

Analysis of the personality of Jose Manuel Etxeita (1842-1915) through a study of his letters

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The aim intended in this work is to disseminate the least known aspect of Jose Manuel Etxeita, in other words, his activity as a businessman. Jose Manuel Etxeita after being mayor of Manila (up to 1898) dedicated himself to business through his participation in various companies, among them Compañía Marítima de Manila. The main source of information used for this work has been his correspondence between 1900 and 1905.

Key Words: Jose Manuel Etxeita. Manila. Compañía marítima de Manila. Businessman. Mayor. Letters. Mundaka. Colonies.

I have conducted research into the correspondence of Jose Manuel Etxeita between 1900 and 1905, and have analysed the main features of his personality through it. This section of his letters from 1900 to 1905 does in fact help to shed some light on his character. Nevertheless, the chronological segment corresponds to the period following Etxeita's return to Mundaka (Bizkaia) from Manila, and consequently to the period in which he no longer held key positions.

Jose Manuel Etxeita held a really important position in Manila, which was that of mayor of Manila. Yet his name does not figure very much in the history books on the Spanish colonisation of the Philippines published today. Indeed, it seems that in the Philippines it was the local governor general who used to wield effective power and authority rather than the mayor of Manila. As Manila was the largest city in the Philippines (today it is the capital of the country), it cannot be denied that he played an important role in the life of the Philippines at that time. Like most of the colonial representatives (at the end of the day colonialism and imperialism were driven by the search for new markets and gains) he tried to make use of his political power to benefit his own wealth. In fact, the position he held gave him the chance to be in contact with people in the Spanish Government. Furthermore, as the Philippines was a maritime colony, and Jose Manuel Etxeita had shares in a maritime company, one can easily think that he used his position as mayor of Manila to act in favour of that company. In his letters he frequently mentions news and details about the company. Just as we have referred to contacts with the administration, we have to mention the matter that arose between Etxeita and the then Minister for War, Weyler. General Weyler had in fact commissioned some services from Etxeita's company, and in 1901 Etxeita asked the General to settle his debts. But Weyler was not his only contact in the administration, because in several of his letters he used to correspond with Madrid lawyers or influential figures in order to secure favours from the State.

While Etxeita was in Mundaka, it was not the supreme moment of his political and business activity. It is clear that he was immersed in family affairs, for example the school fees of his nephew and two nieces, or the engaging of a servant for his house. In some of the last letters (in 1904 and 1905) he was planning to have a new house built.

Many of Etxeita's letters are devoted to one of his pastimes: ships. When reading his letters it transpires that Etxeita was still involved in the Training School for Sea Officers in Bilbao, that he also read handbooks of the Nautical Schools, that he was a member of a Sea Association and the reader of certain sea publications.

Finally, it has to be remembered that Etxeita was in contact with a man from Gernika by name of Pedro P. de Areitio, who had in fact asked him to help in the matter of some wills. That indicates the considerable level of respectability Etxeita enjoyed in the eyes of a number of people.

In this summary, attention has to be drawn to the people in whom Etxeita confided most. They include Juan Bautista de Ojinaga and Juan Bautista de Larrinaga of Liverpool, or his brother-in-law Raimundo de Abaroa. On the other hand, we have Juan T. McLeod who is the friend who puts him in contact with Manila. These are the names that appear in the letters again and again, either in connection with business or in connection with family or friends. So we can deduce that they were Etxeita's closest friends. But it also has to be pointed out that the ones mentioned in this correspondence are not Etxeita's only friends, because he had others, too.

JOSE MANUEL ETXEITA AND HIS FAMILY

We can divide Jose Manuel Etxeita's family into groups in terms of the correspondence relating to family affairs. One group is the Garai family. Garai is a small village in Bizkaia between the districts of Urdaibai and Durangaldea. It was where Jose Manuel Etxeita's parents hailed from. The family continued to live there, his cousin Alejandro, for example, to whom he sends several letters. Another family nucleus is made up of his brother-in-law Raimundo Abaroa and the latter's children (Etxeita's nieces and nephew) Ventura, Nicolas and Maritxu. As far as the children are concerned, most of the letters deal with their studies. In the letters that have to do with them, their father Raimundo is involved in certain businesses together with Etxeita. As Raimundo Abaroa still seems to be actively involved in the business ventures, in this section we will only be dealing with those letters that Etxeita sends Abaroa, because not all of them concern family matters alone. The third family nucleus is made up of his nephew Juan Beotegi, the one in Liverpool. In fact, many of the letters sent to him include professional matters, but in some he recommends Beotegi to someone in order to secure him a job; so we can see that being family has a great influence on relations between Beotegi and Etxeita.



Finally, in Etxeita's letters of 1904 and 1905 another matter emerges with ever greater frequency: his plan to have a new house built in Mundaka. So we can say that this affair is also a family affair, even though most of the letters to obtain planning permission to build the house are not sent to members of Etxeita's family.

Finally, to conclude this section, I would like to clarify one point. Many of the letters and many of the people who had links with Jose Manuel Etxeita are not exclusively "family members", "friends", "business partners" or

“collaborators.” They often fit in with more than one of these characteristics. So this classification made is not very exact, and this little classification made in this subsection on “Family” (Garai family, the Abaroas, etc.) will not be very exact, either. Some kind of classification was required and this was felt to be the most appropriate way of going about it.

Jose Manuel Etxeita and Alejandro Etxeita

As we said, Alejandro Etxeita, is Jose Manuel Etxeita’s cousin in the village of Garai. In most of the letters they exchanged they speak about exclusively domestic matters in a tone of total frankness.

The first letter Jose Manuel sends to Alejandro is dated 20 December 1900. In it he says that the family of a Mundaka man (by the name *Perseverando*) needs a maid because his mother is gravely ill. Etxeita asks his cousin Alejandro whether he knows anyone in Garai who could work as a maid. In these letters Jose Manuel is referring specifically to two girls called Antonia and Dominika (it later becomes clear that they are Alejandro’s daughters). If the two girls do not want to come, Etxeita asks Alejandro to try and send another girl from Garai. What is striking in this letter is the desire to hire a maid from a small village. An apologia of the way of life in small villages is often made in Etxeita’s novels. That could be an indication of Jose Manuel Etxeita’s conservative thought. Moreover, as is mentioned in this letter, Etxeita believes the wages are 20 *duros*.¹ Etxeita establishes a further “condition” and it is that she should not be too young.

The next letter is dated 4 June 1901. The tone of the letter seems to suggest that Etxeita is somewhat agitated, because a member of the family has passed away (Aunt Leona) and Jose Manuel Etxeita, even if he had wanted to attend the funeral, did not find out in time. He is in a hurry to point this out, as he says in his letter “I received your letter with the news at eleven o’clock this morning”, that very same day we can assume; Jose Manuel Etxeita replies to Alejandro Etxeita immediately. Moreover, Jose Manuel offers to pay for some of the funeral expenses, on behalf of himself, his son Salvador, Maurizia Etxeita and Miguel de Beotegi.

Etxeita also refers to Dominika. This girl is already in Mundaka as a maid to a man by the name of Juan Bautista. The letter reveals that Dominika is happy and that Juan Bautista is off to England for a while; Dominika will stay and look after *Perseverando*’s mother, referred to in the previous letter. Finally, Etxeita gives his regards to Sebastian’s cousin (Alejandro’s brother?) and to someone by the name of Gervasia (Alejandro’s wife?).

The next letter that Jose Manuel writes to Alejandro is dated 21 February 1902 and the subject is similar to that of the previous letter: Jose Manuel

1. 1 “duro” = 5 Spanish Pesetas.

Etxeita's cook/housemaid has got married, so he needs a new cook. That is why he asks Alejandro Etxeita whether he could send his daughter Antonia for wages amounting to 3 *duros*. On the other hand, Jose Manuel asks Alejandro to do a favour on behalf of Dominika.

The fourth and last letter is dated 18 February 1905. It also deals with family matters, but this time Etxeita does not ask his cousin for maids or favours. This letter is about the situation of Alejandro Etxeita's current accounts, and his two daughters.

As we can see, all the letters are very much family ones and written in a tone of confidence. What interrupts this slightly is the second one as there has been a death in the family. But relations do not appear to have been broken off, because Jose Manuel Etxeita does in fact make an offer to his cousin to pay for the funeral, and because a few months later Etxeita writes to him asking him to do him a favour.

Finally, we have a single telegram that he sent to his son Salvador Etxeita, even if it is not to his cousin. It was sent on 4 October 1904 to Donostia (San Sebastian), because Salvador was there, and said: "En casa todos muy buenos y rosita muy contenta con vuestra felicitación."²

Jose Manuel Etxeita and the Abaroas

Mr Raimundo Abaroa is the brother of Jose Manuel Etxeita's wife, Juana Abaroa. He has three children called Ventura, Nicolás and Maritxu, who are Etxeita's nieces and nephew. The first is studying in Donostia (San Sebastian), in the Miracruz neighbourhood at a school apparently run by nuns, because Jose Manuel Etxeita sends lots of letters referring to her (on the payment of fees and expenses) to different nuns. The nephew is studying in Gernika. In that family we can distinguish two subgroups. On the one hand we have Raimundo Abaroa, who is not only a member of Etxeita's family but is also engaged in professional business with him. So Etxeita often uses his influence in Abaroa's favour. So as this section deals with family letters, we will only be analysing the letters that only have to do with the family, or the ones that make it clear that the family connections between them are linked to their professional relationship. We will be examining the letters between Etxeita and Abaroa that are purely of a professional nature in other sections.

Another sub-group of this family is made up of the sons and daughters. The letters exchanged between them and Jose Manuel Etxeita only deal with private matters, school expenses, etc. In this group we will also be analysing the letters sent to the school teachers and nuns, because the letters are closely linked to the family.

2. "At home everyone fine and rosita delighted with your congratulations."

The first letters are sent by Jose Manuel Etxeita on 9 October: one to Ventura de Abaroa and the other to Nicolas (in this second letter, only the surname Abaroa appears, but as he is talking about a nephew, we can assume that it is Nicolas). The letter to Ventura is sent to Donostia (San Sebastian). In it Jose Manuel Etxeita replies to a letter Ventura herself has sent him telling him she is happy at her new school and Etxeita likewise expresses his joy. At the same time he gives news about the family, how the members of the family, her brother Nicolas, in particular, are getting on. However, Etxeita is also worried, because he has no news of the girl's father (Raimundo). But the letters he sends Nicolas have a different tone, because Etxeita asks him to concentrate on his studies and not be thinking about the holidays so much. Etxeita expresses to Nicolas the same concerns he expressed to his sister with respect to Abaroa (senior).

Raimundo de Abaroa's name appears for the first time in a letter of 25 January, 1901. That day Etxeita had been with Ramon Blanco, the former Governor of the Philippines. Ramon Blanco was a general and Etxeita asks him a favour in connection with Raimundo Abaroa: to conduct an investigation to get the suspicions about Raimundo Abaroa lifted. In Jose Rizal's rebellion of 1896 while Antonio Cendrera was governor, Abaroa led a volunteer army to put down the rebellion. With Cendrera's permission Abaroa gave each soldier a document so that each one would receive an extra payment when the group of volunteers was demobilised. However, Cendrera was soon removed from office, and as a result the document could not be handed out. On the other hand, when Abaroa returned to Madrid the War Ministry refused to recognise these documents and refused to pay the volunteers, because in none of the Ministry's papers was there any record of Abaroa being the captain of a group of volunteers. So Etxeita asks Blanco a favour: to prove that Abaroa had in fact been the captain of the San Fernando Volunteer Army. In the letter Etxeita expresses little hope that Blanco will remember the matter. That is why he reminds him of his previous positions: Etxeita had been head of the company Echeita y Portuondo, and from 1894 to 1897 Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Governing Council of the Philippines. In the same way Etxeita tells Blanco that now he is at home, and in order to win Blanco's confidence, Etxeita invites him to stay at his house for a time.

The next letter is dated 12 February 1901. Etxeita thanks Blanco for his promise expressed in the previous letter to intervene directly in the "Abaroa issue." In the rest of the letter Etxeita flatters Blanco. However, on 2 March Etxeita sends Blanco another letter. Etxeita acknowledges receipt of Blanco's reply (in it Blanco says that the War Ministry has not come up with proof of Abaroa's participation). But in Etxeita's letter, Etxeita thanks the general on behalf of Abaroa and himself. At the same time he says Abaroa is planning to request help from another "influential person", from a certain Juan Etzaluze, in fact. There is also a final letter, of 13 April, in fact. Once he knows that there is no chance of securing a favourable decision in the Abaroa case, Etxeita thanks Ramon Blanco and once again invites him to stay at his house.

There is a letter begun on 15 July of the same year. In it Abaroa transfers some property to Etxeita. In August Etxeita was to send Abaroa two more letters: in one he tells him that they did not win anything in the lottery, and in the second, he tells him to introduce a man by the name of José Sainz to Juan T. McLeod, the Manager of the *Compañía Marítima*. From the letter it appears that Abaroa is in Manila because Etxeita sends the letters to Manila. That is not, however, the case. The letters are sent to Manila because Abaroa is on his way there, but for the moment the Etxeita family has not received any news from him, nor any letters about his arrival, as Etxeita points out in a subsequent letter.

Jose Manuel Etxeita writes to Ventura Abaroa on 24 September telling her about her father's situation. In it, in addition to congratulating Ventura on the fact that her studies are going well, he gives her news about her father (Raimundo). At the same time he tells Ventura about her school fees. On this same subject Etxeita sends other letters on 5 October to Raimundo and to Sister Angeles Maria, who is the bursar at Ventura's school (Asunción School). In the letter to Raimundo Abaroa he informs him about two things. Firstly, Jose Manuel Etxeita seems to be worried because he has not yet received a letter informing him about Raimundo Abaroa's safe arrival. Secondly, he gives a list of the education fees of his children. He also expresses his happiness that Abaroa's children have got good marks at school. In the letter to Sister Angela Maria, Etxeita tells her how he plans to pay for Ventura Abaroa's school fees. On 17 October Etxeita writes to Luisa Artola de Martinez about paying the expenses arising out of Ventura's education by making some transfers and sending the Sister some money.

On 19 November Etxeita sends Abaroa a normal letter telling him the number of the Christmas lottery ticket he has bought.

But coinciding with the start of 1902 it is once again time for him to turn his attention to the expenses of Abaroa's children. On New Year's Day itself Jose Manuel Etxeita writes to Sister Angela Maria to pay Ventura Abaroa's monthly fees. They amount to 605,50 pesetas and Etxeita explains which account the amount has been deposited in. Etxeita tells Raimundo Abaroa all about this in a letter of 5 January, even though this letter deals mostly with their business affairs.

On 20 January Luisa Artola de Martinez is the one to receive a letter. This letter is also about Ventura's expenses, but there is a surprising detail: there is a strange paragraph in it: "Los Yanquis no saben que antes de fin del Mundo tenemos que comunicarnos con los habitantes de la Luna, y mientras no suceda esto no hay cuidado de lo otro."³ I do not know what Etxeita was referring to with this exercise in astronomy, but it is very strange. I do not know

3. "The Yankees do not know that before the end of the World, we have to communicate with the inhabitants of the Moon, and until this happens, we don't have to worry about the other matter."

whether it is a joke, a kind of coded message, or a strange way of commenting on the policy that the United States Government was carrying out in the Philippines.

On 25 March 1902 Etxeita writes another letter to Raimundo de Abaroa. In it he gives a summary of family news. Specifically, he tells him that his daughter Ventura is doing her exams and that afterwards she will have a week's holiday. However, the most worrying news comes from the school in Gernika, not from Donostia (San Sebastian). It seems that young Nicolas has taken part in a protest and has apparently been egged on by two young lads from Bilbao. Nicolas has been punished for several days for taking part in the protest. On the other hand, Abaroa's younger daughter Maritxu contentedly goes to school, and is growing.

On 2 April it is once again time to settle the accounts as the term is now finished. That is why Jose Manuel Etxeita writes to the people in charge at the Asunción School to pay Ventura Abaroa's fees. Even though the figure is somewhat illegible, the new fees appear to amount to 569,20 pesetas. On the same date he sends another letter to Raimundo Abaroa with the balance sheet. The balance sheet, as usual, includes the school fees of his two children, even though it is not the only item. But this letter is in fact more important for professional reasons, but as it also deals with family matters, it has been included in this section. In a letter sent to Luisa Artola de Martinez dated 3 June, he encloses some bank drafts to cover sundry expenses. In a letter sent to the same recipient on 9 June Etxeita comments further on Ventura's situation.

We come across a telegram dated 7 July to a Pedro Martinez of Donostia (San Sebastian). The telegram says: "Juana sale para esa (Donostia) a buscar a Ventura."⁴ Juana Abaroa, Jose Manuel Etxeita's wife, is Raimundo Abaroa's sister and Ventura Abaroa's aunt. So we can conclude that Juana is going to Donostia to collect Ventura so that she can join them in Mundaka.

Etxeita writes to Abaroa again on 11 July giving a balance sheet. But in it he explains why Ventura is coming to Mundaka. It is because they have recommended that the pupils be sent home from the Asunción School as one of the students has caught typhus. On the other hand, Etxeita confirms one of Abaroa's wishes: Raimundo Abaroa wants Ventura Abaroa to stay on at the Asunción school until July 1903. Etxeita also imparts a very important piece of news: he is going to buy a plot of land from a Mrs Muniategi to have a new house built. This new house was to turn into Etxeita's obsession over the coming years and he refers to it for the first time in this letter.

During July Etxeita wrote another three letters to settle Ventura Abaroa's fees. He sends one dated 15th to Sister Angela Maria and in it he refers to some mistakes. He encloses the bills for April and a copy of the bank drafts

4. "Juana leaving for Donostia (San Sebastian) to collect Ventura."

to support his position. But on 26 July he sends another bank draft to pay for Ventura Abaroa's fees for the period from 1 July until the typhus outbreak (6 days). He tells Raimundo Abaroa about this muddle on 28 July (in this letter, too, professional matters are more important, of course). On 12 November Etxeita was to buy a lottery ticket for Abaroa.

1903 began just like the previous year did with a letter to Sister Angela Maria dealing with Ventura's fees. This letter was sent on 8 January and two days later he wrote to Raimundo Abaroa to confirm this. The balance sheet was enclosed in the letter to Raimundo Abaroa as usual, and it included Nicolas' and Ventura's fees. On 12 and 20 February, Etxeita sends two letters to Luisa Artola de Martinez enclosing bank drafts. On 21 April she pays 590,60 pesetas on Ventura Abaroa's behalf to Sister Maria Florentina of the Asunción school. That was to be the last payment of this type, so, as explained in a previous letter, it could be that Ventura will be leaving that school in July of that year.

What clearly emerges from these letters is this: Etxeita was quite a conservative man (religious school) and was of the kind that paid great attention to his businesses and the running of his household.

Jose Manuel Etxeita and his nephew Juan Beotegi

According to this correspondence, Juan Beotegi seems to have been the son of Jose Manuel's sister Maurizia Etxeita and her husband Miguel Beotegi. Juan Beotegi was also a seaman and Jose Manuel Etxeita sends letters to him in Liverpool and Glasgow. Among the correspondence, only three letters sent to Juan Beotegi have been found.

The first two are dated February 1901, one on 2nd and the other on 7th. In the first, Etxeita explains to Beotegi in general terms what he has to do to obtain a licence to be a skipper. In the second Etxeita encloses an identity card document for Beotegi.

But the last is dated 13 August of the same year and in it Etxeita not only tells Beotegi about the political climate at the time, he tells him what he has to do to pass the exams, how to complete the formalities, rules, etc.

Jose Manuel Etxeita and his new house: In 1902 Jose Manuel Etxeita starts talking about building a new house. Right up to the last letter in this set of correspondence (in 1905) this subject is to turn into one of Etxeita's most important topics. Indeed, Etxeita refers to it for the first time on 11 July 1902. Early on Etxeita tells Raimundo Abaroa that he is going to purchase a plot of land from a woman by the name of Concha Muniategi. This plot of land is located next to the road that runs from Mundaka to Bermeo along the coast. Etxeita tells Abaroa that he has purchased this plot, because he wants to build a house. He also mentions the price of the land: 2.000 *duros*.

On 9 August Etxeita writes another letter, this time to Marcelino Arrupe of Bilbao. This Arrupe is apparently an architect. Etxeita is referring to a change Arrupe had made to the plan; Arrupe has in fact made a change to the plan that is not to Etxeita's liking for a reason that he is not aware of: he does not know whether it has to do with the style or to bring down the cost of the building project. However, Etxeita asks the architect to remove the change because he wants more space in the house even if this will increase the cost. Etxeita also tells Arrupe that he has obtained a licence from the Provincial Council.

Two days later he writes to Raimundo Abaroa again. In it he refers not only to the ups and downs of the shares of the electricity company, he also mentions the cost of the house he is planning to have built. He tells Abaroa that he and his son Salvador Etxeita will build the house. He says that it will cost a total of 6.000 *duros* but, in the end, could rise to 7,000. As Etxeita sees it, he will have to devote a large portion of his assets to the building of the house. So, he tells Abaroa to withdraw the dividends from the shares he has in the Manila Companies (the electricity company and the *Compañía Marítima*) and send them via a postal order in order to pay for the house.

On 7 November he writes to Marcelino Arrupe again as he wants to specify the price of each service that is contracted to build the house. At the same time he specifies the payment deadlines. But on 28th of the same month he writes to the company of some Bilbao decorators (Lostaló, Arrizabalaga and others) as they design mosaics; Etxeita asks them to send some catalogues so that can choose a nice mosaic. In a letter sent to Raimundo de Abaroa on 1 December Etxeita tells him he expects the new house to be ready for them to move into in August 1903.

In 1903 we will begin to see progress being made in the new house. To start with, in a letter sent on 10 January Jose Manuel Etxeita now says how the house is coming along, pointing out that the roof is about to be added. He writes to Marcelino Arrupe on 21 January. The materials for building the house are occupying part of the road between Mundaka and Bermeo and to do this a permit must be requested from the Provincial Council. Etxeita asks Arrupe to request a permit on his behalf and that if there is any payment to be made, Etxeita says he will handle it. On 22 February Etxeita writes to Raimundo Abaroa. This time it is not about the new house but about the house he owns in Juan Bautista Longa street in Mundaka. Etxeita says he is going to have it insured, because if not, there would be no compensation if there was a fire (and at that time there had been a fire in Lekeitio). Etxeita puts the insurance in Abaroa's name.

On 1 September Etxeita sends two letters to the Provincial Council of Bizkaia. He requests two kinds of permits: in the first, as mentioned in the previous letter, Etxeita requests a permit to occupy part of the road with the building materials. In the second, Etxeita requests permission to build a wall in the place on his plot of land where one that used to be there had been knocked down. It would appear that from this moment onwards the works proceed without any hitches. The final letter to do with the building works is dated 4

November 1904 and sent to Teodoro Bidaetxea of Bermeo. In it Jose Manuel Etxeita refers to the design of the Etxeita and Abaroa family vaults in the cemetery of Mundaka. It should be pointed out that during this period Raimundo de Abaroa is mayor of Mundaka; this is stated in a letter of 21 March 1904.

JOSE MANUEL ETXEITA AND HIS PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY: BUSINESSMAN

Jose Manuel Etxeita, apart from being a writer and the member of a respectable Mundaka family, was a colonialist, a member of the Spanish civil service in Manila and mayor of Manila, among other things. Such a key post in the colonies was paid a good salary, but what was more important, as will soon become clear, are the contacts and influences that this post required. It will shortly become clear that Etxeita had contacts with important men in the Spanish Government, like Mr Weyler. On the other hand, he used his own influence to "secure jobs" in companies in which he was a shareholder for people close to him.

It becomes clear to us that after being mayor, too, Jose Manuel Etxeita was a powerful man and wealthy businessman when it is clear where he held shares. He was a shareholder of the companies *La Electricista* and *Minas de la Bernilla*. But in particular, the *Compañía Marítima* of Manila is the company in which Etxeita invested his assets in shares. Many of the people running it were his friends. For example, he frequently corresponded with Juan T. McLeod the Manager. Later on his brother-in-law, Raimundo de Abaroa, was to be appointed as Deputy Manager.

Etxeita, before participating in the *Compañía Marítima* was one of the leading figures in the *Echeita y Portuondo* company. The *Echeita y Portuondo* company ran the postal service in the Philippines using ships. It had three vessels: the *Elcano*, the *Churruca* and the *Gravina*, but the sinking of the *Gravina* precipitated a crisis in the company, which was forced to merge with other companies. The *Compañía Marítima* of Manila was created out of this merger. At the point where the correspondence begins, Juan T. McLeod, a friend of Etxeita's, was the Manager of the *Compañía Marítima* of Manila, and continued in the post until his resignation in 1904. He was succeeded by Manuel M. Rincon.

As time went by, this maritime company was to run into problems. One of these problems was the breakdown in the negotiations held with a large company of the United States. A New York syndicate in fact wanted to buy the *Compañía Marítima*, but even though the shareholders of the *Compañía Marítima* agreed initially, the agreement was broken by the final details for formalising the sale. The Americans decided not to buy the company in the end, and that upset Etxeita very much. Moreover, a few months later the U.S. Government established cabotage freedom in the Philippines ports. This decision was clearly to cause a lot of harm to the already existing companies, in other words, the Spanish companies. Another problem was that two former bosses of the *Compañía Marítima*, the brothers Rafael and Francisco Reyes, lodged a complaint against the *Compañía Marítima*. The brothers understood

that the *Compañía Marítima* had discriminated against them and that was why they lodged their complaint.

Jose Manuel Etxeita had bitter-sweet results with the other companies. For example, the company *La Electricista* was to be affected by a decision of the U.S. Government to establish the gold standard in the Philippines. Etxeita and his brother-in-law and partner Raimundo de Abaroa ended up selling their shares in *La Electricista*. However, things turned even worse for Etxeita with the mining company *Minas de la Bernilla*. The investment he made in the company turned out to be a big mistake and Etxeita lost a lot of money in this move.

Etxeita is the standard model of a colonial politician. He is very conservative and appears to be very concerned about making and accumulating money. He seems to have made use of his position as Mayor of Manila until 1898 to benefit his business activities. What is more, he often tried to find “nice little jobs” for his relatives or friends in his business activities. What is significant, however, is that Etxeita is not an industrial businessman, but a finance businessman. In other words, he is not the regular businessman belonging to the Basque oligarchy (most of the Neguri⁵ ones had their own industrial companies before participating in the financial oligarchy), but a man who had moved from politics and public matters to finances. So he is not one of the models of the bourgeoisie that spread all over the Peninsular Spain in the 19th and 20th centuries, but a member of the colonial bourgeoisie. On the other hand, it is clear that he was not a very skilled businessman as many of his investments ended in failure. Many of the companies he invested in were products of the colonies (the *Compañía Marítima* and *La Electricista*, but not the mining company) and when one takes an overview, after the colonies were lost, it became quite clear that such companies were to lose the guarantee of State favours. It seems that Etxeita would have to invest a part of his assets in more reliable companies in the Peninsula.

Jose Manuel Etxeita, the Compañía Marítima and the debt of the Spanish State

One of the problems Etxeita and his *Compañía Marítima* had to face was Valeriano Weyler, the colonial general and Spanish Minister of War in the early part of the 20th century. This problem they had with Weyler was because some of Etxeita's companies were owed money by the Spanish State for certain services rendered to it in 1888 and 1898 which had not been paid for. Valeriano Weyler was the Marquis of Tenerife and held a key post in the colonial administration of the Philippines, so we can assume that he was one of the people responsible for the Spanish State's debt to Etxeita. The problem with Weyler appears for the first time in a letter from Etxeita to Weyler himself of 12 October 1901. In it Etxeita informs Weyler that he is going to

5. Area near Bilbao where the very wealthy used to live.

tell him about an occurrence that took place in the Philippines; to be precise, about certain activities of the company *Echeita y Portuondo* which Etxeita was regarded as the Managing Director of. This company “ran the postal service in the southern archipelago of the Philippines with the vessels *Churruca*, *Gravina* and *Elcano*.” Etxeita mentions a number of trips made by the vessel *Gravina* to distribute the post and which were not paid for at the time. The trips were between 1888 and 1889 and the debts, according to the Philippines rate, amounted to \$ 16.360. Jose Manuel Etxeita informs Weyler that the managing of the affair would continue in the hands of Rufino de Amusatégi.

Etxeita refers to another matter, too, and tells him that when the *Echeita y Portuondo* company went bust “owing to poor competitiveness”, the company was forced to merge with others and the *Compañía Marítima* of Manila was set up. Thus the vessels *Elcano* and *Churruca* came under ownership of the new company, but by that time the vessel *Gravina* had sunk. Jose Manuel Etxeita tells Weyler how well the *Compañía Marítima* acted “in favour of the Spanish cause” when the Philippines insurrection took place. Because Weyler was a colonial military commander in the Philippines at that time, Etxeita tries to convince him of the worthiness of his Company, because the minister could benefit from the favours made by the Company at that time. As a result of all this, Etxeita informs Weyler that “the State owes the Company, of which I am one of the interested parties, a sum of money.” Etxeita puts the matter in the hands of Francisco de Pleguezuelo.

Etxeita wants to use this hypothetical friendship with Weyler so that the latter will defend the interests of the *Compañía Marítima* before the State. This is how he expresses it in his letter “I would not want to cause you problems, because you are not responsible for this predicament, and that is why I do not wish to concern you about it, but I would be grateful to you if you could just comment on this matter with those authorities you trust completely.” At the end he praises Weyler’s journeys of behalf of the State in order to flatter this military leader.

The same day Etxeita writes to Rufino Amusatégi, in whom Etxeita can confide completely. It is not the first time that we read about him thanks to Etxeita in connection with Etxeita’s business activities (according to this letter Amusatégi was a shareholder of the *Compañía Marítima*). He also refers to his friendship with Weyler as well as to various pieces of business conducted in Manila through the ships. This letter in the Weyler affair is a collection of explanations on how he should defend Etxeita’s interests; in the meantime, he also refers to another lawyer, Francisco Pleguezuelo. Together with this letter Etxeita sends Amusatégi a copy of the letter he sent to Weyler. Etxeita sends Amusatégi a letter to introduce himself to Weyler, because he feels that the lawyer should meet the military officer.

A letter dated the following day is another letter from Etxeita to Weyler. This letter, even though it was sent bearing a different date, is one for Amusatégi to present to Weyler as a letter of introduction, because it summarises Amusatégi’s merits. That same day Etxeita writes to Pleguezuelo. In the letter

Jose Manuel Etxeita tells him every effort has to be made to collect payment for the debt as soon as possible. Judging from Etxeita's hurry, it would appear that his financial circumstances are not very good. There is another note of pessimism: according to this letter it seems that the friendship between Weyler and Etxeita is not as deep as Etxeita would like; Etxeita says this "friendship" is restricted to professional matters. Etxeita tells Pleguezuelo he has received his letters of 5 August and 9 October; Etxeita tells him he is extremely grateful to him, because initially he only wanted him to make a claim in the 1888-89 affair (*Echeita y Portuondo*), but after reading Pleguezuelo's letter, Etxeita decided to make a claim in both of them. As he did with Amusategi, Jose Manuel Etxeita sends a letter of introduction that Pleguezuelo can show to Weyler. Etxeita takes the opportunity to speak of different business ventures and is rather pessimistic.

The next contact between Francisco Pleguezuelo and Jose Manuel Etxeita is on 6 November of the same year. In it more than anything Etxeita inquires about Pleguezuelo's family, but also mentions Weyler in a fairly optimistic tone in view of the fact that Weyler has apparently reacted to Pleguezuelo's visit well.

On 11 November, 1901, Jose Manuel Etxeita decides to inform his partner Ceferino de Portuondo about the whole affair. Even though the letter is unfinished, it includes quite a lot of information, like the fact that he has appointed Pleguezuelo and Amusategi to deal with the affair. He also refers to Raimundo Abaroa and Juan T. McLeod. The tone of the letter is fairly optimistic.

Jose Manuel Etxeita writes to Rufino Amusategi the following year, on 16 January, 1902, and refers to the Weyler case. Weyler appears to have accepted Amusategi as favourably as he accepted Pleguezuelo. Something else stands out in this letter: Etxeita points out that he has instructed Raimundo Abaroa to sell his (Etxeita's) shares in the *Compañía Marítima*.

On 3 March 1902 Etxeita replies to a letter he has received from Amusategi. It deals with settling the debt, and the tone of the letter is fairly optimistic. It would appear that, in principle, the members of the *Echeita y Portuondo* company are in the right.

Throughout 1902 the Weyler case will be something to talk about in connection with Jose Manuel Etxeita. On 2 June Etxeita writes to Mr. Amusategi. Mr. Amusategi appears to have written a letter prior to this one (24 May), one full of pessimism. In the letter it seems that Jose Manuel Etxeita is given permission to appoint another person to represent him before Weyler (Weyler is by now Minister for War). So it is clear that Amusategi does not approve of his work. However, Etxeita reassures Amusategi and informs him that he has his approval.

On 10th of the same month he sends a letter to Mr. Larrinaga in Liverpool to talk about this affair. He copies Amusategi's letter and it seems it could be the one of 24 May; according to this letter, despite getting the attention of the



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members of the government, it does not appear that the Government is willing to settle the debts that have arisen in the former colonies, because they are so many. Amusatagi's letter is of great interest and in it he explains why the Government does not pay the debts; he lists different reasons: its lack of influence, the large amount of the debts and, in the end, the lack of will, both on the part of the Treasury Minister (Rodrigáñez) (because he was appointed only to pass the law of Banking), and also because of great pressure, because of the pressure others who were waiting to be paid their debts could bring to bear if one debt was settled. So Etxeita suggests to his Liverpool partners the alternative of appointing another representative, a new representative with greater political contacts than Amusatagi. Nevertheless, in a letter dated 7 July to Amusatagi (this letter in fact deals with the exams of the Nautical School of Bermeo) he asks him to continue in his post.

In 1903, too, Jose Manuel Etxeita was to go on speaking about the Weyler case. On 16 July that same year Etxeita wrote a letter to a Madrid man by the name of Antonio G. Bejar. In it he expresses his thanks to Bejar because in a letter of 23 April Etxeita thanks him for his offer to represent him. However, Etxeita does not appear to have great trust in Bejar. On 20 July Etxeita writes another letter to Amusatagi and in it describes Bejar's offer as "mysterious."

Before replying to Bejar, he wants to consult with Amusatégi on the matter, just in case.

On 20 August Etxeita presents Angel de Muniategi's letter of introduction to Amusatégi. In it he summarises Ángel de Muniategi's merits and life. As Muniategi is a member of a wealthy, aristocratic family, he could enjoy good relations with the Government. For this reason, it seems, he is offering this contact to assist Amusatégi in his mediation work. In a letter sent the same day to Amusatégi himself, he tells Amusatégi that Muniategi, who hails from Mundaka, is Bejar's friend. The result of these manoeuvres was to become apparent on 20 September. That year, in a letter written to the secretary of the Association of Overseas Credit Holders, Etxeita confirms Amusatégi's position as representative. He seems to have a lot of confidence in Amusatégi. Etxeita's position appears to have been strengthened by bringing Muniategi into the game.

In the end, Etxeita will see the first fruits on 6 August 1904. In a letter to Rufino de Amusatégi that day, he refers to the news that he has been waiting for so long: the decision by the Spanish Parliament to pay overseas debts, which he has found out about from the newspapers. But Etxeita complains somewhat, because the State did not pay up when it should have done, but on the other hand he expresses joy that he is finally going to get the money. Yet Etxeita expresses serious concerns about the *Compañía Marítima*, because it is reported to be in deep crisis and is unable to stand up to the competition. Etxeita says that the Report on the previous year has not reached him and that worries him a lot.

Amusatégi replies to Etxeita on 6 January 1905 saying the long delay was due to the fact that he had been on holiday. Many phrases in Amusatégi's letter are illegible, but the general gist can be understood. Amusatégi has spoken to Mr. Viesca, the Deputy Secretary of the Health Ministry; the latter says that to receive payment for the 1888-89 postal service, as *Echeita y Portuondo* no longer exists, an operational winding-up process needs to be carried out (let us remember that during the Philippines period the *Echeita y Portuondo* company was dissolved along with a number of others to form the *Compañía Marítima* of Manila). Failure to do so would mean that Messrs Jose Manuel Etxeita and Ceferino de Portuondo would not be entitled to the settlement of the debts (because an appeal was filed on behalf of a company that does not exist). Up until that moment Etxeita had presented proof of the winding up which he had secured at a notary's office, but according to Mr Viesca, this was not enough. So with that in mind, the following day, on 7 May, Etxeita gets in touch with Ceferino de Portuondo to start the official dissolution of the *Echeita y Portuondo* company.

That same month of May Etxeita sends two letters, one on 13th and the other on an unknown date, to Rufino de Amusatégi, so that he can proceed with the dissolution of the *Echeita y Portuondo* company; that way Jose Manuel Etxeita and Ceferino de Portuondo will have the chance of collecting the debts.

We find the first news of the actual payment of the debts on 26 January 1905 in a letter written to Messrs Larrinaga in Liverpool. In it there are some interesting details; in particular, that Amusatagi has been working on this matter for Etxeita since 1899, so on a date that is outside this correspondence. Etxeita sends copies of some of Amusatagi's letters to the Larrinagas and in the end gives them a good piece of news: he is about to collect 16.960 Philippine Dollars.

Finally, we have an unfinished letter of 29 May sent to Ceferino de Portuondo. He explains how the State is settling the debts; it seems that first of all it will be settling the salaries owing to former overseas civil servants, and later on the money in debts to different companies. Etxeita agrees to speak to Amusatagi later on.

Thus, the affair of the State's debts so far. In the end, Etxeita and Portuondo managed to collect the money the State owed them, even though it involved a great effort. It seems that the ups and downs of the affair consumed a lot of Etxeita's energy even though the goal was achieved in the end. (In his letters Etxeita is optimistic one moment and pessimistic the next, and vice versa, and this is a reflection on the ups and downs of the affair).

The Compañía Marítima and offer from the New York Corporation

At the end of January 1902 something happened in connection with the *Compañía Marítima*. On 29 January of that year Jose Manuel Etxeita sends letters to different members. These letters are fairly similar in structure; they all bear the same date, Etxeita copies a telegram received from Raimundo de Abaroa, who is in Manila. The telegram says:

Powerful New York syndicate has called Juanito (McLeod) to negotiate on purchase of *Compañía Marítima* in 90 days stop Aldekoa Reyes and McLeod agree stop about 650 per share stop Juanito now requests agreement of other shareholders stop reply by cable stop.

Later, as Etxeita explains in the letters, Aldecoa, Reyes and McLeod are the main shareholders and more or less agree to the conditions of the sale (about 650 Philippine pesos per share), but the approval of the other shareholders is needed, because the U.S. company wants to buy the majority of the company's shares, not just some of them. That is why Etxeita writes to the other shareholders, so that they can express their agreement or otherwise as quickly as possible. So he writes several letters on 29 and 30 January to the following people: the Larrinagas (Liverpool), León de Longa (Bilbao), José de Bedoya (Cadiz), Rufino de Amusatagi (Madrid), Federico de la Pedrosa (Cóbreces), Felix de Larrinaga (the letter is sent to Bilbao even though Felix de Larrinaga is from Oñati), Teodoro Arana of Gernika (his wife Cruz de Larrinaga holds the shares) and Antonio de Ozamiz of Bilbao (his shares are in the name of his wife Carmen de Amusatagi and Mr Andersh). So we can assume that these people are also shareholders of the *Compañía Marítima*. Etxeita says

he, too, agrees to the sale. The letters sent to León de Longa and Teodoro de Arana/Cruz Larrinaga are particularly important. Indeed, León de Longa and Cruz Larrinaga are longstanding partners of Etxeita's, not only in the *Compañía Marítima*, but also in the *Echeita y Portuondo* company. So as the shares of Longa, the Arana-Larrinaga spouses and Etxeita are put together, Jose Manuel Etxeita needs their answer forthwith.

The next step appears in a letter sent on subsequent dates. Even if this letter is incomplete, I suspect that it is one sent to León de Longa. The letter speaks of Teodoro de Arana's approval of the sale; and Etxeita then goes on to speak of "your agreement"; he then says he has cabled Abaroa to tell him that he has the go-ahead to sell the shares on behalf of the *Echeita y Portuondo* company. Therefore, as León de Longa is another member in addition to Jose Manuel Etxeita and the Cruz Larrinaga-Teodoro Arana spouses in the *Echeita y Portuondo* company, we can easily assume that León de Longa is the recipient of this letter. It is made even clearer when we see the telegram of 31 January Etxeita sent to Abaroa. The telegram has three words: "Conforme negocio acciones"⁶ and it is signed, not by Jose Manuel Etxeita, but by the *Echeita y Portuondo* company. So we can see that Etxeita, Longa, Arana and Cruz Larrinaga agree to the sale of the shares. On 2 February Etxeita again writes to Abaroa himself and in it speaks about the affair in further detail. Etxeita informs Abaroa that the telegram he sent has been passed on to different members, and also that the members of the *Echeita y Portuondo* company are totally in agreement. A new piece of information emerges in this letter on the distribution of shares of the *Echeita y Portuondo* company. According to the distribution, Jose Manuel Etxeita must have 15 of the company's shares, León de Longa another 15 and Cruz de Larrinaga 20.

Nevertheless, the members who were to agree to the sale were not members of the *Echeita y Portuondo* company alone. In a letter of 6 February sent to Federico de la Pedrosa, Etxeita congratulates him because he has decided to participate in the sale negotiations. Etxeita says that other shareholders have taken the same decision. However, he adds a pessimistic detail which is that the company is in a bad situation and each share could go down to 600 pesos. Etxeita explains to de la Pedrosa the procedure for selling shares according to the statutes of the *Compañía Marítima*, and he says the best thing is to put the shares in Abaroa's hands, because he is in Manila and at the *Compañía Marítima*'s headquarters, so if these shares are sold to the Americans, he is in the best position to sign the legal documents. On 8 February he writes to José de Bedoya. From what he says in the letter it appears that Bedoya agrees to the sale of the shares. Etxeita tells Bedoya how much it will cost him to send a telegram to indicate his agreement to the sale: a telegram to Manila in fact costs 21 *duros*. He might decide that sending a telegram is too costly (Bedoya only has 6 shares). Etxeita is now referring to the sale of a different set of shares. Etxeita sends Bedoya a list of shareholders that agree to the sale as follows: Cruz Larrinaga (37 shares), Félix Larrinaga (37 shares),

6. "Shares business agreed".

León de Longa (15 shares), Jose Manuel Etxeita (15 shares), Federico de La Pedrosa (14 shares), Carmen Amusategi (4 shares), Mr Andersh (4 shares) and *Echeita y Portuondo* (3 shares).

This information appears to contradict what has gone before. In the previous letter it was pointed out that Larrinaga had 20 shares, and Etxeita and Longa 15 each in the *Echeita y Portuondo* company. According to the information in this letter, the data pertaining to Etxeita and Longa coincide with the previous ones, but not those of Cruz Larrinaga, and moreover the *Echeita y Portuondo* company appears as another shareholder. From the conclusions reached it seems that regarding the 37 shares of Cruz Larrinaga, 20 belonged to her individually, and the other 17 were internal *Echeita y Portuondo* ones. So if the 3 shares in the name of the *Echeita y Portuondo* company that are mentioned are added, this would make a total of 20.

Etxeita writes to Ceferino de Portuondo on 13 February summarizing the details of the previous negotiations and sale. In fact, as Ceferino de Portuondo is one of the founders of the *Echeita y Portuondo* company, and as he is linked to Etxeita through a great friendship, Jose Manuel Etxeita wants to keep his friend in the picture.

On 14 February Etxeita wrote to Abaroa summarising the internal situation of the *Compañía Marítima*. He tells Abaroa details about the work of the manager Juan T. McLeod. Etxeita has great hopes that the Americans will buy the Company.

On 3 March Etxeita writes to Antonio de Ozamiz. The letter is unfinished but the contents are about the negotiations with the U.S. corporation; it should be remembered that Ozamiz's wife, Carmen Amusategi, has 4 shares. The letter states that Juan T. McLeod, the manager of the *Compañía Marítima*, has gone to New York to negotiate with the Americans. Etxeita thinks it will be quite some time before the sale takes place. From the early total optimism, Etxeita has now moved to a situation of caution.

In the letter of 6 May he sends to Ozamiz, the first traces of pessimism gradually emerge. The letter refers to the conditions for the sale of the shares mentioned by Mr. McLeod; the first: the sale of each share for 650 Philippine pesos; the second: a 90-day period for paying for the purchase of each share; the third: all the profits for 1901 to be for those selling the shares; and the fourth: if the American company fails to pay the money owing to the shareholders for the purchase of the shares within 90 days, the agreement can be suspended. The New York syndicate did not accept all the agreements outright and proposed that the negotiations be delayed until August. In that case McLeod says that the sellers are entitled to the profits for the first six months of 1902; and to compensate for the losses caused by the uncertainty that was happening in the company, the company was requested to guarantee 20% of the value offered for the shares. These new conditions gave rise to doubts in the American company.

In a letter of 14 May to Abaroa, Etxeita displays pessimism and fear that the negotiations could break down. Etxeita tells Abaroa to sell the shares that he (Etxeita) holds in another company, the electricity company, of which he is a shareholder. On 19 May he writes to McLeod, but McLeod is not in the USA but in Hamburg. From that we can assume that the negotiations with the New York syndicate have broken down. The letter mentions doubts about the company as well as concern for the future of the Spanish captains and maritime functionaries that are in Manila.

On 26 and 27 May Etxeita writes letters to different members of the *Compañía Marítima*. In these letters he counts up the bank drafts of the profits of the *Compañía Marítima*, but he also refers to the negotiations taking place with the American consortium. He says that for the time being the negotiations have been suspended, because the New York people did not agree to the conditions of the Manila company for re-opening the negotiations in August, without any commitment being given by either party. Etxeita says they might start again in August, but in the absence of any guarantee as to what will happen when the talks resume, he tells the shareholders that they are free to sell their shares to anyone they wish. On 31 May he writes to Leon de Longa to find out his view.

On 9 June Jose Manuel Etxeita writes to José de Bedoya of Cadiz. Bedoya, it seems, has doubts about the sale of the shares because of the latest developments with regard to the negotiations. Etxeita's advice is to sell them as quickly as possible. The American consortium has in fact suspended the negotiations, but as the Philippines are now in the hands of the USA, bearing in mind the influence the consortium could bring to bear on the US Government and on the decisions this Government could take with respect to the Philippines, it would be better to sell as quickly as possible, because the subsequent decisions of the US Government could go against the interests of the company. However, should Bedoya decide to sell, Etxeita tells him not to take the money out for the time being, because the taxes have risen considerably.

On 28 July he writes to Raimundo de Abaroa. In it he explains that disagreements have begun to surface among the shareholders of the *Compañía Marítima*. One interpretation could be that this might be the aim of the purchaser's manoeuvres and delays in order to secure a favourable purchase. Larrinaga, the one in Liverpool, opposes the sale at 650 pesos per share.

From this point onwards, little more will be said about these negotiations; but Abaroa's problems do not end there. In October, for example, the *Compañía Marítima* will have problems with strikers. This strike was resolved around November to Etxeita's and Abaroa's benefit (Etxeita and Abaroa would have defended the interests of the colonial oligarchs, not those of the workers, of course).

In December, the US Government established cabotage freedom in the Philippines ports. This spelled the end of the privileges of the Spanish com-

panies and was therefore bad for the *Compañía Marítima*. We have the first news of this in a letter of 1 December, but the most striking thing is this sentence that appears in a letter sent to Abaroa on one of the last days of December: Etxeita says that this cabotage freedom means that “our interests are heading for the abyss.”

Thus far, as regards the relations between the *Compañía Marítima* of Manila and the United States. As we have seen, these relations have been very difficult with numerous ups and downs and dark negotiations, and this latest move by the US Government.

The Compañía Marítima and the establishing of the gold standard in the Philippines

Having read one of Jose Manuel Etxeita's letters of 1902, it emerges that the US Government has decided to establish the gold standard as a currency measure in the Philippines. The letter is dated 12 June 1902 and was sent to Raimundo Abaroa. It seems that once the gold standard has been established, the Spanish and Mexican currency will have to disappear (in Mexico and Spain coins based on the silver standard were used). Each coin based on the gold standard would have the value of two previous coins. That was to be very important for the business ventures of Etxeita and Abaroa. From having considered selling all the shares of the electricity company, Etxeita now thinks that it would be better to hang on to them (the company *La Electricista* will be covered below). According to Etxeita, the new currency could carry the symbol of the Philippines Government to symbolise the independence of the Philippines. Jose Manuel Etxeita was to confirm this opinion in another letter of 21 November.

Going onto the gold standard meant that the value of the money or currency (in the places where the gold standard was established) was comparable with gold and that the currency should be convertible for an equivalent amount in gold. One of the great defenders of the gold standard was the British Empire and the countries under its influence (the United States had a big cultural influence from Britain). France, on the other hand, was the greatest defender of the silver standard; the gold standard was the international standard for a large part of the 20th century. We can assume that together with the gold standard, the US was planning to establish the US dollar or a currency based on it in the Philippines.

Etxeita refers again to the gold standard in a letter to Abaroa of 4 February. He does not say very much, however, because the letter was not to do with that but mainly to do with company *La Electricista*. According to Etxeita, he found out about the news in the press, but in the press article, apart from the US decision, Etxeita says no date has been fixed, nor have the details of the decision been given.

In another letter sent on 22 February, Jose Manuel de Etxeita calculates the consequences of establishing the gold standard. The moment it is established, trade relations with Spain (at that time Spain was on the silver standard) could be harmed. Etxeita says that the Spanish Government in fact wants to go onto the gold standard. Very gradually the gold standard became predominant in international trade relations. On 10 March, however, Etxeita writes again saying that the previous calculations were wrong. In a letter of 24 March Etxeita says he would like the gold standard to be established as quickly as possible; it could be established early in 1904. Further details appear in a letter of 6 April. In it Etxeita says that he has read in the "Novedades" newspaper of New York that before January 1904 the Spanish and Mexican currencies have to be taken out of circulation in the Philippines' trade. So it would appear that the currency change took place in January 1904. However, as the letters sent to Abaroa end at this point (a letter of 23 October says that Abaroa is in Mundaka), we have no further information on the matter. We can assume that Abaroa and Etxeita had their attention on the works to build the new house. As no letters were exchanged between them, Etxeita was not to express his views in writing on the subject. In a letter sent to McLeod on 21 March 1904, he says that Raimundo de Abaroa was mayor of Mundaka, and that figuring among his plans was also the building of a new cemetery. So it would appear that from this point onwards, Etxeita and Abaroa would have spoken to each other about it, about the future of the Company, but without putting it in writing and thus in a way that could be interpreted.

The Compañía Marítima and the Reyes affair

The *Compañía Marítima* was to have another kind of problem. It arose out of a complaint lodged by two former employees, the Reyes brothers, against the *Compañía Marítima* itself. Etxeita refers to this for the first time on 6 June. According to the tone of Etxeita's letter, he does not appear to attach great importance to the dangers posed by this complaint. Etxeita says that the brothers Rafael and Francisco Reyes, who had been the Managing Directors of the *Compañía Marítima* and who had been dismissed from their positions by the General Meeting in 1897, lodged an appeal to request 1% of the profits of that year. Etxeita does not take this challenge seriously, because as the Reyes brothers are shareholders of the company, he feels it would go against their interests. Moreover, according to Etxeita, they have no legitimacy in presenting this complaint, because the General Meeting of the *Compañía Marítima* had the power of decision, and according to its Statutes, as it had executive power, it was entitled to remove the Managing Director from his position (Etxeita cites a man by the name of Moreno Lacalle, already deceased, to support his view). What is more, when these two men were dismissed, the Meeting apparently decided to reduce the salary of all the members, and no one protested, except for the Reyes brothers. According to Etxeita, it seems that this complaint has no justification.

On 9 September of that year Etxeita writes another letter to Abaroa in which he refers to the complaint lodged by the Reyes brothers. It seems that

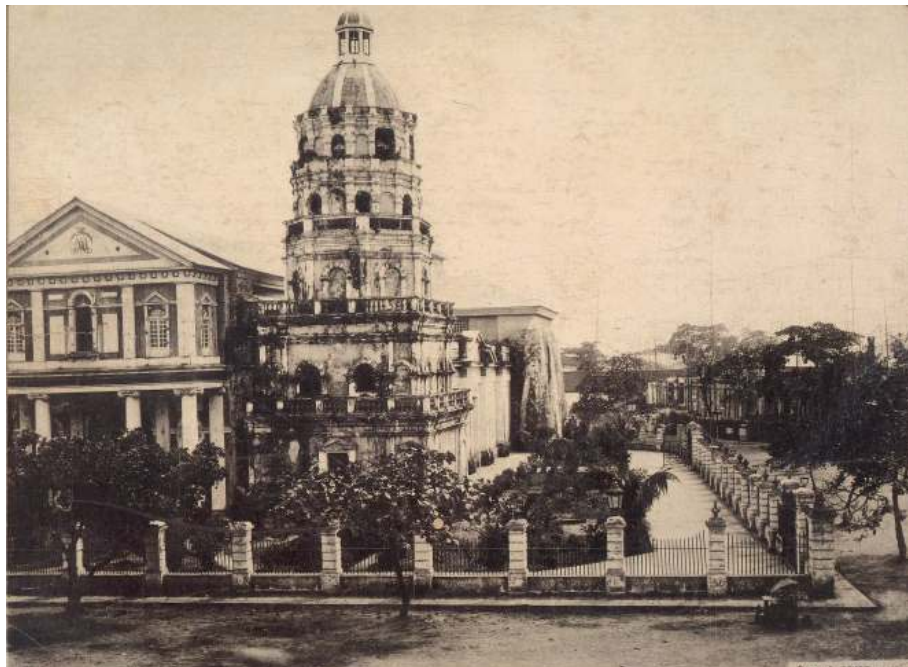
the judgment was due to be handed down initially on 29 July, but Etxeita says that it appears it could be put back to another day as Abaroa makes no mention of it in his letter of 3 August. According to Etxeita's letter, each side hopes to get a judgment in its favour; both Rafael Reyes and the *Compañía Marítima*. Etxeita comments on Reyes' hope: "He will really regret it."

Nevertheless, this optimistic tone will disappear on 16 October. In a letter to Abaroa that day, Etxeita regrets the fact that things "are going wrong" in the Reyes case. He pins his hopes on the *Compañía Marítima* engaging good lawyers and appealing against the result of the judgment, and if the judgment goes against them, on the possibility of an appeal being lodged in the Supreme Court. On 5 November Etxeita is pleased that the General Meeting of the *Compañía Marítima* has decided unanimously to appeal against the judgment in the Reyes case. He receives this piece of news in a letter Abaroa sends him on 21 September. So, if the Company has filed an appeal, we can assume that in the first instance it had lost the case. No further mention of the case will be made in this collection of correspondence, but on 24 March 1903 the Statutes of the *Compañía Marítima* are changed with respect to the appointing of its Managing Directors. A decision is made to appoint Managing Directors in a personal way, and to pay each one a fixed salary. Jose Manuel Etxeita is to express his opposition to these big salaries. This change would appear to go against the interests of Raimundo Abaroa and the members of the *Echeita y Portuondo* company, so not long afterwards Etxeita and Abaroa will be selling their shares (moreover Abaroa will soon be back in Mundaka and will be mayor).

Jose Manuel Etxeita and the "Minas de la Bernilla" company

Jose Manuel Etxeita must have shares not only in the *Compañía Marítima* of Manila and in the company *La Electricista*, but also in the mining company *Minas de la Bernilla*.

The mining company is referred to in letters sent by Etxeita between March and April, 1902. He was to send the first in this set on 7 March to Juan Bautista de Larrinaga in the city of Glasgow. According to what Etxeita tells Larrinaga, the report and yearly balance of the mining company addressed to Larrinaga have been sent to Etxeita's house in Mundaka. So Etxeita encloses the Report and a letter from Mr. Adolfo Chauton Sainz (it can be assumed that Chauton Sainz is a major shareholder) in his letter to Larrinaga. The *Minas de la Bernilla* company seems to have called an Extraordinary General Meeting to decide whether the company should continue operating or be dissolved. According to the Report, this company has been a failure, because it sold the mines belonging to it in order to buy others which were worse. In this letter there is a reference to a "Company", which appears to be the *Compañía Marítima* which wields great influence on the *Minas de la Bernilla* company. So in the forthcoming Extraordinary General Meeting a decision will have to be taken on whether to dissolve the company or whether it should go ahead with the exploiting of new mines. This Extraordinary General Meeting is scheduled for 17 March.



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On 12 May Jose Manuel Etxeita writes to Mr Adolfo Chauton Sainz. He apologises for not attending the Extraordinary General Meeting, but if the *Minas de la Bernilla* company decides to go on operating, he tells Chauton that he wants to hang on to his shares.

Etxeita writes to Larrinaga again on 24 March. In it he tells him that the Extraordinary General Meeting of the *Minas de la Bernilla* company has decided to suspend the contract to work the new mines, and dissolve the company. Jose Manuel Etxeita is very pessimistic about this decision but says he has to accept it, because there was no better option. A newspaper cutting reporting on the meeting is enclosed in the letter to Larrinaga.

In a letter of 2 April he writes to his friend Eduardo de Lete from Zaragoza telling him about the problems of the *Minas de la Bernilla* company. In fact, some mining engineers wrote some totally favourable reports on some mines in Santander and after that the *Minas de la Bernilla* company was set up. Nevertheless, the company did nothing but squander the money, and even if they were expecting to extract 200.000 tons initially, in the end they only managed 3.000 tons, which was of poor quality as well. It seems that Jose Manuel Etxeita and certain people close to him (he refers to his son Salvador Etxeita) lost a lot of money, "because a friend gave us an assurance of good business." This friend could well be Adolfo Chauton Sainz. At the end of the letter Jose Manuel Etxeita tells Eduardo de Lete to be careful when investing in mining businesses.

Jose Manuel Etxeita and “La Electricista” company

The company *La Electricista* was another company in which Etxeita had an interest. In it, too, Raimundo de Abaroa was one of his associates. Early on, the name of this company called *La Electricista* did not appear very much among Etxeita's letters, but it was to become more and more important, in particular, from 1902 onwards. We get news about this company on 22 April for the first time. Etxeita writes to Abaroa on that day. In it he expresses his surprise because in a previous letter Abaroa did not tell him anything about the company, when it turns out that the company used to hold its Annual General Meeting in March. So Etxeita expresses his concern at the lack of news about this General Meeting. In another letter of 24 May, Jose Manuel Etxeita tells Raimundo Abaroa that he has received the company report. It paints a very rosy picture of the company, but with the gold standard the exchange rates in Manila will be higher than in the Iberian Peninsula, so he recommends to Abaroa that rather than take the money out, he should hang on to his shares. On 12 June when he finds out that the Americans are about to establish the gold standard, Etxeita decides against selling his shares. In another letter of 28 July, too, he recommends to Abaroa that he should be paid the profits of the company *La Electricista* in the form of shares.

Nevertheless, on 11 August Etxeita tells him to collect the dividends of *La Electricista* in cash, and send them to him immediately, because the cost of the new house has gone up. The fact is that, even though the economic situation is bad, Etxeita needs that money to build his new house. On 25 August Etxeita says he has collected the dividends: \$ 941,25.

In a letter sent on 28 October it becomes clear that the situation has changed a lot in the company *La Electricista*. In this letter, according to Etxeita, another company (Etxeita uses the word “syndicate”), was in fact operating in places where *La Electricista* was supposed to be. As that will cause his shares in *La Electricista* to fall, Etxeita tells Abaroa to sell them. That pessimism was to grow in the letter of 5 November. On the one hand, Etxeita sees that it is necessary to sell, not at that moment, but when there is not such a big difference between the Philippines and Spanish currencies. *La Electricista* has a contract to manage Manila's electricity supply, but once the competitors come in, it does not look as through this will continue.

In a letter on 11 December, Etxeita tells Abaroa that in the newspaper “El Comercio”, the Public Prosecutor of Manila appears to have prosecuted the company *La Electricista*. That coupled with the American competition could be very damaging indeed.

On 4 February 1903 Etxeita is worried and writes to Abaroa. The letter is full of pessimism. The General Meeting of the company *La Electricista*, despite not deciding to sell the company, has changed the Statutes and has decided to distribute its capital in a different way. According to this new distribution, the founders would lose power. This letter also reveals that Abaroa has \$ 1.975 of Etxeita's but Etxeita tells him not to send it until the exchange rates improve.

Raimundo de Abaroa is known to be returning to Mundaka shortly. Nevertheless, the matter does not end here because additional information emerges about the company *La Electricista*, in 1905, in particular. That year Jose Manuel Etxeita writes four letters to the Manager of Spanish-Philippines Bank of Manila. The fact is he wants to collect payment for his shares and that is why he wants to know if Abaroa has handed his share certificates in at the bank. On 19 April he writes to the Manager of the Philippines Bank again, this time more worried, and maintains the same position as in the previous letter. Etxeita will however get the money in the end; this is confirmed in the letters sent by Etxeita to the Manager of the Bank on 26 April and 6 May.

JOSE MANUEL ETXEITA AND HIS PASTIMES

Two of Etxeita's pastimes will be looked at here. Perhaps "pastime" is not the best word to define these activities, but for want of a better term, these activities not related to his professional activities will be referred to as "pastimes." Once Jose Manuel Etxeita had returned from Manila, without forgetting his companies, he became fully immersed in an activity that was not possible in Manila: being involved in a nautical school in Bilbao for training seamen, or subscribing to several newspapers (in other words as an avid reader). So two of Jose Manuel Etxeita's pastimes were the training of future seamen at the Nautical School and newspapers, in order to be up to date with what was going on. It should also be pointed out that some of the newspapers he subscribed to dealt with ships and the jobs and way of life of seamen. This clearly shows that Jose Manuel Etxeita was a man with a deep maritime instinct, a person who could not live away from the sea; this is something normal and easy to understand as Etxeita was an inhabitant of Mundaka through and through.

As pointed out above, one of Jose Manuel Etxeita's pastimes was newspapers; one of them was the newspaper *La Unión*. As he explained to his friend Eduardo de Lete he would subscribe to the newspaper *La Unión* using the money Lete owed him. (It should be remembered that there was a deep friendship between Eduardo de Lete and Jose Manuel Etxeita; Etxeita even told Lete about the failure of the mines business). Etxeita preferred this paper to the one he had been reading until that moment and which was *El Comercio*, but he found it too pro-American. This is what Etxeita says in a letter of 26 December 1900.

But on 13 January the following year, Etxeita says that the subscription to that newspaper is \$ 7 for six months, in other words, 35 pesetas (this is 10,50 Philippine dollars, but because of the exchange rate, products in the Philippines were 50% more expensive than on the Spanish Peninsula where the price was fixed at \$ 7). Etxeita tells Lete he will take out a six-month subscription, in other words, until June. But a week later, on 20 January, Etxeita decides to extend his subscription for another six months, as he says in a letter to Lete.

The newspaper *La Unión* appears to have been a “general” one, in other words, it offered all kinds of information. Nevertheless, as pointed out already, as Jose Manuel Etxeita was a man of the sea through and through, he was encouraged to subscribe to magazines that had to do with sea subjects. One of these magazines was *El Mundo Naval Ilustrado*. On 7 or 9 November, 1901 (the date is not very legible) he wrote to the editor of this magazine, to a Mr. José Díaz de Lujano, in fact. In the letter Etxeita apologizes for his delay in paying his subscription. The names Messrs Raimundo de Abaroa and Emilio Vega are mentioned in the letter; it seems that these two men had told Etxeita that his subscription had only been paid for until 1 October. But Etxeita has only just become aware of this and is apologizing to Jose Díaz de Lujano for the delay, which he feels is not his fault. Etxeita confirms this on 19 November.

In January 1902 a rather unusual thing happened to Jose Manuel Etxeita on account of the magazine, *El Mundo Naval Ilustrado*, and a new one entitled *La Vida Marítima*. As pointed out above, he subscribed to the former. Nevertheless, on 19 January letters were sent to the editors of each one and in them Etxeita informs them about some significant occurrences. From what he says in his letter, it appears that the magazine *El Mundo Naval Ilustrado* was going to cease publication and in his subscription account for this magazine he had 15 pesetas outstanding, so he was asking that this amount be used to formalise his subscription to the magazine *La Vida Marítima*. Nevertheless, on 23rd of the same month Etxeita writes to Avelino de Arostegi, the editor of the magazine *El Mundo Naval Ilustrado*, confirming the previous operation and sending all the previous letters exchanged between them so that there is no mistake. Etxeita sends Avelino de Arostegi another confirmation of this in a letter of 26 January.

In January 1904 Jose Manuel Etxeita advises the General Secretary of the Spanish Maritime League that he would like to subscribe to the *Vida Marítima* magazine during 1904. That year the subscription cost 20 pesetas (we can assume that the Spanish Maritime League was the organisation responsible for publishing *Vida Marítima*, or that the magazine was the organisation’s “mouthpiece”). In January 1905 he writes another letter to the clerk of *Vida Marítima*, renewing his subscription for that year. The subscription for that year, too, was 20 pesetas.

Finally, Jose Manuel Etxeita was to subscribe to another newspaper, too. It was *Noticario Bilbaino*. In a letter to Pedro Albina of Bilbao he expresses his intention to subscribe to this newspaper. In fact, Albina owes Etxeita some money, so Jose Manuel Etxeita tells him he will use the money to subscribe to the newspaper.

As pointed out above, Jose Manuel Etxeita’s most important pastimes were ships. As a man from Mundaka he had a seaman’s vocation. He was also a [Merchant Navy] Master. That shows that Etxeita never lost the identity of his town even though he lived far from the land of his birth, did important work in the Administration and fulfilled the conditions that guaranteed a com-

fortable life. Etxeita was a Master and from then on never lost contact with other Masters in Bizkaia. Etxeita had two friends who were to keep him in contact with the world of professional seamen: Gonzalo de Artaza and Venancio de Zarakondegi, who were both from Bilbao. The first contact took place on 12 February 1901; in a letter written to Gonzalo de Artaza that day Etxeita tells him that he is being made a member of the Spanish Merchant Navy Masters and Officers; Gonzalo de Artaza was the head of that body. On becoming a member of that body Etxeita tells him he has received a copy of the statutes of the organisation and copies of the three most recent issues of the publication *Boletín Naval*. In the letter, even if it has nothing to do with the matter in hand, it is curious how Jose Manuel Etxeita defines Mundaka, because he offers a very positive view of it in his novels and texts in Basque. Etxeita expresses thanks for having the *Boletín Naval* magazine because he says it is one of the few sources of information “en estos pueblecitos embrutecidos, sin saber nada de lo que pasa por el Mundo (...)”.⁷ This is very strange, bearing in mind that on other occasions Etxeita is proud of being from Mundaka.

In August 1901 (the date, recipient and town are illegible but it appears to be a letter to Gonzalo de Artaza of Bilbao), Etxeita speaks about the Masters' Association wishing to purchase a training ship. As pointed out above, Gonzalo de Artaza was the association's chairman. The Masters' Association wants to buy such a vessel to organise practical tests for the students that want to become Masters. But the problem is, owing to a misunderstanding, two Associations of Ship Owners are building vessels of this kind. Etxeita thinks that this is silly as are bad relations between the Associations of Ship Owners (because the Masters and ship owners need each other). That is why Etxeita believes that they are facing a situation that needs to be resolved as quickly as possible. A few lines further down Etxeita refers to some steamships the Association has ordered and proposes the designs and dimensions for them.

On 13 August he writes to his nephew Juan Beotegi. In it he gives him some advice on practice for becoming a merchant navy officer; Beotegi is apparently preparing to sit some nautical exams. Etxeita gives him some advice on routes, and tells him to comply exactly with what is stated in the logbook (binnacle), etc.

On 10 September Jose Manuel Etxeita gets in touch with another friend: Juan Miguel de Orkolaga of Zarautz. Orkolaga, it seems, wants to know the practical use of some Maritime Calculation Tables drawn by a man called Gallastegi in an article published in the *Boletín Naval* magazine. Etxeita clearly and accurately clarifies Orkolaga's doubts to him in a long letter. According to what Etxeita says, this Orkolaga seems to be more of a meteorologist than a seaman.

On 1 November he writes another letter to Gonzalo de Artaza. It seems that the Masters' Association has commissioned Etxeita to write the General

7. “... in these little unenlightened villages without knowing what is going on in the World (...)”

Shipping Regulations. This work is very important because it specifies the conditions that have to be met by anyone who wants to be a Master in the Spanish State, and which rules need to be abided by when sailing. Moreover, as this is work connected with one of Jose Manuel Etxeita's biggest pastimes, we can imagine that he is delighted about it. That is why on being informed about this appointment, Etxeita thanks Artaza. Jose Manuel Etxeita immerses himself in this work and on 29 August he sends Gonzalo de Artaza some notes on Nautical Studies. Etxeita tells Artaza that he will be putting the rights of this work in the hands of the Masters' Association.

On 13 January Etxeita sends the draft of Shipping Regulations for Seaborne Trade to Gonzalez de Artaza and this time to Venancio de Zarakondegi as well. This is a draft law of the regulations that vessels have to comply with, but it does not establish regulations on engines, because Jose Manuel Etxeita believes that this is the competence of the Association of Ships' Engineers. Moreover, in the letter sent to Venancio de Zarakondegi, Etxeita undertakes to discuss the Nautical School's Teachers' Committee (Mr Zarakondegi appears to be a teacher at the Nautical School run by the Masters' Association). On 17th of that same month he sends Mr Artaza the Royal Decree on Local Maritime Committees.

On 3 March 1902 Etxeita writes to Antonio de Ozamiz of Bilbao about the exams of the Nautical School. At that school Antonio de Ozamiz is the teacher of Juan Beotegi, Etxeita's nephew. It seems that Beotegi spoke to Etxeita quite favourably about his teacher, and therefore, as Beotegi has passed an exam at the school, Etxeita thanks him for the attention he has paid to Beotegi's training. On 6 May Etxeita and Ozamiz discuss the subject once again.

On 1 July Etxeita brings up the subject of the exams at the Nautical School of Bermeo with Rufino de Amusategi. They are discussing a student by the name of Félix Macías. This student has been sent to Etxeita by Rufino de Amusategi so that Etxeita can speak to the teacher of the Nautical School of Bermeo and thus train this student. However, in Etxeita's reply to Amusategi he tells him that he has spoken to the teacher about Macías. This teacher does not think it at all likely that Macías will be up to the September exams, because he has little time to study. In another letter Etxeita sent to Amusategi on 27 September, the predictions of the Bermeo teacher turn out to be vindicated. He tells him that Félix Macías has passed the geography exam but failed the one on geometry. Etxeita points out that he put pressure on the Examination Board, but they did not listen to all the requests made by Etxeita and Macías. Jose Manuel Etxeita tells Amusategi that he does not approve of the decision taken by Macías, once he had been informed of his exam result, to do practice at sea rather than study.

The last letters on this subject are six letters sent to Venancio de Zarakondegi between 16 September and 30 November, 1904. In the letters Jose Manuel Etxeita offers him information on the Maritime Regulations, in particular about the regulations pertaining to Masters, about the penalties

provided for in the Regulations, on the General Legislation on Seaborne Trade Shipping, Legislation on Customs and Excise, and Legislation on Accidents.

On the whole, bearing in mind the importance Jose Manuel Etxeita attaches to this subject and the position he reached, it is clear that we are talking about a man who could not live far from the sea.

Jose Manuel Etxeita's final "pastime" was to do with plants. Although it was less important when compared with the other two, it is worth making it known. In 1904, he spoke to Juan Cruz Egileor of Bilbao about plants. In fact in some of his letters he announces his intention to plant orange trees in the kitchen garden of his new house. On 4 February 1904 he orders different plants and trees from Egileor (Egileor appears to be an expert in Botany). Nevertheless, the letter is illegible so it is not possible to transcribe the whole list, which includes winter imperials, violets and camellias. In another letter Etxeita sends on 25 May he orders other kinds of plants from Egileor: two varieties of white rose, one two-metre high leafy plant called "rhododendron calophyllum", a hollyhock (white) and an "aristolochia siphon." On 1 June Jose Manuel Etxeita expands the list in this letter by adding 12 geraniums, two "eulalia" grass plants and a "flibiscum grandiflorum" to the previous one. As we can see, Jose Manuel Etxeita paid great attention to the appearance of the meadow around his new house, and to types and species of flowers to the point that he chose them without heeding the advice of botanists. From the attention he paid to this matter we can see the Jose Manuel Etxeita was very keen on botany.

JOSE MANUEL ETXEITA AND HIS FRIENDS

Jose Manuel Etxeita was a very influential person in his community. In fact this influence has often come through not only because of his social or political position, but also because of the number of shares he held and interests. Nevertheless, in a person like Etxeita (born and brought up in a humble atmosphere and one who later had a successful career in the Administration) that influence and respect he had around him led to him being the holder of a certain position. Indeed, having completed a career like that tends to lead to two things mostly: on the one hand, contacts, and on the other, respect from those around him. So it is not at all absurd to think that Jose Manuel Etxeita's friends would have asked him to do them different favours; just as it would not be strange to think that Etxeita himself would have used his influence and prestige in favour of his friends.

We can find some of these friends in the *Compañía Marítima*. Jose Manuel Etxeita had a very good relationship with Juan T. McLeod, the Manager of the Company, and that is why we can say that he was "something more" than just a humble shareholder. For example, Etxeita was to give lots of recommendations for securing jobs for people at the *Compañía Marítima*. One of them, in January 1901, was Rafael Lete, a pharmacist and a member of the family of Eduardo Lete, a close friend of Etxeita's. He does the same thing on 9 August

1901 through his brother-in-law, Raimundo de Abaroa, when he tries to find a job for Jose Sainz in the *Compañía Marítima*. Then in 1904 he was to introduce Lucio Zabala to McLeod.

Nevertheless, Juan T. McLeod was to lose his job as Manager in October 1904 and be replaced by Mr. Manuel M. Rincon. Internal tensions in the company were to be the cause of McLeod's dismissal. McLeod did not appear to enjoy very good health, either. However, Etxeita seems to have accepted Rincon's appointment well, saying that the Company had "got it right" when taking this decision. Nevertheless, Etxeita told Rincon he would be grateful if the latter could look after his shares, hinting to him that he would like him to protect his interests.

We could say that Etxeita's circle of friends is thus complete: on the one hand, the members of the *Echeita y Portuondo* company, Ceferino Portuondo, León Longa, Cruz Larrinaga and her husband Teodoro Arana. On the other hand, the main bosses of the *Compañía Marítima*, Juan T. McLeod and Raimundo Abaroa. Neither should his lawyers Rufino de Amusatagi and Francisco Pleguezuelo be forgotten, nor the Ojinagas of Liverpool. And then in a broader way the other shareholders of the *Compañía Marítima*: José Bedoya, Antonio Ozamiz, Félix Larrinaga, Tirso Lizarraga, Francisco de la Pedrosa, and others. In a more concealed way, but no less important, we find Eduardo Lete, whom Etxeita confided in on several occasions, so we can assume that he and Etxeita got on very well.

Etxeita also has contact with city people, both directly and through his lawyer Rufino de Amusatagi. Indeed, during that time Etxeita treated the two most important military figures, Ramon Blanco and Valeriano Weyler, as "friends." It has to be said that these two were with Etxeita in the Philippines. Nevertheless, the relationship he had with them gives us an idea of just how far Jose Manuel Etxeita's relations went.

Furthermore, we learn from Jose Manuel Etxeita's letters that he also acted as an intermediary in arranging the wills of some of his fellow inhabitants at the notary's office for wills of Pedro P. Areitio of Gernika. That tells us about Etxeita's influence.

CONCLUSIONS

By analysing this correspondence it is possible come up with a profile of Jose Manuel Etxeita. The truth is this Jose Manuel Etxeita has little in common with the naïve, simple landscapes that appear in his novels. What emerges is the Jose Manuel Etxeita who was in contact with power at all times, as a shareholder or exchanging favours with Governors and Ministers. He seems quite materialistic in trying to make as much profit as possible out of his shares and in his concern about them.

We have another side of Jose Manuel Etxeita in his relationships with his family and friends. This correspondence reveals to us always a Jose Manuel Etxeita who was concerned about his family and never forgot to send his regards. He appears to be a very courteous person.

The section began with a summary of Jose Manuel Etxeita's correspondence and a simple classification. The author of this article would like to end it by mentioning something that strikes him as curious: all the letters, including those sent to his family, are in Spanish. This is rather unusual in an author who later became a skilled writer of literature in Basque, but this could be explained by the rather repressive laws existing around language diversity at that time.

To conclude, it has to be said that Etxeita's correspondence reveals a considerable amount about his professional life. Indeed, it provides a chance to get to know a side of this inhabitant of Mundaka which has hitherto remained unknown. The writer of this paper regards the reading Etxeita's correspondence as essential and indispensable if one wants to get to know this side of Jose Manuel Etxeita, bearing in mind the severe lack of documents on him.