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Tom XIV

DAWNA MAPA ŹRÓDŁEM WIEDZY  
O ŚWIECIE

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SOURCE ABOUT THE WORLD

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## BEAUPLAN'S CARTOGRAPHIC LABOURS IN FRANCE: THE MAPS OF NORMANDY AND BRITTANY

Over four hundred years have passed since the birth of Guillaume Le Vasseur, Sieur de Beauplan (b. ca. 1600-d. after 1 January 1675). It should be noted, however, that even after the passage of four centuries, his own countrymen did not show much interest about his cartographic, literary and engineering accomplishments, both in France and abroad. Thus, Beauplan's biography and his achievements are known today chiefly through the efforts of Canadian, Polish and Ukrainian scholars. This strange silence among Beauplan's countrymen is precisely the reason for our decision to discuss his cartographic work in France relating to the maps of Normandy and Brittany<sup>1</sup>.

It is uncertain when and why Beauplan began to survey Normandy – although, with regard to the first, some evidence suggests the year 1663, and the second, financial insecurity – and who, before the intervention of Voysin de La Noiraye, provided funds for his activities there. His comment in the dedication of the map to Louis XIV (1643–1715) – that this „small sketch” had been „traced in order to provide diversion to me from the fatigue of my travels afar”<sup>2</sup> – has to be taken with a grain of salt. There is no doubt that in the 1660s he was very well known in Rouen as an author and cartographer, if not as a military engineer. In 1651 he published his first book, *Description des contrées du royaume de Pologne*, and its new editions in 1660, 1661, 1662 and 1673, entitled *Description d'Ukraine*. The first three

<sup>1</sup> For a French version of this article see *Annales de Normandie*, 56, no. 4, October 2006, pp. 483–502 + 2 maps; for an Ukrainian version, see *Teoretychni ta metodolohichni problemy suspil'noi heohrafiï: Zbirnk naukovykh prats' na poshanu Zasluzhenoho profesora L'vivs'koho natsional'noho universitetu imeni Ivana Franka Oleha Shabliia*. Edited by O. Zastavets'ka, O. Vis'tak, M. Bahrov et al., L'viv 2006, pp. 350–358.

<sup>2</sup> See sheet 1 of the map of Normandy in the collection of the Bibliothèque nationale de France [hereafter cited as BNF], Département des cartes et plans, Paris, shelf mark: Ge DD 2987 (449) B.

new editions contained a map of Ukraine and Crimea; however, the inset of Crimea was not added to the 1673 edition. Beauplan was also the author of two short reference works, both of which were published in 1662: *Table des déclinaisons du soleil* and *Les Principes de la géométrie militaire*. To those who would demand formal references and proofs of his abilities and accomplishments, Beauplan could show such documents as the privilege of the king of Poland, Władysław IV (1632–1648), the letter of Crown Grand Hetman Mikołaj Potocki and, among other maps, *Delineatio generalis camporum desertorum vulgo Ukraina* (1648), *Delineatio specialis et accurata Ukrainae* (1650), in eight sheets, and *Nova totius Regni Poloniae* (1652)<sup>3</sup>. His military engineering accomplishments could be easily confirmed by Jan II Kazimierz (1648–1668), to whom Beauplan dedicated his *Description d’Ukraine*, or by some high-ranking competent authority in the Crown army.

Beauplan’s cartographic labours relating to the maps of Normandy and Brittany coincided with the introduction in France of various ambitious policies and reforms by Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683), who sought to create „a powerful and wealthy France, united under a glorious monarch.”<sup>4</sup> Colbert, the chief minister and alter ego of Louis XIV<sup>5</sup>, „had great perseverance, an immense capacity for work, a liking for order, administrative experience, some clear, if occasionally wrongheaded ideas, and inordinate greed.”<sup>6</sup> He was both „a workhorse and a driving wheel on the government of Louis XIV.”<sup>7</sup> No other individual during the reign of the Sun King „rose so rapidly [in rank and power], worked so hard or accomplished so much.”<sup>8</sup>

Wanting to build roads, canals and ports – he had many other projects in mind – Colbert needed topographic maps of the French provinces and regions. These maps would show, after exact surveys and measurements, both natural and man-made features: „the shapes and elevations of mountains, valleys, and plains; the network of streams and rivers; the location of cities, roads, political boundaries, and other works of man.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, in September 1663, he instructed the administrative officials to

seek out the maps that have [already] been prepared of each province or generality, checking carefully [to determine] whether they are good [i.e. accurate, well prepared]; in cases where they have not been prepared exactly

<sup>3</sup> See Guillaume Le Vasseur, Sieur de Beauplan, *A Description of Ukraine*. Translated, edited, introduction and commentary by Andrew B. Pernal and Dennis F. Essar, Cambridge, MA, 1993, pp. xix–lxi.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Woolsey, *Colbert and a Century of French Mercantilism*, 2 vols., Hamden, CT, 1964, I, 355.

<sup>5</sup> Wojciech St. Magdziarz, *Ludwik XIV*, Wrocław 1991, p. 145.

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Goubert, *Louis XIV and Twenty Million Frenchmen*, Tr. Anne Carter, New York 1970, p. 86.

<sup>7</sup> John B. Wolf, *Louis XIV*, New York 1968, p. 151.

<sup>8</sup> Will and Ariel Durant, *The Age of Louis XIV [The Sorry of Civilization]*, pt. VIII], New York 1963, p. 20.

<sup>9</sup> John Noble Wilford, *The Mapmakers*, New York 1982, p. 112.

or even where they are not large [i.e. detailed] enough, if [these officials] find some able and skillful person capable of redrafting them, in the same province or in those lying nearby, His Majesty wills that they should enjoin them to work [at the task] without interruption or respite; and, if they find no one capable of executing this work, they will have very exact studies prepared of the old [maps], as much for the purpose of redrafting them as for making them larger, which in turn His Majesty will entrust to the care of Sieur [Nicolas] Sanson, his Geographer Ordinary in the matter of maps<sup>10</sup>.

It is obvious that Beauplan must have started to survey Normandy prior to the date of the above-mentioned instruction. On finding out that Beauplan „had [already] done considerable work on preparing a new [map] of all of Normandy,” Voysin de La Noiraye, the *intendant* of Rouen, „engaged him to complete it entirely.”<sup>11</sup> Thus, the manuscript map of Normandy was completed prior to April 1665.

Writing to Colbert, Voysin recommended that funds be provided for the engraving of the map, assuring him that Beauplan had visited „the whole province on horseback,” as well as „paced out every location in order to gather information about it.” He also pointed out that Beauplan, who was engaged „in examining the seaports of the province,” had already submitted a report relating to the harbour of Le Havre de Grâce and a feasibility study, with a plan, of constructing one in the nearby Le Hoc<sup>12</sup>. The task was, undoubtedly, part of the grand design of Colbert, which he entrusted to Nicolas de Clerville and Colbert de Terron: the establishment of new port cities for the navy and commerce<sup>13</sup>. On receiving a reply from Colbert, who consented to meet Beauplan, Voysin prepared a letter of introduction for him, once again praising the „extremely accurate, ...[and] very large and interesting map of the entire [province of] Normandy,” and expressed hope that the minister would find it „very pleasing and exact.”<sup>14</sup>

In the first week of June 1665 Beauplan met Colbert, who expressed his „satisfaction” with the map of Normandy, provisionally approved the engraving of it – although he wanted first to review a list, to be prepared by Beauplan, „of expenses which will be required to have it engraved” – gave him hope that, in addition, he would receive a salary and instructed him „to prepare a map of the province of Brittany.” Voysin, in submitting the cartographer’s estimates for the engraving of

<sup>10</sup> *Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert*, ed. Pierre Clément, 10 vols., Paris 1861–1883, IV (1867), 28.

<sup>11</sup> Voysin de La Noiraye to Colbert, Rouen, 15 April 1665: BNF, *Mélanges Colbert* [hereafter cited as MC], MS 128 bis, fol. 885. See also Appendix 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>13</sup> See Josef W. Konwitz, *Cities and the Sea: Port City Planning in Early Modern Europe*, Baltimore 1978, pp. 73–147.

<sup>14</sup> Voysin de La Noiraye to Colbert, Rouen, 30 April 1665: BNF, MC, MS 128 bis, for. 1177. See also Appendix 2.

the map to Colbert, also reported that Beauplan had shown him „the [letters] patent that he has received from the King of Poland [Władysław IV], according to which it appears that he served [in that country] as a [military] engineer and captain of artillery, and where [in addition] he had the privilege of having printed a map that he had made of Ukraine.” These documents confirmed his experience as cartographer and military engineer. Beauplan insisted that, should Louis XIV accept his qualifications and agree to grant him „some payment,” the king should make it „under the title of royal engineer and geographer.”<sup>15</sup>

Either at the June 1665 or October 1666 meeting with Colbert, Beauplan prepared for the minister, undoubtedly at his request, a special memoir „concerning a method for creating a chorographic map.” The memoir revealed that Beauplan used a variety of instruments during his surveys: an astrolabe, odometer, watch, compass, proportional compass, goniometer, staff of Jacob, geometric square, altimetric scale, porometer and „various other instruments used by engineers.” After drafting a map from prepared notes, Beauplan then traveled „along the principal rivers in order to note the bends [in their courses], as well as places where the rivers meet, including the villages located along the said rivers.” Finally, he explored „in all directions the flatlands located between the rivers, in order to locate upon them the villages which are found there, and even the woods, marshes and mountains, which are important to mark upon a map.”<sup>16</sup>

In July Beauplan informed Colbert that he was in Brittany, entering it at Pontorson, which lies south of Mont Saint-Michel. Traveling along the seacoast, he noted „all the varied details and contours of the harbours, coves, capes, bays and rocks as far as Saint-Brieuc.” He mentioned, as well, that he found „no suitable [locality], other than the Bay of Cancale,” for an anchorage. „This bay,” he stressed, „could serve as a place of shelter for a naval force, no matter how large [it might be].” Beauplan closed his letter by indicating that he intended to continue the exploration of the coast during the existence of good weather, and asked Colbert „to issue the order to have funds delivered to the engraver, so that he might continue to work on the map of Normandy in order to complete it promptly.”<sup>17</sup>

This letter, as well as another one from Beauplan, was forwarded to Colbert by Des Essarts, a physician in Rouen. He reported that the map of Normandy „is being engraved at this very time” by Jean Toutain, who received 300 livres. The greater

<sup>15</sup> Voysin de La Noiraye to Colbert, Rouen, 5 June 1665: *ibidem*, MS 130, fol 75. See also Appendix 3.

<sup>16</sup> See „Memoire en forme de letter escrite par Mr B[eauplan] a Mons. C[olbert] touchant une maniere de f[aire] une carte chorographiq[ue]”: in L. Gallois, *L'Académie des Sciences et les origines de la carte de Cassini*, „Annales de Géographie”, 18 (1909), pp. 195–196.

<sup>17</sup> Beauplan to Colbert, Saint-Brieuc, 28 July 1665: BNF, MC, MS 130 bis, fol. 1007. See also Appendix 4.

part of this sum, according to Des Essarts „will be used immediately [by the engraver] to obtain as many copper plates as are required.”<sup>18</sup>

In September 1665 Beauplan informed Colbert that he had surveyed „the entire coastline of Brittany,” all the way to Nantes – an enormous distance. „This year,” wrote Beauplan, „the only remaining task is to travel across the said province in order to prepare the [overall] plan and outline.” He proposed to complete the task „before the [season of] bad roads arrives.”<sup>19</sup>

On 10 October 1665 Beauplan arrived in Rouen. He informed Colbert that he was busy „sorting out and putting into proper form the two hundred leagues [i.e. 800 km] of coastline” that he had surveyed in Brittany. Due to the difficulty of this task, „only a small amount can be accomplished in a long period of time.” For this reason, he was unable to inform Colbert about the precise date by which the map of Brittany would be „entirely and perfectly completed.” He assured the minister, however, that „with the assistance of God, I will show you [at our next meeting] the most beautiful thing in the world, and which will doubtless be very pleasing to you, since it is to that [task] that I am devoting all my strength.” At such a future meeting he would also show him „a sample of the ... beautiful and well made ... map of Normandy, even though it is being engraved in a province outside of Paris.” Colbert should not be surprised at the high quality of work, Beauplan wrote, „since the engraver is not among the mediocre [and] endeavors to surpass himself at this work in order to bring you satisfaction.”<sup>20</sup>

It appears that Beauplan resumed his cartographic work still in the winter, and returned to Rouen in February 1666. He informed Colbert that he was interrupting his cartographic labours because he was ordered to report for a new assignment to Charles de Sainte-Maure, Duke of Montausier, who at this time resided in the coastal region of Caux. Beauplan requested that the minister write to him in care of Des Essarts in Rouen. Finally, he informed Colbert that he was ready to resume his work in Brittany. Beauplan would depart there as soon as he would receive some money, or as he put it, „as soon as you will have handed to me the means of doing so, as I am so unfortunate as to be unable to cover my [own] expenses in the manner I would like.”<sup>21</sup>

On 2 March, following Montausier's orders, Beauplan carried out inspections of Granville, Chausey Island, Cherbourg and Honfleur, paying special attention to

<sup>18</sup> Des Essarts to Colbert, Rouen, 6 August 1665: *ibidem*, MS 131, fol. 187. See also Appendix 5.

<sup>19</sup> Beauplan to Colbert, Nantes, 8 September 1665: *ibidem*, MS 131 bis, fol. 997. See also Appendix 6.

<sup>20</sup> Beauplan to Colbert, Rouen, 20 October 1665: *ibidem*, MS 132 bis, fol. 586. See also Appendix 7.

<sup>21</sup> Beauplan to Colbert, Rouen, 17 February 1666: *ibidem*, MS 136, fol. 291. See also Appendix 8.

fortifications, arsenals and artillery. On 5 March, in Rouen, he prepared a lengthy report. Along with it he included a map of Chausey Island<sup>22</sup>.

It appears that Beauplan chose to stay in Rouen in order to complete the work on the map of Normandy which, according to Montausier, „will be very precise and of great use to the public.”<sup>23</sup> On 4 June Beauplan received a payment of 600 livres<sup>24</sup>; three days later, another substantial sum of 1,200 livres.<sup>25</sup> Thanking Colbert for the money, Beauplan made the following comments:

The map of Normandy would be almost completed were it not [for the fact] that the engraver [Toutain] has devoted himself to his work with such assiduity, that it has so fatigued his vision, that he had become ill because of it and has not worked for some time. That is what has slowed down the [work's] progress. Now, that he is feeling well, he has promised me that within two weeks I would be having [prints prepared from] the plates which he has engraved, for you to see. I await here [in Rouen] your orders for the completion of the map of Brittany which I am most desirous of finishing. I hope that Your Greatness will see to my subsistence and to the resources without which I can accomplish nothing<sup>26</sup>.

As Colbert did not want to encourage Beauplan to be idle during the good summer weather, he undoubtedly ordered the cartographer to continue the surveys in Brittany. Des Essarts, who received two letters from Beauplan – the first from Fougères, dated 9 August; the second from Angers, dated 18 August – informed Colbert on 21 September 1666 that the cartographer was „working daily at completing [the map of] Brittany.” However, due to Beauplan's frequent movements, Des Essarts had difficulties in maintaining a steady contact with him. While Des Essarts did not doubt that Beauplan had „busied himself with all necessary diligence” in Brittany, he was critical about Toutain who, in his view, was not making as much progress as was desirable on completing the engraving of the map of Normandy. Nevertheless, the engraver had informed Des Essarts „that he had the printer print six of the most extensive of the twelve sheets of which the map will be composed.”<sup>27</sup> In the October letter, in which he introduced Sieur Vivier of Rouen to Colbert, Des Essarts hinted that Beauplan would soon visit the minister<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Archives nationales [hereafter cited as AN], Paris, MS Marine 3JJ 137, dossier 10, no. 1. Map of Causey Island: BN, MS Service Hydrographique de la Marine, portfolio 38 bis, division 6, piece 1 D.

<sup>23</sup> Montausier to Colbert, Rouen, 8 June 1666: BNF, MC, MS 138 bis, fol. 319. See also Appendix 9.

<sup>24</sup> *Comptes des bâtiments du roi sous le règne du Louis XIV* [hereafter cited as *Comptes*], ed. Jules Guiffrey, 5 vols. (Paris 1881–1901), I, col. 106.

<sup>25</sup> Cabinet des titres, 7 June 1666, „Le Vasseur de Normandie”: BNF, MS FF 29419, fol. 10.

<sup>26</sup> Beauplan to Colbert, Rouen, 8 June 1666: BNF, MC, MS 138, fol. 161. See also Appendix 10.

<sup>27</sup> Des Essarts to Colbert, Rouen, 21 September 1666: *ibidem*, MS 140, fol. 161. See also Appendix 11.

<sup>28</sup> Des Essarts to Colbert, Rouen, 17 October 1666: *ibidem*, MS 141, fol. 425. See also Appendix 12.



The year 1667 proved to be the horn of plenty for Beauplan: on 15 March he received 300 livres; on 24 September, 1,512 livres 10 sous; and on 26 September, he was paid the sum of 1,500 livres<sup>29</sup>. Moreover, the engraving of the Normandy map was finally completed, and on 16 May a royal privilege was granted to him for the printing of the map and the text, entitled *Description de la Normandie*, by Pierre, the son of his old publisher and co-religionist, Jacques Cailloué of Rouen<sup>30</sup>.

The map, entitled *Carte Générale De Normandie Par Gvillyme Le Vasseur, S[ieu]r De Beauplan Ingénievr Ordinaire Dv Roy*, comprises twelve sheets arranged in three rows of four, each one measuring 54 × 42 cm. Sheet 1 contains a lengthy dedication to Louis XIV; sheet 9, six bar scales surmounted by seven coats-of-arms of the principal Norman towns; and sheet 12, an illustration of a crowned female figure, sitting on a wheeled throne drawn by two lions, holding a long scroll which contains the map's legend. The map is drawn to a scale of 1: 1 200 000. Attached at the bottom of the map are 12 sheets, each measuring 18 × 12 cm, which contain the text of the *Description de la Normandie*.

It seems most likely that Beauplan continued his survey of Brittany in the summer of 1667. Perhaps in the autumn of the same year he was assigned to provide details concerning a new engineering project: the construction of a sea wall between the Île des Landes and Pointe du Groin, north of the port of Cancale. The purpose of this wall was to create a large sheltered anchorage for French war vessels patrolling the English Channel. In his letter of 16 April 1668 Beauplan supplied to Colbert details about the project, including a plan of the barrier<sup>31</sup>. He asked the minister to reply „before the middle of May, which is when I wish to set out for Brittany in order to complete, God willing, the map of the said province.”<sup>32</sup>. Therefore, the map of Brittany was still not finished.

We have been unable to find any documents that specify the exact date for the completion of the Brittany map. However, clues are provided with regard to this matter by two important entries in the royal accounts: on 17 June 1668 Beauplan received 1,200 livres for the preparation of „geographical maps” for the king; and on 23 June 1669, he was paid an additional 1,200 livres for his work on „the geographical maps of Normandy and Brittany.”<sup>33</sup>. This last item leads us to conclude that the map of Brittany must have been completed in the year 1669. There are no other references in the royal accounts of payments to Beauplan.

<sup>29</sup> *Comptes*, cols. 153, 174, 209.

<sup>30</sup> See the text on sheet 12 of the *Description de la Normandie*. On the entire text see Dennis F. Essar and Andrew B. Pernal, *Un texte égaré de Le Vasseur de Beauplan: Description de la Normandie*, „Annales de Normandie”, 53, no 4, September 2003, 317–349. For the Ukrainian version of this article see *Istorychne kartoznavstvo Ukrainy: Zbirnyk naukovykh prats*, L'viv 2004, pp. 63–94.

<sup>31</sup> AN, MS Marine 3JJ 137, carton 14, no. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Beauplan to Colbert, Rouen, 16 April 1668: *ibidem*, fol. 1v.

<sup>33</sup> *Comptes*, cols. 283, 361–362.

The map, entitled *Carte Générale De Bretagne Par Gvillavme Le Vassevr S[ieu]r De Beavplan Ingénievr Ordinaire Dv Roy*, comprises a lightly coloured parchment sheet measuring 67 x 89 cm. The bottom left-hand corner contains a cartouche with six bar scales, surmounted by two coats-of-arms. The scale of the map is approximately 1: 420 000. The map reveals many details: nine traditional bishoprics; forests and wooded areas are shown in green; moors and marshes are outlined by green borders; and fortified towns, boroughs and parishes are each marked by special topographical signs. Coasts are carefully marked, dotted lines depict low tides and reefs, and although rivers are very carefully indicated, roads are not<sup>34</sup>. Moreover, according to Hervé, „Celtic names are given a fantastic, strongly gallicised spelling.”<sup>35</sup> Unlike the map of Normandy, that of Brittany was not engraved and printed.

Due to the lack of documents, it is difficult to trace the activities of Beauplan from late 1669 to August 1674. In the summer of 1674, or earlier, Beauplan requested from Colbert „a commission to complete the map of the [Breton Atlantic] ocean coast, ... from the island of Noirmoutier [in the north] as far [south] as Bayonne.”<sup>36</sup> It appears that Colbert did not approve this project. He did, however, order Beauplan to carry out another task. Thus, from September 1674 he was employed at locating appropriate sites for establishing naval ports along the Atlantic coasts of Normandy and Brittany. Eventually Beauplan recommended La Hogue, Omonville and Port-en-Bessin, in Normandy, and the estuary named Aber Wrac’h, north of Brest, in Brittany. With his report, submitted to Colbert on 1 January 1675, Beauplan also attached plans of La Hogue and Omonville, as well as a map of the coastline of the Cotentin Peninsula in Normandy<sup>37</sup>. This appears to have been Beauplan’s last project for Colbert.

It should be noted that, at the same time as Beauplan made surveys for his maps of Normandy and Brittany, as well as when he prepared technical reports and proposals concerning port facilities in these provinces, there occurred in France some important developments that eventually produced a significant impact on cartography as a whole. The foremost among them was the establishment, in 1666, of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris and staffing of it with scholars and scientists<sup>38</sup>. Thus, Jean-Dominique Cassini (1625–1712), a rising figure in European

<sup>34</sup> This map is located in the collections of the Archives départementales des Yvelines et de l’ancienne Seine-et-Oise, Montigny-le-Bretonneux. Shelf mark: Série A, no. 1567.

<sup>35</sup> R. Hervé, *Levasseur de Beauplan’s Maps of Normandy and Brittany*, „Imago Mundi”, 17 (1963), 75.

<sup>36</sup> Dennis F. Essar and Andrew B. Pernal, *Le Vasseur de Beauplan et les installations portuaires en Normandie et en Bretagne au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle: une lettre inédite a Jean-Baptiste Colbert*, „Annales de Normandie”, vol. 43, no. 1, March 1993, p. 51.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, pp. 47–59.

<sup>38</sup> See Roger Hahn, *The Anatomy of a Scientific Institution: The Paris Academy of Sciences, 1666–1803*, Berkeley, CA, 1971.

science, arrived in Paris in 1669. By 1676 he, along with other astronomers at the observatory of the Academy, managed to revise and enlarge his tables for Jupiter's satellites. Shortly thereafter, various astronomers and surveyors trained by Cassini were able to establish latitude by solar and star sightings, and longitude by the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites<sup>39</sup>.

Moreover, in 1668, when Colbert requested the Academy to recommend ways of making more accurate maps, he actually started a project of mapping France according to scientific principles based on scientific observations. The scientists of the Academy responded to the request by testing several mapping techniques. From 1669 to 1670 Jean Picard (1620–1682), one of France's leading astronomers and mathematicians, laid out a chain of triangles to measure an arc of the meridian passing through Paris. In the years 1679–1782, Philippe de La Hire (1640–1718), a member of the Academy known for his work on conic sections, Picard and others, using Cassini's tables, carried out geodetic surveys of the coasts of Brittany and Normandy. La Hire took the results of these and other coastal surveys and, in 1684, made a new map of France; however, it was not published until 1693. When La Hire's map was superimposed on the latest contemporary map, glaring discrepancies and errors became evident on the latter<sup>40</sup>.

It should be noted that Picard and La Hire surveyed the same area that was mapped by Beauplan. Thus, the traditional techniques of Beauplan's cartography, challenged by the new scientific methods and new instruments of the Academy, revealed many errors on his maps. This is undoubtedly the reason why his map of Brittany was not engraved and printed. The same cannot be said about Beauplan's technical reports regarding suitable port facilities. It is true that Colbert did not act on Beauplan's recommendations – eventually four new port cities appeared: Rochefort, Brest, Lorient and Sete. However, as these choices had been motivated by opportunities of profit and speculation for Colbert's agents and advisors, they were not necessarily the best sites on the French coasts<sup>41</sup>. Beauplan had no financial stake in any site; thus, he only provided a professional and honest advice to his superior.

The maps of Normandy and Brittany, errors notwithstanding, represent an enormous effort by one individual who, even in his seventies, was able to accomplish tasks which would have scared men half his age. The maps of the two French provinces did not bring renown to Beauplan, as did those of Poland and Ukraine, which remained authoritative and useful to the close of the eighteenth century. It should be emphasized that Beauplan the author and Beauplan the carto-

<sup>39</sup> Wilford, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, p. 114. See also Josef W. Konvitz, *Cartography in France, 1660–1848: Science, Engineering and Statecraft*, Chicago 1987, pp. 4–8.

<sup>41</sup> Konvitz, *Cities*, p. 78.

grapher continues to play an important role in modern Ukraine, for he is still regarded as a source of Ukrainian national identity.

## APPENDIX

Letters to Jean-Baptiste Colbert from various persons are preserved at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, in a collection known as *Mélanges Colbert*. The style of these letters is quite chaotic, with numerous illegible words, variant spellings and little punctuation. Sometimes the letter v inside a word is written v, sometimes u, but often it was not possible to distinguish between them. Capitalization is also quite haphazard.

### 1

MS 128 bis, fol. 885: Voysin de La Noiraye, Rouen, 15 April 1665. *Mentions that Beauplan's map of Normandy has been completed and encloses his memoir and plan of Le Havre and Le Hoc. Fragment.*

The first article of the instructions that have been given to the *maîtres de requetes* returned to the provinces, obliging [oblige?] them to examine the maps which have been made of those [provinces] to which they have been named. Having found that there was much to be desired in those we have of Normandy, that of *Sieur Tassin*, which is the most extensive and which however does not even nearly show all the parishes, displaying several errors, and that of *Sieur Sanson* being quite short [small?] and showing only a small number of parishes; [all] that has caused me to determine if there were not some capable person in the province who could remedy these faults and I finally located some time ago an engineer who had [already] done considerable work on preparing a new [map] of all of Normandy, which [map] I engaged him to complete entirely. He has personally visited for this purpose the whole province and paced out every location in order to gather information about it and has included all the parishes without omitting a single one. And there remains at this time only to have it engraved. As this is a person who has little wealth and who has [already] incurred some expense in order to visit the whole province on horseback, he might need some assistance from the king to assist

him in paying the cost of engraving, without which I perceive [that he] will be unable to give to the public this work which is quite fine and very extensive. I believe that any favour which you could grant to him for this purpose would be well employed.

I beg you to grant me the honour, if it is your preference, to inform me of your intention so that I may engage him to undertake the engraving at the earliest opportunity. As he has set about examining the seaports of the province, I have received from him a memoir concerning Le Havre de Grâce and Le Hoc which is situated nearby [together] with a plan he has prepared, mainly of Le Hoc, which I am taking the liberty of sending to you.

## 2

MS 128 bis, fol. 1177: Voysin de La Noiraye, Rouen, 30 April 1665. *A letter of introduction for Beauplan. Fragment.*

The person who will be presenting this letter to you is Sieur de Beauplan, [concerning] whom I have accorded myself the honour of writing to you [about his having] completed a very large and interesting map of the entire [province of] Normandy. I believe that you will find it very pleasing and exact. Several persons to whom I showed it have assured me that it was extremely accurate for the places of which they had particular knowledge and concerning which they could offer a sure judgement, and principally that the paths of the rivers are marked out remarkably well thereupon. He is also the person who had given me the plan and memoir that I have taken the liberty of sending to you concerning the harbour of Le Havre de Grâce as well as the one which could be constructed at Le Hoc. He will be able to inform you [further] on these matters if you so desire, as he appears to possess understanding of these matters.

## 3

MS 130, fol. 75: Voysin de La Noiraye, Rouen, 5 June 1665. *Beauplan has seen Colbert, who asked him for a statement of expenses relating to the engraving of the map of Normandy; Voysin encloses the statement in his letter. Beauplan has shown Voysin letters patent from the King of Poland. Colbert has ordered Beauplan to*

*prepare the map of Brittany. Beauplan wants some money and the designation of „royal engineer and geographer.” Fragment.*

I have met Sieur Le Vasseur, Sieur de Beauplan, whom I had sent to you, following upon the order which you had done me the honour of giving to me, [that he should] present to you the map which he has prepared of Normandy. Concerning [this map] he has reported to me that you stated to him your satisfaction with it, and that you had judged this [piece of] work worthy of presentation to the public, and that for that [purpose] you had ordered him to send to you a list [mémoire] of the expenses which will be required to have it engraved. [As well] you have given him reason to hope that His Majesty would be willing to supply [these funds] and even to grant him a [further] payment [pension? salary?]. He desired that I should have the honour of presenting to you the list he has made of [these expenses] and which he has placed in the attached packet. At the same time he has shown to me the [letters] patent he has received from the king of Poland according to which it appears that he served [in that country] as an engineer and a captain of artillery, and where [in addition] he had the privilege of having printed a map that he had made of Ukraine. He has begged me to inform you how he has shown me these documents so that you might be disposed, if His Majesty should gratify him with some payment, to have it granted to him under the title of royal engineer and geographer. Since his return [to Rouen from his mapmaking activities], I have had his work examined by a very well informed person who has found it to be expertly prepared. He appears extremely willing to set to work as soon as possible to prepare a map of the province of Brittany, as you have ordered him [to do].

#### 4

MS 130 bis, fol. 1007: Beauplan, Saint-Brieuc, 28 July 1665. *Beauplan is in Saint-Brieuc. He entered Brittany at Pontorson (just south of Mont Saint-Michel), has explored the coast to Saint-Brieuc, and notes that the only good place for an anchorage is Cancale. He asks Colbert for some money.*

Following your orders, I have taken the liberty of writing to you again to recount to you what I have seen in Brittany, which I entered by way of Pontorson, and where I traveled along the sea coast. [There] I noted all the varied details and contours of the harbours, coves, capes, bays and rocks as far as Saint-Brieux where I am at the present time. In this way I have found no suitable [locality] other than the bay of Cancale, which is extremely fine and safe, with no rocks, measuring five leagues across the mouth and in depth, with a good mud and sand anchorage.

This bay could serve as a place of shelter for a naval force, no matter how large [it might be]. That is all I can report to you for the moment. I intend to continue my progress along the coast during the [present] fine weather. However, I would most humbly beg Your Greatness to issue the order to have funds delivered to the engraver so that he might continue to work on the map of Normandy in order to complete it promptly.

In complete humility I beg you as well to continue [to extend to me] the honour of your goodwill [and] to be assured that I am, with all my heart, Monseigneur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

G. Le Vasseur de Beauplan  
Saint-Brieux, 28 July 1665

## 5

MS 131, fol. 187: Des Essarts, Rouen, 6 August 1665. *Forwards to Colbert letters written by Beauplan in Brittany and reports that Talon is making 300 livres available for payment to Jean Toutain for copper plates. Fragment.*

Monseigneur,

I am forwarding to you the letters which Monsieur de Beauplan has written to you from Brittany. At the same time I assure you that the map he has made of Normandy is being engraved at this very time. It will be admirable, very exact and well engraved. To this purpose I am devoting my entire attention. The engraver, whose name is Jean Toutain, is sparing neither time nor effort [for this task]; he has set aside all other work in order to pursue his desire to content and satisfy you. What encourages him [in particular] is that I have promised that there will be no delay in his receiving his payment. [In that regard] I have shown him the letter M. Talon has written to me, according to which he authorizes that I may claim [from him] upon receipt the sum of three hundred livres, which [sum] he [himself] [has already] received for the said engraving. The sum is small, and the greater part of it will be used immediately to obtain as many copper plates as are still required. I hope however that it will followed by a larger one, when if necessary a request for it is received, and when you judge it appropriate.

[The remainder of this letter deals with another matter.]

## 6

MS 131 bis, fol. 977: Beauplan, Nantes, 8 September 1665. *He has surveyed the coast all the way to Nantes and proposes to cross the interior of Brittany yet this year, before bad weather sets in.*

Monseigneur,

Since the last [letter] which I had the honour of writing to you, I have traveled continuously until this day when I have arrived in Nantes. I have visited the entire coastline of Brittany. This year the only remaining task is to travel across the said province in order to prepare the [overall] plan and outline. With the help of God, I hope to finish [this task] before the [season of] bad roads arrive[s]. In any case I will waste neither time nor opportunities to make progress in this work. I can assure you of this, Monseigneur, all the while begging you to keep me always in the honour of your goodwill, and that I will remain eternally your very humble and very obedient servant.

G. Le Vasseur de Beauplan

In Nantes, this 8 September 1665

## 7

MS 132 bis, fol. 586: Beauplan, Rouen, 20 October 1665. *Beauplan has arrived in Rouen on 10 October. At present he is working at sorting out 200 leagues (800 km) of the Breton coastline; the resulting map will be „the most beautiful thing in the world.” He proposes to show Colbert both the Brittany map and a sample of the engraved map of Normandy.*

Monseigneur,

Since my arrival in Rouen, [having returned] from my trip to Brittany, where I was [engaged in] following your orders, [the date of this arrival] having been a week before last Saturday, I have been at work with all possible diligence sorting out and putting into proper form two hundred leagues of coastline or thereabout, which we observed during our said trip. However this work was so difficult that only a small amount can be accomplished in a long period of time. Nevertheless, I promise you that I will not desist from it until it is entirely and perfectly completed. As for informing you of the time [required], that is what I am unable [to do]. I can only assure you that, with the assistance of God, I will show to you the most beautiful



thing in the world, and which will doubtless be very pleasing to you, since it is to that [task] that I am devoting all my strength. At the same time I will also show you a sample of the map of Normandy, which you will certainly find beautiful and well made, even though it is being engraved in a province outside of Paris. You must not be surprised at this, since the engraver is not among the mediocre [and] endeavours to surpass himself in this work in order to bring you satisfaction. I am, Monseigneur, your very humble and very obedient servant.

Guillaume Le Vasseur de Beauplan  
In Rouen this 20 October 1665

## 8

MS 136, fol. 291: Beauplan, Rouen, 17 February 1666. *Beauplan has returned to Rouen for the purpose of meeting Charles de Sainte-Maure, Duke of Montausier (1610–90), who is stationed in the coastal Caux region, north of Rouen. He asks Colbert to write to him in care of Des Essarts in Rouen, and mentions that he is ready to return to Brittany as soon as he receives some money.*

Monseigneur,

If I have returned to Normandy without your leave, it has not been for want of respect, but [rather] in order to execute more promptly the orders of the King and to meet Monsieur the Duke of Montozier where I could find him [somewhere?] along the coast of the Caux region. For that purpose I intend to leave tomorrow. I felt obliged to inform you of this matter so that if you are so kind as to issue some order for the service of His Majesty, or [if] in your own service you desire to issue orders to me, you would deign to write to Monsieur Des Essarts, doctor of medicine, whom in the past you have honoured with your letters. [Monsieur Des Essarts] will not fail to inform me of your wishes and will certify to me what you will have commanded for the service of the King, both as regards the map of Normandy as well as that of Brittany, for which [destination] I will depart as soon as you will have handed me the means of doing so, as I am unfortunate as to be unable to cover my [own] expenses in the manner I would like. I am, Monseigneur, your very humble and very obedient servant.

G. Le Vasseur de Beauplan  
From Rouen, 17 February 1666

## 9

MS 138, fol. 319: Montausier, Rouen, 8 June 1666. *He has informed Beauplan that Colbert has agreed to a payment of 1,200 livres. Beauplan is having the Normandy map printed. When it is finished, Beauplan will depart to Brittany to finish his work there. Fragment.*

[Only part of this letter is quoted below.]

I have communicated to this fellow Beauplan what you asked me to tell him with respect to the payment of twelve hundred livres which the king has granted to him through you. He is extremely grateful for this [service]. [At this time] he is involved with having printed a map he has produced, not only of the coast, but in general of the entire province [of Normandy], which will be very precise and of great use to the public. As soon as it is completed, he will be departing for Brittany in order to finish the work that he has begun [...].

## 10

MS 138, fol. 327: Beauplan, Rouen, 8 June 1666. *Beauplan says that he received, on 7 June, a payment of 1,200 livres from Gaulard, a merchant in Rouen. He also explains the delay in printing the Normandy map: Toutain has been ill; however, printed sheets of the map will be available in two weeks. Awaiting Colbert's orders regarding the completion of the map of Brittany, Beauplan asks the minister for more money.*

Monseigneur,

Carrying out your orders, I [am pleased to] inform you that yesterday, the seventh [day] of this month, I received from Monsieur Gaulard, a merchant in Rouen, the sum of twelve hundred livres which you so kindly procured [for me] from the king. Somehow I will endeavour to make myself worthy of the payment that he has bestowed on me, by devoting ever greater efforts to serve him, and by rendering to him many other services according to my abilities, with all possible diligence when it will please His Majesty to have them requested of me. Very humbly I also thank you, Monseigneur, for so many favours which it pleases you to bestow on me. I was already too much in your debt, but this last favour, together with the others, will strengthen [?] within me the determination and the desire to pray to the Divine Majesty that He may be pleased to keep you always under his holy and sacred protection, at your side in all your endeavours and causing you to succeed most sa-

tisfactorily in all you are pleased to undertake for the welfare and service of the king. Following the most recent command I have received from Your Greatness, [I inform you] that the map of Normandy would be almost completed were it not [for the fact] that the engraver has devoted himself to his work with such assiduity that it has so fatigued his vision that he has become ill because of it and has not worked for some time. That is what has slowed down the [work's] progress. Now that he is feeling well, he has promised me that within two weeks I would be having [prints prepared from] the plates which he has engraved, for you to see. In addition I await here [in Rouen] your orders for the completion of the map of Brittany which I am most desirous of finishing. I hope that Your Greatness will see to my subsistence and to the resources without which I can accomplish nothing. If I [am thus able to] travel I will not fail to inform you from time to time of what I am doing and the places I visit. In anticipation of your orders, which I will always follow with complete submission and extraordinary contentment, [please] accept that continue to call myself, Monseigneur, of Your Greatness, your most humble and obedient servant.

G. Le Vasseur de Beauplan

From Rouen, this 8th [day] of June 1666.

## 11

MS 140, fol. 161: Des Essarts, Rouen, 21 September 1666. *He has received two letters from Beauplan: one, from Fougères, dated 9 August; the other, from Angers, dated 18 August. Due to Beauplan's travels, Des Essarts has been unable to write to him. The progress on the engraving of the map of Normandy by Toutain has been slow. Fragment.*

Monseigneur,

Since the departure of Mmonsieur de Beauplan, I have received two letters from him. The first from Fougères, dated 9 August, and the other from Angers, dated the 18<sup>th</sup> of the same month, without my being able to learn from him [an address] where one could write and send him any letters [which might be] addressed to him. He has been content to inform me that he is working daily at completing [the map of] Brittany as long as the fine weather allows. This is the reason why I have been unable to forward to him the first letter with which you have honoured him, not to mention the last [one]. I can tell you neither where he is, nor what he has been able to accomplish. [Nevertheless] I might say, knowing his character and his assiduity, that if God has granted him good health, he has busied himself with all necessary diligence. [In addition] I wish that the engraver who has undertaken the map of Normandy were of

similar temperament and were similarly desirous of giving you bringing you satisfaction. I have given him [i.e. the engraver] the note which you have so kindly sent to him; he thereupon promised that he would in the near future give you cause for contentment. Nevertheless, although he assures me that he is still working, he is not making [as much] progress as I would wish, and as he would make if he were disposed to obey you and give [you] satisfaction. I have learned from him, however, that he has had the printer print six of the most extensive of the twelve sheets of which their map will be composed. [The work is] not [being completed] as quickly as I would wish, and I cannot guess the cause of it [unless] it is because he

[The rest of the letter is illegible; it may contain assurances of Beauplan's continuing devotion, as well as requests for financial contributions.]

## 12

MS 141, fol. 425: Des Essarts, Rouen, 17 October 1666. *A letter of introduction for Sieur Vivier of Rouen. The statements of Des Essarts about Vivier will be confirmed by Beauplan at his future meeting with Colbert.*

Monseigneur,

Sieur Vivier, a native of the city of Rouen and son of an officer living there, having resolved, following the latest of your letters, to grant himself the honour of travelling to greet Your Greatness and making [you] the offer of his very humble service, which he believes himself capable of doing, in the drafting of maps and laying out of plans of the provinces of France and any other places, is setting out today, the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the month, for the purpose of bringing you satisfaction in all that you [might] require of him. He is not [to be counted] among the most daring, nor the most eloquent, but as far as I am able to judge, I think that he is persistent and will finish what he undertakes. I believe that Monsieur de Beauplan, when he has the honour of seeing you, would be able to give you the same assurances, if such were needed. But Your Greatness has no need of them, since merely by seeing and hearing people, [Your Greatness] immediately takes measure of their talent and knows of what they are capable. If you are so pleased, Monseigneur, you will take the trouble to interview him and do with him afterwards what your incomparable prudence will find the most suitable. I am, Monseigneur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

Des Essarts Doctor  
Physician

From Rouen, this 17<sup>th</sup> [day] of October 1666.

## PRACE KARTOGRAFICZNE BEAUPLANA WE FRANCJI: MAPY NORMANDII I BRETAGNII

### Streszczenie

Guillaume Le Vasseur, Sieur de Beauplan (ok. 1600 – zm. po 1 stycznia 1675) miał gotowy manuskrypt mapy Normandii przed nastaniem kwietnia 1665 roku. W czerwcu Beauplan spotkał Jean-Baptiste Colberta (1619–1683), głównego ministra Ludwika XIV (1643–1715), który wyraził swoje „zadowolenie” z mapy Normandii, tymczasowo zaakceptował jej wyrytowanie oraz nakazał mu, „by przygotował mapę prowincji Bretnanii”. Po otrzymaniu niezbędnych funduszy, grafika mapy Normandii została ostatecznie ukończona w Rouen przez Jean Toutaina, a 16 maja 1667 r. Beauplanowi nadano przywilej królewski na wydrukowanie u Pierre Cailloüe mapy i tekstu. Mapa zatytułowana *Carte Générale De Normandie Par Gvillaume Le Vasseur, S[ieu]r de Beauplan Ingénievr Ordinaire Du Roy*, która obejmuje 12 arkuszy ułożonych po cztery w trzech rzędach, każdy w formacie 54 × 42 cm, jest sporządzona w skali 1:1 200 000. W dolnej części mapy przymocowanych jest 12 kart zawierających tekst p.t. *Description de la Normandie*.

W lipcu 1665 r. Beauplan poinformował Colberta o swoim pobycie w Bretnanii. W latach 1666–1669 Beauplan kontynuował tam swoje pomiary, ukończył mapę i zdobył szczegóły dotyczące dalszych projektów inżynierskich. Mapa zatytułowana *Carte Générale De Bretagne Par Gvillavme Le Vassevr, S[ieu]r De Beavplan Ingénievr Ord[ina]ire Dv Roy*, sporządzona jest na lekko barwionym pergaminie o wymiarach 67 × 89 cm, w skali około 1:420 000. Mapa ta nie została wyrytowana i wydrukowana.

Z powodu braku dokumentów, trudno śledzić dokonania Beauplana w końcowej fazie 1669 do sierpnia 1674 roku. Colbert zlecił Beauplanowi by zajął się nowym przedsięwzięciem. Tak więc, od września 1674 r. był on zatrudniony przy ustalaniu lokalizacji odpowiednich miejsc, mających służyć jako porty morskie wzdłuż atlantyckiego wybrzeża Normandii i Bretnanii. Ostatecznie Beauplan opowiedział się za La Hogue, Omonville, Port-en-Bessin w Normandii oraz ujściem zwanym Aber Wrac'h, na północ od Brest w Bretnanii. Wraz ze swym raportem, przedstawionym Colbertowi 1 stycznia 1675 r., Beauplan dołączył także plany La Hogue oraz Omonville, jak również mapę wybrzeża Półwyspu Cotentin w Normandii. Wygląda na to, że musiał to być ostatni projekt realizowany dla Colberta.

Należy zaznaczyć, że w tym samym czasie we Francji doszło do szeregu ważnych wydarzeń, które ostatecznie bardzo znacząco wpłynęły na rozwój kartografii w ogóle. Najbardziej zmiennym było założenie w roku 1666 Królewskiej Akademii Nauk w Paryżu oraz powołanie na jej członków licznej grupy uczonych. Z tegoż powodu Jean-Dominique Cassini (1625–1712) przybył do Paryża w 1669 roku. Do 1676 r. udało się mu, wraz z innymi astronomami, pracującymi w obserwatorium Akademii, poprawić i powiększyć tablice satelitów Jowisza. Wkrótce potem, wielu astronomów i badaczy, przeszkolonych przez Cassiniego, było w stanie ustalić szerokość geograficzną przy pomocy położenia słońca i gwiazd oraz długość geograficzną dzięki zaćmieniom satelitów Jowisza.

Ponadto, w roku 1668, kiedy Colbert zwrócił się z prośbą do Akademii w sprawie wykonania bardziej szczegółowych map, zaczął on właśnie pracę nad sporządzeniem map

Francji zgodnie z kanonami nauki, w oparciu o obserwacje. Naukowcy Akademii odpowiedzieli na prośbę, testując różne techniki kartograficzne. W latach 1669–1670 Jean Picard (1620–1682) zaprojektował łańcuch trójkątów, by zmierzyć łuk południka przechodzącego przez Paryż. W latach 1679–1682, Philippe de La Hire (1640–1718), Picard oraz inni, wykorzystując tablice Cassiniego, prowadzili geodezyjne pomiary wybrzeży Normandii i Bretanii. La Hire zebrał wyniki wszystkich pomiarów i w 1684 sporządził nową mapę Francji; jednakże nie została ona wydana aż do 1693 roku.

Przedmiotem prac Picarda i La Hire’a był ten sam teren, który także opracował Beauplan. A zatem tradycyjne techniki kartograficzne Beauplana, w obliczu nowatorskich naukowych metod i instrumentów Akademii, ujawniły wiele błędów na jego mapach. Fakt ten niewątpliwie zadecydował o tym, że jego mapa Bretanii nie została wyrytowana i wydrukowana. Nie można tego samego powiedzieć o technicznych sprawozdaniach Beauplana na temat odpowiedniego zaplecza portowego. Prawdą jest, że dla swych poczynąń Colbert nie uzyskał rekomendacji Beauplana – ostatecznie powstały cztery nowe miasta portowe: Rochefort, Brest, Lorient oraz Sete. Jakkolwiek powyższe wybory uzasadniono możliwościami odniesienia zysków i założeniami doradców i przedstawicieli Colberta, nie należały one *de facto* do najlepszych terenów francuskiego wybrzeża. Beauplan nie posiadał udziałów finansowych w żadnym z nich; jedynie udzielał on profesjonalnych i rzetelnych wskazówek swojemu przełożonemu.

Mapy Normandii i Bretanii, pomijając błędy, są przejawem niezmiernego wysiłku jednego człowieka, który pomimo swoich siedemdziesięciu lat, był w stanie stawić czoła wyzwaniom i dokonać czynów, których obawiali się badacze w połowie młodszy od niego. Mapy dwóch francuskich prowincji nie przyniosły Beauplanowi sławy ani renomy, jak to było w przypadku map Polski i Ukrainy, których autorytet pozostawał nie podważony aż do końca osiemnastego wieku. Należy wyraźnie podkreślić, że Beauplan jako autor i Beauplan jako kartograf niezmiennie odgrywa ważną rolę na Ukrainie, gdyż jest on nadal uważany za źródło ukraińskiej tożsamości narodowej.

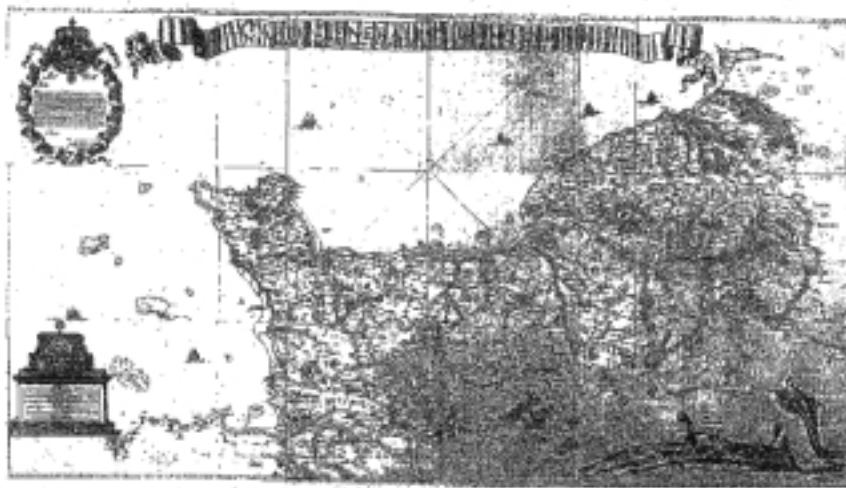


Fig. 1. Map of Normandy, 1667  
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Département des cartes et plans, shelf mark:  
Ge DD 2987 (449) B



Fig. 2. Map of Brittany, ca. 1669.  
Archives départementales des Yvelines et de l'ancienne Seine-en-Oise, Montigny-le-Bretonneux,  
shelf mark: Série A, no. 1567