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## **A Voyage To New Guinea, And The Moluccas, From Balambangan: Including An Account of Magindano, Sooloo, and other Islands; And Illustrated With Thirty Copperplates, Performed In The Tartar Galley, ...**

**Forrest, Thomas**

**London, 1779**

Chapter I. Intention of the Voyage - Sailing Orders - Reactions for undertaking it in a sinall Vessel - Description of the Tartar Galley - and Lift of the Crew.

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“ Having good authority from the experience and opinion of Mr.

“ Dalrymple, to be affixed that cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, pepper

“ and the bark with proper management will be produced

“ into Borneo, as some of these articles are produced in the

“ Spice Islands, and others in the adjacent islands, as the islands

“ of India, mentioned in the preceding paragraph, will show: the

“ acquisition and cultivation of these valuable articles, will be there-

“ ally recommended to the most diligent attention of the British and

“ Dutch Governments which will be the result of the

“ a very favourable notice on our part, on its being made apparent to

“ that the British Government has been desirous to

“ advantageously execute. Their articles if obtained, will be particularly

“ cheap, shall be made part of our contribution to the Chief Council

“ of Borneo, and we shall be obliged to your Excellency for this

“ information.”

“ About the latter end of the year 1770, I was ordered to

“ the service of the East India Company, in which

“ I was appointed to the command of the Tartar Galley, and

“ to settle at Borneo, in the month of June 1771.

“ The following is an extract from their general letter, dated June the

“ 12th 1771, to the Chief and Council of that place.”

“ THE intention of the voyage I am about to relate, was to for-

“ ward what the Honourable East India Company had recom-

“ mended by the ship Britannia, that went from England, to settle Ba-

“ lambangan,\* an island situated near the north promontory of Borneo.

“ The following is an extract from their general letter, dated June the

“ 12th 1771, to the Chief and Council of that place.”

\* See Dalrymple's plan for extending the commerce of the East India Company, 1769.

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“ Having good authority from the experience and inquiries of Mr. Dalrymple, to be assured that cinnamon, cloves, nutmegs, pepper and clove bark, may with proper management be easily introduced into Balambangan, as some of those articles are produced in the Sooloo districts, and others in the adjacent islands, as the inclosed paper of inquiry, mentioned in a preceding paragraph, will show: the acquisition and cultivation of these valuable articles, must be specially recommended to the most diligent attention of the Chief and Council, as an object of the highest importance, with promises of a very favourable notice on our part, on its being made apparent to us, that their endeavours for that purpose have been effectually and advantageously executed. These articles, if obtained, we particularly direct, shall be made part of our consignment to the China Council, until we see occasion to signify our further pleasure therein.”

About the latter end of August 1774, Ambassadors came from the heir apparent of the Sultan of Mindanao, to Balambangan, in whose train was an inhabitant of the Molucca's, called Ishmael Tuan Hadjee, who having been long employed there by the Dutch, had gained an accurate knowledge of the Molucca islands; and having also been to the eastward of them, beyond Pitt's Straits, as far as the coast of New Guinea, called Papua, had seen, and consequently reported that nutmegs grew there.

Mr. Herbert, the chief, had frequent conferences with this man; and, desirous to profit from his intelligence, in the scheme which he had in view, of forwarding the honourable court's injunctions by the Britannia, as above related, to endeavour to obtain spices from parts  
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which had no connexion with the Dutch settlements, he was pleased to consult me on the occasion. As I had, from other accounts, found that there was great probability in the relation of Tuan Hadjee, I offered to go, accompanied by him, on a voyage to New Guinea, if Mr. Herbert thought proper, in order to ascertain the truth of his assertion, and proposed to attempt it in a small country embarkation.—This was approved by Mr. Herbert and his Council, and they left the management of it entirely to my direction.

*Instructions from the Chief and Council of Balambangan, to Captain  
Thomas Forrest.*

SIR,

The knowledge you have acquired from experience of all the departments of marine business in general, to which you was trained from your earliest years, together with a competent share of commercial transactions in this quarter of the world, were sufficient inducements for the chief to accept of your offer to attend him on the expedition to Balambangan. From the small number of servants, most of whom were unexperienced, he knew there would be sufficient field to display your talents, abstracted from the official business of those brought up in the regular line of the service.

He perfectly knew your attachment and turn for discovery; and though nothing has been undertaken hitherto in the pursuit thereof, we would not have you imagine that we have thought lightly of such matters; or, that the chief has taken in bad part the several anecdotes and remarks you have at various times furnished him with.

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We have just received a copy of a paragraph of a letter from Bombay, wrote by the Honourable Court to that Presidency, which seems to imply very strongly, that it is their intention, to keep affairs in this quarter in as circumscribed and narrow limits as possible. A favourable opportunity however offering, without incurring heavy expences, we are unwilling to let it slip; as it is an object of the first consequence, and may, if accomplished, turn out extremely beneficial, not only to our honourable employers in particular, but also to the British nation in general.

You must be sensible, as we are, how important the monopoly of spices is to the Dutch company, and the States of Holland; and equally so, how incompatible it is, as well with the dignity of our company, as their advantage, to carry on a trade in these articles surreptitiously obtained, as they annually are, from the Dutch territories, and transported to Bencoolen, Rhio, and other places in the Straits of Malacca. The Molucca's being generally understood in Europe to be solely subject to the Dutch, joined to the invariable commands of our superiors, not to interfere where any other European nation is engaged, are motives sufficient for us to reject the application that has been made, or any other that we may receive hereafter, which we may esteem to have the least tendency towards creating a controversy between the two companies.

We have thought it necessary to premise thus much, that our intentions, and our conduct may appear as clear to you, as they will to the world, should the public be led ever to investigate the one or the other.

From

T O N E W G U I N E A.

From the many conversations we have had here with Tuan Hadjee Cutchil, we are confirmed in opinion that cloves and nutmegs are produced in many places which the Dutch are, or affect to be, strangers to; where the inhabitants are not subject to any prince or potentate in alliance with, or tributary to them; and on islands, even where there are no people. As he has very readily consented to embark with you in a small country vessel (a Sooloo Prow) and his accounts and representations give us a latitude to hope for some favourable discoveries; we think we should not deserve the appellation of faithful servants, if we delayed our researches into an object of the first magnitude, when it can be prosecuted with no heavy charge, and wears the prospect of terminating to the greatest national good.

It would be absurd to lay restrictions, or to pretend to impose rules in a business of this nature. It is an undertaking that requires prudence, discretion, and perseverance; therefore, we have thought it best to leave it to yourself.

Under this cover come some information and remarks, to which you are no stranger; likewise some extracts from Mr. Dalrymple's Memoirs, which we recommend to your perusal.

If the object in expectation fails of the wished-for success, yet your voyage may have a very good effect towards the improvement of navigation. You must therefore be as accurate as possible, in laying down all shoals, &c. as well as explicit in your remarks and observations. Charts and drawings thereof must be taken, minutely marking every thing



thing that may conduce to the above purpose. We wish you a good voyage, and remain,

Your affectionate friends,

and humble servants,

BALAMBANGAN,

12th October, 1774.

JOHN HERBERT,

EDWARD COLES,

THOMAS PALMER.

The Dutch seem to claim a right to all the Molucca islands, more from the forbearance of other European nations, than from any just title. I am not certain whether the islands of Waygiou, Myfol, Bantanta and Salwattay, may not also be claimed by them; but I resolved, from Tuan Hadjee's report, and what I had learned of others, to go beyond those islands, as far as the coast of New Guinea, where surely the Dutch can have no <sup>exclusive</sup> pretensions.

Sensible of the jealousy and watchfulness of the Dutch in the Molucca islands, near which it was necessary for me to pass on my way to New Guinea, no less than of the danger of navigating in narrow seas, in a vessel that drew much water, I preferred a small one of ten tons burden.

In a large vessel we must have been cautious of coming near land. The crew I had (Malays chiefly) make bad sailors in square rigged vessels; and, having never been accustomed to lie in an open road, or be in a harbour, without the indulgence of going on shore, they would not have had patience to remain on board, which even in a sloop of thirty tons, would have been necessary: and, in a vessel no larger than thirty tons, with such a crew, I must have frequently run  
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the risk of being wrecked, had I made free with the shore. This I was enabled to do boldly, in a boat of small burden, that rowed, and drew little water; and, when she touched the ground, which often happened, part of the crew, by jumping overboard, could push her off again; and, when in harbour, every body had free access to the shore.

In a large vessel, I must have carried with me a stock of provisions, which the settlement we fitted out from, could not well afford; besides, when at places that afforded provisions, in a vessel of any size at anchor, I must have sent my boat ashore, which would be liable to insult. I have known many such things befall ships boats in Malay countries, where designing people entice the crew or commanding officers to be off their guard, by a treacherous show of civility. Commodore Watson, in the *Revenge*, lost his boat going through some straits, by the island *Salwatty*. Many voyages have failed, many trading country vessels have been cut off, and some wrecked, from unexpected accidents of this kind.

The vessel I had, and which shall be hereafter described, was perfectly suited, in her construction and manner of working, to the crew, who were mostly Malays, or natives of those islands that lie east of *Atcheen Head*: several were *Bisayans*, that is, natives of the *Philippines*, and were christians; some were *Magindano* and *Molucca Mahometans*, vassals and slaves to *Tuan Hadjee*; two were from *Bencoolen* and *Pulo Nays*, and three were *Indostan* sailors (lascars.)

Fearing, that, if I carried many Europeans with me, quarrels might arise between them and the Malays, who cannot (unless indeed properly





properly trained) be supposed subject to discipline, according to our ideas of it; I therefore engaged only two white men to go with me, who were plain good seamen, David Baxter, mate, and Laurence Lound, gunner. They knew not a word of the Malay tongue, at least for many months after they embarked; consequently, could not well quarrel with their Mahometan shipmates. However, they soon learnt to speak Malays, and at the same time they learnt how to behave towards them, that is, never to hurry or abuse them. To ensure sobriety, I carried with me very little wine, or strong liquor: my Malay crew never required any, and my two Europeans soon reconciled themselves to tea and coffee.

I had one person of rank, education, and good behaviour with me, Tuan Hadjee. He had several of his own country with him, his slaves and vassals, for whom he drew pay; and who often took liberties, against which I found it imprudent to remonstrate. This person had made a pilgrimage to Mecca. He was a relation of the Sultan of Bat-chian, and was well rewarded before he came on board, by Mr. Herbert, who made him a captain of Buggeffes, having besides great expectations. I knew I could depend on his fidelity; and that he would be of great service in the voyage, having formerly been at Dory harbour, on the coast of New Guinea. Without such a person I should have been in danger from a Malay crew; especially as I had property on board to bear the expence of the voyage, victualling, &c. I made my account from the beginning, that wherever I found people, I should there find provisions; and, I thank God, we were not disappointed.

The vessel, in which I made the voyage, was called the Tartar-Galley. She was a Sooloo boat, or prow, about ten tons burthen. Her keel  
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was twenty-five feet long, and she had a kind of gallery built on each side, from stem to stern, projecting about thirty inches over each gunnel. Here sat the rowers, sometimes twenty in number. She overhung so much forward and abaft, that she was forty feet long. Her draft of water was generally three foot and a half. We had four swivel guns, two blunderbusses, ten muskets, and six pistols, beside lances, bows and arrows.

She had for a mast an artillery triangle \* (gin or tripod) made of three stout bamboos, which could be struck with the greatest ease by three men. On this was hoisted a large four cornered sail, called by the Malays, lyre tanjong (pointed sail), because the upper corner appears sharp or pointed. I fixed to her a foremast close forward, and a bowsprit; and gave her a lateen, or three cornered foresail. I also gave her a lateen mizen; but, when it blew fresh, I took down the lyre tanjong from the tripod mast, as it was a very large sail, and put in its place a lateen sail. The sails then resembled those of the galleys in the Mediterranean. One very great advantage attends the lyre tanjong, which is this; that when the wind freshens, it can, without lowering, be instantly diminished or made smaller, by easing or slacking the sheet, and at the same time winding up the sail, by two men turning the cross bar or winch that is fixed to the inner end of the boom, and which spreads the lower part of the sail. By

\* A great improvement might be made in navigation by means of the tripod mast. It would be a very good substitute for a mizen mast to cruizers; because, when struck, they would appear at a distance like brigs, and deceive an enemy. Lash two London wherries together, and give this double vessel the tripod mast and lyre tanjong, it will beat the fast sailing boats, at least three to two.

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this means, the sail may be entirely rolled up until the boom touches the yard ; the sail being always in this compact manner, as seamen call it, *taken in*. In the same manner, it may be set again instantly, or let out, by turning the winch back the other way ; or half set, according to the weather. The galley steered with two commoodies (rudders), a sort of broad paddle ; but one generally served.

She was covered almost entirely with the leaves of a certain Palm tree, called Nipa, such as the natives cover houses with on the south-west coast of Sumatra, and in almost all Malay countries ; it being a light kind of thatch, which keeps off sunshine and rain. One small part abaft was covered with boards ; and this made a little apartment, called, by the Malays, Koran. \*

At Tomoguy, one of the Molucca islands, I hauled her ashore to clean her bottom ; and there I raised her one streak or plank, about fifteen inches high, as I found her rather too low to proceed down the coast of New Guinea, she being apt to ship water in bad weather. I also new roofed or thatched her there.—At Magindano, (as I had leisure) I decked her, and turned her into a schooner.

\* The reason why the Malays, who are Mahometans, call it the Koran, is, that they seldom travel by sea without the Alcoran ; which they always deposit in the best and safest place, from that custom terming the cabin, Koran.

*List of the Crew of the Tartar Galley.*

Captain THOMAS FORREST,	Commander.
David Baxter,	Mate.
Laurence Lound,	Gunner.
William Hunt,	Passenger to Sooloo. Left at Sooloo.
5 Ishmael Tuan Hadjee,	Pilot.
Tuan Imum,	} Helmsmen.
Ishmael Jerrybatoo,	
Matthew,	Steward.
Jaffier,	Serang.
10 Saban,	} Seamen.
Marudo,	
Abdaraman,	
Dya,	
Andrew,	
15 George,	
Mungary,	
Diego,	
Jacob,	
Rum Johny,	
20 Gibalu,	} Cook. *
Panjang,	
Strap,	Boy.

\* He died at Magindano—being the only person I lost during the voyage.

