some heathen Indians and some Christians from [Mission] San Rafael. They had banded together to discourage any troops of soldiers from passing through their area. This information was confirmed by a Christian Indian from the mission San Rafael named Toribio. Toribio had informed the Indians that they would be killed or taken to San Francisco and that they would be beaten and kidnapped by a "fierce captain of soldiers." Captain is what they call all of our commissioned officers. By saying these things, Toribio managed to alarm all the Indians. The Christian Indians and the heathen alike responded to him saying that they were a united people, armed, brave, and ready to die. They agreed that they were tired of suffering the cunning and treacherous lies of the soldiers, who said one thing, then did another. The soldiers, they said always promised friendship but as soon as their confidence had been gained, the soldiers would violently imprison them and take them to the Missions San Rafael or San Francisco Solano. There they would be forcibly converted to Christianity. The Indians also said they would not allow themselves to be taken, as was common before Toribio arrived.

Essentially this is the statement verified by the Christian Indians and by Gualinela, chief of the Tiutume rancharia.

The name given to the chief of the village at Bodega Bay at the time of the purchase, Tóllo, has no known meaning in the Bodega Miwok language (Callaghan 1970). It must be a variant of toion, as mentioned above, as it was often used by the Russians for "chief" (and known to

have been later applied to the Kashaya Pomo chief at Fort Ross). On the other hand, the name Vallí-éla is interpreted by Catherine Callaghan (personal communication 1993) as being properly “*wállin ?éla*, roughly ‘Great Water Spirit’.” Kelly (1991:342) reported a shift in moieties from generation to generation among the Bodega Miwok. According to her main consultant, Tom Smith, a Bodega Miwok, “I am Land; my boy gets a Water name” (Kelly 1991: 342). Kelly (1991:342) then pointed out a number of cases where the model does not hold, but it may have been due to a breakdown in customs in the modern period. At any rate, it could be that if Vallí-éla was a name derived from the water moiety, Tólló would probably have had a land moiety name. The word “-éla” (translated by Callaghan [personal communication 1993] as “Water Spirit”) appears in several instances in Indian names of the San Rafael Mission records. For example, Rufino Ottacaliva died and was buried in May 1835. His wife, Rufina (San Rafael Mission n.d.:Baptism 536) is shown in a subsequent marriage (San Rafael Mission n.d.: Marriage 538) to have the native name, Tole-éla. This may suggest a moiety link with Vallí-éla.

Another contemporary description of the village from the same voyage is provided by Fedor Lütke (Dmytryshyn et al. 1989:275):

September 22 [October 3, 1818, in the Gregorian Calendar]. We went ashore to an Indian settlement some distance to the north. I believe it would be difficult to find a people who have less political comprehension than these Indians. Their living quarters are more like beehives or anthills than human habitations. They are made of sticks stuck in the ground in a semicircle about one and one-half arshins [42 inches] high; these are fastened together and then covered with dry grass or tree branches. These dwellings do not give them shelter from rain or foul weather, which, fortunately for them, is quite rare in the area where they live.

The village mentioned by Vallejo, Tiutume, is also shown in a map of Bodega Bay prepared

during the Golovnin expedition where it is given as a variant of the term for the cape known as Bodega Head or, at that time, Cape Rumiantsev. The map calls it “Tiu-Tuiya or Cape Rumiantsev” (Тю-Туия или Румянцова) (Fig. 7). The dual association of the name of the village and of the chief over a 15-year span (1818 to 1833) indicates a level of consistency in the life there. This placename occurs again in Kelly (1991:7, 14), wherein Tom Smith refers to “*Tiwúthuya* at foot of hill across from sand spit; source of salmon berries.”

This same map also states that the name given the bay was “the Bay of Rumiantsev or Chookliva” (Заливъ Румянцова или Чоокъ-Лива). The name “Сбоклива” seems to be a combination Miwok phrase meaning creek (*tcok*) and water or bay (*liva*) (cf. Callaghan 1970:14, 45; Kelly 1991:14).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The paintings of the people at Bodega Bay in 1818 by Mikhail Tikhonovich Tikhanov are notable in their own right. However, when elucidated by the accounts of other members of the Golovnin Expedition, as well as the reminiscences of two Miwok men from a village at Bodega Bay recorded by the Spanish priest, Fr. Mariano Payeras, a better understanding of the full import of these paintings is developed. They form an invaluable resource for ethnographers, archaeologists, and the Coast Miwok community.

There is a tragic epilogue to the story of this remarkable painter. Later in the expedition after leaving the Philippines, Tikhanov began showing signs of mental disturbance that only grew worse, becoming very severe by the time the *Kamchatka* arrived at the Azores. He never was able to recapture his creative abilities even though he lived to the considerable age of 73. The 43 known paintings by Tikhanov from this voyage are now in the Museum of the Russian Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg (Pierce 1990:

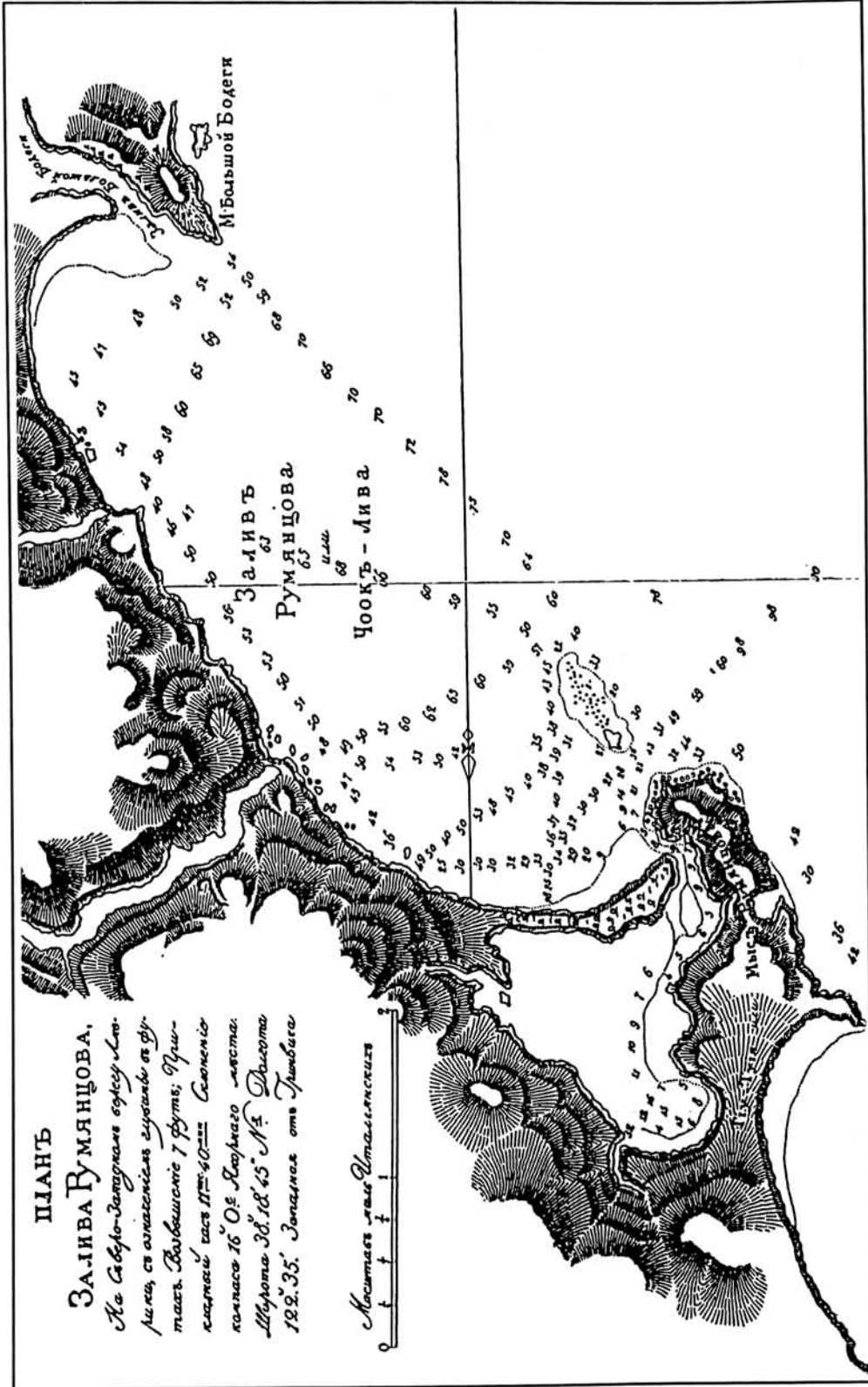


Fig. 7. Russian map of Bodega Bay made by the Golovnin expedition in 1818.

507; Safaraliev 1990:38-39). One can only hope that the numerous sketches Tikhonov made of the various Indians he encountered at Bodega Bay may yet survive and be discovered in some dusty file.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented during the California Indian Conference at the University of California at Los Angeles on October 7, 1995.

2. On the original Payeras (1995) document, it was difficult to decide whether the initial letter was an "i" or a "t." The decision on my part to go with "t" had to do with it not appearing to be the distinctive Spanish "y" which usually acted as an initial "i" sound. Recently, Kelleher (1997:253-254) related an account of a visit by Gabriel Moraga to Tomales and Bodega bays in 1810 in which he spoke of meeting a chief named Yolo. Kelleher (1997:245) believed this chief to be the same as the dying chief in the painting, and thus offered an alternative name for the individual. I would have to reject this hypothesis on linguistic grounds, since the Spanish would clearly differentiate between the sound of "l" versus "ll." Kelleher (personal communication 1997) also suggested that the name Yolo could have been derived from the tribal name, *Yole-tamal*. An anonymous reviewer with apparent linguistic credentials stated emphatically that "the name Yolo could not be derived from Yole-tamal which might mean something like 'near the coast.'" In Bodega Miwok, *támal* means "coast" (Callaghan 1970:70), and in Lake Miwok, *jóle* means "near" (j = [y]) (Callaghan 1965).

3. This Aleut is not otherwise identified, but is very likely the individual mentioned in another contemporary (1818) account by Fedor Lütke (Dmytryshyn et al. 1989:275).

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