

AUSTRALIAN TOPOGRAPHY: EDEL'S LAND, DE  
WITT'S LAND, AND CARPENTARIA.

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In the Letter of Instructions issued to Tasman in 1644, as edited by Mr. Swart in the *Verhandelingen en Berigten betrekkelijk het Zeewezen*, Jaargang 1844, bl. 65, occurs the following reference to an early Dutch expedition for the fuller discovery of New Guinea and the unknown south land:—

“De tweede voyagie met seecker jacht, in den jare 1617, onder 't berleyt van den fiscael D'EDËL, met weynich vrucht gedaen, van welck bejegeningh en ondervindingh tegenwoordich (mits't verlies van de journaele aenteyckeningen) geen seeckere contschap te vinden is.”

“The second voyage in a certain yacht in 1617, under command of the Fiscal D'EDËL, was attended with meagre results, concerning which undertaking and discovery no certain account can now be found, in consequence of the loss of the journals and observations.”

A comparison of this passage with others in the same Letter and with the maps of Tasman and Visscher and the Stadhuys map, leads to the opinion that the Edel's Land of western Australia was approximately the goal of this voyage, and that the date 1619, generally ascribed to its discovery, should be regarded as that of a subsequent visit. *Harris' voyages ed. Campbell. i, p 325.*

In support of this opinion, it will be remembered that a discovery of land far south of the turning-point of the *Duyffken* was reported in Java towards the end of 1616 on the arrival of the outward-bound ship *Eendracht*, and that a lively interest was awakened in the minds of the Dutch authorities by the news of this and subsequent glimpses of the western coast of the new south land. This is evident from the fact that in September 1622, the then Governor-General, Jan Pietersz Coen, authorised an expedition for the express purpose of reporting upon this and other chance discoveries, and equipped thereto the yachts *Haeringh* and *Hasewindt*. It may be presumed that this expedition, six years after the discovery of the *Eendracht*, was not the first attempt made to authenticate the same by an official survey, for the discovery was important to the Dutch East India Company from a commercial point of view, since the crews of their outward-bound ships frequently fell a prey to sickness and scurvy about the time of their reaching these latitudes, for whose relief Gerrit Pool was enjoined in 1636 to find a con-

venient place for obtaining water and other refreshments in about lat. 26° to lat. 28° S. *Instructie voor den E. Command. Gerrit Thomasz Pool.* (*Swart's Journaal van Tasman's Reis.* bl. 36.) This was probably a stereotyped order to the leaders of these expeditions; it occurs again in the Instructions of Tasman, 1644.

To prevent misapprehension, let me state that the maps to which reference is made in association with the names Tasman and Visscher are (1) that map which was draughted by order of Van Diemen in 1644 for the purpose of illustrating, in a connected sketch, the discoveries of the Dutch in New Holland, and the adjacent islands; (Vide *Proceedings R. S. Tas.* 1884. p. 262.) (2) a map said to be the work of Francois Jacobsz Visscher, Tasman's chief pilot, a copy of which, taken as is supposed, by Captain Thomas Bowrey about the year 1687, is reproduced in Major's *Early Voyages to Terra Australis*, p. xcvi. The (3) map referred to is that which was inlaid in the floor of the Groote Zaal of the Amsterdam Stadhuys, and which is reproduced in Thévenot's *Relation de divers voyages*, 1<sup>re</sup> partie, 1663, and elsewhere.

There are considerable discrepancies in these maps regarding the geographical position of Edel's Land and the date of its discovery. Tasman's map has a stippled outline, extending from about lat. 30° S to lat. 32° S, opposite to which on the landward side is placed the legend '*i.d. Edels lant bijseijlt A<sup>no</sup> 1619.*' In the Stadhuys map there is a blank in place of the stippling, and the legend appears at a definite part of the coast-line several degrees further north, so that in this map Edel's Land extends from about lat. 27° S to lat. 29° S.<sup>1</sup> The draughtsman of Tasman's map is very inaccurate in his lettering, and is evidently at fault when he places a legend at a part of the coast which the Stadhuys map shows to have been unknown. On the authority of that map we assign the more northerly position to the visit of 1619. Turning now to the map of Visscher, it is observable that a vague connecting line replaces the stippling of the one and the blank space of the other map, and that the legend, which runs '*I dedels Land discovered Anno 1628,*' appears south of the doubtful place, not, as in the Stadhuys map, north of it. In the latitude of the Land of Edel this map agrees with Tasman's. Had the D'Edel who is mentioned in Tasman's Letter of Instructions been personally associated with these discoveries in 1619 and 1628, it is probable that further reference would there have

<sup>1</sup> The latitudes are those of the maps referred to. It is not easy to distinguish the portion allotted to the *Eendracht* in Thévenot's map from that allotted to D'Edel'. Houtman's Abrolhos are here regarded as dividing the two discoveries.

been made to him. In default of any such reference, we may suppose that his name had become associated with the coast between the Lands of the *Eendracht* and of the *Leeuwin* in consequence of an earlier voyage to those parts, and that the designation, 'D'Edel's Land,' was extended to fresh discoveries in the same region out of compliment to him as its first visitor.

*De Witt's Land.*—Reverting to the text of the Instructions, we find the following account of the discovery of De Witt's Land.

"In't volgende jaer 1628, 't selve lant aen de noortcant by 't schip Dianæ (varende uyt *Indiae* na Nederland) op de zuyderbreete van 21 graden onverwacht ontdeect, en omtrent 50 mylen custs beseylt is."

"In the following year, 1628, the same land was unexpectedly discovered on the north side in lat. 21° S. by the ship *Diana* (bound from the Indies to Holland), which vessel sailed along the coast for about 200 miles."

The name *G.F. de Witte-lant* is borne by this coast, and the discovery seems to have comprized about one hundred miles on either side of the present N. W. Cape of Australia. Strangely enough, the Instructions as edited by Dalrymple (*Collection of Memoirs concerning the Land of Papua*) give the name of the discovery-ship as the *Vianen*. In default of a reference to the original MSS, we can only set the one authority against the other. The probability however is in favour of the goddess, whose name is naturalised in Dutch, while the word "Vianen" belongs neither to that, nor, so far as I know, to any other language.

*Carpentaria.*—The publication of Tasman's map confirms the opinion that the Gulf of Carpentaria was first coasted in its entirety by Tasman in his second voyage. His track, anchorages, and soundings are marked with great minuteness. The name "Carpentaria," however, does not appear, and we may conclude that it was one of those latinised names introduced for the first time in the original of the map published by Thévenot, where it appears on the land east of the gulf. *Vide Major's Early Voyages to Terra Australis*. pp. xcix.-ciii. It is interesting to note that Carpenter's name is appropriated to a river on the east side of the gulf in about lat. 13° S. by the draughtsman of Tasman's map,—probably a survival from one of the early expeditions for the exploration of what was then regarded by the Dutch as the west coast of New Guinea.

I cannot conclude these fragmentary notes without acknowledging my indebtedness to Mr. Justin Browne and Mr. J. B. Walker for their kind loan of books during their preparation. But I would insist on the fact that private collections

can never supply the place of a public collection of works relating to Australian discovery. If Australians are to become familiar with the beginnings of Australian history, the means of studying the sources whence that history is derived must be placed within their reach—an end to be attained, first of all, by a gradual and persistent acquisition in each colony of books, maps, and documents bearing chiefly on its own history ; and next, by the establishment of an Australian library enriched with all procurable rarities of colonial history and discovery.

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