



THREE
VOYAGES

René Laudonnière

Translated with an introduction and notes by
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about these events but to embark promptly with all those who were on the island. This he did immediately. But as he navigated toward the ships, he saw along the shoreline a large number of Indians, all shooting their arrows. For his part he discharged his guns against them, but he was unable to hurt them or even to alarm them. So he gave up and came back to the ship, where we remained until the next morning.

Then we set sail in the charted route and navigated among the isles conquered by the Spanish, such as St. Christopher, Iles des Saintes, Montserrat, and Redonda. Then we passed between Anguillo and Anegada, continuing toward New France.

We arrived at New France fifteen days afterwards, on Thursday, June 22, at about three or four o'clock in the afternoon. We landed near a little river which is 30 degrees distant from the equator and ten leagues above Cape François, measuring from the south; and about thirty leagues from the River of May. After we struck sails and cast anchor athwart the river, I determined to go ashore and reconnoiter, since three or four hours of afternoon were available. I went accompanied by M. d'Ottigni and M. d'Arlac, my ensign, and a considerable number of gentlemen and soldiers. I sounded the channel at the mouth and found it to be very shallow, although further on it was reasonably deep. The river separates itself into two great arms, one running south and the other north.

Having reconnoitered the river, I landed to talk to the Indians who waited for us on the bank. They cried out with a loud voice in their native language "Antipola bonnassou," which means "brother," "friend," or something like that. After they had made

much of us, they introduced their paraousti, or king or chief, to whom I presented certain trinkets. This pleased him immensely. For my part, I praised God without ceasing for the great affection that I found among these savages. They were unhappy at nothing except that the night approached which would take us away. Though they endeavored by every means to make us trade with them and explained by signs that they wanted to give us some presents, nevertheless for various good reasons I decided not to stay. Excusing myself from all their offered presents, I re-embarked and went toward my ships. However, before leaving, I named this river the River of Dolphins, because on my arrival I had seen a large number of dolphins playing about in the mouth of the river.⁵⁷

Since toward the south I had not found a suitable place in which to live and build a fort, on the next day, the twenty-third of the month, I gave orders to lift anchors, let out sails, and navigate toward the River of May. We arrived there two days afterwards and cast anchor. Then having landed with quite a number of gentlemen and soldiers to explore the place, we saw the chief of that country, who came to meet us. It was the same one whom we had seen on the voyage under Captain Jean Ribault. Having seen us he cried out from the distance, "Antipola, antipola," and showed such enthusiasm that he almost lost his composure. He came up to us, accompanied by two of his children, as handsome and as powerful as any that you can find on earth, who offered us only friendship by repeating the word "friend, friend." Recognizing some of us from the preceding voyage, they addressed themselves chiefly to these in using words of

friendship. There were many in the gathering, both men and women, who made much of us and by signs showed their happiness that we had come.

Then the chief suggested going to see the stone column that we had erected during the voyage of Jean Ribault, and of which I have already spoken. It was a thing to which they ascribed great significance. Having granted their request to go to the place where the stone was set up, we found it to be crowned with magnolia garlands and at its foot there were little baskets of corn which they called in their language "tapaga tapola." They kissed the stone on their arrival with great reverence and asked us to do the same. As a matter of friendship we could not refuse, and when this was done the chief took me by the hand as if he had a great secret to tell me, and showed me by signs how far up the river his dominion lay. He said that he was called Paracousi Satouriona, which amounts to King Satouriona. The children carry the same title of paraousti. His oldest one is named Atore, a man whom I dare say is perfect in handsomeness, wisdom, and honest appearance, showing by his modest dignity that he earned the title that he carried. Also, he was pleasant and easy to associate with. After I had spent a little time with them, the chief asked one of his sons to present a slab of silver to me, which he did willingly. As a reward, I gave a knife and some other more expensive presents with which he seemed to be very well pleased. Then, as night approached, we took our leave and returned to go to bed on board ship.

Being delighted by this good treatment, I returned the next day with my lieutenant and a number of sol-

death so that they would be lamented afresh. Our Frenchmen being thus informed of the meaning of these ceremonies, thanked the chief for his hospitality, set sail, and returned to me at the fort, where all of this was declared to me as I have written it down here.

On July 28 our ships departed for their return to France.⁶⁴ Afterward and about two months after our arrival in New France, Chief Satouriona sent several Indians to ask me if I would make good the promise that I had made when I first came to this country, that is, to show myself to be a friend to his friends and to be an enemy to his enemies and also to accompany him with ample men with guns at the time when he thought it expedient and found occasion and opportunity to go to war. Now, relying on this promise, he requested me not to put it aside, particularly since on the strength of it he had given orders to get an expedition ready, and was now prepared and furnished with all the things that were necessary for the trip. I responded that I would not purchase the friendship of one by the hatred of another, and that even though I wished to assist him I did not have the means to carry it out because at this time it was necessary to make arrangements for food and supplies for the defense of my fort. Also I informed him that my barques were not anywhere near ready and it would take some time to put them in readiness. Finally I said that Chief Satouriona could put himself in readiness to go within two months and that then I would think of fulfilling my promise to him. The Indians told their chief this response and he was not very pleased because he could not defer the execution of

the expedition, not only because his foodstuffs were ready but also because ten other chiefs were already assembled with him for this enterprise.

The ceremony which this savage used before he embarked his army is well worth remembering. When he went down to the river bank he was surrounded by ten other chiefs. He promptly demanded that water be brought to him. This being done, he looked up to heaven and began to discuss many things by gestures, showing a great heat in his emotions and shaking his head first one way and then another. Then with a wrath such as I have never seen before, he turned his face toward the direction of his enemies to threaten them with death. He also looked toward the sun, praying for glorious victory over his enemies. Having done these things for at least a half hour, he sprinkled water from his hands over the heads of the chiefs, water which he had taken from a vessel that he held. Furiously he threw the rest of the water on a fire which had been expressly made for this purpose. That done, he cried three times, "He, Thimogona," and was accompanied in this by more than five hundred Indians. They were all assembled there and cried out in unison, "He, Thimogona." According to one of the Indians this ceremony signified that Satouriona begged the sun to give him victory and happiness so that he could scatter the blood of his enemies as he had scattered the water at his pleasure. Moreover it besought that the chiefs who were sprinkled with a part of the water might return with the heads of their enemies, which is the greatest and only measure of their victory.

After Chief Satouriona had completed these cere-



Chief Satouriona, from an ancient drawing by an unidentified artist, on display at the Fort Caroline National Memorial.

monies and had seen to all of his equipment, he embarked and went forward with such speed in his boats that by two hours before sunset on the next day he had arrived in the enemy land, eight or ten leagues from the villages. After all had landed, Satouriona assembled his advisers and it was decided that five of the chiefs would go by the river with half of the forces and would stop at daybreak near the homes of their enemies. As for him, he would go with the rest of the chiefs through the woods and forests as quietly as possible. In this way, all those who went by water and those who went by land would enter the village together at daybreak and cut the enemy to pieces, excepting women and little children.

The agreed plan was vigorously pursued. When it was accomplished, the aggressors took the heads of their slain enemies and cut the hair off, taking a piece of skull with each scalp. They also took twenty-four prisoners and these they hustled off to their waiting boats; when they arrived there, they began chanting praises to the sun, to which they gave credit for their victory. Then they put the scalps at the top of their spears and pushed on to the lands of Chief Omoloa, one of those who was in the company. Arriving there, they divided the prisoners equally among the ten chiefs, first leaving thirteen to Chief Satouriona. He promptly dispatched a runner to give news of this victory to those who had guarded their homes in their absence. These began lamentations, but as night came on they went to dancing and cavorting about in honor of the event.

The next morning Chief Satouriona arrived, and before going into his lodging had all the enemy scalps

set up before his door, crowning them with branches of magnolia, thus showing by this spectacle the triumph of the victory he had achieved. At first lamentations and mournings began, but as soon as night came on these changed into celebrations and dances.

After I heard of these things, I sent a soldier to Satouriona, asking him to send me two of his prisoners. This he refused to do, saying that he was not subservient to me and that I had broken my promise under oath, which I had sworn to him on my arrival.

When I understood this from my soldier, who came back speedily, I devised a means of bringing reason to this savage and to make him understand how his bravado would only hurt him. Therefore I told my sergeant to provide me with twenty soldiers to go to the house of Satouriona. I went into his hall without any hesitation and sat down by him and stayed a long time without speaking any word with him or showing him any sign of friendship. This seemed to disturb him, particularly since a number of my soldiers were stationed at the door where I had ordered them not to let any Indian go out. Having stayed there for about a half an hour in this way, at length I asked him where the prisoners were which he had taken from the Thimogona, and I ordered that they be presented to me. The chief, angry in his heart and very much astonished, took a long time to answer this. Finally he told me arrogantly that they were so afraid at seeing us come in such a warlike manner that they had fled into the woods and that they could not be returned now since their location was not known. Then I pretended not to understand what he had said and asked

again to receive his prisoners and those of his principal allies. Satouriona then told his son Atore to find the prisoners and to bring them to this place, which he did about an hour afterwards. When they came to the lodging of the chief, they saluted me humbly, and as they raised their hands before me, they would have thrown themselves prostrate at my feet if I had allowed them to do it. Soon afterwards I led them away to our fort.

The chief was greatly irritated by this act and immediately began to think of every possible way by which he could get revenge on us. However, to keep us from having any suspicion and to cover his designs, he regularly sent his ambassadors with presents for us. Among others, he dispatched three Indians to us one day who brought two baskets full of large pumpkins, much better than those we have in France. These Indians promised me in their king's behalf that as long as I stayed in this land I would never run short of food. I thanked them for the good will of their prince and told them of the desire that I had to be useful to Satouriona and his subjects by bringing about peace between him and the Thimogona. I told them that this would be a great advantage, because when he became allied with the kings of that area, he would have open passage against his old enemy, Onatheaqua, against whom he otherwise could not do battle; that Olata Ouae Outina was such a powerful chief that Satouriona alone did not have the means to overcome his forces; but that if they joined together they could easily ruin all their enemies and push their boundaries past the distant southern rivers. The ambassadors

asked me to have patience until the next day, when they would return to me after ascertaining the wishes of their lord.

They did not fail in this and gave me to understand that Chief Satouriona was satisfied with the idea. But the contrary was more likely the fact. Satouriona asked me to act promptly, promising to observe and carry out everything that was to be done in his name with the Thimogona. These same ambassadors told these things to the prisoners whom I held. After the ambassadors were gone, I resolved two days later to return the prisoners to Olata Ouae Outina, where they belonged. Before I let them embark, I gave them several trinkets, such as little knives and tablets of glass containing a nice picture of Charles IX. They thanked me for these and also for the kind treatment that I had given them at the fort of la Caroline. Then they embarked with Captain Vasseur and with Lord d'Arlac, my ensign, whom I sent to live for a time with Olata Ouae Outina, hoping that the good will of that great chief would greatly help me in my future discoveries.⁶⁵ I had them accompanied by one of my sergeants and by ten reliable soldiers.

So things moved along, and the hate of Chief Satouriona against me continued. On August 29 there fell on the fort such a stroke of lightning that I think it more worthy of interest and of being recorded than any unusual thing that has yet come to pass, more strange than historians have ever written about. The fields were at that time all green and half covered with water, and yet the lightning in one instant consumed about 500 acres and burned with such a bright heat that all the birds which lived in the meadows

were consumed. This thing continued for three days. It left us in wonderment, because we could not guess where all the fire came from. At first we had the opinion that the Indians had burned their houses for fear of us, abandoning their old places. Then we thought that they might have observed some ships in the sea and, following their usual custom, lighted up fires here and there to show that people lived in this land. Finally not being reassured, I decided to send to Chief Seranay to find out the truth. But as I was on the point of sending out a boat to ascertain the facts, six Indians arrived from the land of Chief Allicamany.⁶⁶

On entering, they made a long statement, but first they presented several baskets of corn, pumpkins, and grapes. Then they spoke of the amiable alliance that Allicamany wished to enter into with me. They said he could hardly wait, from day to day, until the hour would come when it would please me to put him in my service. They said that in view of the obedience that he had given me, he found it very strange that I should direct such a cannonade against his dwelling, making many of the green prairies burn away right up to the waterline, so much so that he expected to see the fire in his house. Because of this he humbly begged me to order my men not to shoot any more toward his lodging, otherwise he would have to abandon his land and go to a place more distant from us.

When we heard the foolish opinion of this man, which might nevertheless be very profitable for us, I spoke expediently as to what I thought of the matter at that time, responding to the Indians with a happy countenance and saying that what they had told me of the obedience of their chief was very agreeable

with me because previously he had not behaved himself in that way toward me, especially when I had told him to send me the prisoners that he detained of the great Olata Ouae Outina, even though he [Satouriona, i.e., Chief of Allicamany] counted them unimportant. I told him that this was the principal reason why I had sent the cannonade, and not that I had wanted to reach his house, as I could easily have done that if I had wanted to do so. I said that I had been content to fire just halfway down the course to let him know of my power. I assured him that if he continued in his good behavior, my men would not be shooting at him in the future and I would be his loyal defender against his greatest enemies.

The Indians were content with this response and returned to reassure their chief who, notwithstanding this reassurance, kept away from his home and at a distance of about twenty-five leagues for a period of about two months. At the end of three days the fire was entirely extinguished. But for two days after that there was such excessive heat in the air that the river near which we had our habitation became so hot that it seemed almost to boil. Many fish died and of many species, to such an extent that in the mouth of the river alone there were enough dead fish to fill fifty carts. The putrefaction in the air bred so many dangerous diseases among us that most of my men fell sick and seemed about ready to finish their days. However, our good Lord took care of us and we all survived without a single death.

Lord d'Arlac, Captain Vasseur, and one of my sergeants had sailed with their ten soldiers about September 10 to take the prisoners back to Outina, naviga-

ting up the river to a place that they discovered by the name of Mayarquá, about eighty leagues from our fort. There the Indians were good hosts to them, just as was the case in many other villages which they visited. From there they went to the lodging of Chief Outina, who, after feasting them as well as he could, asked Lord d'Arlac to stay for a while with his soldiers to make war on his enemy called Potavou. Lord d'Arlac agreed. However, as he did not know how long he would be staying there, he sent Captain Vasseur and the barque back to me with five soldiers.

Now, because it is the custom of the Indians to wage war by surprise, Outina decided to take his enemy Potavou at daybreak; and to bring this about he made his men travel all night. There were about two hundred of them. They were wise in putting our gunbearers at the head of the columns, for, as they said, the noise of the guns would frighten the enemy. They traveled so stealthily that the people of the village of Potavou, twenty-five leagues from Outina's place, were not informed of the imminent attack and suddenly had to defend their village, which was all encircled by woods. They came out in a great company and saw that they were attacked by men with guns, something that they were not accustomed to; and they even saw the leader of their group fall dead at the very beginning of the battle by a blast of the gun of Lord d'Arlac. So they fled, and the Indians of Outina entered the village, taking men, women, and children as prisoners. Thus came the victory of Chief Outina by the assistance of our Frenchmen, who killed many of his enemies and lost in the conflict one of their companions, which greatly grieved Outina.