THREE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY INDIAN OCEAN SHIPWRECKS: MAPS AS HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

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The author was appointed as a lecturer in the Spanish Discipline in 1965, and was Reader in Spanish and Portuguese from 1973 until his retirement early in 1987, since when he has been a Visiting Scholar. An optional course in Portuguese and Brazilian Studies which he introduced in 1970 was partially responsible for a change in research interests from Mexican literature to the application of place-name study techniques to inscriptions on early maps and charts, initially in an attempt to find a solution to one specific enigma in the history of cartography.

For two centuries the landmass named Jave-la-Grande, which appears south of Indonesia on a number of French manuscript world maps made between 1542 and 1566, has been claimed by some to be an early map of Australia, owing to its position and to the superficial similarity between part of its east coast and part of the east coast of Australia. Since several of the inscriptions on both coasts of Jave-la-Grande gave clear indications of having been derived from Portuguese sources, it was held that the Portuguese, not the Dutch, were the first Europeans to reach Australia.

However, somewhat surprisingly, no one had attempted a serious, critical examination of these inscriptions. Place-name studies begun in 1980 seem to have provided incontrovertible proof that the landmass concerned has nothing whatsoever to do with Australia, but was composed from primitive, large-scale, Portuguese sketch charts of parts of the coasts of Java and Vietnam. The French cartographers, unable to identify them, but convinced that they were genuine, attached them to the southern coasts of Java and Sumbawa which were left blank on Portuguese 16th century charts. Some cartographers actually joined Jave-la-Grande by a fictitious coastline to the north coast of Tierra del Fuego, which had been discovered by Magellan in 1520, to create a representation of the vast southern continent long believed to exist to counterbalance the large landmass in the northern hemisphere.

1 This article is abridged and adapted from a much more detailed version entitled ‘Cartographical clues to three 16th century shipwrecks in the Indian Ocean’ which was originally published in The Great Circle, vo. 14, no. 1, 1992. Grateful acknowledgement is made to the Australian Research Council for assistance in the preparation of both articles.

2 See W.A.R. Richardson, The Portuguese Discovery of Australia: Fact or Fiction?, Canberra, National Library of Australia, 1989 (Occasional Lecture Series, no. 3), and the works cited in it, for details of the place-name study case against the identification of Jave-la-Grande as Australia.
Fervent adherents to a given theory, however insubstantial its base, tend to be extremely reluctant to accept evidence that runs counter to their beliefs. This applies as much today in the case of the Portuguese 'discovery' of Australia as it did several centuries ago in the case of that most famous of southern continents, the one that first appeared on the globe gores of the Dutch cartographer, Gerard Mercator, in 1541. It was uncritically copied by large numbers of cartographers for some sixty years, until Dutch navigators in particular gradually revealed more and more of it to be fictitious. Only very slowly did some cartographers reluctantly contract the outline of Mercator's creation in the face of navigational evidence. Light thrown by place-name studies upon the Jave-la-Grande enigma suggested that similar cartographical problems might well be susceptible to solution by similar methods, and this has been confirmed by further research carried out overseas and at Flinders. This article is intimately connected with two such studies, one examining the astonishing mobility and multiple identity of the Indian Ocean island first named los romeros (now Amsterdam Island), the other dealing with the origins and influence of Mercator's southern continent.

There was much rivalry between Spain and Portugal, especially after Bartolomeu Dias' rounding of the Cape of Good Hope in 1487-88 and Columbus' discovery of America in 1492, despite Pope Alexander VI's famous Inter Caetera bull of 1493 and the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 which, in slightly different ways, divided the world between them into two spheres of interest. The exact positioning of the dividing line, west of the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands, was long a source of friction, owing to the extreme difficulty of accurately calculating longitude until the late 18th century. It was not until the Portuguese reached the Moluccas from the west in 1512-13, and the Spaniards, under the 'renegade' Portuguese, Magellan, reached the Philippines in 1521 and, after his death, the Moluccas from the east, that much thought was given to the location of the dividing line on the other side of the world. The matter was eventually resolved by extensive negotiations between Spain and Portugal at Badajoz and Elvas between 1524 and 1529. The two empires were united under the Spanish Crown between 1580 and 1640, owing to the death of King Sebastian of Portugal without direct descendants in 1578. This led to Portugal being adversely affected by the Dutch people's struggle for independence from Spain, and especially by Dutch naval, military and commercial incursions into what the Portuguese considered their sphere of interest, in Brazil and most of coastal Africa, as well as in much of southern and southeastern Asia and the islands of Indonesia.

The standard Portuguese routes to the centre of their Asiatic empire, Goa, on the west coast of India, and beyond to the Spice Islands and China via the Strait of Malacca, passed either between Madagascar and Mozambique, or just to the east of Madagascar, depending on the prevailing winds (Fig. 1). Some fifteen years after their first incursion into the Indian Ocean in 1595-97, the Dutch, whose commercial interests soon became centred on Batavia (Jakarta) in Java, usually selected a much quicker route from the Cape of Good Hope, first across the southern Indian Ocean and then north to Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra. Several Dutch ships which maintained their easterly course for too long before turning north, came to grief on the west coast of Australia, while Portuguese wrecks were strewn along their regular routes.

There is, however, one well-substantiated case of an ill-fated Portuguese ship having sailed across the southern Indian Ocean. Driven far to the east of its intended course by adverse weather conditions after leaving the Cape of Good Hope, this vessel, the São Paulo, 'discovered' an island on 15 December 1560 in about 38°S latitude and it was recorded on Portuguese charts with the name of the ship concerned. However, this island, now known as Amsterdam Island, had actually been discovered on 18 March 1522 by the lone survivor of Magellan's fleet, the Spanish ship Victoria, which eventually completed the first circumnavigation. The pilot's log reported the island's latitudinal position reasonably correctly as 38°S, and by the mid-1520s it was recorded on Diogo Ribeiro's copies of the Spanish official world map, the padrón real, with the name los romeros ('the pilot fish'). By the mid-1530s, however, it was erroneously shown in 28°S latitude on Portuguese charts, 10° north of its true position, and there it remained, not merely on these, but on nearly all charts copied from them, until the 19th century. The error was not discovered because the island's phantom 28°S position was well off the regular Portuguese and Dutch routes in the Indian Ocean.

Portuguese charts, for example those of Fernão Vaz Dourado, quite correctly located both the real position of los romeros, though under the name são paulo, and the site of the ship's wreck on the coast of Sumatra (Figures 2 and 3). Several very detailed accounts of the voyage, the shipwreck and the hardships of the survivors have come down to us.
Figure 3 Part of a chart by Fernão Vaz Dourado (1570), with the inscription "qui se perdon sam paulo" (here the São Paulo was lost!) about halfway down the southwest coast of Sumatra. Several other inscriptions trace the survivors' progress southeasterwards along the coast. (Reproduced from PMC, III, pl. 271.)

Figure 4 Part of Mercator's southern continent as portrayed on Abraham Ortelius' world map in his atlas of 1570. Note the projecting landmass of BEACH, LVCACH and MALETVR south of Java, with the islands of Petan and Iulmaimor east of it. All those inscriptions are derived from a faulty text of Marco Polo's Travels. South of Africa is the Psitacorum regio (Land of Parrots), an inscription transferred by a complicated series of errors from Brazil, where versions of it appeared on several early 16th century maps. In 38°S latitude, just north of the coastline stretching from Psitacorum regio to Beach is the island of Les Romeros, incorrectly shown as four islands, and northeast of it is Pomeri, a version of the same name, in its false 28°S position. (Reproduced from A.E. Nordenskiöld, Facsimile-Atlas, pl. XLVI.)
Maps of Historical Evidence

Fernão Vaz Dourado, like nearly all Iberian cartographers, ignored Mercator’s fictitious southern continent. The other two shipwrecks to be examined were recorded by cartographers who accepted Mercator’s creation and, as will be seen, this had very strange results. Part of Abraham Ortelius’ copy of Mercator’s southern landmass is shown on Figure 4. Mercator had obtained the names given on the landmass south of Indonesia from a defectively transmitted description of SE Asia by the late 13th century Italian, Marco Polo, who was for centuries considered the authority on Asia. In a very vital context in his Travels, where he had originally quite correctly stated that certain SE Asian countries and islands were south of Champa (galmba), now central Vietnam, a careless copyist substituted the name Java/(qaua). As the names BEACH, a printer’s error for LOCACH (rendered LVCACH by Ortelius), MALETVR, Petan and laua minor were so different from the names as recorded on maps from Portuguese sources, the copyist’s error went undetected. Mercator, therefore, on the apparent authority of Marco Polo, invented coastal outlines south of Java to accommodate Marco Polo’s names.

On Mercator’s 1569 world map the inscription south of southern Africa, Psitacorum regio (‘Region of Parrots’) etc., was somewhat longer than the version given by Ortelius; it is quoted in full in English later on. Various renderings of the name ‘Land of Parrots’ had originally been attached by several non-Iberian cartographers to Brazil. However, owing to a series of misunderstandings, false positionings of inscriptions relating to Brazil and the associated ‘Land of Parrots’, together with false deductions based on them by four cartographers including Mercator himself, the Psitacorum regio inscription eventually landed up on a stretch of non-existent coastline somewhere south of the Cape of Good Hope, thus linking up the BEACH landmass with the north coast of Tierra del Fuego.7

On Ortelius’ map one can also see Los Romeros incorrectly represented as several islands, presumably because the name, being in the plural, seemed to suggest more than one island. It is, however, shown in its correct latitude of 38°S. Northeast of it, the island named Pomeri is a mistranscribed, Italianised version of los romeros in its phantom 28°S position. Due north of Ortelius’ Los Romeros is a non-existent island named Juan de Lisboa. On some maps by non-Iberian cartographers the phantom los romeros appeared more or less in that location.

6 Shirley, pl. 102.
7 Details of this transference of the ‘Land of Parrots’ inscription from Brazil to Mercator’s southern continent are contained both in the second article cited in note 5 and in W.A.R. Richardson, ‘The Origin of Place-Names on Maps’, The Map Collector, 55, 1991, especially pp. 21-2.
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The map shown on Figure 5, by the 17th century French cartographer, Pierre du Val, portrays his version of Mercator's southern continent, as amended to account for Dutch discoveries in the vicinity of Tierra del Fuego between 1616 and 1643, and along the north, west and south coasts of Australia from 1606 onwards, and also Tasman's discovery of parts of Tasmania and New Zealand in 1642. Mercator's Marco Polo-derived inscriptions, displaced by Novelle Holande etc. (Australia), have been shifted far to the southwest and amalgamated with Psitacorum regio (Land of Parrots), as can be seen by the inscription Terre des Perroquets, ou quelques uns placent les Royaumes de Psitac, Beach, Lucac et Maletur (Land of Parrots, where some place the Kingdoms of Psitac, Beach, Lucac and Maletur). It seems quite possible that Du Val did not realise that Psitac was an abridgement of Mercator's Latin inscription which he himself gives in French as Terre des Perroquets. In the South Pacific apparent evidence for the existence of Mercator's southern continent is provided by the inscription Terre de Quir (Land of Queiros). This was due to the exaggerated claims made by Pedro Fernandes de Quirós, who in 1606 had discovered what he called la Australia del Espiritu Santo, 8 but which was later named the New Hebrides and is now Vanuatu.

In the southern Indian Ocean on this 1674 map of Pierre Du Val, one can see the islands of S. Paul and Amsterdam, some 38°S; there are, in fact, two islands in that vicinity, but on modern maps the names are reversed. 9 Northwest of them, in about 28°S, is a misplaced version of Romeiros/Castellanos ('Spanish Romeros'), roughly where the Ortelius' map shows the island of Juan de Lisboa. However, added to the name are the words al. I. de Pines (otherwise known as Island of Pines). This additional inscription only occurs on maps by Pierre du Val. French cartographers had a tendency to translate foreign place-names whose meanings they knew or thought they knew, yet Du Val gives what appears to be the English word 'Pines', not translating it as Pins. Moreover, the reports emanating from both the Victoria and the São Paulo suggested that there were no trees on los romeros.

Du Val's source for this inscription was a very brief narrative by an Englishman, Henry Neville, entitled The Isle of Pines, or a late Discovery of a fourth Island near Terra Australis Incognita by Henry Cornelius van Sloetten. First published in 1668, it recounted how a

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8 Australia was coined by Queirós in honour of King Philip III of the Spanish Royal House of Austria, though he can hardly have been unaware of the word play on Terra Australis.

9 Details of the confusion in naming of these two islands can be found in the first article cited in note 5.
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Dutch vessel had discovered an island in the previous year, in a very indeterminate position, somewhere east of Madagascar. On it had been found the incredibly numerous descendants of the five survivors of an English ship stated to have been wrecked there in 1589 or 1590; the island's name was derived from that of the sole male survivor, George Pine. Du Val presumed that the 'Island of Pines' and one of the phantom representations of los romeros were one and the same island. It so happens, however, that not merely was there no island of los romeros in 28°S, there was no 'Isle of Pines' either, despite the English account's claim to be 'A True Relation'. The narrative was one of the very popular works of travel fiction that proliferated in the 17th century, several of which claimed to be voyages to Terra Australis. This is but one of numerous cases that should warn historians to be suspicious of any historical accounts that cannot be corroborated from an independent source. Those which make specific claims to be true may well be regarded as particularly suspect.

Jumping to a conclusion on the basis of insufficient or defective information, as in Pierre du Val's case, is a very human failing. So, also, is the tendency of some crusading advocates of a particular theory to clutch at the most insubstantial of straws, if they can somehow or other be construed as providing confirmatory evidence of fervently held, preconceived ideas. Mercator's belief in the southern continent, and that of those writers who maintain that the Dieppe maps constitute proof of a Portuguese discovery of Australia in the 1520s are typical examples. Some will go as far as to manufacture 'evidence' and disregard or suppress information that runs counter to their case.

Just as Dutch navigators were beginning to make holes in Mercator's southern continent, Queirós, having discovered part of Vanuatu in 1606, bombarded Philip III of Spain with memorials, very exaggerated accounts claiming he had reached part of the southern continent, and seeking to persuade the Spanish Crown to finance further expeditions to settle and develop it.

At approximately the same time two Portuguese cartographers, apparently at last convinced of the existence of Mercator's continent, portrayed it on their maps. The one who concerns us here is Manuel Godinho de Erédia. He was born in Malaca in 1563 to a Portuguese father and a Macassarese mother, and died about 1623. He acquired a well-deserved reputation for his maps of the Malay peninsula made in the early 1600s. However, with a Jesuit education in Malacca and Goa, he was an enthusiastic reader of the classical authorities of Greece and Rome, as well as Ptolemy, the Bible and Marco Polo. He was undoubtedly familiar with maps by a number of cartographers, including Mercator and Gastaldi. He also listened to verbal accounts of mainly Indonesian voyages in the area south of Java, Sumbawa and Timor. Attempts to reconcile such a variety of material led him to conceive an astonishingly confused and varying idea of what lands and islands lay in that vicinity. Furthermore, like Queirós, he was fired with a burning ambition to become a discoverer. Malay revolts against the Portuguese, and the threat posed by Dutch incursions in the area about the turn of the century, led to the cancellation of a planned exploratory voyage. In an endeavour to get financial backing from the Spanish Crown, he later composed written equivalents to Queirós' memorials. However his two famous accounts, the Declaração de Malaca (1613) and the Tratado Ophirico (1616), consist of a jumble of facts, rumours and fantasies, in a chaotic style; included are manuscript copies in his own hand of what are claimed to be legally attested confirmation of statements made by genuine voyagers. The Tratado Ophirico contains several pages of autobiography, to which we are almost exclusively indebted for knowledge of his life. It is difficult to tell how much of it is true. Both the Declaração and the Tratado are superb examples of how wishful thinking affected the construction of some early maps.

Two of Erédia's world maps are relevant to the third wreck under discussion. On the first of these (Fig. 6), which must date from 1610 or later, the southern continent is clearly based on that of Mercator. It includes a misspelled version of Psitacorum regio, as well as renderings of Beach (and Locach), Maletur, Petan and Java Minor. The Beach promontory also bears another name, LVSANTARA, which Erédia gave it on the misunderstood authority of Indonesian informants. The inscription nova jerusalem ('New Jerusalem') provides evidence of his having heard of Queirós' discovery, as it was the name he gave to the settlement on it; the date of discovery should read 1606 not 1609.

The long inscription MANUEL GODINHO / DE EREDIA / fo/y/ployndo nª. /descobrir /esta nova yndia meridional /por /o Vizohay are / de saldangaha / ano 1600 (Manuel Godinho de Erédia was ordered to discover this new southern India by the Viceroy Aires de Saldanha in the year 1600) is of particular interest. The name India or Indies, in one language or another, was bestowed in profusion in many parts of the world that had been newly discovered. In the form India Meridional(is) it appeared on several very early 16th century maps, but it was nearly always placed in what we would call SE Asia, while the name India Superior appeared on them in the vicinity of northern China. The Frenchman, Binot Paulmier de Gonneville, in 1504, named the land he reached — almost certainly Brazil — by the name les Indes meridionales. As late as 1830, one map of Australia records...
that part of it which is now the Northern Territory as AUSTRALINDIA (‘Southern India’). The modern reader can so easily fall into the trap of presuming that a place-name recorded several centuries ago necessarily refers to the same place as it does today.

The southern continental outline on the world map in Erédia’s Declaração de Malaca of 1513 (Fig. 7) is also based on that of Mercator, but it has three significant alterations to the outline on the previous map. One is the shape of the ‘Beach’ promontory south of Java, and the appearance on it of only one name, lucasanta, which on yet another of his maps is attached as an alternative name to IAVA.MINOR, on an island undoubtedly copied from Gastaldi. The inscription INDIA. MERIDIONAL /. descoberta anno. 1601 (‘South India discovered in the year 1601’) appears to be a reference to a voyage which Erédia claims was made by a servant of his in 1610 [sic.] to an unidentifiable land south of Java. The second alteration to the previous outline is the vast gap in the coastline southwest of the southern extremity of South America, and the group of small islands in the vicinity of where Tierra del Fuego is. This suggests that he had heard of the voyage by the Dutchmen Schouten and Le Maire who passed between Tierra del Fuego and Staten Island (Isla de los Estados) in 1606, thus proving that Tierra del Fuego could not be part of the southern continent. The third alteration is that the most westerly inscription, CASTELHANOS descobritas. ano. 1609 (‘Discovered by the Spaniards in the year 1609’), still with the wrong date, is so positioned as to suggest that he may have accepted Queiros’ claim to have discovered part of the southern continent.

It is, however, primarily the remaining inscription which concerns us here, for the words PORTUGUEZES / com Artilheria. ano. 1606 (‘Portuguese with Artillery in the year 1606’) suggest a landing on a stretch of coastline we know does not exist, somewhere in the vicinity of where los romeros (Amsterdam Island) actually is. The origin of the inscription is to be found in two confused and stylistically chaotic passages, in the Tratado Ophirico and the Declaração de Malaca.

The longer passage, in the Tratado Ophirico, states that Rui de Melo de Sampaio, captain of the São Paulo, discovered the ‘Region of Parrots’ in 48°S latitude, and that the sailors had described it as a large island. Actually they described it as being small. Erédia chooses to “present that it is the mainland that extends from Lucach”. He then goes on to give details of how a Dutch vessel under the command of “Cornelio Malodiva called at this land” in 1606 and

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10 Reproduced in T.M. Perry, The Discovery of Australia, Melbourne, Nelson, 1982, pl. 64. Note the literal meaning of the modern term Australasia (‘Southern Asia’).
found there "the descendants of Francisco de Alboquerque and Po. Vaz de Veiga and other Portuguese from those two ships which disappeared somewhere beyond the Cape of Good Hope in 1503". The people were reported as being white, looking like Portuguese and having "Portuguese words". In one village the Dutch "saw a lot of bronze artillery with the Royal Arms of Portugal". He then states that the Portuguese king, "Dom Manuel, ordered these captains to be searched for by Cyde Barbosa and Po. Coresma" in 1506, but that "they could find no trace of people along the coast of Good Hope or on the coast of S. Lourenço [Madagascar] in the year 1506". He then returns to the São Paulo, and "some notes made by the pilot to the effect that that country was a great island like New Guinea, and that along its south coast there was a large bay and trading ports from which large sailing ships passed to the country of Lucach, and all that bay [was] inhabited by white people, and the other people like Portuguese lived on the northern promontory where the Metal Artillery with the Armes of Portugal was, so that this southern land, the Regio Pithacorum, was discovered by Rui de Melo de Sampaio in the year 1560".

The passage from the Declaracan de Malaca states that the São Paulo was carried by a storm near los romeros in 36°S far to the southeast where an 'Isle of Wax' was discovered. The lumps of 'wax' on the shore had Arabic inscriptions on them. Erédia suggests that the substance cannot have come from shipwrecks or it would have melted, so "it would seem that the wax is a commercial commodity belonging to some enterprise merchants from some mainland to the south". He goes on: "And another Portuguese ship, in latitude 40°S discovered the Land of Parrots in a storm, and running along the coast they found many parrots on the shore; and that land seems to be a continental mainland, and the same as Lucach". Finally he again deals with "The Dutch ship" which, "in a storm in latitude 41°S, discovered that southern mainland, where it found many Portuguese, the children and grandchildren of others who were shipwrecked on the coast, and they have the same arms and artillery in their possession, but are naked and poorly clad, and live by tilling the soil and by working, in the year 1606".

Some of the above material is so obviously muddled and self contradictory that comments may seem superfluous. However, some are certainly called for. All the accounts of the São Paulo's voyage agree that the captain's name was Ruy de Melo da Camara (or Camara), not Ruy de Melo de Sampaio. What the São Paulo 'discovered' was Amsterdam Island (los romeros), of course, and not Mercator's fictitious creation. Erédia chose to ignore the description of the 'discovery' as an island because he wanted to believe it was part of Mercator's southern continent. The 48°S figure he gives for the 'Land of Parrots' must have been derived from some map which included that non-existent feature; the figure contradicts both the 36°S figure he gives for los romeros and the 40°S he gives elsewhere for the 'Land of Parrots'.

Cornelio Malodiva is almost certainly a corruption of the name of a famous Dutch sea captain of the time, Cornelis Matelief. The only fair detailed account of his voyage 1606 which I have been able to examine makes no mention of his stopping anywhere in the Indian Ocean except Mauritius, and there is no reference to his having discovered the descendants of Portuguese wreck survivors.

The name Francisco de Albuquerque and the date 1503, however, enable one to identify approximately the real location of the wreck. In his Lendas da India, the Portuguese chronicler Gaspar Correia states that Albuquerque's ship disappeared somewhere off the east coast of Madagascar, on a return voyage to Portugal from the west coast of India. Correia also mentions the despatch of two ships from Lisbon in 1505 under the command of Pero Quaresma and Cide Barbudo, obviously Erédia's Po. Coresma and Cyde Barbosa, though there is no reference to their having been given instructions to search for Albuquerque's wreck survivors.

Erédia's final sentence in the Tratado Ophirico passage is astonishingly muddled. He appears to have confused a description of Sumatra's southwest coast, supposedly written by the São Paulo's pilot, with a Dutch description of the discovery of descendants of Portuguese wreck survivors, probably on the coast of Madagascar. By sheer wishful thinking, he presumes them to have been found on a stretch of Mercator's southern continent.

None of the surviving detailed accounts of the São Paulo's voyage mentions the discovery of an 'Isle of Wax' between the 'discovery' of what we know was Amsterdam Island and the shipwreck on the Sumatran coast, so either the whole 'wax' (presumably ambergris) episode was Erédia's invention, or he transferred it to the São Paulo from an account about some other vessel. His presumption that the owners of the 'wax' came from some mainland to the south was clearly dictated by his belief in the Lucach-Pitacorum regio landmass.

The passage about "another Portuguese ship, in latitude 40°S" having discovered the 'Land of Parrots', not merely contradicts his statement that the São Paulo discovered it, but is clearly an adaptation of some version of the long inscription on Mercator's 1569 map concerning the Pitacorum regio. In English the original reads: "Region of Parrots, so called by the Portuguese, carried along by the southwest wind on their way to Calicut on account of the unheard-of size of those birds there. As they followed the coast for 2,000 miles
without finding the end of it, there is no doubt that they had reached the Southern Continent". This inscription has been shown to be derived ultimately from a misunderstood passage of an Italian diplomat's letter in which he described the discovery of Brazil. Ortelius' abridged version of Mercator's inscription can be seen on Figure 4.

The references mentioned above in Gaspar Correia's *Lendas da India* would seem to suggest that Erédia must have got hold of very confused accounts of the real discovery of descendants of Portuguese shipwreck survivors, though his account is both muddled and interpreted in such a way as to confirm the existence of Mercator's southern continent.

The actual wreck seems probably the one referred to in correspondence between Philip III of Spain and the Viceroy of India between 1613 and 1616 concerning a search for such descendants which was successfully made on the east coast of Madagascar between those two dates.

This survey of three shipwrecks makes abundantly clear that accounts of past events that derive from a single uncorroborated source should be treated with extreme scepticism, and not least when there is reason to suspect the author's motivation. In Erédia's case, both his *Declaração de Malaca* and his *Tratado Ophirico* were specifically designed in an attempt to get backing for a voyage, or voyages of discovery that he would lead; consequently, any 'evidence' that could somehow be made to support his beliefs was interpreted with that end in view. Queirós' *memoriales* were designed for the same reasons, but he, at least, had already discovered something, whereas Erédia had not, so the latter's motivation for concocting 'evidence' was that much stronger.

Neither Queirós's *memoriales* nor Erédia's two works succeeded in persuading the Spanish Crown to provide support. The vast joint empires of Spain and Portugal were already impossible to defend adequately, and their precarious economic state was hardly such as to encourage the acquisition of yet further territory. Moreover, a critical examination of Erédia's 'evidence' can hardly have inspired confidence in its reliability. It is ironical, however, that had his planned voyage not been cancelled, or had his fanciful reports and maps been taken at their face value, he could conceivably have reached Australia just before or just after the Dutch first set eyes on it in 1606.