

Translation into English of a section of the first edition of *Relations de Divers Voyages Curieux* published in 1663 by Melchisédech Thévenot

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Nicolas Bigourdan

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Some notes:

- The translation has attempted to remain very close to the original text, including punctuation and capital letters. Furthermore, the long sentences and grammatical structure have been kept (even though this might be more difficult to read).
- Each fragment located at the end of each pages in brackets relate to the marginal notes from the original text.
- The paragraph lay-out follows the original exactly, although page breaks are indicated in the translation.
- When numbers appear in the text, they are written full-out or with numerals, depending on which option was used in the original.
- Compass directions are written full-out (East) as in the style of the original.

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## The Southern Land

### The Southern Land discovered by the Captain Pelsart

The directors of the East Indies Company, driven by the happy return of the five Vessels of General Carpentier, richly loaded, armed the same year 1629 a Fleet of eleven vessels for the same voyage; and among others the vessel named Battauia, under the commandment of François Pelsart. It left from Texel the 28th October of the year 1628. I will not mention the Logbook until the Cape of Good Hope, due to the fear of boring the Reader with an account of something that is as known as this route. I would only say that the fourth of June of the following year 1629, this Vessel Battauia which has been separated from the others by a storm, was pushed on some abrollos which are under the twenty eight degrees South latitude, named by our Flemish the abrol Hos or the Frederic Outman rocks. Pelsart being sick in bed, felt first that his Vessel touched something: it was night, but the Moon was bright clear and the weather good; he ran on the deck, found all the sails up high, heading North-Northeast, and as much as his sight could reach he found himself surrounded by a thick foam: he shouts at the Ship Master, he reproached him that he is the cause of their loss; the other one apologizes, says that he has done a good night watch, and that having noticed from far a distance the whiteness of this foam, asked one of the crew or comrade what it could be, he responded that this whiteness was coming from the Moon: someone asks what needs to be done, and in which location of the world the Vessel is; he responded that only God knows, and that they are on an unknown shoal: the sounding weight is thrown, showing at the back of the Vessel eighteen feet of water, and at the front much less: they agreed to throw over board their canons, hoping for the vessel that once unloaded, it could be more easily refloated: however, they throw an anchor; but meanwhile, a rainy and windy storm was approaching, they then faced the full extent of the danger in which they were, being between the rocks and the shoals, against which their Vessel was repeatedly smashing, this solve them to cut the Mast, which was increasing the shacking of the Vessel, but despite being cut to the foot, it found itself so engaged between the Maneuvers of the Vessel, that it always remained attached. They were not seeing land that was not covered by the sea, except an Island, which according to their estimation could be three leagues away, and two others smaller, or rather two rocks, which were even closer; the Ship Master was sent for a reconnaissance, he came back around night o'clock, and reported that the sea was not covering them; but because of the rocks and shoals, approaching would be difficult; they resolved to take the risk, and to bring on land the people of the Vessel in order to satisfy women and children's cries, the complaints of the sick ones, and the despair of the timid ones: they embarked on the boat, and in the raft: at ten o'clock in the morning, it was found that the vessel was ajar; they redoubled their diligence to remove the bread from the lower deck, out onto the deck; because concerning the water, they did not think that they could need some on land in this extreme danger; the thing that slowed them down was the brutality of several crew members, soaking themselves with casks of abandoned wine: so that this day only three trips were done, and approximately hundred eighty persons were brought on land, twenty barrels of bread, and some small barrels of water. The Master came on the vessel in the evening, and said to the Commander that it was useless to bring further rations on the Island, because the Crew was consuming them; Pelsart boarded the Boat to put some order, he found no water resource on the

[Marginal note: the lower deck is the place in the vessel where the bread is stored, this word relates also to the place where the gunpowder was stored, named the gunpowder lower deck]

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Island; & as he was coming back to transport some with the most precious goods of the Vessel, a strong wind came up forcing him to come back from where he left.

The whole fifth day of the same month was employed to transport water and goods on land; the Commander in the Raft & the Master in the Boat wanted to get back on the Vessel, but they found out that the sea was strongly breaking against it, so that it was impossible to board; the Carpenter threw himself out

of the Vessel to swim and join them, & tell them the extreme situation in which they were: he was sent back, with order to tell those who stayed, to collect a maximum of planks, to tie them together, and throw them at sea in order to get them and make fins for the Boat or the Raft: but the bad weather continued to increase, and forced the Commander to return on the Island, leaving with great pain his Lieutenant & seventy men in the Vessel, on the eve to get lost: those who were on the small island, were not in a better state; because after counting the volume of water, they only found approximately eighty pints for forty persons: they had even much less on the larger Island, where hundred eighty men were saved: those of the small Island were whispering, & complaining that the Officers were not going to find some water in the neighboring Islands; presenting this necessity to Pelsart: he agrees on their complaints; but he says that before leaving, he wants to communicate this decision to the other troops; he has difficulty to get their consent, because the Master of the Vessel was worried that those of these troops would retain him with them: they finally agreed, after that it was explained to them that they could not go to search for water without the consent of this troop, & that otherwise it was decided to die beside his Vessel; but when he was approaching the Island, the one commanding the Boat told him, that if he had something to say he could shout it, & that he did not need to get out of the Boat: as the Commander wanted to throw himself in the water to reach the Island, he retained him, & ordered to his people to row & to go in the opposite direction, so he was forced to return, after having left these words written on the sheet of a tablet, that he left with the Raft to search for water on the closest lands or Islands; they would search first along the coast of Islands; they found water in some rock holes of these Islands, but seawater was mixed with it, & because of this reason the water could not be used for their need, they resolved to go further to find some.

They created a deck on their Boat; because they would not have been able to do this Navigation on an open deck vessel. More people from the Crew came joining their troops for the same purpose: & after that everybody from the troop had subscribed to this decision, they went to sea, & took the bearing that they first found at twenty eight degrees and thirteen minutes; They saw not long after some land, it was located according to their estimate at six miles in the North-West from the place where they wrecked; they found twenty five or thirty fathoms of water & since the night was coming, they moved away from the coast which they found again after midnight. The ninth morning, they were at three miles from the coast, according to their estimate, they did four to five miles by following several headings, some time to the North, sometimes to the West, the coast was on the North-West; it is low, without trees, & full of rocks, & approximately the same height that Dover's coast; they saw a small cove, & with sandy bottom: they wanted to enter; but as they were getting closer, they realized that the sea was breaking too strongly; and the weather was becoming more difficult, they were forced to sail away.

The tenth, they stayed within the same area, heading sometimes in one direction, sometimes in another direction: finally, the sea being too restless, they resolved to abandon

[Marginal note 1: The Dutch from the *Svvatdez*, are two planks attached to ropes that are left on either sides, to keep the boat straight against the waves]

[Marginal note 2: To do a deck, this means that they covered their boat, hence it is said a vessel with 2 decks, with 3 decks]

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their Boat, and even to through overboard part of the bread present in their Ship, which was preventing them to pull out the water coming from all sides. It rained quite a lot that night, & they hoped that the people who stayed on the Island, would receive a great relieve. The eleventh, wind diminished, they were West-South-West: they headed towards a Northern direction; because the restless sea, pushed them away from the land. The twelfth, they took the direction, they found it bearing at 27 degrees: they sailed along the coast on a South-East direction; but they could not land because it was too steep, without any cove nor piece of land in front of the coast as it is usually the case; from a distance, the land appeared to them as being fertile & full of grass. The thirteenth, they reached the bearing of twenty five degree and forty minutes, which made them aware that the sea current that pushed them in a Northern direction, at this point they were facing an opening along the coast towards the Northeast; their route followed that day a

Northerly direction, the coast was made of red rocks of the same height without any land in front, & because of the breaking waves, it was impossible for them to land.

The fourteenth a fresh morning, which eased up later during the day, the bearing followed was twenty four degree, wind from the East: the tides were pushing them further to the North than they wanted; because their goal was a way down, & for this reason were sailing with small sails along the coast; & saw from a distance some smoke; they started to row towards this place, hoping to find men, and consequently some water: they found that the coast was too steep, full of rocks, & the sea was too rough, which made them lose the hope to be able to land; finally, six of their men counting on their ability to swim, jumped overboard, and with lots of difficulty and facing great dangers they reached land, the Ship stayed at anchor at a place with twenty five fathoms of water depth: these people spent the whole day to try to find water; & despite going towards a direction and another to find some, they perceived four men approaching them by crawling; one of our people being close to them on a higher point, they stood and they fled, in such a way that the people on the Raft had seen them very distinctively. These men are Savages, black, entirely naked, not covering the parts that almost all the other Savages are usually covering; without hope to find water, they swam back to the Ship, bruised and injured by the waves and rocks; the anchor was raised, and they continued to sail along the coast, while staying away from the breaking waves, & hoping to find further away a better place to be able to land.

The fifteenth in the morning, they discovered a Cape, & with at the end of it a reef or line of rocks of about a mile out at sea, & another reef along the coast; they entered between these rocks because the sea appeared calm, but they found out that these rocks were forming some sort of a dead end, & without any exit. Around midday, they saw an opening where the sea was fairly quite; but it was dangerous to get in, due to the fact that there was only two feet of water, and a lot of stones; all along this coast and at the front was a sand bank of about 1 mile wide. Once arrived on land, wells were dug out within this part of the coast; but the water that was found was salty: at the end, it was found within rock holes, fresh rain water, which was of great help; they were dying of thirst, & they had as rations during the past few days only a little bit more than half-seventh of water; they collected at least around 160 pints during all night; there had been sometimes before some Savages at this place, because they found remains of a squirrels & ashes.

The 16. in the morning, they resolved to return once again on land, hoping to be able to collect a larger quantity of water in the rocks since they had

[Marginal note: Savages from the Southern Land]

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no hope to find some anywhere else; but it had not been raining for a long time, because they did not find any: & the piece of land they found beyond the rocks bordering the coast was not promising any; it is a countryside landscape without grass nor trees, where they could only see large ants mound; but so big, that from a distance they could have been mistaken for Indian houses; they found such a strange quantity of flies, that they were in a position that they could not defend themselves. They saw from distance eight Savages, each of them had a stick in their hands; they approached so that they could be within musket shot range: but as they saw that our people were getting closer they fled: finally, realizing that there was no more hope to find water, they resolved around midday to leave this coast, & went out by a different opening in the reef located further North; because following a bearing of twenty two degrees and seventeen minutes, their goal was to look for Jacob Remmessens' river; but the wind was coming from the North-East, they could not follow anymore the coast; so much that they considered being at more than hundred miles from the wrecking place, & that since they found so little water that they had just enough to survive, they resolved to reach as fast as possible Battauia, to warn the General of their misfortune, & seek relieve for their people that they left on the Islands.

The seventeenth, the fog prevented them from changing bearing around midday; they did that day approximately fifteen miles with a Northwest to North wind, dry weather; following a Northeast route.

The eighteenth, once again they could not change bearing around midday; but according to their estimate, they did ten miles with a West-North-West wind; the weather was rough, a heavy rain with a strong wind,

which, around midday, was coming from the North-East as well as slightly from the North; their route followed a West direction; this similar weather lasted again on the nineteen, so that they could not again change bearing, according to their estimation, they did approximately seven leagues, their route was to North-North-East, the wind was North-West to West.

The twentieth they were under a nineteen degrees twenty two minutes bearing; they would have done, according to their estimations, twenty two miles, the route North, the wind West-South-West, with a small wind mixed with rain.

The twenty-first, they thought to have done twenty three miles, the wind changing sometimes from South-West to South-East, sometime fairly good, followed by some calm.

The twenty-second a sixteen degrees ten minutes bearing, which surprised them a lot, without imagining, how in such little time, they could have gone up so many degrees; it appeared that the tides must have carried them strongly towards the North; according to their estimations they had done twenty four miles, the route was North with a light wind which was often coming from the South-East.

The twenty-third, they could not change bearing, according to their estimate, they did thirteen miles, the route was to the North-West, the wind that day, was changing from East to West, variable weather, rainy, with calmer periods; the wind in the evening, South-South-East.

The twenty-fourth, dry weather, well fresh, wind from South-East to South; they were around midday at aof thirteen degrees ten minutes bearing: the route North to West, twenty five miles.

The twenty-fifth, wind from South-East, dry weather, well fresh, a eleven degrees thirty minutes bearing, according to their estimation, they went forward of thirty one miles; North-West; they saw that a lot of kelp.

The twenty-sixth a nine degrees fifty six minutes bearing; the wind South-East, dry weather; they went forward North to West twenty four miles

The twenty-seventh the wind Southeast, rainy weather, too strong so that they could not change bearing: After midday they saw the lands of Java, at a bearing,

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as they had imagined of eight degrees being around four to five miles: they oriented their route, West-North-West Along the Coast until the evening when they discovered a point along the coast in front of which was an Island full of trees; they sailed toward that point, in the fog they found a Bay, they entered following a North-North-West route, threw the anchor there at eight fathoms of water, hard bottom and they spent the whole night.

They raised the anchor in the morning of the twenty-eight and started to row towards land to find water; because thirst had extremely reduced their strength: they hopefully found a running water source, they quenched their thirst and filled up barrels, and after midday resume their route to Batauia.

The twenty-nine after midnight, at the second quarter, they saw in front of them an Island that they passed on their starboard side or right hand; at the end of the day they found themselves close to the cove which was on the West side, and from there they followed West-North-West: by following this direction they moved away from the coast which is of the bottom of this cove, that could be seen again before arriving to the Trouvens islands. At midday, they were located at six degrees forty minutes bearing, & according to their estimates they had done thirty miles, their route West-North-West at three o'clock after midday: they passed between those two Islands, and they saw on the western one many Cocos trees. In the evening, they were still away by one mile from the South point of Java and the Princes Island.

The thirtieth in the morning they were under the coast of the Princes Island, they did only 2 miles that day. In the evening a small wind from the shore appeared.

The first of July, the weather became calmer, & at midday they were 3 miles away from the Dwaers-iudenwagh Island, inconstant winds: In the evening, they picked on the North-West side, so that it reached the Island mentioned above. The evening was calm, & they had to row.

The second in the morning being through the Toppers-hoetien Island, they were obliged to stay anchored until around eleven o'clock, & to wait for the sea breeze, but not much wind picked up; so that they had to row once more, & in the evening they found out that they moved forward by only two miles: On the Sunset, they saw behind them a sail on the other side of the Dwaers-iuden-wegh Island, they reached the coast & anchored in order to wait for it. The morning they went to encounter that Vessel, hoping to receive support and weapons to defend themselves from the people in Java, if they were at war with the Dutch: They happened to be accompanied by two other Vessels from the Company, on which on one of them was Ramburgh the Advisor of the Company: Pelsart went on his Vessel, telling him with pain the incident that happened to him, & went with him to Batauia.

However to solicit relieve, I would go back to the part of the Crew which stayed on those Islands; but I have to tell you that before that the assistant Merchant Jerosme Cornelis, formerly Apothecary in Harlem, had since the African coast been conspiring with the Pilot and some others, to take command of the Vessel, and to lead it to Dunkirk, or to seize it in order to sail away: This assistant Merchant stayed inside the remains of the shipwreck for ten days, without finding any way to reach land; he even spent two days on the main mast which was floating; & from there on a yard, reach finally land. He had to be in command during Pelsart's absence, & thought that it was a good occasion to put into action his first plan, which was to become the master of remaining debris, & to surprise the Commander when he would come back with help from Batavia, & to sail Seas with his Vessel: to achieve this, he had to get rid of the part of the crew which was not part of his team; but before putting his hands into blood, he made his accomplices sign some sort of plot,

[Marginal note: Dvvaers-inden-vvegh means the island in the middle of the pathway]

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by which they promised loyalty to each others. The whole crew was divided into three Islands; in Cornelis' one, which they called Batavia's Graveyard, was the main part: One of them called Vveybe-Hays was sent to another to find water, & have found some after searching for it for twenty days; Vveybe-Hays did a signal as planned, with three fires, but uselessly; because they were not seen by the large group of Cornelis, because meanwhile, the mutineers slit the throats of those which were not from their group, they killed thirty or forty; some of them managed to flee on drifting wood joined together, & were to find Vveybe-Hays, told him the horrible massacre which occurred; he had with him forty five men, he resolved to stay vigilant, and to defend himself from these murderers if they would want to attack his troops; as indeed, he planned, & to take care of the other group, because he was concerned that those from Hay's troops or from the other group which was on a third Island, would let the Commander know when he would have returned, creating some disruption to his plans. They managed to get rid of this last group fairly easily being the weakest; they killed them all, except seven children and some women; they were hoping to get rid of Vveybe-Hays' troop as easily, & however opened the boxes the merchants saved from the vessel. Jerome Cornelis made sure that rich cloth would be used for his troops as costumes, choose himself some guards dressed with scarlets and two large golden and silver laces; & as if women would have been part of the booty, took one for himself, gave one of the priest's daughter to one of the main man of his troop, and abandoned the last three to the public usage; and made even some Rules about the way they should be used.

After these horrible executions, he made himself general Captain, by an Act signed by all from his group; then sent twenty-two men on two Boats, to dismantle Vveybe-Hays' troops; but they were pushed back: he goes there by himself with thirty-seven men; Vveybe-Hays came to see him up to the water when he landed, & made him go, having as weapons only wooden sticks with nails in the extremities: plain force was not successful for him, he used other means; offering a peace treaty; the *Domine* which was on Vveybe's side travelled back and forth: peace was concluded, under the condition that he would leave alone Vveybe's troops, which would send back one of the small Boat with which a Sailor fled from Cornelis' Island, toward Vveybe's one; & that some fabric would be given to Vveybe to dress his people: however during the back and forth travels, Cornelis wrote to some French soldiers which were in the troops, offering them six thousands pounds to corrupt them, hoping that with this intelligence they will allow him to reach his plans. The letters did not have any effect, they were handed over to Vveybe; & Cornelis which was not aware that they had been discovered, came the next morning with three or four men to find Vveybe, &

bring him some clothes, Vveybe sent an attack towards him, kills two or three men of his troop, & keep him as a prisoner. A so-called Vvouter-los which escaped from this attack, came the next morning to give a new assault, but with very little success. Pelsart arrives meanwhile on the Sardam Frigate; he approaches the debris, & noticed faraway some smoke on one of the Islands; which was source of some great consolation, observing from this indication that not everybody had died: he anchored, and went straight away on the Raft with bread and wine, and is going to step down on one of the islands; another Raft land at the same time with four armed men on board; Vveybe being one of them is running towards him, tells him about the massacre, & warn him to get back on his Vessel as soon as possible, that some people had the plan to steal it; that the mutineers had killed hundred twenty five people, and that they would attack with two

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Boats; that he had been this same morning in their hands; Pelsart discovered in the same time the two Rafts which were coming towards him; he was quicker onboard of his Vessel than the two rafts; he sees these people covered with golden and silver laces, and with weapons in hands; he asked them why they are boarding the Vessel with weapons; their reply was that they would tell him once onboard the Vessel; he ordered them to throw their weapons at sea, otherwise he threaten them to sink their raft; they had to obey, they threw their weapons, they came onboard the Vessel, where they were immediately chained to their feet: A so-called Jean de Bremen was examined first, confessed that he had killed, or helped to murder, twenty-seven persons; this evening Vveybe brought on board his prisoner.

The eighteenth of September, the Commander with the Pilot master picked up with Boats ten men from Vveybe's troops, with which they went to Cornelis' Island; those still present lost their courage, as soon as they saw them landing, and were easily chained; the first action of the Commander was to look for the gemstones which were dispersed here and there. Everything was found during the first search apart from a golden chain and a ring, & the ring was found since; next was the debris, the vessel was in hundred pieces, the keel was beached on some sand, part of the aft of the vessel on some rocks, & other pieces here & there which gave only little hope to Pelsart to save anything from the Company goods: one of the crew member told him that a month ago when he was alone fishing close to the debris, that he felt with the tip of a spear one of the boxes full of silver.

The nineteenth, the other accomplices were brought to the Island to be examined

The twentieth, various things that were missing were sent to Vveybe's troops, and water was collected from there. Because after ten days on the illand without finding some, they attempted to try the water which was inside the two wells that were thought to be salted, because the water was going up and down with the tide, and however she happened to be good to drink.

The twenty-first they found that the Tide was very low, & the wind from East-South-East was strong, preventing the Boat to get out that day.

The twenty-second they wanted to go for a closer reconaissance of the debris; the sea was breaking so violently, that even the swimmers would not dare to get closer.

The twenty-fifth, the vessel Master of the Vessel & the Pilot got closer to it with a better and calmer weather; the people on land noticed, that they were trying to pull something; help was sent to them, the Commander went there himself, they had found a box full of silver: a second was found, these two put to dry, & any other one was retrieved that day because of the bad weather, even if the Divers from the Gujarat ascertained that they had found six others which could be pulled up with ease.

The twenty-sixth after dinner, the weather was good, the tide was low, the Master went on site where other boxes were notices, brought back three, & placed an anchor & a cannon to mark the location where they left a fourth one that they could not raise, even with multiple efforts.

The twenty-seventh a very cold wind was coming from the South.

The twenty-eighth, the same wind; & as it did not allow to work near the debris, the Commander gathered a Council to decide whether to judge the Criminals, or if they would be transported to Battauia to be judged there by the Officers of the Company; their large number, & the jealousy from the great wealth that had



been raised from the wreck, & filling up the frigate, pushed towards the fact that the votes went for judging and executing them on site, which they did.

[Marginal note: The peculiarity of this water is remarkable]