scientific curiosities of newly discovered lands. The Scotsman, James Callander, was comparatively late into the field with his three volumes, 'Terra Australis Cognita'. The age was one in which publishing was not regulated by copyright laws, so that Callander was able to pirate much of his work from previous collections. See Richard Hakluyt and his Successors, Edward Lynam, ed., London, 1946.

Experience has already begun to verify our conjecture concerning the existence of a counterpoise towards the South: For, not to mention that extensive but doubtful coast, placed by some to the south of Asia, the immense tracts that are found in the latitudes under the several names of Diemens Land, New Holland, Carpentaria, New Guinea, New Britain, and New Zealand. There is great reason to think, that this is not one continent, but divided by unknown Straits; Such is that island discovered by our navigator Dampier, to which he gave the name of New Britain. Be this as it may, who can doubt that this vast tract of land must furnish objects innumerable, both of commercial advantage and curiosity, equal to any that were found in America by the first discoverers? Numbers of people, entirely different from us, and from each other, in their figure, customs, manners and religion; Their animals, insects, fishes, plants, medicinal herbs, fruits, metals and fossils entirely of another species. Thus this world must present us with many things entirely new, as hitherto we have had little more knowledge of it, than if it had lain in another planet. Here, too, we are sure to find an advantageous market for all our wares, such as cloths, glasses, paper, spirits, and all the species of toys that were so greedily fought after by the Indians of the West, in the days of Columbus. Iron alone is a treasure to Europeans far more valuable than all the gold of the Indies, and the first of metals because the most useful. The extreme avarice of the islanders in the South-sea for this metal is well known, or rather their insatiable avarice; while they discover stronger passion for it than the Europeans have for gold. And, in fact, they must be great gainers, whatever they were to give us for a spade, a saw, or a pair of scissors, instruments of universal use, but which they are entirely unacquainted with. We must also remember how much they would profit, by adopting our ideas of a regular and well-ordered society; their minds would be opened, and formed, their savage manners softened...

As to the product and commodities of this country in general, there is the greatest reason to believe that they are extremely rich and valuable; because the richest and finest countries in the known world lie all within the same latitude. Thus the land discovered by Quiros makes a part of this great island, and forms the opposite coast to that of Carpentaria. This country the discoverer called La Australia del Espiritu Santo, in the latitude of 15°40' South; and, as he reports, it abounds with gold, silver, pearl, nutmegs, mace, ginger and sugar-canes of an extraordinary size. Dampier's account, though formed from a very slight view of that part of the country he called Cape St. George, and Port Montague, agrees very well with the other. ... For all these reasons, and many more that might be added, both Roggevien and Dampier agree in giving the preference to New Britain on account of its size and situation, the salubrity of the air and fertility of the soil. Its whole appearance seems to indicate the riches it is said to contain, and its neighbourhood to lands already well known, leave little room to doubt these conjectures in its favour. Hence the ingenious French editor of the Voyages aux Terres Australes thinks, there is no place so proper as this to fix on. He proposes to settle it by sending three ships from Pondicherry, completely filled out with every necessary, men, arms, ammunition and provisions, for beginning a settlement here. He thinks best, after doubling Cape Mabo, to examine the west coast of the island, which neither Dampier nor Roggevien approached, to try to find there some good port, near to New Guinea, without going round the island to seek the bay of St. George, or port Montague described by our navigator. It will be no difficult matter to maintain ourselves here amid savages who are ignorant of the use of fire arms, and who may be soon reconciled to the sweets of commerce. It must be very obvious, that it is as easy for us to settle New Britain from Madras, as to the French from Pondicherry; as such provisions of all kinds can be sent with the first ships, as may enable the colony to subsist even without the assistance of the natives, till they can be again relieved from the continent. One of the three ships may be sent back for assistance from Madras, the second may be employed in perfecting the discovery of the island itself, and those of the neighbourhood, and establishing a trade with the different tribes of savages who inhabit them, while the third vessel may remain to guard the colony, and be a retreat to them, should any unforeseen misfortune oblige them to abandon the island.


THE REDISCOVERY OF THE SOLOMON ISLANDS: DOCUMENTS
B36 to B42

Mendana, in his search for the great south land in 1567, came upon an island which he named Yasabel, after his wife. (B5) He thought he had discovered part of the great south land. The association of this land with the rich mines of King Solomon led to the islands of his discovery being called the Solomon Islands.
Mendana’s islands, however, did not include Buka and Bougainville, which were not discovered for another two centuries. (B36)

Mendana’s second voyage (1595) was for the purpose of establishing a settlement on one of the islands. The expedition reached Santa Cruz; after Mendana’s death, his widow took command of the expedition and searched in vain for the island of St. Christopher. It is thought that the arrival of Francis Drake in these waters just after Mendana’s first voyage persuaded the Portuguese to suspend plans for the establishment of a colony, lest the English should take some advantage from it. ‘It is desirable,’ wrote Quiros who was on the second expedition, ‘that these islands should remain unknown, because, as they lie between Peru, New Spain and the Philippines, the English, if they were informed of them, might make settlements there of dangerous consequence to Spain.’

Galleo’s narrative of the voyage was therefore suppressed. Herrera published a brief description of the Solomon Islands in 1601, (B6) but no account of Mendana’s first voyage was published until 1613, when Figuera included a narrative in a larger work. Figuera’s chart was inadequate for use by other navigators although the latitudes given for the location of the islands were reasonably accurate for that age. The early charts which show the islands of Solomon—De Bry’s (1586), Wytfliet’s (1597), Ortelius’s (1589)—locate the islands to the east of and at no great distance from New Guinea; but later cartographers made the mistake of locating the islands too

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far to the East. It is possible that the Spanish navigators purposely underestimated the distance of the Solomon Islands from the coast of Peru so that they could bring their discoveries within the limits fixed by the Pope: the hemisphere west of a meridian 370 leagues west of the Azores was assigned by the Pope to Spain, while the hemisphere to the east of the meridian was assigned to Portugal.

Attempts to rediscover the Solomons resulted in discoveries of other islands and the charting of the Bismarck Archipelago. Carteret (B57) and Bougainville (B36) supplied the first clues to the correct location of the Solomons and de Surville (B37) brought home conclusive proof. Lieutenant Shortland’s voyage (B40) corroborated the discoveries of de Surville. In 1781 a Spanish navigator, Maurelle, in the frigate Princesa reached the Candelaria Shoals off the north coast of Isabel Island. If Maurelle had realized his proximity to the Solomons, the rediscovery of the islands might have fallen to the nation that was the original discoverer.

Both the English and the French claimed rediscovery. Dalrymple endeavoured to bring the discoveries of Dampier and Carteret into line with those of Mendana. (B38) On his map he combines the Bismarck Archipelago with the Solomons to form one island group. Despite the evidence that de Surville made available, seven years elapsed before Buache de Neuville, the French Geographer Royal, theorized that the Arsacides of de Surville and the Solomon Islands were the same, and presented his findings in ‘Memoir sur l’existence et la situation des iles de Salomon’ (1781). (B39)

One object of La Perouse’s mission of 1785 was to clear up any remaining doubts on the issue. His disappearance in the south-west Pacific led in turn to D’Entrecasteaux’s voyage in search of him. (B42) In July 1792, D’Entrecasteaux reached Eddystone Rock, discovered by Shortland, passed by the Treasury Islands and along the west coast of Bougainville and Buka; in May of the following year he reached the south coast of the Solomons, sailed between St. Chris toval and Guadalcanal and proceeded to the Lousiades. The French maps of 1785 and 1790 place the Solomons Group fairly accurately, while Fleuriou’s ‘Discoveries of the French in the South-East of New Guinea’ (1806) established that the Bismarck Archipelago and the Solomons were two separate groups.
Guinea', published in 1795, restores to the French nation the credit for the rediscovery and charting of the islands.

Following the establishment of a British settlement at New South Wales, ships leaving Port Jackson for England via Batavia sometimes made contact with the Solomons Group. Lieutenant Ball of the Supply in 1790 sailed along the eastern extremity of the whole group, then north to Malaita and east to New Georgia. In the same year Captain Bowen of the Alhambra sighted New Georgia. The following year Captain Manning of the Pitt navigated the Strait between Choiseul and Isabel Islands. The last of the French explorers at the Group was Dumont D'Urville who reached Malaita in 1838 and named his anchorage 'Astrolabe Bay' after one of his ships. The larger bay, Thousand Ships Bay, of which D'Urville's anchorage formed a part, had been discovered originally by Gallego and Ortega of the Mendana expedition.

D'Urville found a few words of English being spoken by the natives, which suggests the bay had been visited by ships fairly recently. The clipper, Margaret Oakley, coasted along Bougainville Island, through Bougainville Strait and along the north coast of Choiseul and Isabel Islands to Guadalcanal in 1835 or 1836; the clipper anchored near Thousand Ships Bay and it might have been from this source that the natives learned some English. About 1847 a French Roman Catholic Mission was established on Isabel Island and from that date on contacts with the Solomons Group grew more frequent. See also, H. B. Guppy, The Solomon Islands and their Natives, London, 1887; C. M. Woodford, A Naturalist Among the Heathens; Being an Account of Three Visits to the Solomon Islands in the years 1886, 1887, and 1888, London, 1890; C. Jack-Hinton, The European Discovery, Rediscovery and Exploration of the Solomon Islands, 1568-1838, Ph. D. thesis, Australian National University, 1962.

B36 Bougainville's Encounter with the Natives of Buka, 4 July 1768

Lewis de Bougainville was a charming French aristocrat who was instructed to hand over his colony at the Falkland to the Spaniards in April 1767, and in the frigate La Boudeuse and the storeship L'Etoile, to explore the seas between the East Indies and the west coast of America. He was to examine particularly the regions between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn where so many spices and precious metals had been found. Bougainville reached Tahiti, then sailed west and north-west to the Samoan group and then west again to the Melanesian Islands. From here he kept close to the fifteenth parallel until he reached outlying reefs of the Great Barrier Reefs. The dangers of the reefs decided a change to a north-east by north course, which brought him off the east coast of New Guinea. As the ships battled their way past the Louisiades they were in constant peril from storms, fogs and currents. Passing Cape Deliverance, they reached the islands of the Solomon Group, but, like Philip Carteret, failed to recognize them. Bougainville coasted along Choiseul Island, passed through the Strait that bears his name, coasted along the east side of Bougainville Island and off the coast of Buka. In his charts, Bougainville refers to the islands as part of the Louisiade Archipelago. The expedition finally reached New Britain, as Carteret had done, and failing to find refreshment there, put into English Cove on New Ireland, where, ten months earlier, Carteret had revictualled. See also B98.

On the 4th, when the first rays of the sun appeared, we got sight of some lands to the westward of Cape L'Averdi. It was a new coast, less elevated than the former, lying N. N. W. Between the S. S. E. point of this land and Cape L'Averdi there remains a great gap, forming either a passage or a considerable gap. At a great distance we saw some hillocks on it. Behind this new coast we perceived a much higher one, lying in the same direction. We stood as near as possible to come near the low lands. At noon we were about five leagues distant from it, and set its N. N. W. point bearing S. W. by W. It the afternoon three periaguas, in each of which were five or six negroes, came from the shore to view our ships. They stopped within musket shot, and continued at that distance near an hour, when our repeated invitations at last determined them to come nearer. Some trifles which were thrown to them, fastened on pieces of planks, inspired them with some confidence. They came along-side of the ships, shewing cocoa-nuts, and crying 'bouca, bouca, onelle.' They repeated these words incessantly, and we afterwards pronounced them as they did, which seemed to give them much pleasure. They did not long keep along-side of the vessel. They made signs that they were going to fetch us cocoa-nuts. We applauded their resolution; but they were hardly gone twenty yards, when one of these perfidious fellows let fly an arrow, which happily hit nobody. After that, they fled as fast as they could row; our superior strength set us above punishing them.

These negroes are quite naked; they have curled short hair, and very long ears, which are bored through. Several had dyed their wool red, and had white spots on different parts of the body. It seems they chew betel, as their teeth are red. We found that the inhabitants of the Isle of Choiseul likewise make use of it. From these negroes we got bows of six feet long, and arrows armed with points of a very hard
Jean-François-Marie de Surville was a member of an India trading syndicate that hoped to accrue some of the profits from Eastern trade that had formerly fallen largely to the French India Company. News of Wallis's voyage reached de Surville in India and the syndicate was inspired by wildly exaggerated reports of the richness of Tahiti. The *St. Jean Baptiste* left Pondicherry on June 2nd, 1769 on a voyage of commercial enterprise to uncharted lands. The Philippines and the Bashi Islands (Batan) were passed, then, fearing that he might be driven on to the New Guinea coast by monsoon if he sailed too close, de Surville struck a course which took him north of the Admiralty Islands, along the northern coast of New Ireland, and finally to a long chain of islands which he called the Arscidnes, believing that the word 'Arsicidnes' derived from the word 'assi' meaning 'one who ambushes'. The word actually derives from 'hashish'. The party did not recognize these islands as the Solomons; they were not sure if they had sailed to the east or to the west of New Britain. However, de Surville recognized the islands as land of the Papuans and as 'an extension' of New Guinea. He later suggested that the islands might be an extension of the archipelago of the Solomons. The *St. Jean Baptiste* reached Peru, but de Surville was drowned entering the harbour in a small boat on April 8th, 1770. The following extract is from the Journal of Pierre Monneron, the 22-year-old supercargo on the voyage. See also, Jean F. Surville, *Letters, 1764-1786*, MS. M. L., M. F. No. FM4/1777; Alexis Rochon, *Nouveau Voyage à la Mer du Sud*, 1783; M. Fleurieu *Découvertes des Français dans le Sud-Est de Nouvelle Guinée*, Paris, 1790; B99.

The young black told us that his father often made such voyages to a nation much less black than his own. He brought back from there some fine calico, with big patterns on it, and which was used for belts.

The productions of that country which young Love mentioned are bananas, sugar-canes, yams, coconuts, aniseed, and a kind of almond, of which they are very fond. There is also a kind of fruit which he never could see in America, and of which we never could get a satisfactory description. The Arscidnes for food principally use turtle flesh and eggs, which are in great quantity; they also have fish, and make great use of a certain plant which they call 'binax', and which they eat instead of bread.

We showed Love all the spices we made use of; he only knew in his country of one tree, very tall, and of which the bark tasted like cinnamon, but he prefers the bark which grows in his country. The natives make use of it mixed with betel, cabbage-palm, and lime.

They use for lighting purposes, during the night, resin extracted from the tree which produces the almond previously spoken of. The resin is greasy and oily, and while burning emits rather an agreeable odour.

The Arscidnes do not know any metal. They use for cutting wood a stone axe, very hard, and of a slate colour, and for cutting their hair they use a stone similar to the gun-flint.

We only saw fishermen's huts, but Love assured us that in the interior the Arscidnes have some large villages. We did not see any four-footed animals, although, according to what Love says, there are many wild pigs. The cockatoos, orioles, and wild pigeons are very numerous. The pigeons appeared to us to be much bigger than those elsewhere.

On comparing what we saw of those people with ones of whom Dampier and other travellers who have travelled through those countries speak, we have no doubt about their belonging to the same race of men; they have the same arms, the same boats, the same bravery, everything seems to confirm that opinion.

We left several written notices of taking possession of that country in the name of His Most Christian Majesty in the anchorage. We also left several written notices to apprise anybody who might land in that country of the ways of the natives.
B38 Dalrymple Attempts to Rationalize the Location of the Solomon Islands, 1770

In his ‘Historical Collection of Voyages’, published in 1700, Alexander Dalrymple attempted to show that the land Mendana called Salomon Islands in 1567, was the same land that William Dampier named Nova Britannia in 1700. Dalrymple had no knowledge at this time of the voyages of Carteret, Bougainville and Surville, but it is doubtful whether this knowledge would have persuaded him to change his ideas. He was not impressed by the theories of M. Buache. In 1790 he restated his original thesis that the Solomon Islands and New Britain were one.

All the printed accounts of the Spanish discoveries in the quarter before 1595, are confused and inconsistent; this is owing to our not having the original journals of the navigators employed in these expeditions. Thus, though it will be found no difficult matter to trace HERRERA in the plan, the size he gives of all the islands is vastly greater than what DAMPIER’s observations confine us to. HERRERA’s latitudes, as well as DE BRY’s, exceed the truth by many degrees, ISABELLA being placed by them between 8 and 9° S. instead of 4° deg. to 5 deg. S. This error in the latitude has been the great source of the confusion we meet with, and has prevented it from being observed, that the SALOMON islands, discovered in 1567, are, in fact, NEW-
B39  The Location of the Solomon Islands Solved by Buache, 1781

Immediately following the availability of the reports of the voyages of Bougainville and de Surville, M. Buache, first geographer to the King of France and hydrographer to the navy, recognized the possibility that these newly discovered lands were the Islands of Solomon. Buache prepared a chart in which he tried to reconcile the accounts of Figueroa and Herrera with those of Bougainville and de Surville. On 9 January 1781 Buache presented a Memoir concerning the existence and situation of ‘Solomon’s Islands’ to the Royal Academy of Sciences.

The Voyages of modern navigators, at the same time that they have furnished so much knowledge of the South Sea, have given rise to doubts respecting the existence of Solomon’s Islands; and several geographers have already been anxious to expunge them from their charts, and remove them to the class of fabulous lands. It was for some time rather usual to deny the existence of every country which was not found at the place assigned to it by the charts; while on the other hand, all those lands which were found in tracts of sea where there were not any marked in the charts, were considered as new discoveries. The more enlightened navigators of the present time, when their researches prove unsuccessful, draw no other conclusion, than that the lands they are unable to find have been ill placed upon their geographical charts; and, before they give a new name to any island that does not appear there, consider attentively all those that appear in the same tracts and at the same latitude. In the present case, to be qualified to deny the existence of Solomon’s Islands with any reason, it would be necessary to have sought them in all the situations which different authors have assigned, which has not yet been done....

The circumstantial particulars of the discovery of Solomon’s Islands, as related by Figueroa, cannot be regarded as romance; they contain nothing marvellous, nor inconsistent with things actually known, but a simple narrative of fact. The relation of Mendana’s second voyage is alone sufficient to establish the reality of this discovery. We see from the first, that this voyage was not undertaken, like the former, to make discoveries at random, but to return to a place already known, and establish a colony in it: the fleet was, consequently, provided with every thing necessary for such an expedition; 368 persons, chiefly married, were embarked in it; their course was directed to the particular object in view; and they crossed the sea between the 8th and 12th degrees of south latitude, in consequence of their previous knowledge of the situation of the places. When they arrived at the island of Santa-Cruz, Mendana no sooner saw the inhabitants, than he declared to his crew, that these were the people he sought.

After the death of Mendana, his widow, who succeeded him in the command of the fleet, when they quitted Santa-Cruz, was desirous to seek the island of St. Christopher, the most eastern of Solomon’s Islands, and steered W. S. W.; but after the second day, as this island did not appear, she changed her course and bore to the north for Manilla. It was, without doubt, upon Mendana’s instructions that she directed this search; and by the short time she employed, it is evident how near that navigator had supposed them.

Mendana’s chief Pilot, Fernand Quiros, could not bring himself to relinquish his commander’s researches, and regretted the proposal of sailing for Manilla. He was convinced of the existence of Solomon’s Islands, and from this moment the discovery of them became the reigning object of his wishes: he returned speedily to Peru, presented no less than eight memorials to the Viceroy, and employed his solicitations so effectually, that at length he obtained his desire. When he left Callao, the port of Lima, on Dec. 21, 1605, he appointed the island of Santa-Cruz as the place of rendezvous for the vessels with him, which sufficiently points out the object of his voyage. Knowing the distance of this island from the coast of Peru, and desirous to employ his intermediate way to the best advantage, he did not take the direct course which he had gone with Mendana in his first voyage, but proceeded southwards as far as the 25th degree of latitude. After discovering a long chain of small islands, most of which have since been rediscovered, he returned to the latitude of Santa-Cruz. At Taumago he learned from the inhabitants, that they knew of many islands in their neighbourhood; and advancing again to the southward, discovered the land which he named Tierra Austral del Espiritu Santo. When he left this island he met with violent and contrary winds in the open sea, by which one of his ships was separated from him; he therefore resolved to steer up for the island of Santa-Cruz, where the rendezvous was appointed: but when he came into this latitude he was unable to find Santa-Cruz, constantly losing way more and more, says Figueroa, by the force of the wind. Seeing how difficult it was to make this island, and thinking it would be impossible to beat back again, he gave up his design and steered for Mexico.

Such are the principal considerations which move us to believe the existence of Solomon’s Islands. If we observe further, that most of Mendana’s and Quiros’s discoveries
have been confirmed by modern navigators, we cannot well doubt of this. But if these islands exist, why so many voyages undertaken to find them? Have these been fruitless? The answer to this objection will be found in that very situation of the islands which it is my present object to ascertain. We may observe, in the mean while, that Quiros could not find them because he could not make the island of Santa-Cruz, which he sought on the north and north-east of the Tierra Austral; whereas it is on the north-west of it, according to the observations of modern navigators. Carteret and Byron did not find them, because they made the search only in the places pointed out by modern charts. Byron observes, that having advanced to ten degrees west of the position assigned to them by the French chart of the South Sea, he thought it necessary to abandon the search: he adds, that this situation is not founded upon any authority; and that he much doubts whether the celebrated navigator who made the discovery, had left sufficient information for them ever to be found again. Carteret, in like manner observes, that he had advanced far beyond the situation attributed to them; and that, having arrived at the island of Santa-Cruz, which he re-discovered, he gave up the attempt.

If these navigators could have consulted the narratives of Mendana’s voyages, it is probable they would not so hastily have relinquished their researches. These accounts give us, in the first place, the latitudes of many of the Islands of Solomon; and in this respect we know, that the errors to be apprehended are very inconsiderable, seldom more than half a degree: they give us, secondly, the distance of these islands from the coast of Peru, by comparing which with the time of their intermediate way, particularly in Mendana’s second voyage, which was in a more direct course, and on the same parallel with these islands, we may deduce their longitude, at least within a very few degrees. Before we undertake to ascertain this point, we must enquire why geographers are so little agreed about the position of these islands, and why there is the difference of more than a thousand leagues in the situation assigned by them.

The first charts which represent the Islands of Solomon, all agree in placing them to the east of New Guinea, and at no great distance from it: they are thus situated on a chart published by Theodore de Bry, in 1596, the same year that Mendana arrived at Manilla, after his second expedition: the same position appears in a chart published by Wijffleet, in 1597; in the charts belonging to Herrera’s History of the West Indies; in an ancient Portuguese chart of the East Indies, inserted in Themenot’s curious collection of voyages; in the charts of Ortelius published in 1589; and, in general, in all the charts which preceded those of the Arcano del Mare, published by Robert Dudley, in 1646.

Dudley then transposed the Islands of Solomon to the situation of the Marquesas de Mendoza, making but one group of the two sets of islands. On the chart where they appear, which is the 23d of Asia, he explains his opinion, and the authorities he consulted in the following note: ‘The Islands of Solomon, discovered by Alvarez de Mendana, in 1580, were found at 800 Spanish leagues west from Lima; nevertheless the ordinary charts place them at 1800 leagues, but very falsely.’

Dudley’s opinion was adopted by many geographers; and among others, by Delisle, as appears in his first charts, and on his terrestrial globe, published in 1700. Delisle was certainly induced, rather by the reputation of its author than by any profound reflection, to embrace this opinion: we find him renouncing it in 1714, when he published his southern hemisphere: he then placed the Islands of Solo-

mon at 1635 Spanish leagues, and 205 degrees of longitude, east from the meridian of Ferro. Six years after, when he published his Map of the World, and a Memoir on the Situation and Extent of different Parts of the Earth, he approached still nearer to the position indicated in the early charts. He there places Solomon’s Islands in 190 degrees of longitude; and in his Memoir he says, that he has determined the situation of the southern lands, and of the islands of the South Sea, by the journals of the discoveries, and by tracing their voyages. This method was the result of reflection, and accordingly has been most followed since 1720.

M. Bellin had placed these islands in 195 degrees of longitude, on his Chart of the known Parts of the Globe, as well as on that of the South Sea, published in 1741; and in his Observations on the Construction of the latter Chart, we find his motives for so doing.

In 1756, he corrected his chart of the South Sea; and then removed the Islands of Solomon to 205 degrees, or ten degrees further eastward. His opinion was adopted by Mr. Green in his great chart of America.

M. Dampierre had taken a mean between the positions adopted by other geographers, and had placed the Islands of Solomon at 200 degrees; but when he established the new discoveries in the South Sea, upon his Map of the World, he thought it necessary to suppress the old ones, and the Islands of Solomon no longer appear upon his map.

In 1767, M. Pingre, of the Royal Academy of Sciences, on the occasion of the transit of Venus, gave us some very interesting researches into the position of the islands in the South Sea, and placed the Islands of Solomon near 210 degrees.

We are also obliged to Mr. Dalrymple for very curious researches concerning the ancient voyages in the South Sea, made by the Spanish and the Dutch. This learned man, well known for the zeal with which he promotes the progress of geography and navigation, and for his labours in those branches of Science, has particularly studied every thing that relates to the Islands of Solomon, and has published a dissertation on the subject. He perceived that they ought to be placed near New Guinea, and a greater distance from Peru than was indicated in any of the charts; but his patriotic zeal betrayed him into an error of another kind: he has transposed the Islands of Solomon to the situation of those known by the name of New Britain, and situated between the 2nd and the 6th degree of S. latitude; whereas the observations made in Mendana’s voyage place them between the 7th and the 12th degree.

By this summary we perceive how much geographers have differed about the situation of Solomon’s Islands, and how many situations they have assigned for them. To attain the truth in a matter so obscure, the best way is to examine the original authors who were consulted by those geographers; and I will therefore briefly report what the chief of these have written on the subject. [There follows a brief account of the findings of Acosta, Herrera, Lopez Vaz, Ovalle, Quiros, Figueroa, Hawkins and Cornelius Wijffleet.]

Source: M. Buache, 'Extract from a Memoir concerning the Existence and Situation of Solomon's Islands, presented to The Royal Academy of Sciences, Jan. 9, 1781', Discoveries of the French in 1768 and 1769, to the South-East of New Guinea, with the Subsequent Visits to the same Lands by English Navigators who gave them New Names, M. Fleurieu, ec., London, 1791, pp. 309-17
B40  Rediscoveries in the Solomon Islands, 1788

Lieutenant John Shortland was Agent of Transports with the First Fleet that reached Port Jackson, New South Wales, in January 1788. He was ordered to return to England with three of the transports and three storeships the instant the Governor of New South Wales had no further occasion for them. Shortland left Port Jackson in the Alexander transport on Monday 14 July 1788 and set a course via New Guinea. The Alexander was accompanied by the Friendship, the Prince of Wales and the Borrowdale. Carteret Harbour in New Ireland was appointed as the first place of rendezvous. Two of the vessels parted company within the first few days, but the Alexander and the Friendship remained together until the latter was scuttled just before reaching Batavia. The following extract describes Shortland’s rediscovery of the Bougainville Strait. See also B41.

The Alexander and the Friendship now had run from the latitude of 10°44’ south, and longitude 161°30’ east, to the latitude of 7°10’ south, and longitude 156°30’ east, the whole way nearly in sight of land. As, therefore, proceeding westward, to the south of the nextland, might have entangled them with New Guinea, Lieutenant Shortland determined to try the passage which was now before him: and being very well convinced, before it was dark, that the way was clear, kept under a commanding sail all night... At two in the morning of August the 8th, a strong ripple of a current was very plainly to be perceived; and by five the ship had nearly cleared the straits...

These straits Lieutenant Shortland judged to be between four and five leagues in length, and about seven or eight miles broad, running in a north-west direction; and, conceiving himself to be the first navigator who had sailed through them, he ventured to give them the name of Shortland’s Strait. On comparing his account with the narrative of M. Bougainville, which he had not then by him, there seems to be reason to suspect that this is the same passage through which that navigator sailed at the latter end of June, 1768; and that the island supposed to be called Simboo, is the same which was then named Choiseul Island. To corroborate this suspicion, M. Bougainville’s description of the canoes and persons of the natives agrees entirely, as far as it goes, with that given by Mr. Shortland. A small difference in longitude affords the chief reason for doubting the identity of the passage, which, should it be proved, will not detract at all from the merit of the latter navigator, who proceeded entirely by his own attention and sagacity, in a sea unknown to himself and those who were with him, which, if not wholly unexplored, had not, however, been surveyed before with equal minuteness of observation.

Lieutenant Shortland now congratulated himself on having cleared this large tract of land, which he had the greatest reason to suppose united the whole way from the place at which he first fell in with it; as in sailing at a very moderate distance from the coast, he had made every effort in his power to find a passage to the northward. A place called by one of the French navigators, Port Survile, is probably a part of it, as well as Choiseul Bay, but the points seen and described by the French discoverers are very few; and for the knowledge of the form and bearings of the rest of the coast, throughout the whole extent of near three degrees of latitude, and full five of longitude, we are indebted entirely to the researches of our own countryman, as we are for the beautiful delineation of the whole coast, to the care and ingenuity of his son, Mr. Thomas Shortland. The only places in which Lieutenant Shortland suspected there might possibly be a passage which had escaped his observation, was between Cape Phillip and Cape Henlow, and again between the capes Marsh and Pitt. The ascertaining of these matters he leaves to other navigators, at the same time recommending the route he took as the safest and most expeditious passage within his knowledge from Port Jackson to China; Middleton Shoal, on the coast of New South Wales, being the only place of danger he had hitherto discovered. Should any objection be made to passing through a strait, where a more open sea can be obtained, he would recommend the much wider channel between Egmont Island and Simboo, and not by any means the whole circuit to the east of the New Hebrides. To the whole of this land, consisting of the two principal islands on each side of the straits, and the Treasury Isles between them, Lieutenant Shortland gave the name New Georgia.


B41  Fleurieu Comments on Shortland’s Discoveries, 1791

The compiler of Mr. Shortland’s Voyage, might have found some more characteristic points of resemblance than the construction of the canoes, and the appearance of the inhabitants, if he had cast his eyes upon Char. XII of M. de Bougainville’s Voyage. He would there have seen, that the latitude, the figure of the land, and many geographical particularities, make it indubitable that the strait named Shortland’s in 1788, is actually that of Bougainville, discovered in 1768. The difference of one degree and a half of longitude between the accounts of these two navigators, will not seem astonishing, when it is observed that Bougainville had entirely crossed the Great Pacific Ocean, without having had opportunity to rectify the reckoning of his course.

The discovery of M. de Bougainville and that of Survile taken together, comprise a chain of land occupying near six degrees of latitude, and eight degrees of longitude, which is a
Bigley: The Search for La Perouse in New Guinea Waters, 1793

Antoine-Raymond-Joseph de Bruni d'Entrecasteaux was commander of the French Indian Naval Station and experienced in navigation of the Far East. In May 1791 he was appointed by the Crown to command an expedition to search for La Perouse, whose ships the Boussole and the Astrolabe had sailed out of Botany Bay at the end of February 1788 and had not been seen again. D'Entrecasteaux' expedition consisted of two cumbersome store-ships of 500 tons, the Recherche and the Esperance. The searchers aimed to follow the route that La Perouse had indicated his intention of taking, in a letter he wrote from Botany Bay: 'I will go up to the Friendly Islands and I will carefully follow my instructions in respect of the south coast of de Surville's Archipelago, and Bougainville's Louisiades, to see if the latter join New Guinea or not. By the end of July, 1788, I will pass between New Guinea and New Holland by another channel than the Endeavour's if there be one. I will visit, during September and part of October, the Gulf of Carpentaria and Western New Holland as far as Van Diemen's Land, but in a way, however, that will enable me to sail north early enough to reach the Ile de France by December, 1788.' The D'Entrecasteaux expedition left Brest 29 September 1791, and rounding the Cape of Good Hope sailed east to the south-east coast of Tasmania. From here a northerly course took them to New Caledonia and to the D'Entrecasteaux Reef. By 3 July 1792 they had come to the end of the Reef, and rounding the south coast of the Treasury Islands, they moved north towards Bougainville Island. The weather made for poor visibility so that they were uncertain if Bougainville and Buka were separate islands. On 15 July they sailed for New Ireland and anchored in Carteret Harbour. A week was passed here, then on 24 July they sailed through St. George's Channel to New Hanover. On the way to Ambon a strong northerly current flowing from Geelvink Bay made them suspect the existence of a great river. From Ambon they returned to Tasmania. On the second departure from Tasmania a search was made towards New Zealand, then Tonga, New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands. For three weeks the heavy vessels bent their way through the dangerous waters of the Louisiade Archipelago, along the northern side of the chain. D'Entrecasteaux named the islands after men of the expedition. The names Rossel Island and Lusancay Island, and the names given to groups of islands, e.g., D'Entrecasteaux Islands, the Trobiand, have been retained, but most of the names of the individual islands have reverted to their native names. New Guinea was sighted on 24 June 1793 and the following day the ships entered Huon Gulf. As they threaded their way through Dampier Strait, hidden shoals brought them close to disaster. On 3 July they approached the northern coast of New Britain and mistook Willaumez Peninsula for an island, 'The Willaumez.' A few days later the search for La Perouse was abandoned. D'Entrecasteaux died at sea north of Anchorites Island. The exhausted party finally made Surabaya on 19 October, where they learned of the revolution at home and of the great terror fostered by the Republicans. D'Auritscan and Rossel were Royalist sympathisers. All suspected of Republican sympathies were interned and so the expedition broke up. See also B104.

OFF THE COASTS OF BOUGAINVILLE AND BUKA, JULY 1792

We saw at some distance a small canoe, manned by five natives, who came astern of our ship, and kept at the distance of about 500 toises, notwithstanding all our invitations to them to come on board.

In hopes of alluring those savages, we let down into the water a plank, with some knives and nails upon it, and a bit of scarlet stuff by way of a flag, tied to a stick placed upright in its centre. They did not however, seize upon those objects, till we cut the string which kept it nearer to the ship than they chose to venture. The sight of the bit of stuff diffused among them the most lively joy: they showed us that they had accepted of our present, and earnestly desired more of the same sort.

At last, by throwing them handkerchiefs, bits of red stuff, and empty bottles, we succeeded in bringing them alongside. One of the bottles having been taken in some sea-water,
the savage who took it up, thinking perhaps that we had
sent him something good to drink, was disagreeably mis-
taken on tasting the contrary, and we regretted that we had
not given him timely notice of the circumstance.

Those natives were acquainted with the method of
barter, and took much pains to shew us the price of their
goods.

We received a very fine bow and some arrows, in ex-
change for a few handkerchiefs, which we let down to them
by a rope. As they did not observe that we possessed this
kind of weapon, they endeavoured to make us sensible of
its value, by showing us its use.

One of the gunners went for his fiddle, and played them
some tunes; and we had the pleasure to see that they were
not insensible to music. They offered us a number of things
in exchange for the instrument, making signs for it, by
imitating the motions of the fiddler upon a paddle. But
they soon found that their solicitations were fruitless. It was
the only fiddle by which the ship's company danced; and we
had too long a voyage before us, to think of parting with
the instrument, which procured us an exercise so salutary
to seamen.

We had so loaded them with presents, that they soon
began to make difficulties in giving their commodities in
exchange for ours, to procure which they had recourse to
unfair arts. The Commander had agreed to give them some
handkerchiefs striped with red, their favourite colour, for a
bow, and trusting too much to their good faith, had de-
ivered them the handkerchiefs: but instead of the bow,
they would only give some arrows, which were refused.

Those natives seemed to have a great propensity to gaiety.
They seemed to take pleasure in repeating the words which
they heard us pronounce; and the sweetness of their lan-
guage enabled them easily to succeed in the imitation.

They were passionately fond of music, and particularly
of the most brisk and noisy tunes. One of the officers, who
was a good performer, played a very lively tune. They
listened with very great attention; astonishment was visible
in their features; they could not conceal the pleasure they
felt; but, by different motions of their arms, which kept
exact time with the measure, and a great agitation of the
whole body, they gave unequivocal proofs of their sen-
sibility.

They did not lose sight of the desire which the Com-
mander had expressed for a bow. One of them promised
him a bow in exchange for a hat; but when he got possession
of the hat, he refused to surrender the bow.

Most of the things which we gave them were tied to the
end of a line, which they were not at the pains to loose; for
they carried in their girdles, shells which were sufficiently
sharp to cut it at once.

As we had good reason to distrust their promises, a man
went down by a rope ladder astern, with a view to exchange
a bit of red stuff for a bow, when we perceived that the
current had carried us to the north-west, and that we were
already too near the shore. As a calm prevented us from
steering the ship, we were obliged to put out a boat in order
to tow her off. The savages, thinking, no doubt, that we
intended to pursue them, in order to punish them for their
dishonesty, retreated precipitately towards the island. Out
of gratitude perhaps, for the patience with which we
allowed them to cheat us, they committed no such act of
treachery as Genera. Bougainville, in his voyage round the
world, had experienced at their hands.

Four canoes were, all this while, dealing with the Esper-
ance. One of them was manned by natives, of whom sixteen
were paddlers, and the rest warriors.

We learned from the people on board the Esperance,
that this war-canoe had long kept at a distance; but ven-
tured to come alongside, on seeing the different articles
which their country-men in the little canoes had procured.
The order with which the savages were stationed in the
great canoe, indicated a kind of naval tactics. A warrior,
armed with a bow and arrows, stood between every two
paddlers, on each side, and intermediate parties of two or
three warriors stood with their faces towards the stern of
the canoe, in order to observe the movements in that direc-
tion, and to fight while retreating. Those warriors showed
no hostile disposition; they seemed very fond of the wine
and brandy which was given to them, but did not eat bacon,
without a degree of repugnance.

Those savages had excellent teeth, and found no difficulty
in masticating the hardest biscuits which were offered to
them.

Could those natives have had any communication with
the English and the Spaniards? One of them, on showing
us an arrow, which he was going to tie to the end of one of
our strings to convey it on board, pronounced, very dis-
tinguishedly, the English word 'arrow'. Another, showing us
the land, and inviting us to it, made use of the Spanish word
'tienda'.

We learned from the Esperance, that several of them
pronounced the word 'Bouka', the name which General
Bougainville gave to their island. This word, which in the
Malayan language is the expression of negation, and which,
when the first syllable is pronounced long, signifies 'to
open', doubtless seems to indicate some analogy with the
Malayan; from which, however, it differs so much, that
one of the ship's company, who spoke the language fluently,
could not understand those natives.

The value which they seemed to affix to nails, and the
other articles of hardware which we gave them, showed
that they were acquainted with the use of iron.

Source: M. Labillardière, *Voyage in Search of La Perouse, per-
formed by order of the Constituent Assembly, during the