

A HALF MILLENNIUM OF HOPE

THE VOYAGE OF THE ESPOIR TO THE SOUTHLAND AND THE SOUTHLAND'S CALL TO CHRISTENDOM 1503 - 1505

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PART I

THE LEGACIES OF THE VOYAGE OF THE FRENCH
CAPTAIN BINOT PAULMIER DE GONNEVILLE, 1503 -1505

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AND THE SOUTHLAND'S CALL TO CHRISTENDOM
1503 -1505
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Preface to Part I, version 'F'

Dear Friend,

This represents a draft of Part I of a work of several Parts. It is currently in progress, therefore incomplete and subject to future changes. Please be patient with any anomalies, unfinished style, and other shortcomings in the level of completeness.

It is circulated to interested people who appreciate Christian history in order to celebrate the time that coincides with providential events that very likely took place in Australia, five hundred years ago. They are the subject of some debate, but it will be evident that it is as much or more a case of an overlooked history than a controversial one. In any case, it will be seen clearly that these events affected Australian history profoundly. These are of significance to Australia's heritage and of special relevance for the Australian Aboriginal people.

All of the information, unless indicated in the text as being speculative or supposed, is based on original literature of antiquity, as described in the Bibliography, as well as various modern sources. Regrettably, although footnotes and Bibliographic information are added at the end of Chapter VI, these are not linked to markers within the text. This is because the text is subject at present to continuous development. This version of Part I has been somewhat speedily prepared in order to distribute it to interested people, so that the significance of the story might be appreciated at a time that it still correlates with the 500th anniversary of the events described.

Further detailed evidences and in-depth background will follow in subsequent Parts (II and III) in the future. In the meantime, the footnotes in the Bibliographic entries provide additional information of help to those interested in further background and context.

H.W. Brice, December 2004

The Forgotten Quincentenary Of Discovery

There is a powerful case to support a centuries-old belief that a French sea captain named Binot Paulmier de Gonneville sailed to Australia in the year 1504, being the first European ever recorded as having discovered it. For this reason the year 2004 could be regarded as the *quincentenary* of Australia's *European* discovery. While it has been a debated history, some saying the Southland that Gonneville visited was elsewhere, research into this history reveals that the lack of Australian recognition of this event is more a case of unawareness than of controversy. For the alternate theories are quite problematic, while the case that Gonneville came to Australia is compelling.

While that year, 1504, was significant for the reason of the "discovery", many would see its importance in another light. If it is true that Gonneville came to Australia, then 1504 was also the year of the first introduction of Christianity to the Australian Aboriginals. It would thus be, in fact, the year of the baptism of the first Australian. The name of the person thus indicated was Essomeric. He was a youth of fifteen years of age, a member of a large tribe that inhabited a lush, tropical area, which, if it was Australia, was probably part of the north-west coast, possibly in the region of Kimberleys.

It is concluded by the evidence examined for this study, that the place of Gonneville's visit was Australia. The following chapters will focus on relating the events that are recorded in accounts of the voyage dating to the years 1505, 1663, and subsequent years. Without focusing heavily at the beginning on the debates, for it will become evident that they largely derive, as already stated, from simple *unawareness* of the original accounts, this study will focus on the elucidation of the events that are known to have taken place. The existence of other theories is thus acknowledged, but for the sake of depicting the chronology, this account will proceed to follow the traditional and well supported conclusion of the Australian destination of the voyage.

The baptism of the young man that will be described as an Australian Aboriginal, then, took place on a ship, on its way to France, where he was taken, by agreement, along with the French explorers after they had departed from Australia. The Frenchmen had stayed for six months in the company of an Aboriginal community, while they conducted general repairs to their ship after traversing the Indian ocean through a wild storm.

Although it had been the intention of the French Captain to bring the young Aboriginal back to his homeland, circumstances were to dictate that he was never able to do so. Essomeric thus settled in France for the remainder of his life. After settling there, in the coastal province of Normandy, and having married a relative of the Captain, he became the father of a clan of *Normandy* Aboriginals.

A hundred and fifty years after Essomeric's arrival in France, and about seventy years after his death, one of his descendants, his great grandson, who had become a Catholic priest, had made a name for himself as the advocate for the salvation of the native race of his ancestors, the "*Austraux*" (which, being interpreted, means *Australians*). His name was the Abbe (Abbot) Jean Paulmier.

Terra Australis, also usually referred to in the plural by the French as the *Terres Australes*, "Southlands", was by that time the subject of much controversy amongst geographers. Some believed it to be a great antarctic continent as large as the northern continent. Others, particularly the Dutch mapmakers, tended to deny its existence and minimalise the size of the promontories that extended southwards from the known world.

For the Abbe Paulmier the Southland had a different and special significance. Being the descendant of Essomeric, he considered himself a native of it, and therefore that he had a mandate, in order to fulfil a promise that had been made to his ancestors, but not kept. That was: to bring Christianity back to his kinsmen.

His first known *treatise*, imploring the church to send a Christian mission to the *Southland* was disseminated in 1654. In the following years he continued to work on this project, writing successive versions of this treatise, and the last of these was published as a book in 1664. Its title was "Memoirs Concerning the Establishment of a Christian Mission to the Third World - Otherwise Known as the Austral Lands: Southern, Antarctic, and Unknown - By a Priest Who is a Native of That Land".

The selfsame priest was successful in being approved by the Pope, Alexander VII, in 1666, as Priest to the Great Southland. As such, he was the first person ever to be appointed by the church to such a role. Thus, by Essomeric's inadvertent migration to Europe a hundred and fifty years earlier, it had now eventuated that an Australian Aboriginal descendant was appointed as the *first Vicar of Terra Australis*.

The Abbe Paulmier died before he could accomplish his mission, around 1670. But the book that he had published inspired hundreds of explorers and Christian evangelists throughout Christian Europe to search for this priest's ancestral homeland and fulfill the late Abbe's mandate. This was to have a profound impact on the foundation of the Australian nation. The Abbe Paulmier's book stimulated a renewed interest in the Southland not only in France but amongst the other nations of Europe, and ultimately influenced the English in their searching the environs of New Holland and the South Seas.

Another incidental but not insignificant consequence of his book was the development of a whole new genre of literature, namely the "utopian" novels, which arose directly in response to Paulmier's book. Three French utopian fictions were written, all stories about ships becoming lost or fighting through tempests in the South Seas and discovering a strange Southland. These books were actually skeptical reactions to the Abbe's idea of a Christian Mission, and this was partly connected with disputes between the Huguenots (Protestant French) and the Catholics. This, however, takes us off the track of the more important essence of this Australian Aboriginal descendant's accomplishments, and so will be dealt with in a later section of this study. Suffice it to say that the utopian works were the first of their kind, and became the prototype for later *utopias* such as *Gulliver's Travels* and other stories like Robinson Crusoe.

More importantly, historians after this time began to include Gonneville and Essomeric as facts of history. Navigators went on Austral Ocean expeditions using Paulmier's book as a guide. Mission-oriented Christians continued to perpetuate Paulmier's exploratory and evangelistic project for the Southland. Ultimately, when Paulmier's book was resurrected again a hundred years later, around 1756, by a French historian who reproduced much of its content, it rekindled a "third" wave of exploration of the South Seas for this legendary Southland from which Essomeric had come. When the book was translated to English, it coincided with an immediate increase in England's searches for the Southland, and factored in the explorations of Captain James Cook, with obvious conclusions. This will be discussed in the following chapters.

There are a number of factors which have influenced the Australian tendency to forget about the Gonneville legacy. Included in these is the fact that in the days of the early Australian colony, Gonneville's 1504 discovery of Australia was seen as a validation of a French claim on New Holland.

It would seem that English authorities simply speculated for political reasons that Gonneville had not come to Australia but somewhere else, such as Madagascar. That theory was first voiced by

Admiral James Burney, who sailed with Captain James Cook's second and third voyages to the South Seas, in his later accounts of the voyages. The topic could hardly fail to have been addressed in the discussions between he and Cook, nor could it have been insignificant for English geographers and navigators generally, since this search of the South Seas, especially Cook's third voyage where he proved the nonexistence of the Antarctic continent, clearly deferred to Gonneville's legendary discovery.

However, there were mixed opinions amongst Australians concerning the Madagascar theory. The legend of Gonneville clung for a number of equal and opposite reasons; like Captain Ferdinand De Quiros's discovery of the "Southland of the Holy Spirit" (which was Vanuatu, but believed by many to be the east coast of the Great South Land) in the year 1606, Gonneville's discovery of the Southern Indes in 1505 also represented an important precedent in Catholic perspectives. For the French, Gonneville's discovery gave assent to a Catholic Genesis in Australasia (but also, of course, a French genesis).

In addition, there was a certain absurdity in the Madagascar theory which must have become increasingly evident as knowledge about its history became available to Australians. Madagascar's thousand-year history of significant trade with the Arabs, and even longer history of organised civilisation, would be irreconcilable with the account of Gonneville's *Indiens*, who had never seen foreigners or their wares such as steel and glass, and who were awed and intrigued by such things as *paper* that the Frenchmen could use to silently *talk* to each other.

The more influential factor in the Australian abandonment of Gonneville as its first European discoverer came, however, nearly a hundred years after Cook's arrival at Botany Bay. A French geographer named Armand d'Avezac proposed a new theory, in 1869, that Gonneville had in fact arrived at *Brazil* in 1504, not Australia. This was based upon his discovery of the original account of Gonneville's voyage, which had been documented in 1505, and whose full text had not been available prior to this. Apart from the fact that this sparked the invention of an entire new culture of a legendary past between France and Brazil that had never existed, it made it even easier for Australians to reject this already half-rejected story. There were also good political reasons for the French and Brazilians to want a happy and utopian past, that preceded some unpleasant episodes that had occurred in between.

When the *Brazil theory* was put forward, the nautical French geographers seemed apt to reconstruct their long term history to transfer the destination of Gonneville, and therefore the story of Essomeric, and his racial identity (and that of the Abbe Paulmier) from Australia to Brazil. This had the effect of totally invalidating everything that had been previously believed or known relating to Terra Australis.

Hence the chronology of the *Australian Gonneville theory* had progressed through several stages: First, during the period of explorations, it was generally credited by both the English and French. After the English colonisation, there grew a divergence of views, the English-Australians suggesting *Madagascan* and other theories, the French sticking to their traditional Australia theory. A third stage, after 1869, was characterised by a general mutual agreement that Gonneville had gone to Brazil.

The problem with this is that the facts did not, and still do not, support the Brazil theory, nor could it be reasonably sustained that *Gonneville Land* could be any place other than Australia. The argument put forward by d'Avezac for the Brazil theory, while it may have been accepted by many French and Brazilian historians, was challenged by authoritative scholarship in the contemporary period, and modern scholars continue to draw attention to its implausibility.

An illusory mystique seems to have developed around the subject of the Gonneville story: there is a notion that one needs to be an expert on sea currents and tradewinds, or an anthropologist, in order to figure out the truth of the matter. On the contrary, the facts that are available are not grossly ambiguous or vague, nor is there a lack of solid, credible, documentary evidence.

In the first place, the account of Gonneville's voyage was made before a court of the Admiralty of Normandy in 1505, and stands as a record that includes significant dates and details of events which, if they are taken for what they are, provide powerful evidence for the Australia theory. In the second place, the Abbe Paulmier's book, published in 1664, is clear in its grounding in the selfsame account of his great grandfather's *godfather* (Gonneville), in 1505. It was thus from the inherited family history that his passion for the Southland derived. It is clear that the original *Relation de Gonneville* describes a voyage to a great land to the south of the East Indies that coincides with Australia. There is also no doubt that the Abbe Paulmier considered himself a native of Australasia, not Brazil.

Australian Aboriginal Christianity has, therefore, a history of origin that has remained for the most part in obscurity for many years. This has developed to some extent as a result of genuine historical uncertainty, but also as a result of deliberate but unfounded invalidation. This is too valuable a story to simply cast aside on the basis of theories which are not certain, or to be more blunt, are irreconcilable with the basic facts. This is not merely a story about a ship going on an adventure. It is arguably the oldest existing chronicle in the world describing the nature, community and lifestyle of the Australian Aboriginals. It happens also to be the first history of Christianity in Australia.

Gonneville's voyage, and his taking of Essomeric to France, and the centuries of consequences of this, make a remarkable story in their own right. Like the Biblical story of Abraham and the Promised Land, this could also be seen as an example of faith having effect after the passing of several generations in the fulfillment of a dream beyond the expectations of the dreamer. An Aboriginal boy, Australia's first Christian, departed on an inadvertent odyssey of discovery, commissioned by his father to go and learn about many things, not excluding Christianity itself, and bring it back to his kinsmen; then, disappearing into dormancy until a future century, his faith seems to have awakened to fruition in the form of events beyond his imagination, but which did, in no mean degree, fulfil the dream.

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A Land South Of The True Course To The East Indies

The sources that have been consulted to construct the account of Gonneville's voyage and the subsequent events upon his return to France include the original sources as well as recent scholarly studies. The original *Relation de Gonneville*, written in 1505, has been consulted in its rendition by Armand d'Avezac and others. The original text of the Aboriginal-descended priest, the Abbe Jean Paulmier's treatise published in 1663 has been studied in its original edition and in renditions of it by others.

Other French histories of Australian exploration such as written by the historians Marthe Emmanuel and Charles de Brosses have provided additional points. Most helpful of all have been two detailed studies by Professor Margaret Sankey of the French Studies Department at University of Sydney, which have been a source of much clarification on the sequence of events as well as

additional information about the history of Australian exploration. Having said that, I have reconstructed the chronology with both approximate and precise dates, as provided by the information in all of these sources.

The original voyage of Captain de Gonville was not one of evangelisation. It was one of trade and exploration, according to the practices of all of the European navigators in the dawning "age of discovery". The sea lanes to the "East Indies" of Asia through the Indian Ocean, via the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa, were now commonly known. Gonville had gone to Lisbon and acquainted himself with Portuguese exploits and engaged two Portuguese merchants who joined him on his mission.

His crew included appropriately skilled sailors and navigators, as well as soldiers, and were sixty men in total. Included also were some scholarly individuals and officers. The ship was stocked up for a long voyage, and equipped with modern equipment for navigation and the drawing of maps and the logging of latitudes and compass directions.

Although chronometers and sextants had not been invented at that time, the *cross-stick* and *astrolabe* were in use, which gave reasonable latitudes. Longitudes were of greater difficulty, hence distances east and west were very inaccurate. However, since the 13th century, *portolans* had been developed -- which were a kind of map with an outline of the coast and *crosslines* -- which, along with a compass, allowed ships to navigate across the open seas.

In earlier times, ships would have had to "hug" the African coastline in order to navigate to a destination around the Indian Ocean. Gonville was able to follow the "true course to the East Indies" which, being known since it was opened up by Vasco da Gama in 1497, allowed him from the Cape of Good Hope to set sail in the direction of what is current Indonesia.

Gonville himself was an experienced sea captain of the North Atlantic. He was of the nobility of France. In the year 1503, in which he set sail for the East Indies, he was aware of the discoveries of America and the Caribbean by Columbus, and of Brazil by Cabral.

Although there is no evidence that Gonville was looking for the Great Southland, it is a fact that this was of some interest to the French. This is because France had been "cut out" of the dividing up of the world by the Pope in the Treaty of Tordesillas ten years earlier, in 1494.

The Pope's edict had divided the world between two countries: Spain and Portugal. An imaginary line was drawn from north to south through the middle of Brazil. The Portuguese had the right to colonise all that lay to the east of it, that being primarily Brazil itself, and the Orient. The Spanish had the right to everything to the west of it; in other words, virtually all of America, north and south. The problem with this for the French was that they had been completely left out of it. This exclusion from a share in the *world* was a matter of some disenchantment to some French people.

For this reason the mythical Southland, which had been believed to exist since ancient times, as a gigantic continent spanning the Antarctic (but believed to be paradisiacal and temperate), was seen as France's possible compensation for this omission. The primary driver of the belief in this Southland was a map of the world made by Ptolemy in the 2nd century A.D., which portrayed the southern Terra Australis. Hence, while not seeking it, Gonville could not have been unaware of its possible existence and the fact that it represented the "Third World", after the Americas, that had not yet been discovered.

Gonville set sail from the port of Honfleur, Normandy, on 24 June, 1503, in a ship called the *Espoir*, sailing southwards. He reached the Canary Islands off North-West Africa after eighteen days of sailing, about the 12th of July. By about another ten days, approximately the 21st of July, the *Espoir*

arrived at the Cape Verde Islands, further south and off the western tip of Africa, where the ship appears to have remained for about ten days.

Leaving there at about the beginning of August, they sailed south a further six weeks before reaching the equator, on 12th September, 1503. The record of the actual date of this event, in the open sea, demonstrates their use of such devices and knowledge as were able to determine their latitude.

It was another thirty-six days' southward sailing, till about 18th November 1503, before the *Espoir* reached the latitude of the Cape of Good Hope, which was determined by various factors, including masses of seaweed moving along in the ocean currents, and the temperature of the air which, despite being summer, was cold.

It was some time after this point that the providential event of a great storm, which was to bring them to the shores of Australia, began. It is around this point, incidentally, that those who would dispute the route of Gonnevillle's voyage, speculate concerning their contrary theories. This will be addressed later. Suffice it to say, that the *Espoir* rounded the Cape of Good Hope and entered the Indian Ocean, and either well into the Indian Ocean, or at a point close to the Cape of Good Hope, was suddenly caught in a storm that continued without reprieve for *three full weeks*, pushing the ship along, but steering it off its intended course.

Hence it was not till approximately the 20th of December 1503, that the storm finally abated, and the *Espoir* found itself in unknown, calm waters. In these latitudes there was little wind, and so the ship moved slowly. Moving along thus without strong winds or currents, Gonnevillle after a number of days began to be concerned for water supplies. Around or soon after Christmas, 1503, there were some birds seen flying to and fro from a southwards direction, and, although no land could be seen, as according to ancient maritime wisdom, this was seen as an indication of the direction of land.

Although aware that the course to the East Indies was more northwards, Gonnevillle turned his ship south in the direction of the birds, fearing that otherwise the slow progress with the lack of good winds might land them in a crisis of water shortage. Since Gonnevillle did not know exactly his longitude, he merely determined that he was south of the *true course to the East Indies*. This "true course" would have been a line that ran east nor' east from the Cape of Good Hope, towards current Indonesia.

After several more days, during which time the New Year of 1504 was seen in, the *Espoir* soon came upon land. They saw the northern coast of a vast, southern land, unknown in the current maps, and unknown to Europeans except by possible vague myths. They came to the mouth of a great river, which Gonnevillle compared in size to the River Orne in Normandy, and into which the ship duly sailed. The *Espoir*, entering the great river, found a suitable place to land and dropped anchor. It was a rich, fertile region, tropical and forested. On the shore, waiting to meet them, were the natives of the land.

As it was the custom to call all natives or *aboriginals* of the lands, whether in the East or West, *Indians*, the Frenchmen called these Aborigines *Indians*, and called the land the *Southern Indies*. The date was the 5th of January, 1504, and the ship had been at sea since June, already a period of six months. It would be a further six months before the French sailors would depart.

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The Baptism of a Southland Prince

Upon their coming to shore, the Frenchmen were met by a tribe of Aboriginals who, despite their unfamiliarity with Europeans, were amicable and hospitable, initiating rapport and engaging in the examination of goods and commodities which the Frenchmen had brought with them. There was no hostility, and the leader of the tribe, whose name was Arosca, soon established a dialogue with Captain de Gonneville.

It was clear that these Aboriginals had had no knowledge of Europeans, or even of other regional civilisations, in living memory. This is indicated by their complete unfamiliarity with things such as mirrors, metal and paper.

While the crew went about their work of repairing the ship, Arosca and the tribesmen visited them frequently. The ship was fortunately loaded with a massive number of French wares that had been brought along for the purpose of trade in the East Indies. These included hundreds of pieces of diverse fabrics, such as silks and items of clothing, thousands of personal items such as jewelry and hair-combs, mirrors, and beautiful ornaments, as well as, on the other hand, thousands of practical handtools, such as knives, axes, hoes, and scythes. For the duration of their stay, the Aboriginal tribesmen availed themselves of all manner of trinkets and baubles that the Frenchmen were keen to swap for a continuous supply of fresh meat and fish that the Aboriginals hunted daily from the teeming river and forests around them.

Upon investigating the surrounding territory, the French visitors also made notes and descriptions of the wildlife, as well as observations of the lifestyles of the local Aborigines. Master Nicole de Fevre, a scholar who had volunteered on the mission, made drawings of the birds and animals which, it was stated in their account, consisted of a multitude of unknown species, that is, birds and animals "never before seen in all of Christendom". Exploring the river in an inland direction for a day's journey, and also along the coast in both directions, they established that the entire region was lush, fertile and teeming with all kinds of wildlife.

Other observations included that the people wore simple clothing consisting of animal skins or woven "mats", some of which were made of feathers. The men and women all went bare headed, their hair hanging down naturally, the women ornamenting their hair with small threads of grass dyed in bright colours, while the men put feathers in their hair which indicated some sort of status. The women also wore necklaces made of bones and small shells. They noted that the leader, Arosca, did not wear any outfit distinguishing himself from the others, but was in appearance exactly the same as the rest of them. Nevertheless, he enjoyed the utmost respect, not only from the nearby village but from the villages of his tribal encampments spread around the region.

Arosca was described as a "king", because the tribe was scattered over a region of about a day's journey in various directions, being distributed in small villages or, as the Frenchmen described them, "cantons", each of which had their own leader. However Arosca was clearly the leader over them all and was held in great reverence. On one occasion, a young man of about eighteen years of age had hit his mother in a moment of anger, and Arosca, having heard of it, called all of the tribe, including the young people, to witness his punishment, which was to be thrown into the river with a stone tied around his neck. The punishment was carried out despite the fact that the mother had pleaded for her son's life on her knees, and despite no complaint having been made by her.

The Frenchmen estimated that there were about a dozen villages under Arosca's eldership, and each of them might have had thirty, forty, sixty or eighty inhabitants. In the neighbouring areas there were other tribes, both inland and along the coast, who were independent of Arosca's tribe. Most of these were friendly, but one particular tribe that lived further inland had been constantly at war with them.

On two occasions during the Frenchmen's stay there were periods of warring, where Arosca would gather together some hundreds of men from the surrounding villages and march off to do battle with these enemy. These could occur from day to day during those periods, suggesting that the enemy tribe was not a great distance away. Arosca's men would return from these affrays jubilant and rejoicing about victories.

On at least one occasion Arosca called upon Gonneville to send his men along with him on one of these skirmishes. Gonneville diplomatically declined. It is supposed that Arosca wished to intimidate his foes with his allies and their firearms. No doubt this would have ultimately backfired, in view of the Frenchmen's soon-coming absence, never to return.

As for the domestic life of the Aboriginals, they slept in huts that were by description oval or round in shape, made of stakes and with leaves and grass or feathers as filling in the sides. They used animal skins to sleep on, and all their utensils and weapons were made of wood. The Frenchmen said these Aboriginals lived an easy, carefree life, fishing and hunting, and the population was very sparse.

On a certain day, Arosca organised an tour of the ship, coming together with his selected elders and leaders of the villages under his eldership. The Aboriginals were awed by the size of the vessel and its layout, its craftsmanship, its equipment and cannons. But they were even more daunted by the Frenchmen's "talking paper", intrigued by the way it could be used to convey the thoughts of someone on board to one of the Frenchmen far away in one of the villages. This caused the Aboriginals to have great respect for the Frenchmen.

With all this friendly rapport and exchange of goods, the development of aptitude for Gonneville and Arosca to communicate with each other, and the obvious development of future interests for both parties, it should not be expected to be omitted that the Frenchmen communicated to their hosts something of their Christian faith.

This they did, and an example of it was in the erecting of a large cross, at least thirty-five feet in height, painted brightly, which had been prepared for the occasion of Easter, which fell on about the 7th of April of that year (1504). The cross was positioned so that it could be seen from the sea, and the planting of it was attended both by the French crew and Aboriginal tribesmen who are described as having participated in it with much enthusiasm.

The aforementioned erudite *Maistre* Nicole de Fevre had prepared an inscription and inscribed it upon the back of the cross. Apart from the date, 1504, which was rendered according to the Latin usage of le Fevre's times, "MCCCLLXVVVVVVVIIIIII", it included, in Latin, the names of the Pope, the King of France, Gonneville, as well as all sixty members of the crew, from the least to the greatest of them.

As the original *Relation de Gonneville* described this event, Gonneville himself, and his chief officers, reverently bare-footed, carried the cross in a solemn procession, to the place where it was to be set up. As stated, it was at a prominent position, and a gathered crowd was there in all formality, consisting of both the Frenchmen and their Aboriginal hosts. Together with Arosca were all of his chiefs from the neighbouring villages, and all of his children, who were mostly adults.

The ceremony was accompanied by fanfare and joyous festivity. The music included the blowing of trumpets, the singing of canticles, and if there were drums they were augmented by the firing of guns, not only the soldiers' muskets but the larger artillery.

It would be a greater stretch of the imagination to suggest that the Frenchmen did *not* communicate anything to the Aboriginals concerning the articles of their Christian faith, than it would be presumptuous to assert that they did. Even given the culture of France at this time, there

would have been some degree of obligatory requirement upon Gonneville, as upon any of the patriotic and religious among the company, to represent Christianity to these people. In France itself, a church-state at the time, religious deviance was a punishable crime, and foreign lands that knew nothing about the faith were at least seen as needing to be enlightened about it.

The purpose for the Frenchmen staying in Arosca's land for this period had been ultimately to repair the ship, presumably from damage entailed in the storm. This may have involved getting timber and cutting it to size. It may have been a complicated process without proper port facilities. Nonetheless the ship's repairs finally were completed by July, 1504.

It had been a hope at least partly entertained by the Captain that the *Espoir* might continue on its voyage to the East Indies after leaving this land. However, the ship's crew apparently objected to this. It had been already by now a full year since leaving Europe. There had been sufficient impediments to their journey already. The decision was made thus to return to France.

However, there occurred at this point the idea that can be said to have ultimately changed Australia's, and even the world's, destiny. That is, the decision of Arosca to send his son, Essomeric, together with the Frenchmen on their journey to France.

Arosca was interested in obtaining various wares that the French could supply. In particular, the guns - and especially the artillery - were top of the list. It was for the purpose of intimidating the aforementioned enemies that had for so long been troubling them. To this request Gonneville *did* respond positively, and it was specifically in relation to this that Arosca's son was to be sent to France.

It was Gonneville who pressed upon Arosca to let him take with him his son. Essomeric was only fifteen years of age at the time. Arosca's agreement to this request demonstrates not only the degree of trust between himself and Gonneville, but the fact that there was a future agenda in mind, an agenda for both Arosca and Gonneville.

There could be no doubt that in Gonneville's mind the discovery of Arosca's land was at least possibly to be equated with the hope that the French had dreamed of: the legendary Southland, hinted at by Marco Polo hundreds of years earlier, and speculated about by Churchmen since Saint Augustine. There may not be proof, but there is also no reason to doubt, that Gonneville would have exercised his duty, as an exploring Captain of discovery, to proclaim the land as a future possession for France and for the church. Thus had done Cabral in 1500 in Brazil, and thus had done Colombe in the Americas on his recent voyages there in the 1490's.

This compliance with Arosca's request to bring artillery can also be seen as an indication of an intention in Gonneville's mind of future relations between France and Arosca's Land. To bring the King's cannons to another land, together with the training (and no doubt if such was to occur, a general mission would come with it), was more than a matter of trade or of simple cordialities. Furthermore, the taking of Arosca's son to France could be likened perhaps to the practice in those times of the intermarrying of princes and princesses to secure alliances between the kingdoms of Europe.

Essomeric was the youngest of six children. His eldest brother was about thirty. Arosca himself was about sixty years of age. Essomeric's mother was deceased. The choice of Essomeric as the envoy can easily be seen as wise planning. Because of his youthfulness he was probably more acquainted with the French visitors and their language than his older siblings. As the privileged son of Arosca, he might have had the greatest access to tutors like the Scholar Nicole de Fevre. He would also have been the least attached and most unlikely to have been burdened with a family to support.

It could even be surmised that he may have seen the prospect of travelling on the great odyssey across the oceans as a much desired adventure. In any case, upon their departure, Arosca, in front of the great crowd of well-wishers who saw the Frenchmen off to their ship, compelled Captain de Gonneville to solemnly swear that he would bring his son Essomeric back within the space of *twenty moons* that they had agreed upon.

On the 3rd of July, 1504, the French ship sailed out of the great river, this one that the Frenchmen had likened to their "Orne" in France. On board was not only Essomeric, but a thirty-five year old Aboriginal named Namoa, who was sent as a kind of guardian to keep him company. It was an auspicious moment and an emotional one for all. Arosca and the tribespeople conveyed the Frenchmen and their departing kinsmen to the ship in a great throng, giving to the Frenchmen all manner of gifts such as foods and colourful feathers and artworks such as were the most beautiful things that they could make. Amongst these were gifts to be conveyed to the King of France.

It has been stated that the cross that had been erected was situated at a place where it could be seen from the sea. As they began to leave, there was the sound of a loud simultaneous cry from the entire gathered tribe, which is likely to have been a number of some hundreds of people, and they all put their hands in the air, making with their fingers the sign of the cross, indicating, as had been the commission to them, that they would take care of the cross until the ship returned.

Presumably as they departed, Essomeric and Namoa and the crew of the ship would have been able to see the cross, since it had been positioned for such a purpose, and possibly this would have been the last identifiable object that those aboard the ship could pinpoint as they drew away from the land, and the coast of the South Land faded into the horizon.

While it is not the purpose of these chapters to argue for the case that Gonneville's land was Australia (this will be addressed in Part 2), it is important to reflect on this part of the *Espoir's* journey for that purpose. The journey from the Southland back to France took eleven months in total. More significantly, for the first *full three months* of the journey there was no sight of land.

During this time it is important to point out that they crossed the Tropic of Capricorn. There is no mention of any significant event such as storms or the changing of course along the way during this segment. Such weather events, if they occurred, would have been mentioned in the account in the *Relation de Gonneville*, as they were at other stages of the journey. It fits perfectly, therefore, with a description of crossing the Indian Ocean from north-west Australia, in a south-westerly direction, headed for the *Cap de Bon Esperance*, as would be the necessary path to return to France.

In September, 1504, about two months into the ocean crossing, a number of the crew, as well as the two Aboriginal travellers, were struck down with a fever. It was of such intensity that several crew members died, namely Jean Bicherel de Pont-l'Evêque, the ship's surgeon, Jean Renoult, a soldier of Honfleur; and *Stenot Vennier de Gonneville sur Honfleur*, the captain's *valet*. Essomeric's companion and guardian, Namoa, likewise did not survive the fever. The narrators thought the fever had been due to the "stinking water" that they had not changed for two months. A likely cause would perhaps be malaria, stowed away on the ship in the larvae from the tropical river.

Namoa died on the 12th of September, 1504. His death induced a discussion amongst the officers concerning religious rites on behalf of the late Aboriginal. In the case of Namoa, it would be a profanity of baptism for the rites to be conducted, because he had died without the knowledge of the mother church, declared *Maistre* Nicole de Fevre, who appears once again to have been the authority on religious matters. For his young friend Essomeric, however, since although he had succumbed to the fever he was still alive, there was a chance for him to become a Christian and thus

be eligible for those important rites. It was thus decided that he should go through the necessary rituals and confessions for baptism. This course of action Essomeric had a will to follow.

The process of the baptism was administered by the selfsame Master Nicole, and standing in for him as witnesses and in place of godparents were Captain de Gonneville himself, and two other eminent persons on the ship, Monsieur Anthoine Thierry, and Monsieur Andrieu de la Mare. The Captain, furthermore, adopted the boy as his own son, and gave him his own name, *Binot Paulmier*. The date of this event was 14th September, 1504.

--- iv. ---

Journey From the South Seas to Christendom

The event of Essomeric's baptism in the middle of a three-month voyage across the ocean was to have great ramifications later in his life, when it became the grim reality that he was unable to be returned to his homeland. At the time, however, its purpose was to save his soul in the event of his death. Fate was to have it that he recovered, and continued with the Frenchmen on their journey to France.

Moreover, it was considered by all that this recovery was itself something of a miracle, for, as it is written in the report made to the Admiralty by Gonneville and his officers, after their eventual return to France, "it seems that the said baptism served to remedy to the soul and the body, because after it the Indian [Essomeric] improved ... and he is now in France". The rest of the voyage to Honfleur, however, was not without further trouble and tragedy. Along the journey to follow were several stops, some of which occasioned adventure, violence, and death.

As stated, the Indian Ocean crossing took about three months. There was no sight land until the 10th of October. Here there is room for some speculation and negotiation as to what land this was. It is clear that its inhabitants had encountered Europeans or other firearm-bearing sailors before this point. They were also fearsome, warlike, and "cannibals". Crossing the Indian Ocean, the presumption would be that the ship would see the Cape of Good Hope as it rounded Africa and entered the Atlantic. However, it is also possible that the ship went far south of the Cape and missed seeing it, especially if Gonneville underestimated how far East of Africa he was. Logically, the closer he thought he was to Africa, the more southwards would he have steered. Whether then their first sighting of land represented some part of Africa, such as the said Cape, or some coastal edge of the Atlantic after already rounding it, is a mystery. This is reflected in the different views put forward by various scholars who have written on this topic.

When they did reach this land, as said, the natives were not friendly. On the 10th of October, 1504, starving for fresh water, the ship pitched to land as soon as they laid sight of it. These natives, who appeared unflustered by the Europeans' great ship, but were wary of its cannons and the Frenchmen's weapons, held back and seemed to intimate that they would not interfere with their activities.

However, after several of the seamen went to shore and were scooping up some water, not having their weapons with them, the natives suddenly attacked, instantly killing one Henry Jesanne, a page of the ship, and "dragging off to their deaths" two others, Jacques l'Homme, one of the ship's soldiers, and Mancel Glues, a sailor.

Four other Frenchmen ran back to the ship, three of them wounded. One of these, the only one of the wounded who was not to survive, was none other than Nicole de Fevre. Thus it was that the selfsame Master Nicole, who had but four weeks earlier baptised Essomeric at the point of near death, was himself now dead. And thus was the passing of the scholar, artist, theologian, a volunteer on this mission and, perhaps, author of certain art piece that was to be found, hundreds of years later, in a wild, remote forest region that some would claim to be the land of Essomeric.

The sailors, having resorted to the ship, continued their voyage, seeking another place to stop in order to obtain their fresh supplies. The period of time between the first landing and the second is not given, but must be calculated by the date that they departed from the second stopover, that being about 21st December, or before Christmas. The distance between the two stops was a matter of an estimated one hundred leagues, which is about three hundred miles. Balancing the distance travelled with the date of departure, it would seem they spent at least some weeks sailing, then spent at least some weeks anchored in the second place.

On the second occasion they also encountered hostile natives, who were also in *appearance* like the previous natives encountered. The previous ones had been described as being mostly naked, having piercings on their faces, painted bodies with gash-marks, beardless or shaved faces, partly shaved heads, and seemed by description to be rude and surly in manner. On the second occasion they ensured that they were prepared for any surprise attacks of the previous sort, and therefore no harm came to the ship's crew. They were able to trade and barter with the local people and obtain the provisions they were seeking.

There are varying speculations by scholars concerning the location of these stopovers on the return journey. Some insist that one or both of these landings must have occurred along the coast of Brazil, while others make the assumption that the *Espoir* followed the African coast northwards. Neither case makes much difference to the preceding six months of the journey, for indeed once having crossed the Indian Ocean and doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and having entered the South Atlantic, it is only a matter of a handful of compass degrees whether a north-west bound ship would first hit an African, or South American, coast.

Having set sail northwards again before Christmas, the Frenchmen must have celebrated this day at sea, however they may have done that in 1504. About New Year's Day, 1505, they were treated with the surprise of the discovery of a small island that was uninhabited by humans but populated by an enormous multitude of birds, who swarmed on the ship and perched all over the ship's masts and ropes.

From this point the northwards voyage through the Atlantic took a further five weeks before they reached the equator, on about the 6th of February 1505. There they found changeable winds, and the water was full of a mass of long, stringy seaweed. They made depth soundings here and found that it was so deep that there was no echo.

Another full month of northwards sailing, bringing it then to eleven weeks with no sight of land, and they believed they were in the region of the Canary Islands, but discovered that rather they had proceeded further than that to the vicinity of the *Azores*, about nine hundred miles west of Lisbon. There, on the Isle of Faial, which had been inhabited by the Portuguese for about eighty years, they laid anchor on the 9th of March, 1505.

Although it should be almost due East from there to sail to France, the *Espoir*, when they had decided to set sail from the Azores in that direction, turned on account of stormy weather to make headway for the closer Ireland. There they docked the ship in order to repair some *leaks* that had developed. The process of caulking wooden ships was a task that usually involved the pressing of a

rope-like substance into the cracks between the planks of the ship's hull, then sealing it in with pitch. Usually particular seamen were skilled at this profession and were included in the crew for the specific purpose.

While waiting for this final preparation for the voyage's final leg, the Frenchmen were walking, once more, upon "European" soil, for the first time in almost two years. It was also, for Essomeric, his first experience of "Western" society.

It is not stated exactly when the ship departed from the Azores, nor arrived in Ireland, but it would probably have been late March or early April. Likewise the time spent in Ireland is not stated exactly, but was probably several weeks, for it can be calculated that they departed from there only a few days before the end of the first week of May. It was at this point that the company of the *Espoir* were to experience the last, but final and cataclysmic event of the voyage.

On that fateful day, 7th of May, 1505, the *Espoir*, along with all of its contents, sank into the English channel. This tragedy occurred after the ship came under attack, while passing along near the Islands of Guernsey and Jersey, by two pirate ships. The first assailant was an English corsair, Captained by the privateer known as Eduard Blunth, of Plymouth, of whose reputation and habits they were later to learn.

The *Espoir's* combatants responded with wholehearted defense. Indeed, the *Espoir* should have been reasonably equipped to deal with one buccaneer. Aboard their ship were a good number of soldiers, and its equipage included, as noted in the inventory of Gonnevillle's *Relation*, several *cannons of various sizes*, about *forty muskets* and other firearms, and "*one thousand, six hundred pounds of bullets of various calibres*" for the diverse weapons and artillery on the ship. That a fierce resistance must be put up by Gonnevillle would likely have been also a matter of course, given the valuable and sensitive items that were being carried on the ship, consisting not in gold, but his important new discovery for France.

However the odds turned against them when a second privateer joined in the attack, the known and condemned French pirate Captain Mouris Fortin, of Brittany. Outnumbered, Gonnevillle made headway for the island coast, where, although most of the crew escaped to land, the ship broke up and sank, the pirates plundering from it whatever they could before it went down.

Sixteen members of the crew perished, twelve of them within the affray with the attackers, another four after arriving upon land. One, Nollet Epeudry, pilot, had been "killed by a cannon shot". A number of others had also been wounded in the engagement, but survived. All of those who died are named in the account that was given to the Admiralty soon afterward. They were all "men of Honfleur or Touques, or the outskirts thereof".

The residents of the island who gave them assistance reckoned that they knew the names of the pirates, thus that they were well known for their antics in the region. Whether taken by the privateers or having gone down with the ship, all that had been brought back from the journey was now lost, including the maps, logbooks, the valuable drawings and documentation by the late Master Nicole, various specimens, and the beautiful artifacts given as gifts to the French King by Arosca's people.

After those who were wounded were recovered enough to travel, they made haste for Honfleur, stopping at the "Port of La Hougue" to leave three of the crew there who were still too severely wounded to continue. So it was with little more than the clothes that they were wearing that Captain de Gonnevillle and the remainder of the crew of the *Espoir* came to their home port of Honfleur, about two weeks after the disaster, on the 20th of May, 1505. They were now a unit of

some thirty-three men, out of an original sixty that had set out two years earlier, except for the addition of one new member, the passenger they had brought along with them, Essomeric.

It had been a voyage of almost two years' duration. They had set out to the East Indies, intent on bringing back wealth, but had returned empty handed, with neither a ship nor any documented records of where they had been. The result of this was that Gonville and his principal officers were required to attend a court hearing at the Admiralty, to give an official account of the great misadventure. This hearing was to occur two months after the date of their arrival, on the 19th of July, 1505.

Upon reflection, it is interesting to consider that the event of the pirate attack, tragic as it was, resulted nonetheless in the creation of the document that we now have that is known as the original *Relation de Gonville*. This twenty-page account is written in the *third person plural*, each of its major sections beginning with the words, "They say that ..." indicating that a third party scribe, possibly of the court of the Admiralty, was noting down the information as it was being verbally recounted by the navigators, presumably in response to questions.

The account is brief but compact, and follows a methodical pattern that is consistent with the information that would be required by the naval authorities. It gives attention, for instance, with much detail, to the equipment and provisions that were taken on the voyage, and of the preparations before leaving France. As for the voyage to the Southland and the return journey, important dates are given, including all those instances incurring the death of persons, including such an instance during their stay in the Southland, and the significant nautical events on the seaward journey.

Most importantly it contains significant detail of the stay in the Southland itself, and about its people, and the agreement by which the young Essomeric was brought with them to France. It is from these details that all those who have written upon the subject of Gonville's voyage have ultimately drawn, for apart from this account there has been no independent account, save that from the Abbe Paulmier himself (Essomeric's great grandson) who is, albeit a *second-hand* witness, the only other known person who had access to information from numerous people who personally knew Essomeric.

The *Relation de Gonville*, as it is known, was signed by Gonville and the ship's officers themselves, and was then kept in the Admiralty archives. It was not a published or publishable item, being both sensitive politically and having been created not by Gonville for the purpose of broadcasting his story, but at the request of the Admiralty as a procedure. It was an item not known about to the outside world. Gonville's voyage itself, as much can be ascertained, was likewise either a quietly kept secret or too obscure in its detail to have made any mark in the books of navigational history for the following century.

Nevertheless, the clear vestiges of a more enlivened faith in the existence of the Southland, can certainly be seen to have existed in France during the coming years; that is, through what would be the latter years of Gonville, and the lifetime of Essomeric, who lived until the year 1583.

There is another strange providence encapsulated in the seeming disastrous voyage of Gonville, in the fact that the entire mission could be seen as having achieved only one notable result. That is, the bringing of Essomeric to France.

--- v. ---

A Priest That Was 'A Native Of That Land'

Perhaps for both Gonneville and his godson Essomeric, the manner of the termination of his voyage may have seemed a sardonic end to his exploits. For indeed, it proved to be the case that his attempts to raise support for a mission to take Essomeric back to the Austral Land, as he had promised Arosca, failed.

However, if they could have imagined that in a century yet to come, Essomeric's great grandson, who would also be related to Gonneville, was to become the first Priest ever to be appointed by the Holy See as Vicar to Terra Australis, they might have been a little happier.

In lieu of his obligations to *King* Arosca, Gonneville gave Essomeric a property, and arranged for him to be married to one of his relatives, a woman by the name of Suzanne. Essomeric then lived till the year 1583, dying at about the age of ninety five. He had fourteen children. However, from the modern point of view -- and regardless of however popular he may have been within his own life and times -- he, like Gonneville's voyage, seems to have been forgotten in the annals of the history of his century.

This obscurity was to suddenly change about seventy years after his death. The resurrection of his memory and his entry into history occurred when his great grandson, a priest in the local Lisieux Church, not far from the town of Gonneville of his godfather's namesake, took up the cause of the *Australux* -- that is, the *Australians* -- and *literally* began to influence the course of Australian history.

Essomeric's great grandson, the Abbe Jean Paulmier, was Canon of the Cathedral Church de Pierre in Lisieux when he published, in 1664, a book that was titled : *Memoirs Concerning the Establishment of a Christian Mission to the Third World, Otherwise Known as the Austral Lands: Southern, Antarctic and Unknown ... by a Priest Who Is a Native of That Land*. The essence of the Abbe Paulmier's book was a petition aimed at the Pope and the King of France, but also entreating the support and arguing the case to various missionary groups in France, to put together a full expedition of exploration, colonisation and evangelisation of the Great Southland.

The book demonstrated a prodigious knowledge about the massive yet unknown *Terres Australes*. Despite this, his arguments, while clearly recommending the benefits of those lands to France, revealed a fervency not for colonial interests but for the spiritual destiny of the *Southlands'* natives. While highlighting a certain naive innocence of these *Australux*, the Abbe did not portray them as living in a sublime paradise, but poised between salvation by the Christian God and the peril that he considered it to be, of succumbing to the conquest of the *armies of the Mahommedans*, which, he asserted, would soon secure their place in the Southland if France did not do so firstly.

The language thus, perhaps, harks somewhat to the recent century of wars of religion and heavy-handed Inquisitions against aberrancies from the faith. Nevertheless, amongst the Abbe Paulmier's persuasive and scholarly arguments are many scriptural quotations of a more compassionate essence, invoking spiritual mandates that would do justice to any modern evangelist.

While the book spoken of here was published in 1664, the Abbe Paulmier had been working on this project for many years prior to that. His first work under a similar title had appeared ten years earlier, in 1654. There is, furthermore, some reference to his having shown an interest in the Southland from his teenage years.

There was a difference between the first treatise and his later publication, which was the absence of any reference to that antiquated document, the *Relation de Gonneville*. At that time he had not yet had the opportunity to avail himself of it, and possibly did not even know of its existence. Nonetheless, this is not to say that he was not aware of much of the information about Gonneville's

voyage and Essomeric's life. Certainly many stories would have been passed down from Essomeric, yet without specific dates, numbers and names, it would have been difficult to reproduce in writing.

It was due to another *adverse* but providential turn of events that the Abbe was to gain access to that third source of data for his treatises. The adversity was the imposing upon him by the government of an unusual tax, around about the year 1657, known as the *aubaine*. This tax on *foreigners* and *the descendants of foreigners* was imposed not only upon him, but upon certain other of his relatives, namely, two widows of Paulmiers, Simone Paulmier, widow of Roux de la Roziere, and the widow of Olivier Paulmier de Courtonne (de Gonneville).

The justification for the imposition of this tax was their descendancy from the "savage Essomeric" as the official record put it. It is possible to conjecture that there could have been an element of racism in this sudden attempted levy. At the same time it could betray resentments held by some less evangelistically oriented officials against the Abbe's overly zealous activities. Possibly some might have contrived that, since he had proclaimed widely his ancestry to the Australians, why should he not also pay the tax due from the descendants of foreigners?

The Abbe Paulmier vigorously opposed it, arguing that he and his relatives were not liable for the tax on the basis that their ancestor, Essomeric, had been an immigrant to France not by his own choice, but due to the actions of Captain de Gonneville. This argument, it seems, eventually proved successful. However, in the meantime, the process of the legal battle caused him to have to search the archives of the Admiralty, where, at Rouen, he discovered the 150-years-old document made by the court.

It is perhaps unable to be known whether the Abbe Paulmier knew exactly what he was looking for in the Admiralty archives, for had he known of its existence one would expect that he would have accessed it and used it for the treatises that he had been making since at least previous eight years. The fact that he had not used it, and not referred to it, indicates all the more the validity of Paulmier's claims. He knew the place that his family traditionally identified as its origin: namely, Australasia. He was passionate about the existence of a great Southland which still, in the 1660's, was a subject of much debate.

He had a concern for the people of that land that befitted one who not only saw himself as *related* to them, but having some sort of obligatory inheritance. His great grandfather, it needs to be remembered, was described as a *Prince*.

Whether or not Paulmier knew what to look for, he was successful in finding the original *Relation de Gonneville*, or a certified replication of it. As was the tradition of perpetuating the archival documents in those days, he obtained a certified copy for himself, signed by the official notaries, which he then submitted to the officers seeking the tax, along with letters. This occurred in about 1658-59. As stated, it seems to have been successful in clearing the Paulmiers of the tax.

The more significant consequence of this, however, was that the Abbe was now armed with an information base with which to bolster his treatise. Thus it was that around 1659 a new version of his treatise in manuscript form appeared which was larger than the previous ones and contained detailed information from the *Relation de Gonneville*.

By 1663 the first formally printed book appeared, smallish but more than two hundred pages in length, a supposedly *unauthorised* version published by Cramoisy in Paris (which, nonetheless, is the version often quoted in literature). The following year the *official* version of the book was published, which differed in containing a *map* of the known world. This map, typical of the French tradition, displayed the Southland as a colossal landmass which, although including Australasia, centred on a more southerly point that spanned the South Pole in all directions.

It is a matter of history that after the publication of this book, explorers throughout Europe were “reawakened” to the existence of this Great Southland, and churchmen became aware of it as a focus of evangelistic aspiration. History books began to include Gonville the explorer, Essomeric the Prince of the Southland, Jean Paulmier the Priest of the Southland, and maps even appeared with the inscription "Arosca's Land" added to Terra Australis. Arosca had not known it, but in sending away his son Essomeric, he had awakened the world of Christendom to the existence and location of his land.

To balance this statement, it is also the case that the interest in the Southland was more predominant amongst the French explorers. However, the interest shown by the French began to attract the attention of others. It is also the case that there was less interest by some nations because of the unlikeliness of wealth through trade with this Southland, than there was interest in it amongst the French for other reasons.

The Abbe Paulmier's evangelistic mandate continued to be the driving force behind explorations for the Southland for the following hundred years and beyond. It was not lost on some that the Abbe had written of two large crosses in the Terres Australes, one on its west, and one on its east. The *western* cross was planted by Binot Paulmier de Gonville on the day of Easter in 1504. The *eastern* cross was planted by Pedro Fernandes de Quiros on the day of Pentecost in 1606. Within these unrelated phenomena many discerned a link, not only as a pinpointing of the Southlands' location, but a Divine ordination concerning it.

The search for the Southland eventually spread to include the English, and this coincided with what was possibly the first English rendering of the Abbe Paulmier's works in the form of the translation to English of Charles' de Brosses "History of the Exploration of the Southlands" (*Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes*). This had been published in France in 1756, and had once again reawakened, a century after Paulmier, the Abbe's commission. A notably religious man, Charles de Brosses was very much of the same mind as Paulmier: Zealous that the French should acquire the stewardship of the mission to the Southland, zealous that the primary motivation for the exploration of Australasia must be for the evangelisation of all of the peoples within it.

De Brosses' book inadvertently contained considerable segments of the original *Relation de Gonville*. Although nobody else had yet ever discovered that original work, it was much quoted in Paulmier's book, and thus Charles de Brosses, lifting large passages from the Abbe's *Memoirs*, presented once again to the *modern* French-speaking world parts of this now two-hundred and fifty years-old document.

Likewise, a few years later, when the English translation of de Brosses's work was published, it also brought to the modern English-speaking world, probably for the first time ever, the knowledge of Gonville's voyage and his *Southland*. It is not a coincidence that this translation, by John Callander, appeared in 1766-68, coinciding with the beginning of the activities of Captain James Cook and his colleagues. Included in the instructions from the Royal Society for Cook's first voyage was clearly (after he had witnessed the transit of Venus) an order to proceed and investigate this Southland which, he was adjured, had much promise of potential benefit to Great Britain.

The title of Callander's translation yields some of the sense of recency and significance of the Southland revelation at the time: "*Terra australis cognita, or, Voyages to the Terra australis, or southern hemisphere, during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries: containing an account of the manners of the people, and the productions of the countries, hitherto found in the southern latitudes: the advantages that may result from further discoveries on this great continent, and the methods of establishing colonies there, to the advantage of Great Britain*".

While it could not be pretended that all of these efforts were purely of an evangelical or missionary motivation, or even that it was very high on the agenda, the point not to be missed is that the region of Australasia is still to be distinguished from other regions by a certain uniqueness. That is, by the fact that it was for hundreds of years principally by *Christian evangelistic inspiration* alone that the knowledge of its existence and approximate location had been vigorously and persistently disseminated.

In conclusion, so long as we can ascertain that Gonneville's Southland was Australia, and the argument for that is compelling, an examination of these historical events show a remarkable story of how, by several uncanny and providential events, five hundred years ago, and in the years intervening, a young Aboriginal boy, being sent off to Europe came to have an enormous impact upon the destiny of Australia. One could also say that, if some were to argue that Gonneville's land had *not* really been Australia, then certainly, nevertheless, Essomeric's influence came just as powerfully to bear upon Australia, and upon Australia alone.

That which might well be celebrated today in illusory commemorations, in alternative places, may well have an impact on modern intellectual debate, and tourism. However, it has not changed their history. In Australia's case, Essomeric, whoever he was, steered Christendom towards the true Terra Australis, and sealed its future at the most pivotal time.

--- vi. ---

A Quest for the Orne of the Kimberley

After five hundred years, it would seem unlikely that a trace could be found of sixty Frenchmen who had sojourned by the side of a great river somewhere along the coastline of north-west Australia. However, strange as it may seem, and yet not out of character with the bizarre fortuitousness of the whole Gonneville story thus far, at least one piece of evidence has been found that might pinpoint the place of Gonneville's visit.

The person who made this "discovery" was not the one who proposed that it represented a remnant from Gonneville's visit. Rather, the discoverer put forward other theories concerning it, which will be discussed later. The person who put forward the theory, who was a person as well qualified as anybody to conjecture on the subject, was Edmond Marin la Meslee (1852 - 1893), a French immigrant to Australia, who happens also to have been the founder of the Australasian Geographical Society.

Marin la Meslee was a firm believer in the "Australian Gonneville theory", if it can be put that way. The story, as described in the preceding chapters, has been much according to what Marin la Meslee would have subscribed to, it could be warranted, except that more has been provided here in the detail of the account of the voyage and the extenuating circumstances.

When Marin la Meslee wrote his essay on the subject of Gonneville's visit to Australia, which was published in Ernest Favenc's *History of Australian Exploration, 1788 - 1888*, (the article occupies all of chapter XV), he had already read the "original" *Relation de Gonneville* (1505) which had then only recently been finally discovered and published in full, for the first time ever. That first publishing of the *Relation* was done by the French geographer Marie Armand d'Avezac, who happens also to have been the person mainly responsible for the "Brazil theory of Gonneville".

Thus Marin la Meslee, a French-speaking Australian, familiar with both French and Australian historical records, a scholar, a historian, and a geographer, was informed of all of the basic texts and

theories which form the basis of the main views still held today. Yet, in contradiction with those proponents of such theories as the Madagascar theory and the more recent Brazil theory, and by all appearances being at least as well qualified as any of them, he considered it not only a matter of *likelihood* but a conclusion that there was no other option but to draw, that Gonneville's voyage in 1504, and the land of his Prince Essomeric, was Australia.

While for the most part his arguments are much the same as would be put forth by any reasonable person, Marin la Meslee added to these his perspectives on certain discoveries that had been made in the *Kimberley* area of the north-west of Australia. Without going into too much detail from his lengthy but fascinating discourse, what he spoke of was the discovery by an explorer in 1838, of certain artistic works, including cave paintings, but most significantly, a *rock sculpture* of a *human head*.

Lieutenant George Grey, later to become *Sir George Grey* (1812 - 1898), one of the celebrated pioneers of the early colony, had been, if not the first, then one of the first Europeans to explore the Kimberleys on foot, while on a government-sponsored expedition to survey the land for its suitability for grazing farm animals.

It is *necessary* at the outset to point out the *awareness* that we now have (which Marin la Meslee did not have) of the fact that a whole new *genre* of Aboriginal art has been discovered to exist in, and be completely unique to, that area of Australia. This art, found throughout the north-west of Australia is known to the anthropological world as *The Bradshaws*, and to the Aboriginal people of the Kimberleys as the *Gwion Gwion* paintings. These cave paintings are internationally acclaimed, many calling them one of the "*eighth wonders of the world*".

They are indeed a wonder of the world, and have stimulated all manner of interest, ranging from theories of prehistoric, pre-Aboriginal societies that lived in the area, to visits from Martians from outer space, to simple acknowledgments that the Aboriginals of these areas at some time in the past just *may* have had variations in their art styles.

They are to be found not only in the Kimberleys but, in their more various but distinctive forms, in Arnhem land, and across an area of 60,000 square kilometers, and could be in the thousands in number. While it is not the objective here to remark about these unique cave paintings, it needs to be pointed out that, apart from Sir George Grey in 1838, nobody in the non-Aboriginal world was aware of their existence until a man by the name of Joseph Bradshaw, a pastoralist holding a million-acre lease along the Prince Regent River, stumbled upon some of them in the year 1891. Since that time, cave art enthusiasts throughout the world have called them, perhaps not very imaginatively, the *Bradshaws*.

It is interesting that it would appear that scholars who are aware of George Grey's discovery of the said cave paintings, and the fact that he described them in considerable detail in his journal published in 1841, still describe Joseph Bradshaw as having first discovered them in 1891, while presuming also that what Grey had discovered and described *fifty years earlier* were also these same Bradshaws. Whether or not the cave paintings that Grey saw were part of the *Gwion Gwion* art, or something different, will not be speculated upon here, since experts on the subject do exist and it would be best for them to make judgments on it.

For the sake of elucidating the thoughts of Marin la Meslee, however, it is necessary to look at the descriptions and renderings that Grey had made in his journals concerning those paintings. First of all, there were a number of such paintings, but to speak of one of them only, Grey found, at the back of a long, narrowing cave, a large painting of a man, about ten feet six inches in height, dressed in a

robe, coloured in bright red, yellow and white, and having an aureola about the head with radiating lines like that of the sun.

What intrigued Marin la Meslee was Grey's noting that upon the perhaps halo-like bands around the head were markings which seemed to be deliberately placed, which could have been, yet might not have been, *Latin* characters. There were other such markings near its shoulder.

"At first sight" wrote Marin La Meslee, "[even] an illiterate person would at once exclaim, 'these are Latin characters.'" The letters he then proceeded to reproduce, based on his interpretation of the markings in the picture. They were:

G-I-T-I-L-F.

These he did not attempt to interpret. However, making various remarks about them, he went on to say that the cave painting was evidence of a long past, but temporary European presence in the area, such as the visit of Gonneville's sailors, in particular the artistic Nicole de Fevre, would have perfectly exemplified. He believed that the painting represented "some holy monk or nun in their habiliments", and was typical of a style of art with which the religious painters of medieval times, such as in "old church windows", typically portrayed their subjects.

Marin la Meslee's proposal did not rest as securely on these paintings, however, as upon another item which does *not* fall into the category of, and therefore cannot be said to have been confused with, *Gwion Gwion* art. At least as far as this writer has ever heard, rock sculptures of human heads are not represented amongst the varieties of this art form. (One always remains open to being corrected on these matters.) Marin la Meslee seemed confident, and certainly was in a fairly well-informed position to feel so, with his Geographical Society connections, that Grey's discovery of a solid, stone, *sculptured head* was the "one and only" instance of any such discovery in Australia.

The head, described by Grey, was in the form of a profile. It can best only be described in his own words, quoted by Marin La Meslee:

"After proceeding some distance, we found a cave ... I was moving on when we observed a profile of a human face and head, cut out in a sandstone rock which fronted the cave; this rock was so hard that to have removed such a large portion of it with no better tool than a knife and hatchet made of stone, such as the Australian natives generally possess, would have been a work of very great labour. The head was two feet in length, and sixteen inches in breadth in the broadest part; the depth of the profile increased gradually from the edges where it was nothing, to the centre where it was an inch and a half. The ear was rather badly placed, but otherwise the whole of the work was good, and far superior to what a savage race could be supposed capable of executing. The only proof of antiquity that it bore about it was that all the edges of the cutting were rounded and perfectly smooth, much more so than they could have been from any other cause than long exposure to atmospheric influences. "After having made a sketch of this head I returned to the party."

(Grey, 1841, quoted in Favenc, 1888).

Marin La Meslee may well have been over-reacting to some *Gwion Gwion* paintings. However, his response to Grey's sculptured head may require considerably more expert pontification in order to extinguish his hope that this sculpture was nothing less than a work of art by the Frenchman mentioned, Master Nicole De Fevre, who, doubtless, if he did inhabit some part of the Kimberleys for six months, might very well be expected to have created such a thing.

Without having had a personal experience viewing these relics, and having to rely on third-hand reports, one can only say that it does seem to pose either a challenge concerning the location of Arosca's Land, or something even more mysterious that needs to be addressed.

For the record, it should be pointed out to the reader that both the particular cave drawings found by Grey, as well as the sculptured head, as described in his journal, have been positively "rediscovered" and re-identified in modern times, by currently living students and enthusiasts of the Kimberley region.

To add to Marin la Meslee's case, although this is merely *circumstantial*, he cites further descriptions and observations made by Grey concerning the physical qualities of the region and the characteristics of the Aboriginal people in the area. Grey was astounded by the uniquely lush and tropical nature of the area he saw, near the Glenelg and Prince Regent Rivers, which he described as having no other comparable equivalent elsewhere in Australia. He described a fertile land and broad, *navigable* rivers, two of which he could see, from a mountaintop where he climbed, one to the north and one to the south, enclosing an expanse of forests teeming with wildlife. In the valleys surrounding him he could see the smoke rising from the many campfires of the Aboriginal people who were set in small villages throughout the region.

Further observations made by Grey corroborated (in Marin la Meslee's estimation) with the account of Gonneville's Southland. Grey noted that the huts in which the Aboriginal people lived were of an oval shape in construction, using tree branches for the structure and *reeds* as wall padding. He also noted the organised structure of the society where the small encampments spread over a wide area were connected to a central village of larger population where also the women and children stayed. These and various other aspects of Grey's description resonate with the society that Gonneville had found.

Grey was also a pioneer of description of the Aboriginal languages, not only in Australia but the Pacific Islands, and noted the difference between the language of the people of the Kimberleys and that of more southern tribes. Additionally he commented on the presence among the Aboriginal people of some individuals who appeared to be of different racial origin.

It had already come to be a common belief by the Europeans, ever since the pioneering ventures of Captain Phillip King who had recorded dealings with the north-west Aboriginals some years earlier, that the people of that area were in some part descended or of mixed race with what were presumed to be Malay peoples. Grey's speculations on the paintings he saw were that they represented a "pre-Aboriginal race" that was also not related to the Malays. Thus, in 1841, Grey was laying the foundations of theories that were to have a following, but be controversial, in the later years.

Marin la Meslee's article did not go down that track, but he did speculate on the probable existence of elements or traces of Malay culture amongst the Aboriginal peoples of the area. One thing necessitating this speculation was the single problem of one comment made in Gonneville's original account: the weapons of the Aboriginals in the Southland of 1504, while otherwise bearing great similarity to those currently known to be used by the Aboriginals, included the *bow and arrow*.

Marin la Meslee recognised this as problematic, but his argument that some Kimberley locals may have been apt to use the bow and arrow at some past time, is not an outlandish one. Over the centuries, amongst a people which it is widely agreed has mingled with incoming Malay travellers over the years, it is unlikely that a bow and arrow has never made its way to Australia. It is an ancient weapon of both the Malays and many throughout the great archipelago to Australia's north. It may have been here in the first place, but later abandoned in favour of weapons more convenient

for their livelihood. There is much discussion that could be made on this topic, but since Marin la Meslee has made the point, it is perhaps the turn for anyone challenging this idea to attempt to do so, rather than to say the even more obvious supporting it.

Marin la Meslee was, as stated, a French immigrant and a student of the exploration of Australia, and his thesis in support of Gonnevillè's having discovered Australia (for Europe and Christendom) was based on far more extensive research than the simple matter of Grey's *medieval frescoes* and his European-style carved head.

He had studied the works of Charles de Brosse, mentioned in the previous chapter, not only in the original French, but also John Callander's translation, the enormous impact of which has already been pointed out. Thus Marin la Meslee was very well acquainted with the claims and the ambitions that the Abbe Paulmier had made and aspired to, and, as said, with the ancient document known as the *Relation de Gonnevillè*.

He lived at a time, fortunately, to be able to have read, and refuted, the assessment made by Armand d'Avezac concerning Brazil. Thus he also rebutted the inferences that some had made, that the portrayal of the Southland given by the Abbe Paulmier had been significantly different from that portrayed in Gonnevillè's account in 1505.

He asserts that there is nothing in the material that had been *omitted* by the Abbe Paulmier that made any difference to the theories of the Southland's locality. Thus, he reiterated, it strengthened the conviction and evidence that *Australia* was Arosca's Land.

Marin la Meslee made reference also to some fascinating information about the early *maps* of Australia. At the time of his writing, Australians did not have access to the earliest known maps depicting the north-west Australian coast, but he himself had seen and studied them, in the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, before coming to Australia. No doubt his migrating to Australia, as a historian and geographer, was preceded by some research on his future homeland.

The earliest map that was available to the English was that drawn by Jean Rotz, published in 1542, in his *Booke of Idography*. Rotz was, as it happens, the personal hydrographer to King Henry VIII of England, but earlier, in 1529, he had sailed with the French Carpentier brothers, after which our northern Gulf is named, on their voyage to the East Indies and Sumatra.

The Carpentiers clearly contributed to what was known of the north coast of Australia. It is believed, however, that the maps produced by this school (called the *School of Dieppe*), originated from information drawn from earlier Portuguese maps. A certain similarity was identifiable in the names of places, suggesting their having been translated from the Portuguese, hence revealing the connectedness.

However, Marin la Meslee harked to an even older map, or two of them, which portrayed the Australian coastline, and which, he believed, were of a different source to that of the *School of Dieppe*. He cited a map by the great sixteenth century French cartographer Guillaume Le Testu (1509 - 1573), who can be credited with many of that century's maps, particularly of the *New World*.

Le Testu is more famous for an atlas he made in 1556, dedicated to the King of France, called the *Cosmographie Universelle*, which included maps he had drawn of the Americas, after an expedition that he had conducted from north to south, in 1551. This voyage had been at the behest of the French Protestant leader Admiral de Goligny, who wanted to find a suitable location for a Protestant haven that was so keenly wished for by the minority Huguenot population.

On the basis of Le Testu's recommendation of Rio de Janeiro du Sud, Goligny commissioned the founding of one of France's significant colonies in South America, known as *France Antarctique*, in 1555. The Protestant outpost was a successful venture for most of the next ten years, but collapsed

from an absence of support from France as the years drew on, and its fate was to be forcefully annexed by the nearby waiting Portuguese.

Here it becomes relevant again to the Kimberley, for Marin la Meslee points out that the oldest of all maps depicting the north-west Australian coast was one that was drawn by this selfsame Guillaume le Testu, dated 1536, and not having upon it any names that bore resemblance to the aforesaid *Dieppe School* maps. This suggests, said Marin la Meslee, that Le Testu had a different source for his maps than those of the existing tradition derived from the Portuguese.

Despite this, he said, the coastline of north-west Australia was defined in Le Testu's map accurately enough to be able to clearly identify it, including the depiction of particular rivers along the coast, consistent with the modern maps of Australia. Marin la Meslee's theory was that Captain de Gonneville, who hailed from the same area coastal ports of Normandy as the young Le Testu, would have been personally known to Le Testu, as an explorer and cartographer.

At the time that Le Testu drew this map of what must be, in effect, the Kimberley region, he was only about twenty eight years of age. It is unlikely that he had been on the voyages to the East Indies, but rather that his map-making at that time was based upon other sources. La Meslee proposes that Le Testu would have consulted Gonneville about his explorations, and suggests this as the source of information for his map.

It is interesting that later in life, Le Testu, in his world Atlas, depicted a great Southland called the "Austral Region", on which he placed an inscription stating that everything indicated on that land was "purely imaginary", because, in fact, till the present time, no one had ever made certain discovery of it.

Marin La Meslee referred to Le Testu's map of the Australian coast in order to add weight to his overall conclusion that the Kimberley area of North Australia was the very land that Gonneville, in 1504, discovered. The various pieces of information that he puts together do not individually prove anything. However, circumstantially they are coherent and consistent with a history of Gonneville that, as can be seen from the previous chapters, stands fairly strong on its own merit.

To pinpoint the locality of Gonneville's Land – that is, of the land of the tribe of which Arosca was the leader - helpful clues can be found in Gonneville's description. It must be, for instance, located along some north-facing section of coastline, for the original account states that the navigators, after *turning southwards* (and, literally, "turning their backs on the East Indies"), came upon the coast of a vast land after *several days'* sailing. The coastlands they arrived at were not only characterised by the great river, but surrounded by areas of fertile lands, and abundant with wildlife (species which, they stated, had never been seen before in all of Christendom.)

Perhaps the best clue may be one visual description which was left to us by the narrators in 1505: it should be identifiable by a certain likeness to the *River Orne* in Normandy. For, in the words of the French Officers, it was "of the magnitude of the Orne at Caen" (Caen is the place in Normandy where the Orne runs into the English Channel).

Regardless of the discoveries by Sir George Grey and the later speculations about them, *Arosca's Land* might just as easily have been around any of the great rivers of the north-west, from Grey's *Glenelg*, all the way up to the *Ord River* in the north, which, true to the Aboriginal name of its main town, *Kununurra*, ("Great Water") holds the largest inland body of water in all of Australia. At a stretch, the river in question could even be as far east as Arnhem Land.

To finish, it is perhaps best to dig deeper than the sciences of archeological and anthropological speculation, down to the foundation of *testimony and witness*. Circumstances change, and science is always limited. The trustworthiness and reliability of documents of antiquity concerning Gonneville's

visit remain the true bedrock of this history. This applies not only from the current perspective, but from that of the contemporaries of those testimonies.

Whatever other theories may have been construed, Essomeric and his descendants considered themselves natives of the *Australasian* region, not of Brazil, nor of any other places that some have suggested they were descended from. If Essomeric had come from South America, then certainly within his own lifetime and that of his children, there would have been ample opportunity to “go back home”. There were a number of French colonies in South America during his lifetime, and “Indians” from those lands were brought back and forth between there and France.

It is hard to imagine if Essomeric was South American that the family legend of an *Australasian* origin could have developed, while at the same time the French (and Portuguese) were becoming so very familiar South America. If Gonneville’s life mission had been to take Essomeric back to his home, surely the challenge of taking him to Brazil, a mere one-or-two-month journey, would not have been the nemesis of his career.

As for Madagascar, it is impossible for it to be the land of such natives who had never seen mirrors, paper and steel, given that Madagascar has a written history dating to the 7th century when trading began with the Arabs. Furthermore, the French and Portuguese also developed dealings with Madagascar throughout the lifetime of Essomeric. Once again Gonneville could have gone there, and Essomeric and his children could have travelled there, or acquainted themselves with native visitors from there, without great difficulty.

It might also be pointed out that in the days of the Abbe Paulmier, one of his significant friends, and who supported his mission to the *unknown Terra Australis*, was Monsieur de Flacourt, who had formerly been the *Governor* of Madagascar. Clearly this man, who knew Madagascar well, and knew the Abbe Paulmier very well, knew also that Madagascar was not the land of Paulmier’s great grandfather. This point is made to highlight the *ease* with which rather ludicrous theories such as this one, proposed without any serious background consideration, yet by some very eminent historians (James Burney, Matthew Flinders, Richard Henry Major), can nonetheless become the basis of nationally accepted folklore, as had been the case to some degree in the early days of the Australian colony.

There is no doubt that the Abbe’s life work was devoted to bringing Christianity to the Australasian region, no matter how large or small he thought it was. For these facts alone, the Gonneville history has been a uniquely *Australasian* history and his desired Christian mission cannot be construed as applying to any other place.

Although it was mentioned briefly at the opening of this study, it is important to bring attention again to the fact that until very recently, it was not generally known that the Abbe Paulmier had been appointed by the Pope, in the year 1666, as the church’s official Vicar or Missionary to the Terra Australis. Although this appointment occurred nearly three hundred years ago, it is interesting that it should remain so unknown, apparently never mentioned in any of the literature that either supports or attempts to undermine the validity of the Abbe’s vision.

Revealed in an article by Dr. Joe Morley in the Catholic Weekly, April 14, 2002, the facts had come to the attention of researchers after the relocation of a certain library in Rome fairly recently. The records reportedly have revealed a great treasure of church documents concerning the Southland dating to the 17th and 18th centuries.

Perhaps now, after five hundred years, the time has come to look at this history through the prism of Divine Providence. Perhaps it could be that the Almighty has ordained events to occur through

uncanny coincidences and remarkable fortuitousness, to draw attention to something that is beyond the sphere of the aspirations of nations, or *even* of church denominations.

That would be that the people who have inhabited this Southland for so long, have drawn to themselves the attention of their Creator. This has been shown not only in the provision to them of their great inheritance, but in the nature of the story of the Southland travellers, who through strange twists and turns of history not only brought to them that most ultimate of messages of the Maker, but fashioned the destiny of a nation that stands out, even in the most adverse times, as having a certain, unique spirit to it.

One might be beckoned to ask, what must be the significance of a people who have a story in their distant past not unlike a tale of the Patriarchs of Genesis? It is perhaps good to reflect that at this time, five hundred years ago, a young Aboriginal man was travelling across an ocean, going on an odyssey of adventure, enlivened by his baptism on his sickbed that had seen his recovery from that sickness and inspired him to have a fresh hope. Travelling to an unknown *northern* land, on a ship called the *Espoir* (that is, the *Hope*), it might just be that he learned to dream and pray of things that one day would be brought back to his people.

END OF PART ONE

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[NB Published in 1869, Avezac's book was the first presentation of the entire text of the "original" Relation de Gonneville (1505), which Avezac had transcribed in full. It is in this work that he presents the 'Brazil theory' which changed popular French opinion regarding the history of Gonneville's discovery of Australia.]

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[Barry & White's article on the Gwion Gwion Paintings in the Kimberley reports on an extensive study conducted by Michael Barry involving extensive of Australian and overseas cave paintings. He used a methodical and scientific approach to demonstrate that the Gwion Gwion paintings are unique to Australia and are not to be identified with cave paintings found in other countries which some theorists believe to be the case.]

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[NB De Broses revived the work of the Abbe Paulmier's book (1663), thus reproducing much of its original text, and this included substantial portions of the Original 'Relation de Gonneville' (1505) which Paulmier had transcribed, but only partially. De Broses' book once again revived French interest in the Southland, inspiring another wave of explorations, especially several to Antarctica. It was in this context that the English became more interested as well. See notes on John Callander's translation of this book to English just a few years later.]

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[NB This English translation of De Broses' work, by John Callander, appearing around the time that Captain James Cook set out on his voyages of discovery of New Holland, provided the direct link for English readers to the full story of Gonneville, the Aboriginal 'Prince' Essomeric, the Abbe Paulmier's evangelistic campaign, and clues to the location of the Southland.]

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[Being the same item republished as the above English translation of De Broses, by Callander. Note that Marin La Meslee says that Callander's translation omits important things from De Broses's book, and his translations are sometimes not accurate renditions. It is moreover from this work by

Callander that Marin La Meslee quotes in his article that is included in Chapter 15 of Favenc, 1888, which is freely available on the Internet (see La Meslee or Favenc)]

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[Online versions of Favenc's work, including Marin La Meslee's essay which is included as chapter XV, can be found at:

1. www.blackmask.com/thatway/books161c/terrau.htm and
2. gutenberg.net.au/ausexplore/ausexpl2-15.html]

Grey, George (1841). Journals of two expeditions of discovery in North-West and Western Australia : during the years 1837, 38, and 39, under the authority of Her Majesty's Government describing many newly discovered important fertile districts, with observations on the moral and physical condition of the aboriginal inhabitants, &c. London: T. and W. Boone.

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Major, Richard Henry, (1859). Early voyages to Terra Australis, now called Australia: a collection of documents, and extracts from early manuscript maps, illustrative of the history of discovery on the coasts of that vast island, from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the time of Captain Cook. [NB Ernest Favenc cites a publication by Major in 1861, but generally makes the point that Major, like Matthew Flinders, did not defend or argue their proposition that Gonneville had gone to Madagascar, but simply restated the opinion that had been given by Captain Burney many years earlier. As stated, Burney was on the voyage with Captain James Cook, with orders to search for the Southland that had clearly been inspired by the recently popularised English translation of works concerning Gonneville's Southland discovery.]

Marin La Meslee, Edmond (1888) [Untitled article containing "evidence relating to the voyage of ... Paulmier de Gonneville", included in chapter XV of Favenc, 1888.]

[Online Versions: <http://www.blackmask.com/thatway/books161c/terrau.htm>
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Manuscript. [Scottish Catholic Archives, Edinburgh, MS 3/6]

[NB The existence of this, possibly the earliest known publication of the Abbe Paulmier's treatises, is pointed out in Sankey (1995).]

Paulmier de Courtonne, Jean (1663): Mémoires touchant l'établissement d'une mission chrestienne dans le Troisième Monde, autrement appelé la Terre australe, méridionale, Antarctique & inconnuë. Dediez à Nostre S. Pere le Pape ALEXANDRE VII Par un Ecclesiastique Originaire de cette mesme Terre. Paris: Claude Cramoisy.

[NB. The title may be translated: "Memoirs Concerning the Establishment of a Christian Mission to the Third World - Otherwise Known as the Austral Lands: Southern, Antarctic, and Unknown - Dedicated to Our Father Pope Alexander VII - By a Priest Who is a Native of That Land. It is pointed out that this version of the book, which had certain typographical and possibly other errors, and did not include the maps that were to accompany the edition that was to be published the following year, was later somewhat disavowed by Paulmier as "unauthorised". However, it is commonly cited and quoted, thus the reference to this monumental and seminal work on the Southland is often alternately referred to with the date 1663, or 1664.]

Paulmier de Courtonne, Jean (1664): Mémoires touchant l'établissement d'une mission chrestienne dans le Troisième Monde, autrement appelé la Terre australe, méridionale, Antarctique & inconnuë. Paris:

[NB: The 1664 version included maps, some differences, and the author Paulmier disavowed the previous 1663 version as "unauthorised". This version included maps, including one that depicted Terra Australis in a manner popularly subscribed to by French cartographers. The maps, along with Paulmier's instructions on how to find the Southland, proved to be incorrect, placing the location of Terra Australis much further west than Australia really is. This was based both in the lack of clarity of the distance from Africa in Gonneville's account, and the misleading shape of Terra Australis in the imaginative World Maps that had been perpetuated throughout the previous millennium and longer.]

Pontharouart, Jacques Lévêque de, (1993). Quatre siècles après, un rouennais dénonce le voyage imaginaire d'un découvreur d'Amérique. In Paris-Normandie, 26 April 1993.

[This reference to a nihilistic proposition put forward by Pontharouart adds perspective to the phenomenon of the emergence of a recent dimension to the discussions on Gonneville. The gist of it is the accusation that the Abbe Paulmier was a devious and ambitious person who fabricated not only his own family history, but also made forgeries in the substance of the antiquated documents which are now drawn upon as the basis of this history. Pontharouart's theory has been roundly criticised by authorities and scholars on the subject of Gonneville. The overall thesis is sensational and, ultimately, seems implausible. See my notes on Pontharouart's book (2000) for further comments.]

Pontharouart, Jacques Lévêque de, (2000). Paulmier de Gonneville -- son voyage Imaginaire. France: éditions France Quercy, 2000.

[NB Pontharouart's book espouses the theory of the total fabrication of Gonneville's, and therefore, Essomeric's existence. It has been methodically discounted point by point by such Gonneville scholars as Leyla Perron-Moises, and roundly criticised and dismissed by other French authorities on maritime history. While consisting of arguably ineffectual reasonings, some valuable points are nonetheless made. Firstly, it brings to light the existence of a possible Huguenot-Protestant presence amongst some of Essomeric's descendents. This can be used as a basis to explore another important aspect of the legacy of Essomeric, and the Southland search, which certainly in the 1500's was well represented among the Protestants. Also, while it may not have been his objective, some of Pontharouart's arguments can be used as a plank of support for the Australia theory, since he points out that the description of the sea voyage of Gonneville does not reconcile with a journey to Brazil.]

Sankey, M. (1995). Where was Gonneville's Land? Did the French discover Australia? The Abbe Paulmier's *Memoirs touchant l'etablissement d'une mission chrestienne dans le Troisieme Monde, autrement appelle la Terre australe, meridionale, Antarctique & inconnue: the French and the Terres australes*. Parergon, Bulletin of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Medieval & Renaissance Studies, vol.12, No.2, pp.115-126.

[Professor Sankey's article makes a detailed study from the original Relation de Gonneville, sorting out a number of questions that have hung over the theory. Most significantly, a chronological breakdown of the voyage of Captain de Gonneville is made, with a view to creating a basis from which to examine the controversial theories. Among her conclusions is the important observation, which has been made by others and is probably the most consistently furnished argument, that the navigational record of the voyage cannot, without implausible inventions, be reconciled with the Brazil theory. Remaining objective, Sankey affords Pontharouart's recent theory (see notes on Pontharouart) a place as worthy of consideration, but suggests also that Australia could have been Gonneville's Southland. A point highlighted by Sankey is the politically sensitive nature of the discovery of a new Southland by Gonneville, suggesting that for political reasons Gonneville may have deliberately allowed the Southland's locality to be portrayed as closer (to Africa) than it actually was.]

Sankey, M. (2003). The French and Terra Australis. Arts: The Journal of the Sydney University Arts Association, 25, 2003, pp. 26-64.

[Professor Sankey's recent study reveals much about the history of early Australian exploration in what must be one of the most exhaustive studies in a single article of the pre-colonial cartography of Australia in existence. She suggests as an alternative title to this study, 'Why the French Didn't Discover Australia', and it follows the theme of the misleading information about Terra Australis that gave false guidance to mariners for hundreds of years (until Captain James Cook finally laid the question to rest). Sankey also highlights literature from the genre of Utopian writing which, it is clearly shown, was spawned in early French writings that were a reaction or response to the Abbe Paulmier's book, i.e. his book re the Christian Mission to the Southland, of 1664.]

"Captain Guillaume Le Testu" at:

[www.vleonica.com/testu.htm]

[NB. There are various websites which, like this, make reference to Guillaume Le Testu, whose relevance to the present study is that he is cited by the geographer Marin la Meslee as having drawn the first known map of the north-west coast of Australia. Marin la Meslee believed that Le Testu personally knew Captain de Gonneville, and gives evidences for that. Guillaume Le Testu died in events related to a raid on a Spanish gold convoy in Panama, when he joined forces with England's Sir Francis Drake. As well as being an eminent explorer and cartographer, Le Testu had also been a Protestant combatant. During the Wars of Religion in France which flared up between 1562 and 1572, he participated in military activity and as a result was imprisoned for four years. Being released in 1572 and placed in charge of a warship, he appears to have met Francis Drake by chance in 1573. However, their partnership in the gold raid was not incongruent with the nature of the allegiances of that period. Queen Elizabeth I of England had pledged support for the Protestants, while the Catholics had drawn support from Spanish forces. The previous year, the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day had occurred in France, possibly the greatest pogrom in Europe's history at the time, in which within a few months, tens of thousands of the Protestant population perished. Among these had been the Protestant leader, Admiral Coligny, who had earlier established the French colony in southern Brazil known as France Antarctique. See also the footnote with the entry on J. Pontharouart's book.]

'The Expedition of Gonneville to Santa Catarina'

Webpage at:

www.saofranciscodosul.com.br/eo_sfs/a_cidade/historico.htm

[NB. This is an example of many articles on the Internet making reference to Gonneville's supposed visit to Santa Catarina Province in Brazil. Classically it also cites the supposed original name of Essomeric as "Içá-Mirim", a Carijós Indian word meaning "Little Head". (This name appears to have been generated purely by speculation on the sound of the name "Essomeric".) The legends of Essomeric have expanded to remarkable extremes, fitting into various political revisions of history, being mentioned in folk songs, and the subject of stories of tragedy. Some have included Gonneville with the pillagers of South America, not only "removing" the native Essomeric, but plundering wood, and one writer has calculated and included the number of trees cut down by Gonneville to repair his ship in inditements for centuries of logging. However, the only wood Gonneville certainly used was for the construction of the cross at Easter, and Essomeric, son of the King of the land, was certainly not "removed" in the sense inferred, but sent deliberately and with royal purpose. Although the "Brazil theory of Gonneville" was only a late addition in history, it appears to have been welcomed with relish by both French and Brazilian historians. It has also become a significant focus of tourism, with many attractions in both Brazil and France highlighting this supposed beginning of their international relations. Not surprisingly, the current period, 2003 - 2005, coinciding with the 500th anniversary of Gonneville's two-year voyage, is a special quincennial commemorative period.]