A critique of Spanish and Portuguese claims to have discovered Australia – 2

by W.A.R. Richardson

In the second part of his article Bill Richardson examines first the techniques of persuasion used by Kenneth McIntyre and secondly the evidence of the inscriptions on the ancient maps. In the latter part he reveals what a specialised field of scholarship this is, including the need to be acquainted with foreign languages in both their modern and ancient forms. He also demonstrates how a lack of this specialised knowledge can lead to the wrong conclusions.

McIntyre makes astonishingly effective use of two techniques of persuasion throughout his book which I do not remember having seen commented on in detail elsewhere. One is the presentation of hypotheses in such a dogmatic, or apparently authoritative manner that the reader is ‘persuaded’ to accept them as proven facts. A few examples will illustrate this:

1. ‘Mendonça ... reached Cape York Peninsula, and passed through Torres Strait, without knowing it was a strait’ (p. 245).

2. ‘...it was in 1522 that the Portuguese voyage of discovery down the east coast of Australia was made’ (p. 51).

3. ‘Sequeira’s exploration of the Australian coast... was made in 1525’ (p. 310).

4. ‘He [Desceliers] then received from his spy in Lisbon the Casa da Índia map of Australia’ (p. 124).

The above statements are sheer speculation, hypotheses calculated to support his main hypothesis. As yet there is not one shred of evidence that any of these assertions are true! The mention of a spy is just journalistic sensationalism.
The other, related persuasion technique used by McIntyre, is a variety of false logic, variously known as petitio principii, circular argumentation, or begging the question. His propagandistic use of this technique many scores, if not hundreds of times, has the same effect as subliminal advertising – the public is not consciously aware that it is being manipulated. The technique consists of assuming the truth of a dubious proposition as part of the proof that it is true. The reductio ad absurdum of this can be illustrated by McIntyre’s equation of ‘Coste dangereux’ [sic] (lit. ‘dangerous coast’) with the Great Barrier Reef coast (p. 247). It goes like this: Given that the east coast of Jave-la-Grande looks like Australia’s east coast, then, from its location, Coste dangereuse corresponds to the Great Barrier Reef coast; in view of this correspondence, Jave-la-Grande’s east coast must be Australia’s east coast! If one tries to identify Jave-la-Grande with an open mind, rather than ‘bend’ supposed evidence to suit one’s preconceptions, one would presumably acknowledge that there must be a considerable number of ‘dangerous coasts’ in the world! Consequently, the equation of Coste dangereuse with the Great Barrier Reef coast can only be a reasonably legitimate assumption if one has first proved that the two east coasts are the same.

Similar examples include: ‘the Dauphin Map of Australia... is a very good map indeed’ (p. 102); ‘On all the Dieppe maps the Gulf of Carpentaria area is devoid of place-names’ (p. 113); ‘The Dauphin’s Australian continent is divided into two parts by a narrow channel, labelled “Rio Grande” from the Gulf of Carpentaria to Joseph Bonaparte Gulf, converting Arnhem-land into an island. Arnhem-land on the Dauphin Map is named “Java” ’ (p. 127); ‘some of the Dieppe Maps... join the Warnambool [sic] coast to a Terra Australis Incognita’ (p. 263). Referring to one map, McIntyre states that it has ‘Portuguese flags flying over the Australian continent’ (p. 217). Elsewhere he states that ‘a map of Australia... was published in Dieppe, included in the map of the world which we know as the Dauphin Map’ (p. 95) [my italics]. In reference to Jean Rotz’s representation of Jave-la-Grande, which he actually calls the
Londe of Jaua, on a hemispheric map, McIntyre states that 'most people can “see” Australia in it better than in the other maps, although it has its limitations, with an insignificant Gulf of Carpentaria, a stunted Cape York, and an unduly-emphasised Rio Grande running across Arnhem-land from Gulf to western sea' (p. 145). Examples could be quoted ad nauseam. There are eight or more on each of pages 102, 112 and 230 alone, where he equates Jave-la-Grande with Australia, or unknown features on the former with specific Australian features.

In each of the above cases, and in vast numbers of others, he is ‘inviting’ his readers to accept as proven what he is actually trying to prove, namely that Jave-la-Grande is Australia. They are being subconsciously conditioned to accept his proposition by the use of an unprincipled technique of false logic. One must surely wonder why McIntyre should have relied so heavily upon it in a work purporting to be reliable scholarship.

He relies very much on the suggestibility of his readers in other ways. The most obvious case is in his treatment of the title page of Cornelis de Jode’s atlas of 1593, the Speculum Orbis Terrae, on which four animals appear. As McIntyre almost certainly correctly states, the horse symbolises Europe, the camel Asia, and the lion Africa. Referring to the other creature, he states that ‘To Australians this illustration should be of great sentimental value, the world’s first pictorial representation of the most typically Australian of all animals’ (p. 232). McIntyre’s Plate VII, consists of a reproduction of de Jode’s title page, with what in the caption is called ‘De Jode’s “Kangaroo”’, and facing it, McIntyre’s admittedly doctored version of it. One is clearly ‘invited’ to accept the creature as a kangaroo, and explicitly so in the text, as quoted above. This supposedly provides yet one more bit of “proof” that Australia was known in the 16th century. It is, however, yet another example of McIntyre’s sleight-of-hand. One may observe that though the creature has two ‘joeys in its marsupial pouch’, as he suggestively describes it, it only has a stump of a tail, when the kangaroo’s large tail is probably its most distinguishing feature. If one ignores McIntyre’s loaded words, and applies a
bit of genuine logic, it should strike one that by 1593, over a century had passed since Columbus’s ‘discovery’ of America. If symbolic animals are provided for Europe, Asia and Africa, why should de Jode include a ‘symbol’ of Australia, rather than of America? The most typical symbolic animal of South America, which first figured on Waldseemüller’s 1516 world map, was an opossum, which is also a marsupial\(^1\). First described in detail in print in 1510 by Peter Martyr (Pietro Martire d’Anghiera), in the first of the Decades of his famous De Orbe Novo, a number of imaginative artistic versions of it appeared on maps throughout the 16th century\(^2\). The mysterious creature on de Jode’s title page is almost undoubtedly meant to be a South American opossum, though some features of it suggest confusion with a llama. George Collingridge’s article about emus and kangaroos, which McIntyre twice refers to, specifically deals with the kangaroo and the American opossum, and the possible artistic confusion between them, actually illustrating how it might come about\(^3\). One can only speculate regarding McIntyre’s motive for failing to mention this possibility.

Factual errors

Factual errors abound, even in contexts not closely connected with McIntyre’s thesis. A few examples may suffice to make the point.

1. ‘Drake ... passed between Australia and Timor’ (p. 62). He did not. He passed between Timor and Java, and actually spent some two weeks in the port of Cilacap on the latter’s south coast\(^4\).

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\(^1\) Reproduced in Shirley, op. cit. pl. 43. See also op. cit. in note 31, pp. 44–51 and fig. 3.

\(^2\) It appears, for example, in a variety of different forms, on Mercator’s 1541 globe gores, Mercator’s 1569 world map, the Caspar Vopell-Bernard van den Putte map of 1570, Petrus Plancius’ world map of 1592 (reproduced in Shirley, op. cit., pls 68, 102, 106 and 148 respectively), on Desceliers’ 1546 planisphere and on many others.


\(^4\) Sir Francis Drake, The World Encompassed. London (1854), (Hakluyt Soc. 1st series, 16), pp. 160–1 and 250. The identification is made from the names of the ‘rajahs’ in the vicinity of Cilacap.
2. The 'Portuguese expression “ca nada” (“there’s nothing here”) gave form to the name of this nation [Canada]’ (p. 32). It did not. It is a typical case of popular, false etymology. It is sheer coincidence that the sounds of the Portuguese words approximate to a Huron/Iroquois word. As canada, it was included in a brief vocabulary of Canadian Indian words compiled during Jacques Cartier’s second voyage (1535-6). In Ramusio’s version its meaning is given as Vna terra (‘a land’)
6. In a modern place-name study, as kanata, its meaning is given as ‘village, camp’

3. The full list of the ‘Dieppe Maps’ that McIntyre gives (p. 207) is by no means complete. A complete list is given by the late Dr Helen Wallis

4. ‘Desceliers provided a waterway south of Java “to let the Vitoria through” ’ (Fig. 14.1 caption). McIntyre’s figure seeks to explain why the Dieppe cartographers appear to have made no allowance for the passage of Magellan’s surviving ship from the Moluccas to the Cape of Good Hope. It purports to show the Vitoria’s course as depicted on one of Battista Agnese’s maps
8. A mere glance at the latter shows that the route is actually just a wavy line, with no pretense of accuracy whatsoever. In any case, it shows the route passing north of what is meant to be Java, not south of it, as McIntyre’s figure depicts it.

5. ‘Nicolas Vallard produced his world map in 1547...’ (p. 214). The so-called Vallard atlas, which was produced no later than 1547, does not contain a ‘world map’, nor was it made by Vallard; he was the owner, not the cartographer. The map McIntyre refers to is one of the east coast of Jave-la-Grande only. There is another covering the west coast, which he does not refer to at all. The place-names on

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8 Reproduced in R.A. Skelton, Explorers’ Maps, New York (1958), fig. 46.
both coasts are certainly more numerous than on most of
the Dieppe maps, but they are an astonishingly corrupt lot,
many being hybrids of French, Portuguese and Italian. Some
of the east coast names are actually duplicated on the
west coast.

Name dropping

McIntyre makes a great point of listing the names of illustrious
persons who believed that Jave-la-Grande was Australia,
thirteen of them on one page (p. xix). Since few of them had
made a detailed study of the Dieppe maps, and none of them
had examined the most vital evidence of all, their opinions
cannot legitimately carry the weight of influence that
McIntyre’s name-dropping tries to place on them.

The inscriptions

Let us now examine the hitherto disregarded evidence, that of
the inscriptions. The most reliable way of identifying a piece of
otherwise unknown coastline on an early map or chart, is not to
doctor it on specious grounds until it more closely resembles
what one would like it to be, but to examine critically the
inscription’s. Only they are capable of revealing what the
cartographer concerned believed he was depicting.

Incredibly careless

Those who have not had first-hand experience of the work of
16th century copyists may well find it difficult to believe how
incredibly careless many of them were, especially when dealing
with unfamiliar material. At a time when no language had
consistent spelling norms, place-names on maps and charts
were miscopied, misplaced, translated, frequently incorrectly,
and transliterated, in other words, adapted to the pronunciation
and spelling habits of another language. Long names got
divided, for reasons of space, the separate sections later being
attached to different features; adjacent words were
amalgamated. The unfamiliar sounds of exotic languages
presented difficult spelling problems. Names sounding, or
looking, roughly like words in a mariner’s native language
were sometimes recorded by those words, and foreign copyists

9 W. A. R. Richardson, ‘Toponymy and the history of cartography’,
Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, vol 78, parts 1 & 2,
then 'translated' them. In sailing directions, which were often the source material of maps, distance figures and compass points were sometimes altered, and words, even whole lines of text, omitted.

Kenneth McIntyre excuses himself from making a detailed review of the place-name evidence because 'it is difficult for an English-speaking person, whether author or reader' [my italics] (p. 108), hardly an acceptable excuse in a work with pretences to academic integrity. He does, in fact, deal with a few. I have already commented on *coste dangereuse*. An examination of the following reveals them to be fundamentally flawed:

1. He lists *some* of the east and west coast names from the Dauphin/Harleian map, though with several transcription errors. He ignores the offshore island names which are very significant. He states that the 'north coast' names 'do not belong to Australian historical geography' (p. 113). This very neatly brushes aside serious consideration of one of the basic difficulties of the *Jave-la-Grande* = Australia case, the fact that the 'north coast' is not Australia's north coast (Arnhem Land and Cape York peninsula) at all, but precisely what the place-names state it to be, the north coasts of Java and Sumbawa.

2. He appears to accept James Burney's equation of 'Coste des Herbiages' [sic] with 'Botany Bay', where the two names are 'similar in meaning' (p. 114). *Coste des herbaiges* ('Coast of Pastures') and Botany Bay are not in the least 'similar in meaning'. The latter, of course, was so called because of the activities of the botanist Joseph Banks during Captain Cook's stay there. In any case there is a latitude difference of some 4° between the two features.

3. As Timor inconveniently appears off the north-east coast of *Jave-la-Grande* on the Dieppe maps, McIntyre invents another one, 'the Australian Timor' (p. 195), the island named *de Laine* on Desceliers' 1550 map. I have dealt with that inscription elsewhere. McIntyre finds opposite it, on

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what he is pleased to identify as ‘the Kimberley coast’, what he transcribes as P. de Laine (whatever that means); and down in the Antarctic [i.e. an obviously hypothetical coastline joining Jave-la-Grande to the north coast of Tierra del Fuego] there are many capes marked P. de Laine’. He admits that he does not know its meaning, but suggests that ‘Unidentified’ would make sense. In fact, he has mistranscribed the inscription; in every case it reads Plaine (‘Plain’), with what looks rather more like an ‘L’ than an ‘l’, and there is no ‘de’. It is sparsely represented on the ‘Antarctic’ coast amongst numerous unimaginative inscriptions reading R for Rivière (‘River’) and Cap (‘Cape’).

4. In the Pan/Picador edition of his book (pp. 59-61), McIntyre equates the Abrolho inscription on the Desceliers 1553 map with Houtman’s Abrolhos off Geraldton. He is aware of the literal meaning of the Portuguese composite word, ‘Open eyes’, and suggests that it is a suitable name for rocks or shoals (my italics). Abrolho(s) is, in fact, a well-established, though now rarely-used maritime term for a reef, especially a coral one. It can be found in many places, in the Indian Ocean, the Caribbean, and off the Brazilian and West African coasts, on 16th century Portuguese charts11. So widespread was the use of this term that it appeared in Spanish, Italian and French versions, abr(e)ojos, aprilocchio and ouvrel’oeil respectively, not to mention several hybrid forms. Abrolhos is still the name of a group of rocks and islands off the Brazilian coast, near Caravellas. The Dutch adopted the term, and even used the Portuguese word cabo (‘cape’) on some of their charts, even though they had a perfectly good word kaap of their own. The attempted use of such a common term as abrolhos to equate Desceliers’ Abrolho with Houtman’s Abrolhos is quite as unjustifiable as the identification of coste dangereuse as the Great Barrier Reef coast. Yet McIntyre goes on to say: ‘with the Abrolhos evidence the

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11 See, for example, PMC, vol. I, pls 47A & D, 50A & B, 55A & D, and passim on nearly all maps which cover the areas cited in my text, in all vols.
west coast must coincide with the west coast of Australia, and, with that coast verified, the east coast’s verification follows as a matter of course’ (p. 84) [my italics]! Moreover he fails to observe that Desceliers’ Abrolho is in about latitude 34° S, while Houtman’s Abrolhos are about 28° 15’ S, presumably another ‘tolerable error’!

5. McIntyre informs his readers that ‘Sumatra... at times assumed the name of Jave-la-Grande’ (p. 69). It did not. Marco Polo adopted Arab nomenclature which, somewhat illogically, in view of their relative sizes, referred to Sumatra as Java Minor and to Java as Java Major. The Portuguese, whenever they used the term Java maior, always applied it to Java. It was not until the 1590’s that any Europeans seem to have realised that Marco Polo meant Sumatra when he used the term Java Minor. Consequently the name was applied by nearly all 16th and some early 17th century cartographers variously to Sumbawa, Bali, Borneo, and even to Java itself by Jean Rotz, as the Lytil Jawa, while Mercator, Ortelius, Gastaldi and others invented an island of Java Minor somewhere south of Java, in accordance with the 1532 faulty editions of Marco Polo12. Erédia was in a state of utter confusion over the location and identities of the two Javas, and actually produced a third, IAVA de Mataron13. The concept of the name Jave-la-Grande as applying to a landmass south of Java itself was a misconception of some, but not all the Dieppe cartographers, probably for a reason explained later on.

6. In Haure de Sylla, McIntyre misreads the first word as Hame, derives it from ‘Habn or Hafen’, expresses understandable surprise at finding a ‘Germanic’ name on a Luso-French map, and tries to make out that Sylla is Ceylon (Sri Lanka) (p. 143). See below for a logical derivation for the inscription.

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12 See Shirley, op. cit., pls 68, 92, 97 and 102.
13 See "PMC", vol IV, pl. 413A, or op. cit. in note 13 (a), Fig. 9. Erédia’s confusion is explained in the latter on pp. 251–253.
Kenneth McIntyre’s carelessness with inscriptions is paralleled by his indifference to accuracy in summarising other authors’ material, as I have pointed out in connection with Erédia. One reviewer of his book identified several cases where McIntyre had misquoted other authors, in one case reversing the sense of the author’s sentence.\(^\text{14}\)

**Contradictions and problems**

Roger Hervé gives a table of supposed place-name identifications (pp. 58–60). Those relating to *Jave-la-Grande*, and a large proportion of the remainder, are sheer guesswork, and can easily be shown to be false. He makes an interesting comment: ‘a closer study of the nomenclature and outline of these coasts brings out contradictions and problems which sometimes make definite identification almost impossible’ (p. 50) [my italics]. I have already pointed out that the identification of enigmatic coastlines on 16th century maps and charts can best be solved by a critical linguistic examination of the inscriptions first. Hervé encountered ‘contradictions and problems’ because he did not approach the enigma of *Jave-la-Grande’s* identity with an open mind. He had a preconceived conviction, based on its position and coastal outlines alone, that it was Australia, and then tried to find inscriptions and other evidence that would match, or could be made to appear to match his conviction.

**Initially persuaded**

I started my research into the inscriptions on *Jave-la-Grande* in 1980, when I realised that nobody had carried out a really detailed examination of them, despite Kenneth McIntyre’s statement to the contrary (p. 109). The ‘authorities’ he mentions merely established the undoubtedly Portuguese origin of many of the inscriptions, but did not attempt to establish what features they identified. I admit to having been initially persuaded (deceived?) by McIntyre’s arguments, and hoped that the inscriptions might provide conclusive confirmation of the Portuguese discovery thesis. Since Portuguese navigators frequently adopted native names, such confirmation would entail identifying uniquely Australian features, such as

Aboriginal words for bay, cape, hill, river, water etc., or uniquely Australian items such as the kangaroo, the woomera and the boomerang. As will be seen, my researches failed to find any, but did decipher some superficially puzzling inscriptions which specifically identified two other geographical locations. Detailed investigations of the place-name evidence are available elsewhere. Here, only a few samples are provided.

As the west coast of Jave-la-Grande had received very cursory treatment by investigators, I decided to start there. I worked primarily on the Dauphin/Harleian map’s inscriptions, and later compared them with other Dieppe maps’ versions. The most interesting inscription seemed to me to be what McIntyre mistranscribes as Quabe segmesse (p. 114), for it seemed quite long, and did not suggest any word(s) in French or Portuguese. A close examination revealed it to be either Quabesequiesce or Quabesequieste, with an undotted ‘i’, as was then quite common. Eventually I chanced upon the word Quabes in the Elizabethan English translation of Linschoten’s Itinerario; the original Dutch edition had Quabeb. It was one spelling of the name of what was then a very valuable spice, called ‘cubeb’ in English, which grew in one place only, in Sunda, the western third of Java. If Quabes, or rather Quabeb, was really a spice, what was the rest of the ‘word’? This was a clear case in which ignorant copyists had combined two or more words they did not understand. The remainder of the ‘word’ had evidently originally consisted of two Portuguese words, aqui esta (‘is here’). This was confirmed by a similar inscription on a

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(d) W. A. R. Richardson, The Portuguese Discovery of Australia: Fact or Fiction?, Canberra, National Library of Australia (1989); Occasional Lecture Series, no. 3.
Spanish map of 1522. Several early Portuguese maps, most notably the ‘Cantino’ of 1502, indicated, after the words aqui ha (‘here there is’), where certain commercial products could be obtained. What was an inscription concerning an exclusively Sundanese spice doing on a map of ‘Australia’?

Further investigation revealed that gao, applied to different features on different maps, was a variant Portuguese spelling of jao (‘Javanese’). It was hardly a word likely to have been written by a Portuguese on a Portuguese map of Australia, in view of the utterly different flora, fauna and inhabitants.

The inscription incorrectly transcribed by McIntyre as Hame de Sylla (p. 114) was actually, as we have seen, Haure de Sylla (i.e. mod. French Havre) (‘Harbour of Sylla’). Below it was the word cap, apparently the French word for ‘cape’, but it had no name attached to it. This turned out to be a case of the common scribal error of dividing a long word for reasons of space. The original Portuguese inscription had almost certainly been porto de Syllacap, in other words, ‘the port of [what is now spelled] Cilacap’, the most significant port on Java’s south coast. The French had evidently mistaken the isolated, final syllable of the name for their word for ‘cape’. As mentioned above, it was the port where Drake stopped on his circumnavigation.

The west coast of Jave-la-Grande was evidently not Australia’s west coast, but a copy of an early, rough, Portuguese sketch chart of part of Java’s south-west coast on a completely different scale from the world map into which the French had incorrectly introduced it. Scale, orientation and latitude were not invariably indicated on primitive charts. This one had probably had on it the words laua maior (i.e. Jave-la-Grande), thus suggesting where it might belong. Two scholars disparaged by Kenneth McIntyre, Edward Heawood and Andrew Sharp, both suggested this identification on the basis of perceived coastal outline similarities and differences of

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Andrew Sharp, The Discovery of Australia, Oxford (1963), pp. 9 et seq.
scale. In attempting to rebut their suggestion, McIntyre resorted to another of his false, dogmatic statements: ‘Confusion of scale is only a theory, as there are no extant maps in which massive confusion of scale has occurred...’ (p. 379). He would have been better advised to say that he knew of none. He evidently did not know, for example, that Mercator and Ortelius, in their portrayal of part of the coast of Tierra del Fuego, represented it on a scale some five times greater than that of the rest of the maps concerned, precisely because they were combining information from two different sources. I must, however, agree with Kenneth McIntyre in rejecting the suggestions of both Heawood and Sharp regarding the identity of the east coast of Jave-la-Grande.

If its west coast was not Australia’s west coast, then it seemed to me that it was even less likely that its east coast was that of Australia. Apart from anything else, it would have involved sailing successfully eastwards through the notoriously dangerous Torres Strait against the tidal stream and prevailing easterlies, and perhaps back again, if the resulting ‘chart’ were to reach Europe. There was also the unsolved problem of the cap de fremose promontory. Could Jave-la-Grande’s east coast be another misplaced part of SE Asia or Indonesia?

The only coastline and offshore islands in that area that together bear some resemblance to Jave-la-Grande’s east coast is that of Vietnam, c. de fremose corresponding to the huge triangular delta of the River Mekong. Portuguese 16th century portrayals of Vietnam included an inscription costa de champa (‘Coast of Champa’), Champa then being a kingdom in central Vietnam. The French appear to have understood this as coste de(s) champs (‘Coast of Fields’), while actually rendering it as Coste des herbaiges (‘Coast of Pastures’), a near synonym.

Coste dangereuse (lit. ‘Dangerous Coast’), on one map rendered by the synonymous Coste perilleuse, is a French misrendering of the Portuguese maps’ inscription costa da varela, or more frequently costa dauarela, for the words do and

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18 See op. cit. in note 14 (b), pp. 89–92.
da 'of the', were then commonly written attached to the following word. The letters 'u' and 'n', and 'l' and the old long letter 's', were frequently mistaken for one another in early manuscripts, while 'u' was regularly used where we use 'v'. Varela was for centuries the name by which the most easterly cape of the Vietnamese coast was known.

**Hainan Island**

The inscription y. de Aliofer, off the north-east coast of Jave-la-Grande, has nothing to do with Ophir, as Roger Hervé suggests, but identifies Hainan Island, north-east of Vietnam, off the south coast of China. Aliofer is a French mistranscription of the Portuguese aljofar, now aljófar ('seed pearl'), for which Hainan was then famous. Numerous early maps, including those by Ortelius and Gastaldi, applied various spellings of this name, such as Aliofar, Alofar, and even Doastoter (i.e. [I.] do aljofar or doaljofar, ['Island] of the Seed Pearl') to the island, or a town on it.

**Further confirmation**

Several other inscriptions would appear to confirm Jave-la-Grande's east coast as being that of Vietnam. The original chart may well have resulted from a voyage towards China by Duarte Coelho and Fernão Peres de Andrade in 1516. The monsoon season meant that they only reached the Gulf of Tonkin when they were forced to turn back to Thailand and Malacca respectively, pausing for water and supplies on the coast of Champa and at the Con Son islands off the Mekong delta.\(^{19}\)

**Unable to identify**

The French must have laid hands on yet another early Portuguese sketch chart, lacking scale and orientation, like the Javanese one. They were presumably convinced that it was genuine, but were unable to identify it, either from its outline or from its inscriptions. Having attached a chart of part of the south-west coast of Java to Java itself, probably with the justification of seeing the name Java maior on it, it could well have seemed logical to the French to hazard a guess that the other chart should be attached to another Indonesian island.

\(^{19}\) João de Barros, *Decada Terceira da Asia*, Lisbon (1777), parte 1a, livro 2o, pp. 177–184.
whose southern coast was left blank on surviving Portuguese charts, namely Sumbawa.

Two further reasons for placing a large landmass south of Indonesia were the faulty Marco Polo texts of 1532, which caused Mercator to include one there on his globe gores of 1541, and the centuries-old belief in the necessary existence of a vast, counterbalancing southern continent. The north coast of Tierra del Fuego, discovered by Magellan in 1520, was widely believed to be part of the latter. The fact that some Dieppe cartographers joined Jave-la-Grande to Tierra del Fuego’s north coast, just as Mercator did his fictitious land of Beach (i.e. Locac(h)) etc., would seem to confirm this as a probable motive.

It is with some regret that it must be stated unequivocally that the place-name evidence does not support any of the variant theories identifying Jave-la-Grande as being a map of Australia, with or without Hervé’s New Zealand connection.

Kenneth McIntyre, in a paragraph in his final chapter (p. 378), states quite correctly that it is incumbent upon critics who deny the Portuguese discovery to provide another, more convincing theory to account for Jave-la-Grande. Moreover, such explanations need to be rigorously examined and appraised. I entirely agree with him. My explanation has been available for a number of years, yet so far no such counter to it has appeared in print. My identification of the coasts of Jave-la-Grande does not resort to any of the methods used by the proponents of the Portuguese ‘discovery’ theory, but relies primarily upon the most significant evidence of all, which they virtually ignored—the inscriptions, an omission which William of Ockham would not have approved of.

This evidence cannot just be dismissed out-of-hand because its conclusions do not accord with personal convictions or national sentiment. Its rebuttal can only be convincingly achieved in two complementary ways, by scholars with: (a) the requisite historical knowledge of the languages concerned; (b) sufficient
experience of 16th century handwriting to enable them to read the variant inscriptions correctly; and (c) extensive acquaintance with the astonishing changes wrought over the years by the ignorant or careless copying of inscriptions by scribes and cartographers. Firstly, it must be shown in detail, by reliable place-name study methods, how each of my identifications is wrong. Secondly, for each identification satisfactorily disproved, a more satisfactory, detailed, Australian identification must be provided. Anything less would be tantamount to the attempted suppression of vital evidence, simply because it inconveniently contradicts a popular, but erroneously-held belief.

Observations have been made above regarding research methodology appropriate to the solution of problems in the history of cartography. Samples have been provided of some of the defects in the methodology hitherto applied in the case of Jave-la-Grande. An interesting partial parallel has recently been provided by the publication of an article regarding the famous ‘Vinland Map’. A real sensation was caused when it first surfaced in 1957, because, although apparently made ca A.D. 1440, it contained a remarkably accurate portrayal of Greenland. The inscriptions on it are in Latin. After much research and scholarly debate regarding its authenticity, it was eventually scientific examination of the ink used on the parchment that seemed to prove that it could not have been made before about 1920. Kirsten Seaver, in a fascinating piece of research, has gone one stage further, and actually managed to identify its author beyond reasonable doubt\(^\text{20}\). She was able to do so because: (a) Being linguistically equipped to cope both with the Latin inscriptions and, more importantly, with Old Norse, in which the primary source documents were written, she was able to identify some significant inconsistencies; (b) Generations of historians who had written on early Norse voyages, made or transmitted errors, because they were ignorant of the culture of the period, and were unable to read the primary source documents in the original language; (c)

Consequently, these historians had to rely on secondary sources, written by authors whom she describes as being ‘uninformed’ or ‘uncritical’. She narrowed the suspects down to two historians, both of whom were very interested in early Norse voyages to Greenland and America, and both of whom were proficient in Latin, but ignorant of Old Norse. Only one of the two, the Jesuit historian Joseph Fischer, had any interest in old maps. In 1903, he had, together with Franz von Wieser, published the first study of the then recently discovered 1507 and 1516 world maps by Martin Waldseemüller. A comparison of the script on the ‘Vinland Map’ with Fischer’s handwriting revealed remarkable similarities, thus apparently confirming what she had deduced from other evidence.

_Jave-la-Grande_ is not a fake, like the ‘Vinland Map’, but a prize example of faulty map compilation by cartographers who were unable to cope with the inscriptions on their primary source material. A careful examination of all the evidence regarding the suggested primacy of the Portuguese in the European discovery of Australia must lead to the conclusion that none so far produced is valid. One wonders how many decades will pass before the place-name evidence regarding the identity of _Jave-la-Grande_ will eventually come to be accepted. Certainly, the wishful thinking of the proponents of the _Jave-la-Grande_ = Australia concept, however persuasively argued and ingeniously disguised, does not recommend itself as providing sufficiently adequate grounds for the rewriting of either Australian or Portuguese history.

The position examined in some detail above has recently been admirably and succinctly summarised as follows: ‘Despite frequent claims, nourished on imagination and abetted by ingenuity, there is no surviving evidence for contacts by European or Asian seafarers with Australia and its Aboriginal inhabitants before 1606’.

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