

# Map Matters



Issue 39

Autumn, Winter & Spring 2020

**This is the Autumn through Winter and Spring 2020 edition of *Map Matters*, the newsletter of the Australia on the Map Division of the Australasian Hydrographic Society.**



Dear Readers,

I hope this finds you all in good health. In these days of Covid-19, health is a precious thing.

The events of the past summer and the following months of 2020, are all reasons that this is a combined autumn through spring issue. I travelled for a bit over eight weeks during summer, and had the good fortune to just miss the fires in Qld and NSW, the flooding and the virus in NSW during my long-distance drives and my early February cruise. But I got awfully close to all of these, and was exposed to a lot of smoke in ACT. So, in order to not tempt fate, I've stayed home since, as we all are told to do by our state governments.

As we feared after the fires, and expected since the travel limitations were introduced, the Mallacoota Cook 250 festival and all Cook commemorations were cancelled. After the fires Mallacoota could have used the tourism income, but so much had been burned down that even before the travel limitations were introduced, it was decided to cancel the festival. At the same time, in many places on our eastern seaboard various Cook monuments suffered disfiguration. This was because it is wrongly perceived that Cook started the occupation of Australia by Europeans and it is usually only looked at from white people's eyes, making Cook a hero. Cook was a great hydrographer, but he was not a settler. However, the National Museum of Australia has now organised an exhibition that is said to look at the Endeavour voyage through the eyes of the First Australians, using oral histories. See the article below.

As you may know, the AOTM group in Canberra has discontinued their monthly meetings for Covid reasons, and the executives of the group have taken time out for other activities or for health reasons. They also will stop writing for Map Matters.

Thus, I anticipate receiving less contributions than usual, and I'm happy to now introduce a new contributor, John Welch, an amateur historian who lives in Invergowrie, NSW. He explains a bit about himself below his article.

Contributions and suggestions are always welcome. Please send material for Map Matters to me at the email address at the bottom of this newsletter. The next issue of Map Matters will come out when enough contributions have been received.

Happy Reading.

Marianne Pietersen  
Editor

## Endeavour Voyage – the untold stories of Cook and the First Australians National Museum of Australia, Canberra.

*A Review by Trevor Lipscombe*

This new exhibition makes a valuable contribution to producing a more balanced account of Lt James Cook's time on the eastern coasts of Australia in 1770. It brings together the stories and impressions seen through both the lens of those on the shore and the lens of those on the ship. In doing so it reminds all of us of the importance of this voyage in shaping the Australia we have today.

*Endeavour's* voyage was the beginning of massive change that would impact the lives of people who had already occupied the continent for tens of thousands of years, and would bring people from all over the world who would reshape the continent in unimaginable ways.

The gap in perspectives and understandings, which we are all still grappling to share, is neatly illustrated at the entrance to the exhibition. In a darkened area we are confronted by three towering, illuminated and swirling columns, with accompanying ominous sounds. These are the three water spouts that *Endeavour's* company observed just seven hours after the first sighting of the Australian coast.

Cook describes them only briefly:

'At 1 p.m. saw three water spouts at once, two were between us and the shore and one at some distance upon our Larboard quarter'. Joseph Banks however records this incident graphically and at length, which reads in part: 'the pipe itself was perfectly transparent and much resembled a tube of glass or a Column of water, if such a thing could be supposed to be suspended in the air...'

In the exhibition, Banks' description, the perceptions of a man of science, is displayed alongside that of Monero Yuin elder Aileen Blackburn:

'According to the oral history, those water spouts represented the spirits of the Ancestors – two elderly women and a young girl. The little water spout was the young girl. The message we understand them to be giving is to 'go home, go away'. We would have thought that they would have done this from our cultural worldview... The Ancestral water spouts are a bad omen and warning. One water spout meant a bad omen, but three Ancestral water spouts meant real bad trouble'.

These contrasting perceptions and understandings become the major theme of the exhibition, and are examined for nine of the places which Cook named and or visited between the Point Hicks area and Possession Island, near Cape York. While the events on the ship – life aboard, charting, collecting plants, observations of the coast and of the limited interactions with First Peoples are displayed, for most the interest will be in perceptions from those on the shore. It has been very hard to find material on the voyage from an Aboriginal perspective, and this exhibition brings fresh insights which enrich the story of the *Endeavour* voyage and its impacts.

One of the thoughtful conclusions at the end of the exhibition:

'As the ways of remembering Cook's landings have changed over time, he has become much more than the embodiment of modernity, invasion and dispossession, he is also the promise of peace and reconciliation.

He plants the seeds and is gone. He claims possession without consent, yet he also brings with him the law that will belatedly recognise native title more than two centuries later. He is at once the agent of destruction and the agent of redemption.

A man who becomes a story that remains open-ended – a story that continually draws us back, although we know the whole tale will always elude us. Cook can be lionised, misrepresented and reviled, but he can never be banished from Australia's historical consciousness.

We stand forever on the beach with him.'

Mark McKenna, historian

If you are unable to visit the exhibition, do visit the excellent and informative website:

<https://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/endeavour-voyage>

Currently there is no exhibition book on sale, but this is promised for later in the year and will be a valuable addition to the Cook literature.

**TL**



**Editor's note:**

*The exhibition at the National Museum of Australia, Canberra, runs till 26 April 2021.*

*If you cannot go there, the Museum website is worthy of spending some time on, as there are a few audio-visual experiences to be had related to this exhibition.*

*The Museum commissioned filmmaker Alison Page and director Nik Lachajczak to create a film in collaboration with Indigenous communities along Australia's east coast.*

*"The Message" features descendants of those whose ancestors witnessed Cook's passage, powerfully reimagining the message of the ship's arrival being passed up the coast line.*

*You can also read James Cook's daily entries from his Endeavour journal.*

**MP**

## Endeavour Voyage - NMA Museum Shop

*On the occasion of the Endeavour Voyage exhibition the NMA Museum shop has a large collection of merchandise available. These can also be purchased on line. Following is a list of books:*

Cook's Endeavour Journal, the Inside Story, the National Library of Australia.

Endeavour: The Ship and Attitude that Changed the World, Peter Moore.

Endeavouring Banks: Exploring Collections from the Endeavour Voyage 1768-1771, Neil Chambers.

Discoveries: The Voyage of Captain Cook, Nicholas Thomas.

Joseph Banks' Florilegium: Botanical Treasures from Cook's First Voyage, Mel Gooding, David Mabberley, Joe Studholme.

Captain Cook's Apprentice, Anthony Hill.

Pacific Exploration: Voyages of Discovery from Captain Cook to the Beagle, Nigel Rigby, Pieter van der Merwe and Glyn Williams.

Captain Cook's Epic Voyage, Geoffrey Blainey.

H.M. Bark Endeavour Box Set, Ray Parkin.

*For more info, check the NMA Museum Shop website:*

<https://shop.nma.gov.au/collections/endeavour-voyage>

Editor

## New Installation commemorates Houtman & Dedel



Plaque commemorating Houtman and Dedel in Rockingham, WA  
Courtesy Stephen Sullivan, City of Rockingham

On 28 October 2020, the City of Rockingham, Western Australia, installed a plaque and plinth to celebrate the sighting of the south-west coast of Australia by Frederik de Houtman and Jacob Dedel in July 1619.

The installation is at the Indian Ocean foreshore of Warnbro Sound, in the suburb of Warnbro.



Plaque and plinth commemorating Houtman and Dedel in Rockingham, WA  
Courtesy Stephen Sullivan, City of Rockingham

**Editor**

## ARTICLES

	<b>Memorial to Georg Forster in Mokre Dwór</b>
	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Robert J. King</b></p> <p>A memorial to George Forster was unveiled on 24 November 2019 in his home town of Mokre Dwór, a suburb of Gdansk, Poland. It was in the form of an inscribed bronze plaque embossed with his portrait, mounted on a boulder (in fact, a glacial erratic retrieved from under a street in Gdansk). The erection of the memorial was the result of a campaign waged for some time by the mayor of the town, Wiesław Zbroiński, and other residents.<sup>1</sup></p>



Fig. 1. Monument to Jerzy Forster in Mokre Dwór. The inscription reads: "Pamięci Adama Jerzego Forstera / ur. 26.XI.1754 r. w Mokrym Dworze / naukowca i podróżnika / pierwszego obywatela królestwa polskiego / , który opłynął dookoła świat / w drugiej wyprawie Jamesa Cooka / mieszkańcy Mokrego Dworu / 26.XI.2019 roku". (In Memory of Adam Jerzy Forster / born on 26.XI.1754 in Mokre Dwór / scientist and traveller / the first citizen of the Polish Kingdom / who circumnavigated the world / in James Cook's second expedition / the residents of Mokre Dwor / 26.XI.2019).

The birthdate on the monument is in error as the baptismal record in his parish church says that George was born on 27 November 1754 in Mokry Dwór (then Nassenhuben) in what was then Polish Royal Prussia, a province of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. His baptism (on 5 December, 1754), was inscribed in the register of the Presbyterian Church of St Peter and Paul in Danzig by his clergyman father, Johann Reinhold Forster.

Royal Prussia is to be distinguished from the Kingdom of Prussia (the former Ducal Prussia), with its capital Königsberg, which was part of the dominions of the Elector of Brandenburg with his seat at Berlin, who after the destruction of the Commonwealth took the title, King of Prussia.<sup>2</sup>

George was the son of Nassenhuben's Calvinist pastor, Johann Reinhold Forster, whose ancestors had immigrated from Scotland in the seventeenth century as a consequence of the Civil War and married into the local German-Polish community. He was therefore by birth and upbringing a German-speaking subject of the multi-ethnic Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (German was the official language in Royal Prussia). As he said much later in his life, when he was urged to "be a good Prussian" in the face of French invasion of the Rhineland:

I was born in Polish Prussia, an hour from Danzig, and I left my place of birth before it passed under the rule of the King of Prussia. It follows, therefore, that I am not a Prussian subject.<sup>3</sup>

He was baptised with the English name, George, which in the fashion of the eighteenth century became Georg in German, Jerzy in Polish, Giorgio in Italian, Georges in French, and so on.

Prussian identity was confused by the Prince-Electors of Brandenburg incorporating Prussia into their dominions in successive stages, declaring themselves first Kings in Prussia and then Kings of Prussia, and applying the title Kingdom of Prussia. They extended the historical territory along the south coast of the Baltic between the Bay of Puck (Putzig) and the Niemen River, to all their dominions, which thereafter extended as far as the Rhineland, renaming the original Prussia East Prussia and West Prussia.

George Forster could have called himself a Prussian in the sense of one having been born and raised in the Palatinate of Pomerania (Polish, *Województwo pomorskie*), one of the three palatinates of Polish Royal Prussia.<sup>4</sup>

In 1765, aged eleven, George left Nassenhuben forever to accompany his father on a journey of inspection of German immigrant settlements on the Volga on behalf of the Russian government. From this beginning, his life's journey took him to England, then round the world as his father's assistant on James Cook's expedition of 1772-75.

His unauthorized but very popular account of the voyage, in English and German editions, made him famous and he was able to obtain academic appointments, first at the Collegium Carolinum in Cassel and, in 1784, at the University of Vilna (Vilnius) in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the eastern part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. His inaugural lecture at the University, titled *Limites Historiae naturalis* and delivered in Latin, was given on 2 February 1785. He expressed his happiness at finding himself again in his homeland:

And returning to myself, by right and merit among the causes of my joy, and not the least of them, is for me to have fallen the most fortunate lot for any man, that of after a space of twenty years, having completed a great round the world periplus and other journeys, seeing again my homeland (*patrios lares*), and so at last in this our Alma Academia as a true priest of Nature making sacrifices to her *numen* [divinity] achieving that to which I had wholly dedicated myself from a tender age.<sup>5</sup>

Although Polish was officially the language of instruction, the University rector encouraged his professors to give their lectures in Latin, both because he respected it as the international language of learning and because his expatriate staff were more comfortable with it than with Polish.<sup>6</sup>

George illustrated his lectures with original ethnographic or natural history material from the South Seas, and in that way roused the interest of his students.<sup>7</sup> The historian of the University, J. Belinsky, said:

his lectures for young people were important opportunities, since everything was illustrated by specimens, which was something rare not usually practiced in Vilnius. In anthropology he showed clothing, weapons and other items, which more easily explained racial differences.<sup>8</sup>

In November 1786, he prepared an article, “Neuholland, und die brittische Colonie in Botany Bay”, in response to an invitation from Johann Spener, publisher of the *Historisch-genealogischer Calender*, which was put on sale at the 1787 Easter book fair in Leipzig.<sup>9</sup>



Fig. 2. Dedication of the monument by Mayor Wiesław Zbroiński and residents on 24 November 2019.

Images courtesy of Radio Gdansk:

<https://radiogdansk.pl/galerie-radia-gdansk/odsloniecie-pomnika-adama-forstera-w-mokrym-dworze/86667-odsloniecie-pomnika-adama-forstera-w-mokrym-dworze?bcn=wiadomosci&art=102673-jestesmy-dumni-ze-taka-osoba-urodzila-sie-na-naszej-ziemi-w-mokrym-dworze-odslonieto-obelisk-upamietniajacy-adama-forstera#look1>

By the latter part of 1786 he had realized that his post at Vilna as professor of natural history, a discipline that was still seen as no more than an ancillary to the medical profession, was never going to provide him with the kind of career he aspired to for the fulfilment of his talents and ambitions.<sup>10</sup> Although he obtained a medical doctorate from the University of Halle he was unable to develop the practical knowledge and experience necessary for him to practice as a physician which would have guaranteed him financial security.

He was able to leave Vilna when in June 1787 he was invited to join a large Russian expedition to the North Pacific to explore the region and to reinforce Russia's territorial claims there.<sup>11</sup> He was visited at his residence in Vilna by Captain Grigory Ivanovich



Mulovsky, the commander, who offered him the position of the expedition's naturalist and official chronicler, or historiographer.<sup>12</sup> He left Vilna as soon as the Russian government agreed to assist him to settle his obligations to the Polish authorities. But all came to naught when the expedition was cancelled because of the outbreak of war between Russia and the Ottoman Turks, occasioned by Russia's annexation of the Crimean khanate.

Mulovsky wrote to him on 17 December 1787, informing him that he was "most grieved to apprise you that my Expedition will not take place", and that as a consequence Forster was relieved of all obligations he had undertaken in connection with it. Having declined an invitation to resume his position at Vilna, he secured appointment as university librarian in Mainz. When Mainz was occupied by the army of revolutionary France in October 1792, he joined others in establishing a Jacobin Club, the *Freunde der Freiheit und Gleichheit* (Friends of Freedom and Equality). He declared his position on the question of his own nationality in the letter he wrote in November 1792 from Mainz:

I have lived as a student in England, made a voyage round the world, and afterwards in Cassel, in Vilna and finally in Mainz sought to pass on what small knowledge I had. Wherever I happened to be, I strove to be a good citizen; wherever I was, I worked for the bread that I received. Ubi bene, ibi patria [where happy, there the homeland], must remain the motto of the scholar, who also remains a free man when he must live, isolated for a time, in lands which do not have a free constitution.<sup>13</sup>

He became vice-president of the Mainz Republic and, as its representative jointly with Adam Lux, was sent to Paris to apply for it to become a part of the French Republic. The application was accepted, but had no effect, since Mainz was occupied by Prussian and Austrian troops in July 1793, and the old order was restored.

George lost his library and collections and had to remain in Paris working for the revolutionary government. He wrote from Paris on 23 June 1793 to a friend: "I can hardly think of Mainz without starting to weep, this is also the case for Vilna".<sup>14</sup>

The two delegates from Mainz (Mayence) were dismayed at the course the Revolution took during the Terror: Lux was guillotined for expressing support for Charlotte Corday, the assassin of Jacobin leader Jean-Paul Marat.<sup>15</sup> George himself died of illness in Paris in January 1794. He was attended on his deathbed by the noted economist and nephew of the King of Poland, Piotr Pawel Maleszewski, a fellow Danziger who had also been a colleague in Vilna, and other friends from his time there and in Mainz.<sup>16</sup>



Fig. 3. The house where George Forster was born in Nassenhuben / Mokre Dwór.

George Forster was a man of cosmopolitan outlook and the dedication of the memorial to him in Mokre Dwór on 24 November 2019 took place under the flags of both Poland and the European Union.

**Robert J. King**

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1. Andrzej Januszajtis, 'Tego jeszcze nie wiecie. Pomnik wielkiego Żuławiaka' [What you still don't know. Monument to the great Żuławiak], *Gazeta Wyborcza* [The Electoral Gazette], 2 December 2019. The residents of the district of Gdansk refer to themselves as Żuławiacy — "Lagooners", from the nearby Zalew Wiślany (Vistula Lagoon). I am grateful to Małgorzata Taborska, Curator, Jagiellonian University Museum Collegium Maius, Krakow, for drawing this article and other Polish sources on George Forster to my attention.
  2. Karin Friedrich, *The Other Prussia: Royal Prussia, Poland and Liberty, 1569-1772*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.xi.
  3. Forster to Christian Friedrich Voss, Mainz, 21 November 1792; quoted in Zbigniew Wojcik, "Joannes Georgius Adamus Forster, his voyages and Polish relations", *Polskie badania polarne/Polish Polar Research*, vol.10, issues 1-2, 1989, pp. 31-45.
  4. Norman Davies, *Vanished Kingdoms*, New York, Viking, 2011, Chapter 5, "Litva: A Grand Duchy with Kings (1253-1795)" and Chapter 7, "Borussia: Watery Land of the Prusai (1230-1945)", pp.229-308, 325-394.

5. „Ut enim ad me ipse redeam, jure quidem et merito inter gratulationis meae caussas, easdemque non mínimas, quis non retulerit hanc secundissimam mihi sortem cecidisse post viginti annorum spatium, ingenti circa orbem terrarum periplo ceterisque itineribus absolutis, revisendi patrios lares, ut tandem in hac alma nostra academia genuinus naturae mysta, eius numinis sacra facerem, quibus peragendis totum me a teneris inde dicaveram“; Georg Forster, “*Limites Historiae naturalis*”, in Z. Fedorowicz, *Mowa Jerzego Forstera wygłoszona 2 lutego 1785 r. w Szkole Głownej Wielkiego Ksiestwa Litewskiego w Wilnie*, Wrocław and Warsaw, Wrocław Ossolineum, *Memorabilia Zoologica*, 1961; on-line at:  
[http://rcin.org.pl/Content/16451/WA058\\_24196\\_P4753\\_Mem-Zool-7.pdf](http://rcin.org.pl/Content/16451/WA058_24196_P4753_Mem-Zool-7.pdf)
6. Wacław Stąbczyński, *Polscy podróżnicy i odkrywcy*, Warszawa, Państwowe Wydawn, Naukowe, 1973, pp.342, 348.
7. A. Piročkinas, “The University of Vilnius in 1773-1803”, in Jonas Kubilius (ed.), *A Short history of Vilnius University*, Vilnius, Mokslas 1979, p.80.
8. Wacław Stąbczyński, *Polscy podróżnicy i odkrywcy*, Warszawa, Państwowe Wydawn, Naukowe, 1973, p.346.
9. English translation by Robert J. King at:  
<https://www.australiaonthemap.org.au/new-holland-and-the-british-colony-at-botany-bay-2/>
10. Forster to Thomas Pennant, Vilna, 5 March 1787, Brigitte Leuschner (ed.), *Briefe, 1784-Juni 1787*, Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR, *Georg Forsters Werke: sämtliche Schriften*, Band 14. Berlin, Akademie-verlag, 1978, S.641-7.
11. Robert J. King, "The Mulovsky Expedition and Catherine II's North Pacific Empire", *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies*, vol.20, no.2, 2007.
12. Г. И. Спасский, ‘Письмо профессора П. С. Палласа к графу Ивану Григорьевичу Чернышеву’ [G.I. Spassky (ed.), ‘Pismo profesora P.S. Pallasa k grafu Ivanu Grigoryevichu Chernyshevu’] (‘A letter from Professor P.S. Pallas to Count Ivan Grigoryevich Chernyshev’), *Москвитянин*, ч.6, no.23, кн.1, [Moskvityanin, pt.6, no.23, bk.1, bound with no.24, bk.2], декабрь, 1849, pp.53-67.
13. Forster to Christian Friedrich Voss, Mainz, 21 November 1792, in Klaus-Georg Popp (ed.), *Briefe, 1792 bis 1794 und Nachträge*, Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR, *Georg Forsters Werke: sämtliche Schriften*, Bd.17, Berlin, Akademie-verlag, 1990, pp.248-250; quoted in Zbigniew Wojcik, “Joannes Georgius Adamus Forster, his voyages and Polish relations”, *Polskie badania polarne/Polish Polar Research*, vol.10, issues 1-2, 1989, pp. 31-45.
14. Piotr Daszkiewicz, “Georg Johann Forster (1754-1794) et la fin de la République des Deux Nations”, *Art et Culture de Lituanie: Le Blog des Cahiers Lituanien*, 14 Avril 2012, accessed 1 January 2020.
15. Stefan Zweig, *Adam Lux. Zehn Bilder aus dem Leben eines deutschen Revolutionärs*, Obernburg am Main, Logo Verlag, 2004.
16. „G. Forsteris mirè Paryžiuje, slaugomas lenkų emigrantų – Petro Maleševskio ir kitų, su kuriais susipažino dar Vilniuje“ (Forster died in Paris under the care of Polish expatriate Piotr Maleszewski and others he met in Vilnius): Jonas Kilius (ed., transl. and annot.), *Georgo Forsterio laiškai iš Vilniaus* [The letters of Georg Forster from Vilnius], Vilnius, Mokslas, 1988, p.32.

RJK

## Early Javanese mapping of the Southern Ocean

John Welch

"The Javanese people think and believe in their messianic mission that their culture is to javanize other people outside their realm. In their delicacy, being Javanese is to adopt and practice the Javanese custom and tradition in terms of mature, polite, subtle, and refined." [Wiryomarton].

It is possible that 'Indonesians' had sailed in 'Australian' waters in the centuries before westerners arrived. In the 16th century, Europeans were designing maps

when chronometers were unavailable. Two centuries later, Cook had no chronometer in 1770, but did in 1774 and this gave more accurate longitude.

But in the 16th cent, Asian developments were more advanced than the European methods. Indian traders had sent large ships to East Asia since Roman times, carrying gold for silk and around the 8th century there was a settlement of Kalimantan 'Indonesians' in Madagascar, evidently for gold-mining.

Javanese maps gave workable solutions for crossing the Indian ocean from Java and returning. These maps on perishable *lontar* palm-leaves are apparently not known to exist today. This essay suggests that two of such Javanese maps were the source for the Antarctic coast-line section of the Piri Reis map and also a Vallard map which may depict 'east Australia', possibly for the entry to the gold-fields of 'Victoria', on circumstantial evidence.

The Portuguese considered that Javanese maps were the best maps in the early 1500s. When Afonso de Albuquerque, Duke of Goa and Governor of Portuguese India from 1509 to 1515, conquered Malacca in 1511, the Portuguese recovered a chart from a Javanese pilot. Regarding that chart Albuquerque said:

"...a large map of a Javanese pilot, containing the Cape of Good Hope, the Red Sea and the Sea of Persia, the Clove Islands, the navigation of the Chinese and the Gom [Mozambique], with their rhumbs and direct routes followed by the ships, and the hinterland, and how the kingdoms border on each other. It seems to me, Sir, that this was the best thing I have ever seen, and Your Highness will be very pleased to see it; it had the names in Javanese writing, but I had with me a Javanese who could read and write.

I send this piece to Your Highness, which Francisco Rodrigues traced from the other, in which Your Highness can truly see where the Chinese and Gores [Japanese?] come from, and the course your ships must take to the Clove Islands, and where the gold mines lie, and the islands of Java and Banda. The main map was lost in Frol de la Mar [ship that was shipwrecked]. With the pilot and Pero de Alpoim I discussed the meaning of this map, in order that they could explain it to Your Highness; you can take this piece of map as a very accurate and ascertained thing, because it is the real navigation, whence they come and whither they return. "

Letter of Albuquerque to King Manuel I of Portugal, April 1512. [Anon].

Varthema of Bologna in 1505 also described the navigational skill of Javanese and their maps of portolan style, including knowledge of Antarctica. [Jones].

A Portuguese account described how the Javanese people already had advanced seafaring skills when Europeans arrived:

"(The Javanese) are all men very experienced in the art of navigation, to the point that they claim to be the most ancient of all, although many others give this honor to the Chinese, and affirm that this art was handed on from them to the Javanese. But it is certain that they formerly navigated to the Cape of Good Hope and were in communication with the east coast of the island of San Lorenzo ('Madagascar'), where there are many brown and Javanized natives who say they are descended from them". [Couto].

Navigators sailed ships to the islands by using stars' rising and setting. [Liebner]

The maps and maritime skills appear to be corroborative, even circular, as each requires the other. Additionally, an imperial will was evident even if it was for only a tributary empire.

According to the Mūla Malurung inscription (found at Mula and Malurung villages) issued in 1255: "His Majesty (Rājasa) served as a single parasol for the world, the whole island of Java as well as the other islands", the parasol being a common symbol of

sovereignty in Southeast Asia and the Indian ocean world. After all this, can we say that Majapahit was really an empire? The answer depends on what we mean by the word. If being an empire means the direct administration of provinces, permanent military occupation, and the imposition of political and cultural norms over a wide area, then Majapahit was probably not an empire. Javanese rule over the other islands was too intermittent and too indirect to qualify by those criteria. But if being an empire means the projection of military power at will, formal acknowledgement of overlordship by vassals and third parties, and the regular delivery of tribute to the centre, then Java's relationship to the archipelago can well be considered an imperial one, especially during the late Singhasari (1268–92) and middle Majapahit (1330–1400) periods." [Sastrawan].

In 1322 friar Odoric of Pordenone reported an (Javanese) archipelagic vessel that carried at least 700 people. \_Yule. The Majapahit Empire used *jongs* as its main source of naval power. The largest number of *jong* deployed in an expedition is about 400 *jongs* when Majapahit attacked Pasai Sumatra. Each ship was about 230 ft long, and could carry 600 men. The large ones could carry 800 men and were 300ft. The ships were armed with 3-metre-long cannons. In 1357, the Sunda king and the royal family arrived in Majapahit in a fleet of 200 large ships and 2000 smaller vessels. [Djong].

Could it be that the Javanese included 'Australia' in their territory and gold fields? Did the Portuguese obtain Javanese coastal lists of 'Australian' locations (similarly to the maps of Asia seen by Albuquerque) and perhaps translate words for their own use?

It seems that both the early Javanese maps and large *djongs* are gone. One comment is that Manuel I's prohibition may have caused such perishable Javanese maps to not be preserved. Although the Javanese maps of Albuquerque's letter are absent, a possible copy is presented from the Book of Rodrigues 1512.

A map of Southeast Asia—one of the first European ones to rather accurately chart the area despite Ptolemy and al-Khwarizmi's mistaken accounts—compiled by assembling the maps from consecutive pages of Rodrigues's book (folio #s labelled on the map). [Cortesa]



The Picture Art Collection/ Alamy Stock Photo. Public Domain.

Only part of the map, *hum pedaço de padram*, was copied before the original was lost in the shipwreck of the Frol de La Mar in the last months of 1511. This portion of a larger Javanese map is no longer extant, but its form can be gleaned from the sketches depicted in Francisco Rodrigues's Book.

According to Sollewijn (1995) and the piece of the Albuquerque letter above, the copied map illustrated the practical trade routes used by the indigenous mariners from the Far East.

This information was intended for the Portuguese King's use and was all that was recorded before the map was lost. These charts were carried back to Spain by ship, but the extant drafts were published later and compiled in the *Suma Oriental* 1515/16. This source also indicates that, contrary to Cortesão's analysis, the date for Rodrigues's sketches should be placed in the year 1511 because when Albuquerque mailed his letter holding the *pedaço de padram* to Manuel I in 1512, Rodrigues was already en-route to the Spice Islands on a mission with Abreu, and therefore he must have drawn them while in Malacca between August and December, before the sinking of the *Frol de la Mar*. [Bridges].

Another approach for evidence is the reality of Madagascar and Maldives, where a population needing food, farming tools and survival until harvest, was transported across the Indian ocean to gold-producing lands. In 2011, foreign countries (mainly the United Arab Emirates) reported importing \$250m worth of gold and gemstones from Madagascar.

"The Witwatersrand Basin in South Africa remains the world's largest gold resource. According to a survey conducted by Mwiriti, one of Mozambique's largest gemstone companies, large gold reserves have been confirmed in the province of Cabo Delgado (a coastal province 500km NW of Madagascar). Preliminary results indicate gold reserves about six times as large as those discovered in South Africa".

The Madagascar settlement has genetic, linguistic and cultural associations with greater 'Indonesia' and more specifically Kalimantan Borneo. The dates range over 700 years but probably the 8<sup>th</sup> century is the specific era.



Ceremonial dipper imitating a palm leaf bucket early 10th C  
National Museum of Indonesia, Jakarta. Image courtesy NGA

Loan words from Sanskrit, all with local linguistic modifications via Javanese or Malay hint that Madagascar may have been colonized by settlers from the Srivijaya Empire, a major regional power in western Indonesia (modern Java, Sumatra and Malaysia) from the sixth to thirteenth centuries AD. Consistent with this hypothesis, Malagasy borrows large numbers of words from Javanese; the regional lingua franca, Malay; and even languages from southern Sulawesi, an island near the centre of the Indonesian archipelago.

Cultural evidence—including iron working techniques, outrigger boats, musical instruments such as the xylophone, and the cultivation of rice, bananas, yams and taro (i.e. a ‘tropical food kit’)—all supports a strong Southeast Asian connection from at least the eighth century onwards. Genetic evidence paints much the same picture. Early blood protein studies identified dual African and Asian contribution. Later studies of mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) and Y chromosome variation improved this geographical resolution.

Soodyall et al. firmly established an Island Southeast Asian connection when they located the Polynesian motif in Madagascar. Apart from Madagascar, this mtDNA haplotype is restricted to remote Oceania, with low frequencies in Melanesia and eastern Indonesia, and only sporadic occurrences as far west as Bali and Borneo”. [Cox].

There are a number of Southeast Asian traits and artefacts in the Maldives: crops such as sweet potatoes and taro, dark-coloured fish of Southeast Asia, and "bed-roasting" a custom which compels the mother to rest on a bed with fire under it for ten days after delivery to purify her, which is of Southeast Asian origin. Maloney.

The “motif” means the identifying aspects of Polynesians of the Austronesian language group, which includes Javanese, such as their notable long-range Pacific voyages. They reached all their Pacific islands about three centuries before Europeans crossed the Caribbean Sea.

Javanese travelled the distance to the Philippines. Albuquerque wrote of "where the gold mines lie". The royal Javanese interest in gold is indicated by evidence across Asia and east Africa, from the Philippines to Madagascar.

"A study of this (gold) image was made by F. Bosch, of Batavia, in 1920, who came to the conclusion that it was made by local workmen in Mindanao. It probably had some connection with the Javanese miners who are known to have been mining gold in the Agusan-Surigao area in the middle or late 14th century." [Beyer].

That gold statue is held by the Field Museum in Chicago. [Francisco].

Even though Java did not have its own gold deposits, the texts make frequent references to the existence of goldsmiths, and it is clear from the archaeological evidence that this culture had developed a sophisticated gold working technology, which relied on the importing of substantial quantities of metal (Wahyono Martowikrido, 1994; 1999). A gold and silver currency had been in place since the tenth century, and although copper coins imported from China during the Late Classical Majapahit period in the early 14th century replaced it, this replacement seems to have been more for the convenience of small denominations than because of a shortage in the supply of gold. In 1225 PE, the Chinese writer Zhao Rukuo referred to the Majapahit’s commander in chief and his 30,000 soldiers being paid in gold (Miksic, 1999; 2004). [Bennett]

"Some 77 precious, gold, silver and gem-studded works will travel to Australia. (1999). The show covers a broad sweep of Indonesian history dating from the period of Indian Hindu and Buddhist religious influence (from about the seventh to the fifteenth centuries)". [Smith].



Golden statue from Mindanao Philippines.  
Field Museum, Chicago.

If 'Indonesians' sailed to Africa and the Philippines for such gold, then the shorter voyage to north 'Australia' is arguable. Ludovico di Varthema (1470-1517), in "The travels of Ludovico di Varthema", stated that the Southern Javanese people sailed to "far Southern lands" up to the point they arrived at an island where a day only lasted four hours long and was "colder than in any part of the world". [Jones].

This four-hour day exists at the tip of the west Antarctic peninsula such as James Ross island at winter solstice, 64 degrees south. Islands to the north have a longer winter solstice. Today, it's not normally possible to sail further south into the Weddell Sea or Bellingshausen Sea in May-July for daylight of less than 4 hours. This is confirmed by British Antarctic Survey staff at Rothera Base and photos of contemporary Antarctic winter sea-ice extent.

Cooler Antarctic temperatures in 15<sup>th</sup> century indicate that more southerly voyaging was unlikely then. The unique geography, ice area and sun elevation indicate a genuine report for the island at the tip of the peninsula.

Poetic confirmation may come from Dante's "Divine Comedy" poems of 1304-21 where he describes the Southern Cross on high. The north star Polaris "never rose" which in the year 1300 meant South of four degrees, the effect of precession, and which means south from Kenya.

*Goder pareva 'l ciel di lor fiammelle: oh settentrional vedovo sito, poi che privato se' di mirar quelle!* (Purgatorio. 1.22-27). "Heaven appeared to revel in their flames: o northern hemisphere, because you were denied that sight, you are a widower!" *Tutte le stelle già de l' altro polo veda la notte, e'l nostro tanto basso, che non surgèa fuor del marin suolo.* (Inferno 26:126). "Night showed stars of the other pole and ours was so low it didn't rise above the sea". *Del mondo senza gente* (26:117) "the south seas were empty", and "poi che 'ntrati eravam ne l'alto passo, quando n'apparve una montagna (26:133)" as we travelled the deep, a mountain appeared".



This is the opposite geography from the Arctic and not readily obvious without travelling. Dante's Hell is marked by the depth of their sinners' immersion in the ice and the condemned souls are frozen into the ice of the south. Dante was Ravenna's ambassador to Venice in 1318 which traded with Arabs of Alexandria for Indonesian spices.

If Albuquerque knew about the Javanese polar voyage, then Arabs would also know and be able to inform Venetians. This takes the date of a polar voyage to the 13th cent or earlier. Dante's concept of the south as Purgatory and Hell is not part of medieval Catholic teaching but accords with Hindu Javanese traditions of Yama, god of death, identified with the south.

Majapahit as an imperial Javanese kingdom was conscious of its literal "position in the world", with Yama as one indicator. The *Devata Lokapala* are the Guardians of the Directions, overseers of the four cardinal points — Indra (east), Yama (south), Varuṇa (west) and Kubera (north) — and four ordinal points — Agni (southeast), Nirṛti (southwest), Vayu (northwest) and Īśāna (northeast).

Javanese Hinduism includes a ninth member of the party, representing the center point, and calls them the *Dewata Nawa Sanga*, or Nine Guardian Gods. The Guardians are often found painted or carved on the walls and ceilings in Hindu temples, but Java has an even stronger historical connection to these deities because they appear on the Surya Majapahit.

This 8-pointed sun-ray star with the centre depicting Hindu gods is in effect a compass rose and the emblem is commonly found in ruins dated from the Majapahit era. [Majapahit blog, Surya].

It was a main royal emblem and Javanese kings who often identified themselves as Indra, Shiva or Vishnu incarnate, also seem to be Surya at the centre of the compass, the 9<sup>th</sup> compass-point.

In the Buddhist Jātaka text, the *Narakas* as "hell" or "purgatory" are Yama's abode with *Yamadipati*, "commander Yama" in Javanese culture, being preserved especially in Wayang dance. In the Wayang legend, Yamadipati married a goddess who fell in love with Nagatamala, son of the Anantaboga snake, who rules the earth.

In Java, Bhima had to deal with his father the wind god and with the Indra god. Arriving at the edge of Lake Gumuling, Bhima fought the Anantaboga snake. With the spell given by Indra, Bhima sailed the Southern Ocean which was full of waves rolling as high as a mountain. In the ocean he had to face *Nawatnawa*, a large dragon and conquered him. [Darmawan].

This suggests a coherent Javanese schema for the Southern Ocean and Polar mythology along with familiarity with that ocean. An example of a *Naraka* is a dark, frozen plain surrounded by icy mountains and continually swept by blizzards. *Nawatnawa* in Sanskrit is "9 of 9" and so may indicate the complete 9-point compass and the conquest of all directions by Java's god-kings. The Old Java word *tantu* (from the Sanskrit "a succession of sacrificial performances") means "fixed order, establishment of the world order (the world = Java)". The divine king was the centre of Java, the world.

A ship of "ancient design" was found at Macquarie Island in 1810 by the first known British visitors. [AAD]. Thus, by the 16th century, if the ship was "ancient" to 19th century observers, someone was sailing south of New Zealand. That voyage, then, would be a circumnavigation of Australia. Cook's ship "Endeavour" was scuttled after

14 years of work and many Spanish and Portuguese ships became worm-eaten after a few years. An “ancient” ship was unlikely to remain usable for long beyond its era.



Three-masted Javanese jong in Banten, 1610

Hieronymus Megiser (translator), Ludovico di Varthema (original work), Megiser, Hieronymus (1610).

Hodeporicon indiae Orientalis. H. Gross. Public Domain.

Fra Mauro in his map explained that one *junk* rounded the Cape of Good Hope and travelled far into the Atlantic Ocean, in 1420:

*Text from Fra Mauro map, 10-A13.*

"Around 1420 a ship, or *junk*, from India crossed the Sea of India. It sailed for 40 days in a south-westerly direction without ever finding anything other than wind and water. According to these people themselves, the ship went some 2,000 miles ahead until once favourable conditions came to an end, it turned round and sailed back to Cape Diab in 70 days.

The ships called junks that navigate these seas carry four masts or more, some of which can be raised or lowered, and have 40 to 60 cabins for the merchants and only one tiller. They can navigate without a compass, because they have an astrologer, who stands on the side and, with an astrolabe in hand, gives orders to the navigator".

Fra Mauro explained that he obtained the information from "a trustworthy source", who travelled with the expedition, possibly the Venetian explorer Niccolò de' Conti, who happened to be in Calicut, India, at the time the expedition left:

What is more, I have spoken with a person worthy of trust, who says that he sailed in an Indian ship caught in the fury of a tempest for 40 days out in the Sea of India, beyond the Cape of Soffala and the Green Islands towards west-southwest; and according to the astrologers who act as their guides, they had advanced almost 2,000 miles. Thus, one can believe and confirm what is said by both these and those, and that they had therefore sailed 4,000 miles. [Needham].

Fra Mauro puts the inscription by the southern tip of Africa and while others had tried previously to sail around Africa this voyage is exploratory of the open ocean. It makes an Antarctic journey credible both in the motivation and ship capacity for wide-ocean sailing.



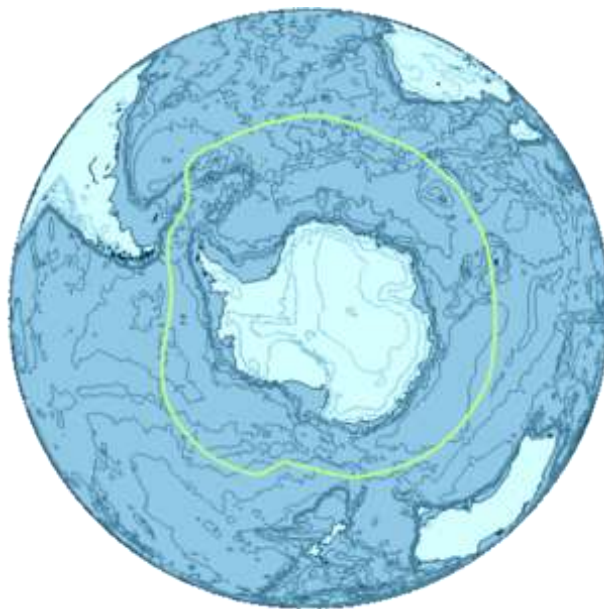
Piri Reis \_ Bilkent

The Piri Reis map has the equator marked by a compass rose. [Reis, Harwood]. Then the map's proportions of Equator - Recife Brazil related to Recife-Cape Horn seem correct. This is about 1700: 6000kms where the uniformly undulating line may represent the open sea of Cape Horn. Then the proportion for Cape Horn to the end-point which seems to be the cape in Queen Maud Land is also correct, about 5000kms. Although the South American coast is deformed east, the outline gives the correct distances for heading along the Weddell Sea ice-field to Queen Maud Land. This projection compensates for reduced polar longitude width.

The map is a Turkish composite and perhaps the original Antarctic section was Javanese. Similar deformation is seen in the north Atlantic where the real geography would be more familiar. [Digital Scriptorium Database Huntington Catalog Images].

The eastward 45degree bend may be intentional in both Piri Reis and Vallard maps, as the linear distance to the end extremity is correct for both, with the low latitudes' sections being correct. The deformation of the bend at high latitudes seems to be an early attempt at Mercator projection. The longitude changes eastward at Buenos Aires 35S (and correctly 8deg west of the Amazon mouth) by measurement of proportions of Equator to Recife Brazil. The distance Buenos Aires to the cape of Queen Maud land, in Antarctica, is then correct.

The ship mentioned by Fra Mauro would have travelled to approximately the position of halfway between the two southerly compass roses on Piri Reis' map. The Weddell Sea is usually covered in sea-ice to varying extents which would accord with the flatter line in Piri Reis. The map may show the islands such as Falkland, Sandwich, Georgia, Elephant, Coronation, Montagu, Bristol and others. It can be compared with a modern map. This shows Queen Maud land as SSW of southern Africa and thus south of west Africa which resembles Piri Reis' map.



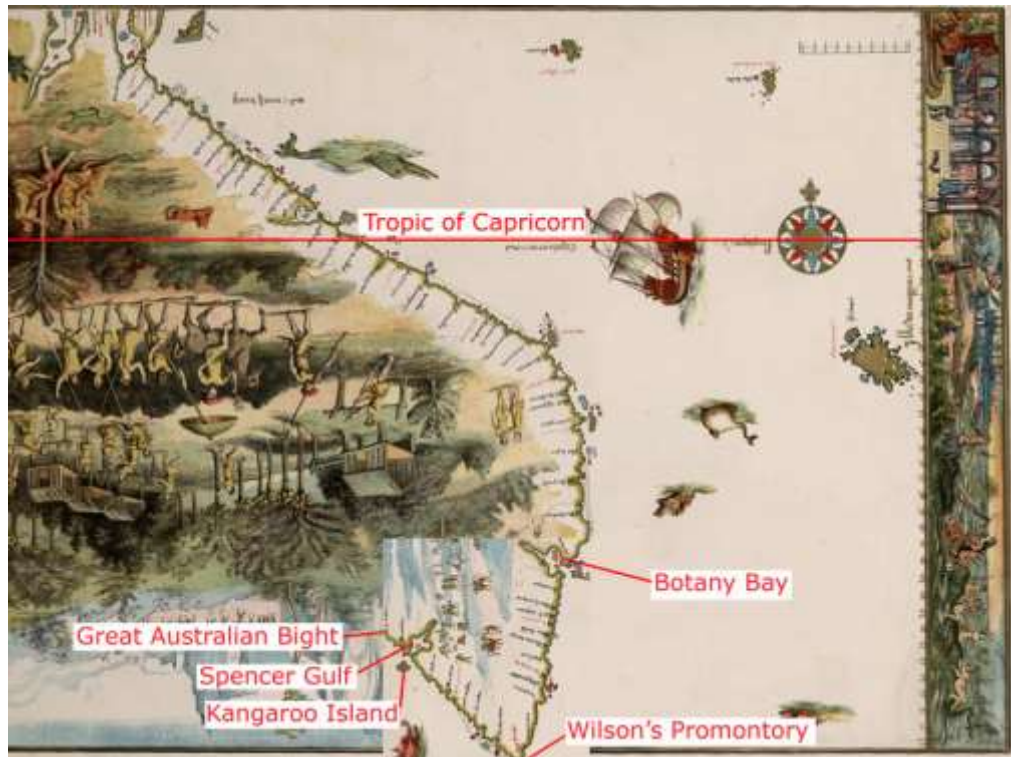
Ivanov

My following comments about "Botany Bay" and "Tropic" are from the adjusted version of Vallard, which restores the changed longitude to a presumed original survey.

Vallard has South at the top so this is the more normal style. If the lower extremity is taken to be the Murray river mouth (in South Australia) because of its resemblance to Coorong lagoon on the Murray, then the section to Wilson's Promontory (in Victoria) can be given a proportionate value for 750 kms.

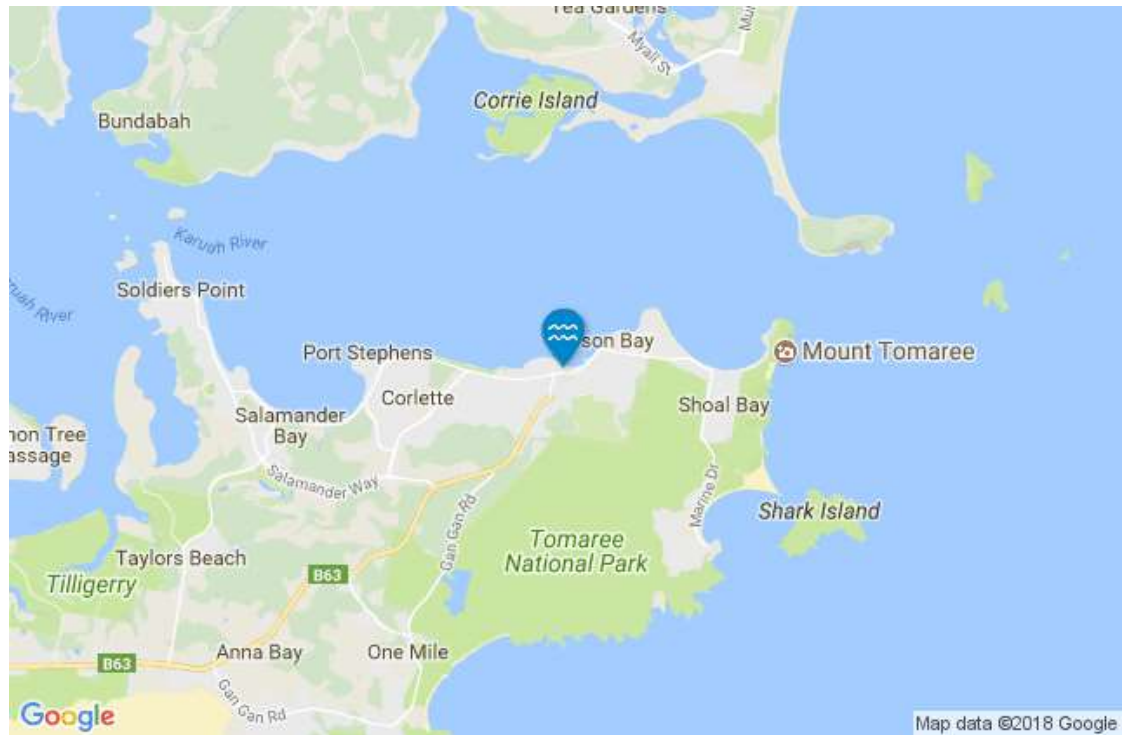


The replica Vallard map of 1547 held by National Library, Canberra, also changes eastward at about 32S. That is the area above the upper compass rose.



This map in Public Domain adjusts the Vallard Dieppe layout.

The total length to Cape York (at top of Queensland) fits and then the inlets can be matched to geography. Then, presuming this scheme to be reality, the section to "Botany Bay" measures 950km north from Wilson's Promontory (in south Victoria), which accords with the distance to Nelson Bay, Port Stephens near Newcastle:



Tideschart.com (with permission)

Link to another more detailed map is in the references below. [Port Stephens].

Nelson Bay is a safe port to enter by sailing ship with low inflows of fresh water, which can be supplied at Kore Kore Creek, which is above sea level at 8 metres, beyond 10km inside headlands, behind Corrie island which seems to be in red colour in Vallard.

By contrast, Newcastle's estuary extends up to the tidal limit of the Hunter River at Oakhampton (65km from the ocean), the Paterson River at Gostwyck (75km from the ocean), and the Williams River at the Seaham Weir (46km from the ocean), with strong outflow. The Port Stephens off-shore islands are a reasonable match and the sand spit may be variable.

Nelson Bay is about halfway to Fraser Island, the mid-point of the Australian east coast, and the northern inlet above "Tropic" is about half-way between Fraser and Cape York. The Fraser-Cape distance of 2000km is correct on the map. Fraser island has safe anchorage at north and south and has abundant fresh water. The map seems to locate fresh water and safe anchorage in three locations at nearly equal distances along the coast, Port Stephens, Fraser Island and south of Ayr.

Stradbroke island (in south Queensland) fits the map drawing at 550km from Port Stephens, with 250km on to Fraser Island. The inlet below "Tropic" fits Sarina 680km (Vallard 750km) from Fraser island. It is shallow and not emphasised like the inlet above "Tropic" which may be south of Ayr where Rocky Ponds creek flows down from 82m altitude to the beach, sea depth 21ft. Ayr is 900km direct from Fraser island (Vallard shows 950km) and the geography fits the shape of the map drawing.

There are 2 Pacific Ocean islands which seem to be correctly drawn:  
 Cape York to Honiara, in the Solomon Islands 1900 km.  
 Brisbane to Norfolk Island 1470km.

Vanuatu is further out, the Vallard map shows 2400kms. The Cairns to Vanuatu distance is 2100kms.

The map over-compensates longitude eastward (maybe demonstrated by Vanuatu?), perhaps from copying the Piri Reis method blindly without knowing the polar distance. Having two maps with this oddity when the basic form is correct, may mutually validate them for their purposes. The Murray river mouth may be the end-point because the Chinese and others went by boat on the river to Echuca on the Murray river (in Victoria) in 1856 to reach the gold-fields.

Perhaps Javanese gold-miners also carried equipment and their loads of gold along the Murray as a convenient mode of transport for maritime people.

Macassan trips to north Australia from 1600s and Maori travel to NZ in 1200s are evidence for regional navigation skill. If a ship reached east Australia, then it only needed to "hug the coast" in the European manner as the maximum width of reefs is about 50km. Reefs and coast are mostly in straight sections with deep water off the reef-edge, which allows for a rhumb bearing course.

The Javanese had maps for SE Asia. Evidence for a Javanese presence in Australia may be the skull from NSW with sword-cut, dated at 1200s by ANU Canberra.

There seem to be many Old Javanese loan-words in south-east Australia, some related to royal matters, but skull trauma and linguistics are outside the scope of this journal.

These three corroborating aspects and Java's royal cultural links with compass directions give credibility to the Javanese of those days having reliable maps which included 'Australia'.

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*John Welch sent me following background info:*

John Welch is an amateur historian who did part of a law degree then turned to religious interests. This included inquiring into Indo-European roots of Celtic traditions from west and central Asia, which led him to Indian history, then to SE Asian and Australian. Due to Sanskrit being Indo-European and Indonesian languages such as Old Java having large amounts of Sanskrit vocabulary loan-words, then Javanese contacts with Indigenous people probably diffused some Indo-European terms into Australia. Indonesian Macassans brought 16 Sanskritic words to Yolngu language of north Australia. Some other evidence is a skull with sword-cut from west NSW dated to 1200s by ANU. A test is being arranged at Centre for Orthopaedic and Trauma Research, University of Adelaide to see if a sword and not a boomerang was used. A map from 1547 may show east Australia and was possibly a Portuguese copy of a Javanese map. It seems to show an island in a bay where a sandspit connecting with the island was "eroded away between late 1500s and 1800s", according to Climate Change Research Centre, UNSW Science. Thermoluminescent OSL dating of the quartz sand is being arranged to determine the absence of the sandspit in 1300-1400 and so making the map a correct depiction at that time. Perhaps the country that Cook visited had already some linkage with common antiquity.

Editor

## **Did Cook invent Point Hicks to hide the existence of Bass Strait?**

**Trevor Lipscombe**

Margaret Cameron-Ash has set a cat among the pigeons in the world of Cook Studies with her book 'Lying for the Admiralty' (Cameron-Ash, 2018). She claims that Lt James Cook, in a conspiracy with the British Admiralty, deliberately fabricated evidence to dissuade the French from colonising parts of New Zealand and Australia. An important part of her argument concerns the Admiralty's desire to hide the existence of Bass Strait (between the Australian mainland and Tasmania) to discourage French colonisation of Van Diemens Land (today's Tasmania). This article examines Cameron-Ash's case that Cook sought to disguise the

existence of Bass Strait under orders from the Admiralty. Since this was a secret, possibly oral, order she has been unable to trace any documentation supporting this claim.

### **Did the French guess that Van Diemens Land was an island?**

Abel Tasman had charted the southern part of today's Tasmania in 1642. By Tasman's time the Dutch had had also charted most of the north and west coasts of Australia and the western part of the south coast. At the time of Cook's voyage, besides the Tasmanian stretch of coast, the southern and eastern coastline of the entity which we now know as Australia was unknown from Ceduna in the Great Australian Bight all the way to Cape York, the northernmost point of Queensland. It was still unclear whether Van Diemens Land was part of the supposed continent that the Dutch had named New Holland or a separate island. The insularity of Tasmania and the existence of Bass Strait was finally proven by Matthew Flinders and George Bass in *Norfolk* in 1798.



Figure 1: Bowen, Emanuel. & Harris, John. & Tasman, Abel Janszoon. & Thévenot, M. & Nederlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie. 1744, *A Complete map of the Southern Continent [cartographic material] / survey'd by Capt. Abel Tasman & depicted by order of the East India Company in Holland in the Stadt House at Amsterdam*; E. Bowen, Sculp <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-163902730>>

Earlier in her book (p105) Cameron-Ash argues that Cook had surmised from Tasman's data that Van Diemens Land was an island divided from the mainland of New Holland by a strait. Tasman, searching for an east coast of New Holland and driven from Mauritius by the roaring forties, came upon the west coast of Tasmania. He turned south and followed it southward, then eastward. The coast then turned north, sheltered from the westerlies, eventually rejoining the roaring forties when that coast ended at Tasmania's north east corner. At this point, Tasman would have realised, from the resumption of this wind, that the land he had found was probably an island, so he

continued to ride the winds, sailed away to the east, and found New Zealand. While there is no documentary evidence that Cook made this surmise, it seems reasonable to accept that he may have come to this conclusion. Any mariner examining this data, as Cook had done, would be likely to come to the same conclusion, and at the very least suspect a passage. The French had Tasman's map, so why wouldn't their mariners also have guessed that there was a strait?

### Did Cook find a strait?

According to Cameron-Ash, when Cook arrived off the coast of today's Victoria he realised that his surmise was correct, there was a strait between Van Diemens Land and the mainland. She tells us that Zachary Hicks saw land 'away to the north east' when Hicks journal tells us he saw it 'bearing from NE by N to W by S' (Currey, 2006). The *Endeavour* journal tells us much the same (Beaglehole, 1955). Everyone on the ship was seeing land out to the west, but Cameron-Ash does not tell us this. Instead she says 'Cook quietly continued westward. He had the mainland off to starboard, Van Diemens Land away to the south, and the wind in his teeth', giving the impression that nobody is seeing land in that direction but, instead, open sea. 'He believed he was in a passage, but wanted to make certain. He maintained this westerly course for two hours, applying his great talent for predicting the trend of a coastline and interpreting the winds and currents. By 8 a.m. he was satisfied and quickly turned the ship around.' There is no evidence at all that Cook believed he was in a passage, but it suits her argument so she asserts it to be the case.

She would have us believe that Cook 'believed he was in a passage' and had confirmed the existence of a strait, when in fact ahead of him he was seeing apparent land. The reason that he 'turned the ship around' was that at 8 a.m. he recorded seeing land in the same quarters as he had two hours earlier, from north east to W ¼ S. Now, closer to this huge arc of land 'and finding this coast to trend NE and SW', Cook realises he is probably on the mainland coast but heading in the wrong direction. He records at that time '...bore away along shore NE for the Eastermost land we had in sight'. There was no real land to the west, Cook and his crew were deceived by cloudbanks. But this apparent land was real to them. Cameron-Ash says Cook saw a passage, Cook says he saw land.

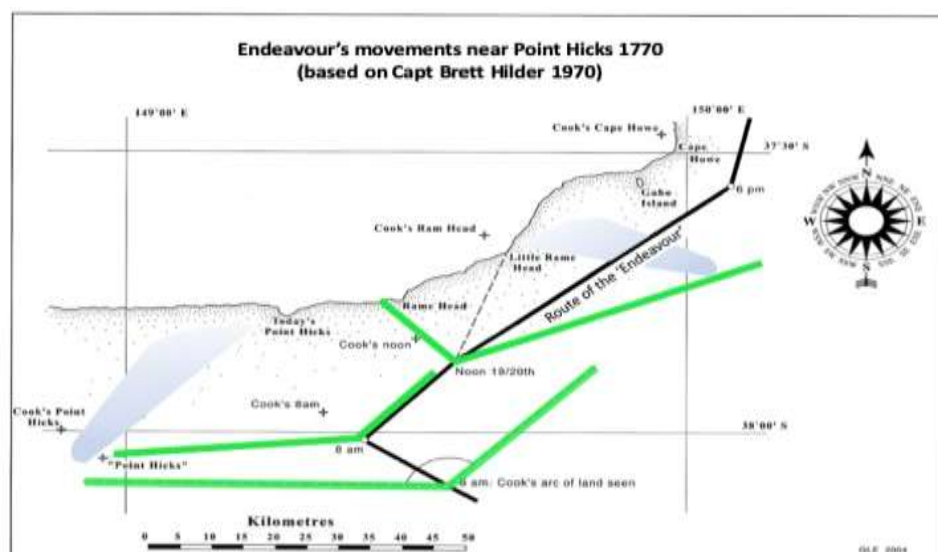


Figure 2: *Endeavour's* movements near Point Hicks 1770 plotted against the real coast line (Hilder, 1970). Green lines show the extent of 'land' seen at 6 a.m., 8 a.m. and noon according to the *Endeavour* Journal. Approximate areas of cloudbank or illusions of land are also shown.

We are told that, having proved the existence of what was later to be known as Bass Strait, Cook now had the problem of explaining away 400km of sea to fox the French into believing that Van Diemens Land and the new coast were parts of the same landmass. Cameron-Ash sets out to convince us that he did this in a number of ways - by inventing a mythical promontory and naming it Point Hicks, through a clever Journal entry, and by an ingenious design of his coastal chart.

### **A Mythical Promontory?**

At 8 a.m. on the morning of 20 April 1770 Cook records seeing an arc of land from the north east round to just south of due west. He records the 'Southernmost Point of land we had in sight which bore from us W  $\frac{1}{4}$  S I judged to lay in the Latitude of 38.0 S and in the Longitude of 211.07 W from the Meridion of Greenwich. I have named it Point Hicks...' Cameron-Ash correctly recognises that this is a point out at sea – 'no-one could have seen such a land feature, because there is nothing but water in that direction for about a hundred miles', and tells us 'Cook falsifies his coast from Ram Head to the bottom' of his chart at 38 S: '...he concocted a mythical promontory, called it Point Hicks, invented its coordinates' and entered it in the Journal. She claims 'His mythical Point Hicks is the lynchpin of a brilliant ruse. With a stroke of his pen, Cook drew a curtain across Bass Strait, hiding a large tract of water and shoreline. By concealing these western waters that signalled the entrance to a passage, Cook reinforced the notion that Van Diemens Land was joined to New Holland'.

But Cook reports seeing land in the quarter where he saw Point Hicks not just at 8 a.m, but also at 6 a.m. Why would he confuse the issue by inventing land in the same direction at 6 a.m? At 6, again at 8, and yet again at noon, also Cook records seeing land to the north east where there is no land. These are all sightings of apparent rather than real land. We know that cloudbanks, convincingly appearing as land, can linger for long periods. Matthew Flinders and George Bass in *Norfolk* reported such a sighting in this area in 1798. Flinders recorded that the illusion persisted all afternoon, evidence that these are not necessarily fleeting deceptions. Why would Cook invent all of these additional sightings of apparent land when, if Cameron-Ash is right, the only one of importance is the one at 8 a.m. of Point Hicks?

Cook's phantom Point Hicks lies about 28km off the coast of Victoria. Cameron-Ash's poor view of French intellect seems also to be apparent in the notion that Cook's placement of Point Hicks out at sea and less than 7% of the distance between the coast of Victoria and Tasmania's north east corner, a 400km gap, was likely to fool either the French or indeed the modern reader. When Cook was set a task by the Admiralty, he had a reputation for overdelivering. That is why this man of humble birth, when not yet an officer in the Royal Navy, was chosen to lead the *Endeavour* voyage – he could be relied on to follow his orders to the letter and beyond. Had Cook been charged with this task it seems likely that he would have invented land in a far more convincing position and of far greater extent.

Cameron-Ash brushes aside all of the accumulated expert evidence from navigators and hydrographers down to the present day that explains why Cook placed his Point Hicks out at sea (Lipscombe, 2019). Their own seafaring experiences and Cook's own primary data show that he was deceived by cloudbanks appearing to be land. This is a common phenomenon known by sailors in Cook's day as Cape Flyaway and reported a number of times in the *Endeavour* Journal, and still reported regularly by sailors in this area. Instead she chooses only to quote the influential historian Ernest Scott's view from more than a century ago: 'Professor Scott wrote that such a meteorological mistake "would be fantastic, even if the observer had been an amateur: but when

he was James Cook, the greatest navigator of his age, and one of the greatest of all time, the idea that he mistook a clot of mist for a cape is staggering” (Scott, 1916). The idea of Cook mistaking a cloudbank for land might appear incredible to today’s lay person, as it did to Scott more than a century ago. But there is plenty of expert evidence to support this hypothesis.

Scott was ultimately responsible for another monsterring of Cook’s legacy. He fostered the notion, based on an ‘inference’, that Cook’s Point Hicks was actually a land feature on the coast earlier named as Cape Everard (Lipscombe, 2014). In 1970 Scott’s acolytes, despite the protests of navigators and hydrographers, persuaded the Victorian Government to rename Cape Everard as Point Hicks as part of the Cook Bicentenary (see Figure 2). Inevitably historians copy earlier historians, particularly eminent ones, and more than a century later Scott’s errors are still being trotted out as truths by modern historians. Captain Brett Hilder, a very experienced Pacific navigator and hydrographer, who affirms the cloudbank hypothesis and provides the most elegant proof of *Endeavour’s* track near today’s Point Hicks, wrote despairingly: ‘academics tend to believe the printed word of previous scholars rather than the printed charts of practical men who are the real experts in the matter of charting a coastline’ (Hilder, 1970).

### **A Clever Journal Entry?**

Another way Cameron-Ash claims that Cook hid the existence of Bass Strait was by the following entry in the *Endeavour* Journal: ‘...finding this coast to trend NE and SW or rather more to the westward makes me doubtful whether they are one land or no: however everyone who compares this Journal with that of Tasman’s will be as good a judge [as] I am...’ Cook, despite his apparent surmise from Tasman’s data that a strait exists, now, and inconveniently for Cameron-Ash, says he is not sure whether there is a passage or not. In an attempt to explain this hesitation away, she tells us Cook ‘could not bring himself to tell an outright lie. So, he composed a riddle instead’. But, if Cameron-Ash is to be believed, Cook is already telling a whopping lie by faking the existence of Point Hicks. Surely if he wanted to disguise the strait, he would have at least expressed a firmer opinion in favour of ‘one land’?

While we have no more than circumstantial evidence, it does seem likely that Cook surmised from Tasman’s chart that there was a strait. But with his usual caution when he got there, he may not have felt that he had sufficient evidence to state that it existed. He would have looked foolish had he made a definitive statement only to be contradicted later. Cameron-Ash says that if he had any doubts about the strait’s existence, he would have spent time investigating further. He could have investigated the strait, but it would have meant sailing against the prevailing winds, the roaring forties. He was already on the way home after 20 months at sea. Time was of the essence, with low supplies, a ship in need of repair, and a crew sighing for roast beef. He was in no position to spend time investigating every passage and harbour along his chosen route, the east coast of New Holland. He saw, and passed without exploring, important harbours including those at Jervis Bay and Port Jackson.

### **An Ingenious Chart?**

One of Cook’s charts is also cited as evidence of his aim to hide the existence of Bass Strait. Cook and members of *Endeavour’s* crew made several charts of the whole east coast of Australia (David, 1988). All of these begin at latitude 38 S, the latitude of Point Hicks and all but one finish at Cape York on the Torres Strait. Cameron-Ash focuses on the only one of these charts which extends

beyond Cape York, remarking that 'the composition is strangely unbalanced and truncated. Cook has left a generous space between Cape York, the northern tip of his New South Wales, and the upper edge of the map. He has filled this space with several features which provide a geographical context, including Torres Strait, part of New Guinea, part of Timor and the track of the Endeavour towards Batavia. He has also pencilled in the entire coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria...' She argues that Cook could have done the same thing at the bottom of the map by showing Tasman's charting of Van Diemens Land. 'He could have filled this space with geographical context by pencilling in the Dutch outline of Van Diemens Land and shown the final leg of Endeavour's track from New Zealand towards New Holland. But he didn't.' The unstated implication here is that Cook deliberately left this southern context out to disguise the existence of Bass Strait.

So, why did Cook provide more context in this single map at Cape York? The answer lies in his entry in the *Endeavour* Journal dated Thursday 23 August 1770. Cook is not supplying context – he has a more important motive:

*In the meantime the wind had gone to SW and although it blowed but very faint yet it was accompanied with a swell from the same quarter; this together with other concurring circumstances left me no room to doubt but that we were got to the Westward of Carpentaria or the Northern extremity of New Holland, and had now open Sea to the westward, which gave me no small satisfaction not only because the dangers and fatigues of the Voyage was drawing near an end, but by being able to prove that New Holland and New Guinea are two Separate Lands or Islands, which until this day hath been a doubtfull point with Geographers.*

Cook had confirmed the existence of the Torres Strait, a key exit from the Pacific Ocean, a passage between New Guinea and New Holland, and one of far more practical importance as an international sea route than Bass Strait. Torres had passed through this strait in 1606 but its existence had remained 'a doubtfull point' until Cook proved it. Cook, always thorough, wanted to chart this new discovery in as much detail as he could, given the precarious state of his ship, and to show how it related to earlier charting west of Cape York by the Dutch. No conspiracy, no ingenious and deceptive design, just a cogent reason for including this area on this chart.

### **Did Cook invent Point Hicks to hide Bass Strait?**

Margaret Cameron-Ash's case that Cook was commissioned by the Admiralty to disguise the existence of Bass Strait to head off French colonisation of Van Diemens Land just does not stand up.

There is no evidence that in April 1770 Cook was under secret Admiralty orders to hide Bass Strait, or that he concluded that there was a strait between Van Diemens Land and the mainland, that he invented a mythical promontory at Point Hicks, or that his charts were meant to disguise the existence of a strait. Much relevant evidence is conveniently ignored or not refuted. The history of these events is not being corrected, a speculative and fanciful case is being made, and it is full of holes.

So much of what Cameron-Ash attributes to Cook is completely out of character - concluding that a strait existed on limited evidence, fudging the Journal entry in such an unconvincing manner, inventing a mythical promontory. Cook was thorough, and would have scoffed at the notion that

placing Point Hicks where he did would do anything to persuade the French that there was no strait. This voyage was Cook's great opportunity to demonstrate his abilities. At this stage of his career he would have been particularly eager to please the Admiralty in any way he could. If Cook was under secret Admiralty orders to mislead the French about the existence of Bass Strait, he would have made a far better job of it.

**Trevor Lipscombe**

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**TL**

**Detached Reef discovered 130 km off Cape York**

During a 3D seabed mapping exercise conducted from a ship owned by the Californian non-profit Schmidt Ocean Institute, Australian scientists have discovered a reef more than 500 metres high at the northern end of the Great Barrier Reef.

Video of the discovery from the robot, known as SuBastian, was live-streamed on U-tube. The 4-hr video (or pieces thereof) can be seen on:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L\\_Ee7JV5oSI&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_Ee7JV5oSI&feature=youtu.be)

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