

# Travelogue and Autobiography 1647–1656

*Coastal Africa, the Red Sea,  
Persia, Mesopotamia, Coastal India,  
Sri Lanka, South-East Asia*

**Nils Mattsson Kiöping**

Translated and annotated by Martin Rundkvist



KVHAA Handlingar *Historiska serien* 39



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With an afterword by Carina Lidström



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KUNGL. VITTERHETS HISTORIE OCH ANTIKVITETS AKADEMIEN  
HANDLINGAR HISTORISKA SERIEN 39

*Travelogue and Autobiography 1647–1656. Coastal Africa, the Red Sea, Persia, Mesopotamia, Coastal India, Sri Lanka, South-East Asia.* By Nils Mattsson Kiöping. Translated and annotated by Martin Rundkvist. Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien (KVHAA), *Handlingar, Historiska serien* 39. Stockholm 2021. 192 pp.

#### *Abstract*

The Swede Nils Mattsson Kiöping (1621–1680) was a priest's son and a bastard grandson of the Queen's brother. From 1648 to 1656 he travelled around the coasts of Africa, Arabia and southern Asia before returning home and becoming a naval officer. He left two longer pieces of writing: the first book in Swedish about the area he sailed in, published in 1667, and an autobiographical essay published posthumously in 1773. This extensively annotated volume contains the first translation into another language of both.

The reader is invited to join the curious and perceptive Swede as he wonders at the inhabitants of coastal Africa, visits St. Catherine's monastery in Sinai, serves in the army of the Persian Shah, studies the ruins of Persepolis, searches for Old Testament sites in Mesopotamia, visits India's Malabar coast, attends the cremation of a provincial governor under the Sultan of Golconda, catches wild elephants in Sri Lanka, visits Java and is shipwrecked off Taiwan.

#### *Keywords*

travel, autobiography, 17th century, Early Modern, Sinai, Persia, Mesopotamia, India, Sri Lanka, Sweden, VOC

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ISBN 978-91-88763-26-6

ISBN 978-91-88763-32-7 (pdf)

ISSN 0083-6788

Publisher: Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien  
(KVHAA, The Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities)  
Box 5622, SE-114 86 Stockholm, [www.vitterhetsakademien.se](http://www.vitterhetsakademien.se)

Distribution: eddy.se ab, Box 1310, SE-621 24 Visby, Sweden  
<http://vitterhetsakademien.bokorder.se>

Graphic design: Niklas Lindblad/Mystical Garden Design  
Printed by Italgraf Media, 2021



# PREFACE

I came upon Nils Mattsson Kiöping in the Swedish National Encyclopedia's article about travel writing. Reading up on him, I found that the most recent complete edition of his travelogue was from 1790 and thus over two hundred years old. In September 2004 I read the 1961 edition of excerpts from the travelogue and realised that this is a magical book.

I immediately ordered a CD from the National Library containing a complete scan of the 1667 first edition. I then transcribed it onto my computer, a few pages every night. In February 2005 I put the full transcription plus the autobiography online at [Runeberg.org](http://Runeberg.org) and on my own website. In October 2016 the Ruin Publishing Company of Stockholm issued these transcriptions in the first complete printed edition of the travelogue in 226 years. Stockholm was Nils Mattsson Kiöping's home city after his travels ended, and it is mine, too. The commuter train that I ride into the city passes Danvikstull where Nils and Margareta lived with their children in the 1670s.

This is to my knowledge the first translation into another language of Nils Mattsson Kiöping's travelogue. It is certainly the first fully annotated edition in any language. The work has been enormously enjoyable and instructive to me, with every discovery, every little riddle solved giving rise to a deep sense of satisfaction.

Warm thanks to Andreas Andersson, Mia Bohlin, Ashk Dahlén, Bo Ekero Eriksson, Mariam V. Gabazian, Stina Hansson, Birgitta Hoffmann, Menno Leenstra, Valborg Lindgärde, Lars Lönnroth, Jonas Nordin, Helen Simonsson, all Wikipedians and the Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators in Visby.

Fisksätra, 23 December 2019

*Martin Rundkvist*

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# INTRODUCTION

Nils Mattsson Kiöping (1621–1680) wrote the first book-length travelogue in Swedish. The present volume contains annotated translations into contemporary English of both of his surviving works, the 1667 travelogue and an autobiographical essay published posthumously in 1773.

## The author

### IN SWEDEN 1621–1647

Nils Mattsson Kiöping (hereinafter NMK) was born on 23 June 1621 into an educated family as the first of six children.<sup>1</sup> Their father, Matthias Nicolai Thunaemontanus, was a sexton's son from Dalarna who had studied in Frankfurt an der Oder, Greifswald, and Helmstedt, all in the northeastern part of modern Germany. He took holy orders in Sweden in 1615, graduated with a master's degree from Helmstedt in 1618 and then returned to Sweden. There he served briefly as vicar of rural Munktorp in 1619 after the Reverend Latovius died unexpectedly. In 1620 Matthias became a teacher at Västerås cathedral school, and he married Latovius's young widow Magdalena Carlsdotter that same year. She gave birth to their son Nils (named after Matthias's father) only seven months after the wedding.

This caused the young father to have a major career setback. He was suspended from teaching for a year, sentenced to do public penance and ordered to pay a fine. In that same year, 1621, Matthias became headmaster of the town school in Arboga, and served there until he

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<sup>1</sup> Unless stated otherwise, the biographical information here is from Muncktell 1843, Forsell 1948, Almqvist 1965, and Almqvist 1975–1977. The household may have included a son from Magdalena's first marriage, Johannes Latovius (Muncktell 1843, p. 221).

became vicar of rural Romfartuna in 1624. In 1630 he became provost of the town of Köping, a position he kept until his death in 1646. Though born in Arboga, his eldest son considered Köping his town of origin and thus styled himself Nils Mattsson Kiöping. Because of its role as a transshipment point for bar iron from the mines and blast furnaces of Bergslagen, Köping grew dramatically over NMK's lifetime, from 672 inhabitants in 1610 to 1,270 in 1690.<sup>2</sup>

Magdalena (or Malin) may have been an illegitimate daughter of Baron Karl Gustavsson Stenbock, a brother of the third queen of King Gustav I, Catherine Stenbock.<sup>3</sup> Magdalena's first husband N.J. Latovius had been the Queen Dowager's court chaplain, suggesting that Catherine married her illegitimate niece off to one of her favourite employees. If Magdalena had no family ties to the high nobility, then it is difficult to understand why Count Per Brahe the Younger would for so many years take such an interest in her oldest son. Assuming this link, both the count and his first wife were second cousins of NMK, which meant that they counted as close relatives at the time.

NMK and at least three of his five siblings were troubled teens. In November 1637 NMK himself was expelled from school in Västerås, his father's former work place, for stealing. He also underwent public physical punishment, possibly on the same spot where his father had atoned for NMK's semi-legitimate birth sixteen years earlier. The boy was then sent home to Köping where in the following year he was accused of shoplifting.

Magdalena died on 23 February 1641, and eleven days later her sons matriculated at Uppsala University. All four would eventually become soldiers or even officers. Whether NMK stayed at university for a significant amount of time is uncertain. But his writings reveal a fairly

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2 Ortshistoria.se, Stads- och kommunhistoriska institutet, University of Stockholm.

3 Loenbom 1773; Munktell 1843, pp. 221, 330; Almqvist 1966.

good grasp of Latin (Chapter 36) and relatively wide reading, and he refers twice in the travelogue to academic matters at Uppsala (Chapters 13–14). He had a facility for languages, and seems to have learned Dutch, Persian, and Portuguese (Chapter 77) during his travels.<sup>4</sup> His brother Carl, who was named after his maternal grandfather and proved to be one of the family's two white sheep, studied at Uppsala for four years. His brother Johan did not stay there for long: he ran away from home in 1644, went into hiding, and committed unspecified 'mischief'. Jöran/Georg, another brother, moved to Finland and became a military officer. Apparently all three of NMK's brothers eventually died while on military campaigns.

Matthias seems to have tried to arrange marriages for his daughters, but he failed spectacularly. Brita eloped at the last minute from her engagement to a teacher and married another man in a ceremony officiated by a 'drunk foreign priest'. She was possibly disinherited for this by her father, but the couple settled respectably in Arboga where the husband served as a municipal administrator. Kerstin's similar troubles ended badly, though. While still a minor she received money from a suitor but in the end she refused to marry him. She was eventually committed to Västerås hospital where she became known as 'Mad Kerstin'.

The year after Magdalena's death Matthias married Sara Andersdotter Dalekarla, another widow. She was a daughter of the provost of Rättvik and previously married to the mayor of Köping, Michael Hising. The marriage ended after only four years with Matthias's death on 3 May 1646. He was at that time 'depressed by worries and chagrin due to a dissolute daughter'.<sup>5</sup>

For six years after his matriculation at Uppsala, NMK disappears from the Swedish sources. Sven Almqvist<sup>6</sup> suggests that he may have

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4 Though not very good Portuguese: Chapter 17.

5 Muncktell 1843, p. 330.

6 Almqvist 1966, p. 339.

studied abroad somewhere. It might be possible to find him, like his father, in East German university registers. In the autobiography NMK lists Germany as one of the European countries he has visited, even though this would have been unnecessary when sailing between Stockholm and Amsterdam.

He reappears aged twenty-six in 1647, one year after his father's death, as the recipient of a royal recommendation. This son of small towns around Lake Mälaren's placid bays and inlets had somehow become 'completely directed towards receiving instruction in navigation', as he puts it in his autobiography. And for some reason (his mother's family connections, perhaps?), Queen Christina issued to him a letter of recommendation or passport to 'try his luck at sea'. At first his luck proved quite bad.

#### ABROAD 1647–1656

NMK speaks eloquently of these nine and a half years in the two works translated in the present volume. Here I will only summarise his activities briefly. He first spent over a year as an ill-starred seaman in Dutch waters, including seven idle months as a prisoner of pirates on Lake Grevelingen in the Rhine-Meuse estuary. His far travels began after 22 October 1648, when he signed on as a boatswain with the Dutch East India Company – the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (hereinafter VOC). NMK arrived at the company town of Batavia (Jakarta) on Java on 30 April of the following spring. For the next seven years his career across South Asia and Arabia was motley and mobile: he preferred to work as an interpreter and secretary for wealthy European travellers, but, failing that, supported himself as a seaman, a soldier, or even an elephant catcher. He names four employers:

- ✦ Shah Abbas II of Persia. This service began in 1650 or 1651 and lasted for either ‘some months’ (autobiography) or eighteen months (less likely in view of the editor’s known interventions; Chapter 32).<sup>7</sup>
- ✦ The Dutch merchant, painter, and author Philips Angel van Leiden<sup>8</sup> in Persia and Mesopotamia in 1651–1652.
- ✦ The Dutch diplomat Hendrik Pellicorne in South Arabia, Sinai, and south-east India in 1653–1654.
- ✦ The Swedish nobleman and later Dutch Governor of Taiwan Fredrik Coyet along the coasts of modern Vietnam and south China in 1654–1655.

At this point NMK grew homesick and boarded a ship from Batavia on 3 February 1656. The travelogue’s opening chapters about the coasts and islands of Africa contain material from this voyage home, which was thus freshest in NMK’s memory when he wrote his book. On 22 October he disembarked in Stockholm.

#### BACK IN SWEDEN AND IN THE NAVY 1656–1680

One of the first things NMK did upon his return to Sweden was apparently to wait upon a number of noblemen. He states in Chapter 89 that he presented two of them with birds of paradise that he had brought from the Maluku Islands. (This was almost certainly only the birds’ skins and plumage, since NMK says that they are never seen alive, and they would in any case probably not have survived the many months on the ship.) One of these lords was Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie.<sup>9</sup> It seems a

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7 The travelogue’s statement (Chapter 28) that NMK served the Shah in 1652 seems erroneous.

8 *Nieuw Nederlandsch biografisch woordenboek* 1, p. 147. Identified by Bjerke Jægersborg 2018, p. 8.

9 De la Gardie’s bird skin was passed on to the naturalist Olof Bromelius, whose son Magnus von Bromell donated it to Uppsala University in 1707 (Bernström 1951, p. 617; Löwegren 1952, p. 59).

safe guess that the other would have been Per Brahe the Younger. Less than five months after NMK's return he was appointed sub-lieutenant in the Swedish navy. His naval career proved brief, but he did advance to full lieutenant.

Half a year into his service, on 12–13 September 1657, he took part in the Battle of Møn off the southern coast of Scania against the Danes. A year later, on 29 October 1658, he fought on the ship *Fides* in the Battle of the Sound against the Dutch. The same year NMK married Margareta Mattsdotter, a chaplain's daughter from Häverö near Norrtälje: they would eventually have three children. NMK spent 1659 on land, working, among other tasks, as a naval tax collector in Scania. He managed to commit some kind of outrage at the vicarage of Torrlösa that earned him an official censure from *riksamiral* (Lord High Admiral) Carl Gustaf Wrangel. On 27 May 1660 Sweden and Denmark entered into the Treaty of Copenhagen that ended the Second Northern War. And on 29 October NMK was discharged from the navy, like many others against his own wishes, aged thirty-nine.

Both the travelogue and the manuscript copy of NMK's autobiographical essay that Loenbom printed were completed after the death of Charles X Gustav in February of 1660. Neither source mentions NMK's discharge from the navy or any plans for future travel. He probably wrote both texts at a point when his future with the navy did not look good, but before he was discharged in October. As Loenbom notes, the main aim of the essay seems to be to solicit patronage for the travelogue: 'I will communicate to anyone about the aforementioned countries [...] not just orally but also in writing when called upon to do so'. Loenbom found the autobiographical manuscript among the papers of Nils Gyldenstolpe, who had been Count Per's secretary in his youth during the early to mid-1660s.

It is uncertain how far NMK had come with the writing of the travelogue in its submitted form when he began to advertise the work to patrons. He must have had voluminous notes – many of them probably penned on the long voyage home from Batavia. NMK mentions a *diarium*



*The Tjörboden quarter in Södermalm, Stockholm, where Nils and Margareta lived with their children in 1676 still looks much like it probably did in their day.*

in the autobiographical essay, and the travelogue contains many dates in August and September of 1653 that indicate that he was working from a diary when describing his time on the Red Sea. The autobiography also advertises a separate manuscript about the Sinai Monastery, the contents of which have apparently been integrated into the travelogue as Chapters 23–24.

NMK's fortunes waned after 1660, though he lived to see two editions of his travelogue appear. He wanted to travel more and learn about Mediterranean shipping, particularly to Smyrna/Izmir, and he applied for funds to support his family while he was away. Whether he ever made this trip is unknown. Count Per continuously supported NMK with money, foodstuffs, and clothing, at least from 1666 to 1672. One of NMK's children died in 1670. In 1676 the family lived in rooms rented from a tavern keeper near Stockholm's south-east toll gate at

Danvikstull,<sup>10</sup> close to the modern bridge of the same name. This was a poor suburb that had only recently become part of the city proper when the toll gate was moved there in the 1660s. The family then moved to St. Clare's parish in what is now downtown Stockholm. While living there NMK, who had survived endless hardship on the high seas, drowned in November 1680, aged fifty-nine.

## The book

The travelogue fills the first 136 of the first edition's 260 pages, in quarto format. The rest of the volume consists of three travelogues by other writers, all likewise in Swedish: first one from Japan by sea captain Olof Erickson Willman,<sup>11</sup> then a summary of François Caron's Japanese travelogue from 1636, and finally a short description by a Russian diplomat of a voyage through Siberia and China. The first edition was printed in five hundred copies.

### NMK'S SOURCE LITERATURE

Several passages in the travelogue are based on earlier works. Of the books of the Bible NMK refers explicitly to Genesis (Chapter 50) and implicitly to a few others. He mentions only two authors by name: Ovid (Chapter 1) and Adam Olearius (Chapter 33). NMK also references the 'diary' of some recent Spanish shipwreck survivors on St. Helena (Chapter 4) but omits the authors' names. In addition, he borrows repeatedly

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10 Södermalm, east part, fifth quarter, at the toll gate, on the property of Johan Lind Hökare: currently the Tjårboden plot, Kvastmakartrappan 2–10 (Forssell 1948, p. 52; cf. Carl Björling's reconstructed map from 1916 based on Johan Olofsson Holm's 1674 plot book).

11 Willman is likely to have known NMK well from their youth onward. In 1658, incidentally, Willman was briefly the captain of the royal warship *Kronan*, of maritime archaeological fame.

and silently from Pliny the Elder (Chapter 6, 53, 80, 90) and at least once from Herodotus (Chapter 87), which is probably also what lies behind his repeated references to unspecified 'nature writers' (*naturskribenter*) (Chapters 34, 71, 89). NMK's attitude to these authors is however quite sceptical and at times even empirical (e.g. Chapters 89, 90).

To begin and close his work NMK or his editor quotes several pieces of poetry and mottos in Latin. Of the books in question only the Psalms and a work by Marcello Palingenio Stellato that turns out to be the *Zodiac of Life* (1536?) are explicitly identified. Other quotations are taken without attribution from Virgil's *Aeneid*, Alexandro Luzon de Millares's *Idea Politica Vera Christiani* from 1664 (either inserted late by NMK's editor or a quotation from that author's own sources), and Plautus's *Poenulus* or a later work that quoted it.

The printer's introduction explicitly positions NMK's book as a Swedish response to foreign travel writing: 'such books that describe others' travels have [...] become greatly appreciated. [...] One has recently seen published several accounts'. Olearius takes pride of place here. The editor modelled the travelogue's description on the title page of the 1656 second edition of Olearius's book, *Vermehrte Neue Beschreibung*.

Olearius: Worinnen die gelegenheit derer Orte und Länder / durch welche die Reyse gangen / als Liffland / Rußland / Tartarien / Meden und Persien / sampt dero Einwohner Natur / Leben / Sitten / Hauß =Welt= und Geistlichen Stand mit fleiß auffgezeichnet ...

NMK: I. Beskrifwes een Reesa som genom Asia, Africa och många andra Hedniska Konungarijken, sampt öjjar, Med Flijt är förrättat ...

This explains the odd choice of words where NMK's voyage is described as 'assiduously made': Olearius's title page describes his *writing* about his voyage as assiduous. To the target audience at the time this allusion signalled that the new anthology was comparable to a specific well-known foreign book that had appeared only eleven years previously.

#### THE EDITOR AND HIS AGENDA

There is a dramatic difference in style between NMK's travelogue and his autobiography. Also, a few small pieces of datable content were added after 1660. All this shows that the manuscript passed on to an editor before being typeset and printed in September 1667.<sup>12</sup> It was the first product of Count Per Brahe the Younger's new press on Visingsö Island. The editor may have been one or both of the Count's successive secretaries, the brothers Nils and Daniel Gyldenstolpe.<sup>13</sup> The printer was Johann Kankel.

The editor's political agenda, and thus by extension Count Per's, was not identical to NMK's own. NMK had no particular hostility to the Dutch: he went straight to the Netherlands when he left Sweden, he quickly accepted a position with the Dutch East India Company, and he later worked abroad for the Dutchmen Angel and Pellicorne. But as Arne Forssell has shown, many virulently anti-Dutch passages have been inserted into the first edition: 'Because the evil manner and habit of the Dutchman is this, that whatsoever benefits others, particularly the Portuguese and English, [...] he seeks to exterminate and destroy, even though he does not profit himself from this' (Chapter 4). Sweden and England had formed a pact in 1665, and England was at war with the Netherlands from 1665 to 1667. But the anti-Dutch material was then removed seven years later in the second edition of the travelogue, when the political situation had changed.

#### CHAPTER DIVISION AND PAGINATION

The first edition is not divided into chapters. The text is only divided by a few headers that indicate when NMK begins writing about a new major part of the world. To make it easier to navigate the text and cite it I have applied the second edition's chapter division to my translation

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12 This section is based on Forssell 1948.

13 Almqvist 1965, p. 103; 1966, p. 342.

of the first edition's text. These chapters vary dramatically in length and there is no Chapter 69. While keeping the chapter numbers, I have written new headings since the ones in the second edition a) are not NMK's, b) often only refer to the first couple of sentences in a chapter no matter what follows, c) do not offer modern place names.

The first edition's pagination is indicated in this manner: [42].

#### DATES

NMK gives dates by the Julian calendar, used in Sweden until 1753. This is, for instance, evidenced in Chapter 28, where he places the Persian New Year (and thus the vernal equinox) on 10 March instead of its current Gregorian date of 21 March.

#### UNITS OF MEASUREMENT

NMK expresses long distances in *mijl*, which I have translated as 'miles'. Just what unit of measurement he means is hard to tell, particularly since he may often be repeating numbers reported to him by other people. There are many kinds of miles to choose from.

The mile that NMK would have grown up with was the old Swedish land mile of 10,688 metres. In Chapter 28 he specifies a day's travel through Armenia with camels and donkeys as a little more than three Swedish miles. In Chapter 38 he reports his caravan travelling up a steep Persian mountainside at a speed of more than three Swedish miles a day. In Chapter 49 he states that generally a caravan can travel three Swedish miles a day.

The old Swedish sea mile on the other hand (a distinction that NMK never makes explicit) was 7,420 metres. Dutch and French geographers of the seventeenth century defined a nautical mile as one-sixtieth of one degree of latitude, or 1,852 metres. Similarly, the English navy defined it as 6,080 feet, i.e. 1,853 metres.

In Chapter 12 NMK gives an island's width in German miles, which is almost entirely unhelpful given the bewildering variety of German

*Meile*. In Chapter 50 NMK suddenly gives the circumference of Babylon's ruins in German miles again.

In Chapters 34–41 NMK gives various measurements in Italian miles. The concentration of this unit's use to a few chapters about Persia may be a product of the source literature NMK relied on, Olearius and possibly Pietro Della Valle. In Chapter 50, however, he explains that nine Italian miles equals three Swedish ones, which would make the Italian unit 3,563 metres. NMK is thus not operating with anything like Agrippa's Roman mile of 1,479 metres.

Most of the measurements in Italian miles seem impossible: the circumferences of a giant tree and two cities, the distance between Persepolis and an apparently fictitious mountain fort, and the dimensions of a fictitious mountain that seems in reality to have been an ancient Persian building platform. In Chapters 46–47 NMK gives the width of an island and the (wildly erroneous) distance between two cities in the same unit.

In Chapter 49 NMK introduces a Persian length unit named the *ross*, of which two are a little less than a Swedish mile. In Chapter 19 he records an estimate of distance given in whatever kind of miles were used by travelling monks from Mount Sinai.

All in all, it seems safest to assume that the length of NMK's mile varies throughout the book, and that he probably does not quite know himself how long it is in each case.

Shorter distances are expressed in *alnar* and *fampnar*, that is, ells and fathoms. These are not as problematic as NMK's miles. A fathom was three ells in seventeenth-century Sweden, that is, the fathom is 178.2 centimetres and the ell 59.4 centimetres. An ell is two feet or four *quarter*. Context suggests that NMK sometimes refers to quarter fathoms rather than quarter ells when he writes *quarter*.

NMK occasionally gives volume measurements in the *kanna* of 2.6 litres.

COINAGE

When speaking of prices and value, NMK usually reckons these in Swedish *riksdaler*. In 1650, a miner had to work for five days to make one riksdaler. This sum would buy about fifty-six litres of rye grain. Or it would buy six military officers a fine meal with drinks in a tavern.<sup>14</sup>

NMK has much to say about India's and Sri Lanka's regional coinage in Chapters 55, 57, 61, 75, and 77. I deal with this matter in one place here rather than inserting scattered notes. Quite how NMK decided that, e.g. 1 *paisa* was worth 1 *öre* *kopparmynt* is hard to say. He would in all likelihood not have been able to exchange one for the other in either Stockholm or Surat.

NMK'S TERM	MODERN TERM	STANDARD WEIGHT	NMK'S DESCRIPTION	VALUE TO NMK IN RIKSDALER
Achab	?	?	Gold. Size and weight of a Portuguese <i>real</i> .	?
Ropia	Rupee	11.5 g	Silver.	1/2
Mamodie	Mahmudi	5.7 g	Silver. Smaller than a ropia.	1/4
?	?	?	Silver.	1/8
Peiss	Paisa	?	Copper.	1/120
Larin	Larin	4.75 g	Silver.	1/6
Pitkess	?	?	Copper. Size of a copper half-öre coin.	?
Pogada	Pagoda	3.4 g	Gold. Size of a bean. Idol on one side, other side blank.	2

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14 Lagerqvist & Nathorst-Böös 1993, p. 70.

#### SPELLING OF NAMES

In line with the editorial conventions of e.g. the Hakluyt Society I have left NMK's spelling of names untouched. Footnotes offer identifications of the places and people involved, with a few exceptions left for future research. The only names I have consistently spelled differently from NMK are those of religious figures, since they have established versions in modern English. I have judged it pointless to write *Moyses* for Moses, *S. Catharina* for St. Catherine and *Watte* for Fatimah. A secondary reason for this decision was that NMK occasionally inflects biblical names by grammatical case, an archaism carried over from his era's Swedish Bible translation.

# AUTOBIOGRAPHY. ABOUT NILS MATTHSON KIÖPING, NAVAL LIEUTENANT IN ROYAL SWEDISH SERVICE

## Samuel Loenbom's 1773 introduction

Nils Matthsson Kiöping was born in the town of Köping in Westmanland in 1630.<sup>15</sup> His father was the provost and vicar there, Magister Matthias Nicolai Thunæmontanus.<sup>16</sup> His mother was Mrs Malin Carlsdotter.<sup>17</sup> Provost Tunæmontanus was born at Stora Tuna in Dalarna

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15 Loenbom's note: The information about Nils Matthsson's year and town of birth were kindly communicated by the vicar of St. Nicholas's Church and chair of the Cathedral Chapter in Stockholm, Dr. D. Herweghr, who has the most exact knowledge about everyone born within the borders of Västmanland who has distinguished themselves in any way. [Daniel Herweghr (1720–1787) ended his career as bishop of Karlstad. NMK was actually born in 1621, on 23 June (SBL).]

16 Or in Swedish, Mats Nilsson Tunaberg.

17 Loenbom's note: Certain people insist that she was a daughter of Lord Carl Stenbock, the brother of Queen Catharina, who at that time lived at Strömsholm, but her name is neither in the *Theatrum Nobilitatis Svecanae* of Messenius nor in Peringschöld's manuscript genealogy of this lineage [the House of Nobility Archives, Stockholm]. Whether she was his natural daughter, which was at the time not unusual to find in the old noble families, is something about which I have no knowledge. Otherwise regarding this Carl Gustafsson Stenbock, Baron of Tofftaholm and Kongslena, he was for a time commander of Kexholm, then governor of Calmare, colonel, and royal councillor, but, as he was dedicated to King Sigismund, he was long kept

where his father was a sexton. He took his surname, according to the custom of the time, from the name of this parish,<sup>18</sup> as it was a mining district. Similarly, he had a bell carved on his gravestone in memory of his father and his profession. He was at first vicar for some time at Romfartuna,<sup>19</sup> but after the death of Magister Peter Johannes Rudbeckius, which occurred on 26 August 1629, he was promoted to provost and vicar in the town of Köping. During the time he led this congregation he had much trouble with a man in the town by the name of Hans Månsson, who believed he was the Messiah of the world and the Son of God, and who caused such an uproar that the authorities eventually had to step in.<sup>20</sup> Magister Mattias expired on 3 May 1646. His wife had died a few years earlier, viz. on 23 February 1641, and it seems that he then married Sara Andersdotter. His grave is in the chancel of the church in Köping, with a memorial inscription in Latin on the gravestone that shows his own and his first wife's death dates and years, and the later wife's name, since she no doubt survived him.<sup>21</sup>

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imprisoned and eventually died at Gripsholm Castle. By his wife, Lady Brita Clasdotter of Wik and Kockis, he had only the sons Baron Clas Stenbock, who died unmarried; Abraham, who drowned in his youth at Toftaholm; Gustaf Stenbock (Messenius's *Theatrum*, p. 53); and Sophia Stenbock, married to Lord Peder Nilsson of Säby, princely councillor to Duke Johan of Östergötland. [Karl Gustavsson Stenbock (c. 1537–1609) was at any rate of a realistic age to be NMK's grandfather.]

18 *Thunæmontanus* means 'man from Tuna's mountain'.

19 Romfartuna is a parish between Västerås and Sala.

20 Loenbom's note: There were quite a lot of absurd fantasies here in the realm during the reign of King Gustavus Adolphus: see the biography of Professor and Vicar Forsius. [This is an advertisement for Loenbom's own 1772 book about the astrologer and diviner Sigfrid Aron Forsius.]

21 Loenbom's note: Hallman's *Beskrifning öfwer Köping*, pp. 77, 78. It says there that he became provost of Köping in 1646, while the same year is nevertheless also said on the gravestone to have been his year of death. But this must be a printer's error, which is completely probable considering his predecessor's year of death.

Young Nils Matthsson, who called himself Kiöping after the town of his birth, was raised by his respectable parents with all due care, and was placed by them first in the school in Köping and then in that of Westerås<sup>22</sup>. But after his father died, as was mentioned above, in 1646, he quit his studies and gave himself over completely to his heartfelt desire and inclination towards life at sea. In 1647 he sought Queen Christina's recommendation for travel to foreign parts, after which he left his homeland in the same year. What happened to him after that time and until he returned to Stockholm on 22 October 1656 can be read in the following notes, which appear to have been written by his own hand, and are taken from the papers of the late royal councillor and chancellery president Lord Count Nils Gyldenstolpe.<sup>23</sup>

Some of what Nils Matthsson has described here he has dealt with more comprehensively in his *Beskrifning på en Resa, som genom Asia, Africa och många andra Hedniska Konunga-Riken samt öjar, med flit är förrättad*, which was first printed at Wisingsborg by Johan Kankel in 1667, 136 pages quarto. The second printing was done at the same location in 1674, quarto,<sup>24</sup> and has been reprinted in octavo in later times. But while in this printed travelogue he has tied himself more to geographical than chronological order, listing the countries as they are located beside each other (though not always noting what time he was in this or that place), this present document, where the order of time is painstakingly observed, seems able to serve as the safest guide when describing the course of his life.

After returning home, he was employed by King Charles X Gustav in the Royal Swedish Navy as a lieutenant and participated, as he men-

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22 Västerås.

23 Nils Gyldenstolpe (1642–1709) was Count Per Brahe the Younger's secretary from no later than 1662, when NMK's autobiography may have come into his hands. His brother Daniel (1645–1691) took over the position in 1667.

24 Loenbom's note: See the *Adelige och Lärde Swenske Sjö-Män* of Bechstadius, p. 62.

tions himself, in two hard sea battles. I have not found noted anywhere on what date he died, but it seems to have happened before 1667, which the title of his travelogue allows.<sup>25</sup> Besides having had a good education according to the taste of his time, there is good reason to give him well-deserved praise in that he was very attentive during his travels, to nature as well as to the customs and temper of the peoples.

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<sup>25</sup> NMK died in November 1680.



## Notes on the course of his life by the naval lieutenant in Royal Swedish service, Nils Matthsson Kiöping

The Fates will find a way, and Apollo be present at your call.<sup>26</sup>

Let us travel like bees, not like spiders.<sup>27</sup>

With God as my guide, Virtue at my side.<sup>28</sup>

and so

Neither timidly nor pridefully.<sup>29</sup>

but

Everything in moderation.<sup>30</sup>

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26 *Fata viam invenient, aderitque invocatus Apollo.* Virgil, *Aeneid* III:395. Transl. H.R. Fairclough 1916.

27 *Peregrinemur ut apes, non ut araneæ.* Alexandro Luzon de Millares, *Idea Politica Vera Christiani* (1664), ch. 32, p. 580.

28 *Deo Duce, comite virtute.* Motto of the Collomb d'Arcine family of Upper Savoy (Chassant & Tausin 1878–1895).

29 *Nec timide, nec tumide.* Motto of at least three Dutch families (Chassant & Tausin 1878–1895).

30 *Omnia moderate.* A sentiment voiced by Plautus (*Pænulus* I:2:29) but not in these exact words.

Following an application of mine, in 1647 on 14 April, I received Her Royal Majesty Queen Christina's recommendation to try my luck at sea, as my mind was completely directed towards receiving instruction in navigation. I thus immediately went to Holland and joined the merchant navy as a seaman, where not only the ship, but also myself and several others were seized off Texel<sup>31</sup> and brought as captives to Grevelin.<sup>32</sup> There we sat for seven months before being ransomed by the shipowner.

After being ransomed, I marched to Dynkerken<sup>33</sup> where I signed onto a privateer, which was then seized off the Vlie<sup>34</sup> by a ship from Rotterdam named the *Princesse Marie de la Grande Bretagne*. Here I was wounded in both the right arm and thigh. This ship brought us as captives through the Vlie to Amsterdam, where I, being a foreigner and wounded to boot, was soon released.

On 22 October 1648 I signed on as a boatswain with the East India Company.<sup>35</sup>

On 30 April 1649 I arrived at Greater Java at the town of Batavia in the Kingdom of Jaccatra,<sup>36</sup> where I was forced willy-nilly to come ashore as a soldier and abandon my boatswain position.

In 1650 I sailed from Java to the land of the mightiest Indian ruler, the Grand Mughal, that is on the Costa Malabar. I saw the towns of Negepatan and Keilepatan<sup>37</sup> where the finest pearls are collected. From there to Cochin, Mangalor, Tutti-corre, Barcalor, Wingurla, and Su-

31 One of the West Frisian Islands.

32 Lake Grevelingen in the Rhine-Meuse estuary.

33 Dunkirk in the extreme north of modern France.

34 The passage between two of the West Frisian Islands, Vlieland and Terschelling.

35 Hereinunder the VOC.

36 Batavia was in effect a VOC-controlled city state at the time and belonged to no kingdom.

37 Nagapattinam and Chilaw.

ratte,<sup>38</sup> etc., in addition to all the other towns and trading places that are unnecessary to list.

That same year I sailed to Persia where I first arrived at the town of Gammeron<sup>39</sup> in the Kingdom of Ormus. There I went ashore and then travelled overland through most of Persia, saw (in addition to many relics and notable antiquities of Alexander the Great and Darius) the principal towns such as Lara, Jessed, Commissia, Schiras (which is next to the ruins of Persepolis), Jesicas, Curbazarican, and Corostan,<sup>40</sup> next to which is a prominent ancient stronghold of Darius named Tsielmonar,<sup>41</sup> which was however completely demolished a few years ago by ignorant villains. Then to the king's residence Ispahan, where I found the late Lord Bengt Oxenstierna's name in the Augustinian monastery. Then I supported myself for some months as a soldier in King Shah Abbas personal company, which at the time consisted exclusively of various Christian nations. I marched with this king<sup>42</sup> to the Kingdom of Candahar,<sup>43</sup> and, as it was taken in a short and speedy time, not only I, but also several other Christians who made demands, were discharged when we came back to Ispahan.

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38 Kochi, Mangalore, Thoothukudi-Tuticorin, Basrur (near Kundapur), Vengurla, and Surat.

39 Bandar Abbas at the Strait of Hormuz.

40 Lar, Yazd, Qomsheh-Shahreza, Shiraz, Izadkhast, Gur-i-Bazargan and Kohurestan. The two latter have never been large enough to be called towns, let alone principal ones.

41 Persian *Čebel Menār*, 'Forty Minarets', being the ruins of Persepolis.

42 Loenbom's note: Shah Abbas II, who ascended the throne in 1642 and died in 1667. Lieutenant Kiöping describes him (p. 46) as young and good, but it appears that he was later very given to drinking and committed great tyranny in his madness. [The reign of Abbas II did begin in 1642, but he died in 1666.]

43 Kandahar Province in modern Afghanistan. Abbas II of Persia took it back from the Mughal Empire in 1648. NMK may have served on a peace-keeping mission in 1650 or 1651.

I then travelled at my own initiative farther north into the country, particularly the province of Parthia, now called Arac,<sup>44</sup> to the town Amadan, or Susa,<sup>45</sup> where many antiquities could be seen, particularly the tombs of the prophet Daniel, Esther, and Mordecai, which are highly valued by the Jews, and the school or synagogue of the Three Kings, and much more. The famous River Ulai runs through here.<sup>46</sup>

From there I travelled into Media to the city of Tauris, or Tabris, or Ecbatana<sup>47</sup> where several antiquities were also shown to me. In particular I was shown the magnificent palace of King Ahasverus and the place where Haman is said to have been hanged.

From there I travelled into Lesser Armenia to the city of Erivana<sup>48</sup> that sits at the foot of Mount Ararat. Then to the town of Nachschiouan<sup>49</sup> (that is, the first settlement, because in the Armenian language *nach* is 'first' and *sciouan* is 'settlement'<sup>50</sup>) because the inhabitants of the whole country believe fully and allege that after the Deluge, having stepped off the Ark and onto the earth again, Noah not only made his first sacrifice there, but also made his first hut and home there.

From there I travelled back with a caravan to Ispahan again, arriving there [paragraph breaks off here]

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44 Here and in Chapter 30 of the travelogue NMK places Parthia in the north-west part of modern Iran. Ancient Parthia was in the north-east part of the country.

45 Hamadan, which is not in fact identical to ancient Susa.

46 It does not. NMK is extrapolating from his belief that Hamadan is identical to Susa.

47 Tabriz and ancient Ecbatana are in fact neither identical nor located near each other.

48 Yerevan.

49 Nakhchavan. Spelled *Nachseidwan* in Chapter 28.

50 Armenian *nakh*, 'first', and *ichevan*, 'resting-place' or 'descent'.

In 1651 I travelled back through the country again and eventually came into contact with a gentleman named Philip L'Augel<sup>51</sup> who employed me as his interpreter. I followed him to Arabia. We first arrived in the town of Bassora<sup>52</sup> (a place which is at the mouth of the Euphrates and the Tigris, flowing together there into the Persian Gulf). Then to Bagadet<sup>53</sup> or New Babylon, and so across the Euphrates to Felugo,<sup>54</sup> or the old Babylonian ruins. All you could see there was the lion's den into which Daniel is said to have been thrown, and the oven where the three men were thrown because they would not worship the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar put up. Moreover, a small piece of the wide town wall, but very ruined from the annual earthquakes that happen here. The Bishop of Babylon gave me his certificate of this, that I had seen this, and I still have it. Note that in Bagadet, too, I found the late Lord Bengt Oxenstierna's name.

In 1652 I travelled back again to Bassora, where we took ship and sailed to the island of Ceylon, where all the cinnamon grows, where my Lord left me, dismissing me. I thus had to go ashore and become a soldier. Eventually I and several other Christians were ordered to go elephant catching, and I lost my health to the country's unhealthy and poisonous air, food, and water.

In 1653 I sailed from Ceylon with a prominent Dutch ambassador named Henric Pelliconie<sup>55</sup> to the Red Sea. He hired me not just to be his interpreter, but also his steward. With this gentleman I saw most of Rich Arabia, in particular the principal cities Aden, Mascalet, Mocha on

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51 Philips Angel van Leiden (1616–1683), Dutch merchant, painter, and author. *Nieuw Nederlandsch biografisch woordenboek* 1, p. 147. Identified by Bjerke Jægersborg 2018, p. 8.

52 Basra.

53 Baghdad.

54 Fallujah.

55 Probably a member of the Pellicorne family from the southern Netherlands.

the Streto Babel Mandel, Ziden, Zibit, Zarhan, Jambut, Jamsus,<sup>56</sup> etc. with great wonderment. Particularly when visiting the Arabian Muslim pashas and sultans who accommodated my lord and all his Christian entourage well and magnificently and let us travel freely through the country (where I learned much of note) as my diary will painstakingly demonstrate. Except for Mecca and Medina, where no Christian is permitted to go on pain of death or apostasy, where according to many reports Muhammad hangs in the air from a magnet, in which there is not, however, supposed to be any truth, according to the testimony of several converts.

Then we were accompanied by a fine party of Arabs to Stony Arabia where we saw Mount Sinai and Mount Horeb, of which I have a special description for those who demand one of me.

Once we had viewed this we returned the same way through several towns and open spaces (that seem too long to write about) to Mocha, located on the Streto Babel Mandel, where my lord boarded the ship that had long waited for us there and sailed straight across the Red Sea to the town of Suaquem,<sup>57</sup> located right on the coast in Egypt, where the ship was loaded with mummies.

Having conducted all our business, we sailed from Suaquem right through the Streto Babel Mandel to the land of the Gentiles,<sup>58</sup> Costa Coromandel in common speech, saw the towns of Tegnepatan, Tranquebar, Negropatan, Paliecutta, and Masulipatan,<sup>59</sup> etc. in which I saw and heard described many things of note among the inveterate pagan inhabitants, not just their divine services, but also other repulsive ceremonies.

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56 Aden, Muscat, Mocha on the Bab-el-Mandeb strait, Jeddah, Zabid, *Zarhan* unidentified, Yanbu' al Bahr, *Jamsus* unidentified.

57 Suakin.

58 *Terra Gentivorum*. This is analogous to how NMK labels the polytheist inhabitants of the Coromandel Coast *gentiwer* in Chapter 75.

59 Cuddalore, Tharangambadi, Nagapattinam, Pulicat, and Machilipatnam.

After my lord had completed all the tasks there that he had been entrusted with, we set sail to Malacca (or the Golden Chersonese),<sup>60</sup> then to Sumatra or Lesser Java, and then to the city of Batavia<sup>61</sup> on Greater Java where my lord gave me honourable discharge, as his own handwriting will demonstrate in detail.

1654. I was asking to see China, and so my lord recommended me to his good friends of fine repute, particularly one of his best friends named Friederich Coyet,<sup>62</sup> born in Sweden, who was the Governor of Ilia Formosa or Tajovan.<sup>63</sup> With this Lord Coyet I saw some fine towns of greatest interest on the Chinese coast, in particular Joer, Tunquin,

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60 Modern Malacca City or, more generally, the Malay Peninsula. According to Menno Leenstra (e-mail 13 December 2019), a letter in the VOC archive was sent on 28 February 1654 from Malacca to Batavia. It probably travelled on the ship that transported NMK and Pellicorne, as the next known letter was sent on 10 July.

61 Jakarta.

62 Loenbom's note: Friedrich son of Julius, Coyet, was born in Stockholm and travelled abroad after completing his studies. During his travels he was knighted by Queen Christina on 20 November 1649 along with his older brother Peter Coyet. He then went to India as a merchant, and was sent in 1652 as a Dutch envoy to the emperor of Japan. He then became a councillor for the Dutch in India and governor of the Island of Formosa. He defended the castle Zeeland there for as long as he could when it was attacked in 1659 by the pirate Kockokinga (others write Coxinga). But for lack of ammunition, fresh water, and support he finally had to surrender it under treaty, after which he and his men were taken to Batavia. During his ensuing long and difficult imprisonment he tried to demonstrate his innocence with a submitted document called *Das Verwarlosete Formosa*, but was not released until King Charles XI interceded for him with a letter dated 30 July 1670. He died in Holland in 1689. See NMK's travelogue pp. 120–121, Olof Willman's voyage pp. 235–236, von Stiernman's corrections to *Matrikel öfwer Swea rikes ridderskap* p. L, and the two Lords Coyet's genealogy, Table I. [Koxinga, Zheng Chenggong (1624–1662), was a Ming loyalist naval commander along the south-east shores of China who was powerful from 1650–1662. Fredrik Coyet's four hundred-page book about Taiwan was printed in 1677 at Nuremberg. Its title translates as 'Neglected Formosa'.]

63 Taiwan.

Siam, Tsiompa, and Coinam,<sup>64</sup> along with several other places. And as the Tartar<sup>65</sup> had at the time conquered all of China with weapons, we did not dare attempt any travel farther into the country, but, having obtained refreshments and fresh water, we directed our course from Coinam to Ilia Formosa with several Chinese vessels that they call *junks*. These are held together entirely with rattan or Spanish reeds, and their sails are also made and braided together from the same rattan, the anchors are made from wood, and the ropes are made from the aforementioned rattan.

We were, however, scattered by a powerful hurricane, but the vessel that I served on was broken apart completely near Ilia Formosa. Some were saved from the shipwreck, but I for my part came onto a board that broke my chest completely into pieces in the surf. And though my intention was to make a voyage to Japan, I had to give it up because of my poor health.

In 1655, in the care and to the credit of Lord Frideric Coyet, after I had regained some semblance of health, I boarded a ship and followed it to Greater Java, where I arrived on 24 December of the same year.

In 1656 I determined once, after long and arduous travels, to visit my dear homeland. I thus boarded a ship from Jawa on 3 February and arrived in Holland on 9 September. In the meantime I have also seen parts of Africa: Madagascar, Cumba de Tristan,<sup>66</sup> the Cape of Good Hope, St. Helena, Ascension, Cap Verde, and the Canary Islands. Not to mention Europe: some places in Spain, Portugal, France, England, Holland, and Germany, etc.

That same year on 22 October, I came back to the capital of the Swedish realm, Stockholm, thanking God who had showed me the

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64 Johor, Tonkin, the Ayutthaya Kingdom in modern Thailand, the Champa kingdoms in modern south-eastern coastal Vietnam, Cochinchina in southern Vietnam. None of these are in fact 'fine towns on the Chinese coast'.

65 The nascent Qing Dynasty.

66 Tristan da Cunha.

grace to be worthy to hear God's Holy and Only Beatific Word and use His Holy Sacrament unadulterated, which I had not enjoyed for eight years and seven months.

During these eight years and some months I have passed the even day and night line six times, not to mention the Tropic of Cancer.

I will communicate to anyone about the aforementioned countries, with their inhabitants' religions and societal organisation, which I have been curious to observe and acquaint myself with, not just in conversation but also in writing when called upon to do so.<sup>67</sup>

I ask every right-minded Christian to consider what adversity I suffered over this period: I have often been infested with rare poisonous illnesses, dealt under greatest mortal danger with barbarian peoples, in particular among the aggressive and inveterate pagans, among whom for a long time I never saw nor even less tasted beer, bread, or wine; always had to run around naked like a brute and was tyrannised beyond all measure by the sun's heavy heat; never safe in forests, bushes, and mountains from tigers, leopards, lions, rhinoceroses, elephants, wild buffalos, crocodiles, baboons, salamanders, scorpions, many kinds of venomous snake, mountain cats, jackals, and centipedes, etc.

In addition to various hardships and battles at sea that I have endured in foreign nations, among such as Dutchmen, French, Portuguese, and various barbarian and Indian pirates, I have also fought under the flag of my most gracious King and Lord Charles X Gustav (now blessedly with God and glorious in remembrance) in two battles at sea. One against the king of Denmark in 1657, which involved the Swedish and Danish navies on 12 and 13 September between Ystedh or Cimbrishampn and

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67 Loenbom's note: In this manner the manuscript of his travelogue seems to have come into the hands of some prominent gentleman. It is at least certain that he gave them some of the rare birds he brought home. See p. 128 of the travelogue.

Möön.<sup>68</sup> The other was between the Swedish Crown and the Dutchman in Öresund in 1658 on 29 October.

Only briefly.

\*

... we went through fire and water,  
but you brought us to a place of abundance.

PSALMS 66:12 (NIV)

\*

Who followeth vertue may go see,  
the Arabian desertes fell:  
The Ethiops black the rugged Getes,  
the Indes in health and well.

MARCELLO PALINGENIO STELLATO (A.K.A. PIER ANGELO MANZOLLI)<sup>69</sup>

\*

Nils Mattsson Kiöping  
A Swede

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68 Ystad, Simrishamn, and Møn.

69 *Qui pollet virtute, Arabum deserta, nigrosque / Æthiopas, rigidosque Getas lustrabit, et Indos.* Marcellus Palingenius Stellatus, *Zodiacus vitae*, Book II, lines 358 f. English translation by Barnabas Googe.

# TRAVELOGUE

## The printer Johann Kankel's 1667 introduction

[i] *Here is described a voyage diligently made through Asia, Africa, and many other pagan kingdoms and islands, by Nils Matson Kiöping, His Royal Majesty's erstwhile naval lieutenant.*<sup>70</sup>

[iii] Gracious Reader, it has always been commendable to acquire experience of the nature and characteristics of various peoples and regions through travels on sea and land. Because thereby travellers have not only benefited themselves, but others have also been able to reap good fruit from their collected knowledge, for the discovery and spread of many public advantages. But since not everyone's circumstances allow them to undertake such travels, particularly to distant locations that entail the greatest difficulty and danger, such books that describe others' travels have instead become greatly appreciated. Particularly, one has recently seen published several accounts of regions in Africa, Asia, China, Japan, and the islands around them that have not long ago, through the seafaring of the English, the Dutch, and a few others, begun to be made known by their names and in some closer particulars. But since these have all been written by foreigners in their own languages, and it would also be good and useful to have a description like this in Swedish, it has luckily happened that some of our countrymen have recently had the opportunity to see the aforementioned [iv] countries, and then to write about their travels: of which I have also secured two. And as through

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70 Introduction possibly ghost-written by Count Per's secretary, Daniel Gyldenstolpe (Almqvist 1965, p. 103).

the high-born count's and lord's Lord Peer Brahe's,<sup>71</sup> Count of Wijsingzborgh, Baron of Cajana, Lord of Ridboholm, Lindholm, Brahelinna and Bogesundh, etc.,<sup>72</sup> councillor and Lord High Steward<sup>73</sup> of the Swedish Realm and law-speaker of Weszmannelandh, Bergzlagen, and Dahlarne:<sup>74</sup> my gracious count's and lord's zeal

I have become employed as a printer at his eminent school here on Wijsingzöö,<sup>75</sup> I have now with his high-comital grace's permission and consent, and as a sample of my printing, wanted to print and publish it, trusting that anyone who reads this book will interpret my well-meaning intent in the best way and allow themselves to be pleased, until I may, God willing, serve them with some better piece of work in the future. In this hope I faithfully commend the gracious reader to God's providential protection.

Wijsingzborg, in the year 1667.

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71 Count Per Brahe the Younger (1602–1680), at this time the largely autocratic ruler of Visingsborg county, a large area on both sides of Lake Vättern, and commander of a small private army.

72 Visingsborg on Visingsö in Lake Vättern, Sweden. Kajaani, central Finland. Rydboholm near Stockholm, Sweden. Lindholm near Eskilstuna, Sweden. Brahelinna in Mikkeli, south Finland. Bogesund near Stockholm, Sweden.

73 Sw. *riksdrots*.

74 Västmanland and Dalarna are adjacent Swedish provinces and Bergslagen is a mining district occupying parts of both.

75 Visingsö: an island in Lake Vättern and Count Per's comital seat.

# [I] Brief description of Nils Mattsson's voyage

## Around Africa

### CHAPTER I. HOLLAND TO CAPE VERDE

In 1647 I sailed from Holland through the straits between France, England and Holland, and the Spanish Sea,<sup>76</sup> passing by the Canary Islands. Which belong to the king of Spain, and are located in Africa, right below the even day and night line,<sup>77</sup> and are well known to everyone. When we entered the great West Sea<sup>78</sup> we were chased off course by some pirates, and had to go in on the Guinea side: thus arrived at Kapo de wärde,<sup>79</sup> in earlier times called the Hesperides,<sup>80</sup> about which Ovid writes.

### CHAPTER 2. CAPE VERDE

The inhabitants are called *Kaffers*,<sup>81</sup> a very large people, with ugly looks. They came to us where we fetched a large quantity of water. All had arrows and bows with them and brought us great numbers of cattle and lemons, asking for iron in trade, particularly knives. They also went about completely naked, hiding not one body part, and although they were black all over they nevertheless had blue and red stripes around the body, which they had cut with knives, and then rubbed in [2] these dyes and let it heal over. Their women were very shameless, indeed, one gave birth before our eyes, and no one helped her. Nor could you see

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76 The Bay of Biscay.

77 The Equator.

78 The Atlantic.

79 Cape Verde.

80 In Classical mythology the Hesperides are in fact the Nymphs of Evening, not the country they inhabit.

81 Arabic, *kāfir*, 'non-believer'.

that she would wail at all for the pain, but it was done in the blink of an eye. Soon she stood up as able as before, took the baby on her arm, carried it to the sea and washed it, and then came back with her baby tied to her back, carrying along a large quantity of lemons in a basket woven from green leaves.

Among others who came to us, a large, tall young man visited us. He had his arrows and bow in his hand, wrapped in a strap on which he had six large knives hanging in a sheath.<sup>82</sup> He spoke Dutch ably and said that he had been to Holland, specifically Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Delft, Hagh,<sup>83</sup> etc. He spoke harshly to us and ordered us to leave immediately, because they did not want to suffer us on their land. Here I could not observe any beasts of prey, nor what might be gained in the country, because I did not find anyone I could talk to. But you could see that there were dangerous beasts from the fact that they had suspended their children wrapped in leaf baskets high up in the trees.

### CHAPTER 3. OPEN EYES REEF AND ASCENSION

Some cliffs known as the Open Eyes are a group of underwater reefs between Kapo de Wårde and Kapo de bon Esperanse<sup>84</sup> (which is a promontory of good hope for a completed journey). They extend about sixty miles in the sea and all seamen fear them greatly, and must take great care not to [3] be driven onto them by the current. Because if they happen to fall onto them, then there is no way off them, and everyone has to stay there. Once you have passed these you then do not have to fear any underwater cliffs in the Ethiopian or Oriental Seas. Ascension Island<sup>85</sup> is an island about four miles in circumference without any inhabitants. There is nothing so see here among the stones and sand

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82 The wording does not make it clear whether it is the bow and arrows, the man's hand, or (perhaps more likely) the man himself that is girdled with the strap.

83 The Hague.

84 The Cape of Good Hope, in Portuguese, *Cabo da Boa Esperança*.

85 NMK has *Upfarelsens-Holmen eller Assenszöön*.

except a multitude of turtles and large seagulls, which allow themselves to be caught by hand, and were not shy at all. The turtles are quite large, indeed, five of us stood on one and she still went with us wherever she wanted. We collected a great mass of their eggs, which they had buried in the sand, and the sun then hatches out the young. Their eggs are completely round, with a thin film on them, like wind eggs. They are also very dry inside, so that when they have been boiled, you must fry them in oil. It<sup>86</sup> has two hearts inside, and their meat tastes delicious. They can also live for six or seven weeks without food, if only given water, which we tried on the ship, and this was for a long time our daily refreshment. When lying on their backs they cannot turn themselves over, but have to lie there and starve to death.

#### CHAPTER 4. ST. HELENA

St. Helena is also an island, eight or nine miles in circumference, a rocky place that is visible for thirty miles across the sea in clear weather. But it is [4] now, and has been for four or five years, occupied by Englishmen,<sup>87</sup> who have built three forts there. The soil is by nature so good that, with little tilling, it bears fruit in great abundance, such as cabbage, salad, parsley, carrots, pumpkins, melons, etc. Everything you plant there grows right away, but you have to enclose it well against feral pigs and goats that are abundant there. On the hills the Spaniards,<sup>88</sup> who have lain there to refresh themselves, have planted bitter orange, lemon, and lime trees that bear fruit continuously. And in the past no one who came there took anything to eat from the land without planting something else in the same place, for the benefit of later ships, particularly the

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86 The turtle.

87 The English East India Company fortified St. Helena in 1658, which would date the writing of this passage to 1662–1663.

88 NMK writes about Spaniards and Portuguese interchangeably and almost always means the Portuguese.

Portuguese and the English. But the Dutchman<sup>89</sup> did not simply take what he needed, but would also tear down the fence around anything that had been planted, and so whatever was left was eaten by the pigs after they sailed away. There used to be a great abundance of pigs and goats, so tame that they allowed themselves to be caught by hand, but in 1656, at the time when I was there, they were quite shy of people, such that those who had been there before were greatly astonished. But when eventually we went among the hills into the lovely valleys and woods, we found many feral dogs running there, which have caused great injury to the aforementioned beasts. These dogs came to the land in such manner that a Dutch [5] captain returning from Jawa by ship stopped at this St. Helena for refreshment, but when he was to leave, and had taken as much as he needed, he intentionally let loose a large bitch that was full of puppies onto the island, and this dog then gave birth on the island, through which the aforementioned beasts did not only become shy, but the dogs have also made them their sustenance. Because the evil manner and habit of the Dutchman is this, that whatsoever benefits others, particularly the Portuguese and English, who have themselves discovered this place, and there planted the land with their own hands, introduced pigs and goats for them to multiply, not only for their own sake, but for that of all distressed seafarers, this he seeks to exterminate and destroy, even though he does not profit himself from this. This is also a very healthy land, indeed, so that many who lay on their deathbeds on the ships, when they came ashore and had lain on the grass, they recovered and became healthy. Some years ago a Spanish ship foundered off the aforementioned St. Helena, and the people saved themselves ashore, and were there for one year before being collected.

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89 Chapter 4 consists largely of one of the anti-Dutch passages that seem to have been inserted into the text after NMK submitted it. He was himself quite friendly towards the Dutch, worked for them for years, and praises their envoy Hendrik Pellicorne in Chapter 21.

They have made known, as their diary recounts,<sup>90</sup> that none of their number (eight hundred strong) would as long as they were there have the least headache, nor less any other ailments, nor did anyone die. They have also built a little chapel there, but the Dutchman [6] tore it down. There are no dangerous or venomous animals on this island, indeed, not even a mosquito or fly. During the night you are always tested by ghosts which show themselves quite plainly by the fire, but which do no harm. From the high mountains flows the most excellent water a person can ever get in this world. All sorts of fish are found here and can easily be caught in great quantities, so much so that it is quite beyond description, both large and small, of many kinds, indeed, you can catch them with a bent nail using no bait or fishhook. We caught so much that we could not salt it all. In particular there is a kind of mackerel, which when someone eats it, then that person is shortly stricken with a shaking fever, and becomes red as blood all over the body, but it soon gets better.

#### CHAPTER 5. CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

The outermost point into the sea of Africa, which is otherwise called Kapo de bon Eszperanso, is a headland or isthmus thirty-five degrees south<sup>91</sup> of the even day and night line in the Kingdom of Monomotapa,<sup>92</sup> and is part of the mainland. Its inhabitants<sup>93</sup> are people of average size, and so barbaric that it cannot be described. They run around completely naked, wearing no more on their loins than a fox tail in front of their shameful parts. But the women wear nothing at all. They are

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90 Apparently a published account that I have not been able to identify. NMK's information about St. Helena's history shows vague similarities with what better sources say, and may be based on oral tradition among navigators.

91 Actually S 34°21'.

92 The Kingdom of Mutapa's core was the Zambesi valley in modern Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Zambia: it did not in fact extend to anywhere near the Cape.

93 See note 94.

completely black. And although their soil is easily sown and planted, they nevertheless care nothing for it, [7] nor for any creed, authority, ruling estate, trade, craft, or the slightest business. But worse than brutes, seek out carrion and inappropriate food, particularly dead and rotting fish along the seashore, which they eat right away. Nor do they have any houses or burrows, and though they have a lot of beautiful cattle, they shall never slaughter any of them, but when a beast has died by itself they eat every part of it. When a Christian comes there, such as an Englishman or a Dutchman, they have to take great care not to fire any shots with musket or cannon, if they hope to have any benefit of them, or they will flee into the hills with their cattle, where no one can find them. And if you want to buy cattle from them, then they do not ask for money (if you want to give them a piece of gold or silver as big as the cow, you still shall not have it) but only a piece of tobacco or thick brass wire as long as the cow with its tail and whole body, from which they make themselves rings for their arms and feet. They are quick, however, to insist that they must keep the offal, which when they receive it, they drain somewhat of dung, and then immediately eat raw. Whatever they cannot eat, they tie to their arms and legs for when they get hungry again,<sup>94</sup> and when they have nothing to eat they run like hungry dogs along the shore, [8] looking for mussels, oysters, and dead fish. In addition, they come aboard with ostrich eggs and feathers, and little turtles, asking for nothing but tobacco in return.

#### CHAPTER 6. TABLE BAY

In 1656 I lay there for three weeks on a Dutch ship in a bay named Taffwelbayet.<sup>95</sup> Among other things in the sea, we saw a whale and a swordfish fighting, where the swordfish got the upper hand, and had cut

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94 These are stereotypical ideas about people in South Africa, expressed almost verbatim by earlier seventeenth-century European authors; Bjerke Jægersborg 2018, pp. 34–36, quoting sources collected in Raven-Hart 1967.

95 Table Bay.

up the whale's belly,<sup>96</sup> whereupon it came drifting ashore dead. Then a great number of the inhabitants (who are called Hottentots)<sup>97</sup> came and ate the whole whale in a quarter of an hour. This fish<sup>98</sup> was thirty-five fathoms long;<sup>99</sup> the swordfish might be about nine or ten ells, not very thick, perhaps one and a half ells. It is triangular, has four fins more than other fish, on the snout is its sword, about a good ell long and a hand's width wide, set with large sharp spikes on either side,<sup>100</sup> like wolf's teeth, with which it goes below the whale and cuts up its belly. These inhabitants are very fast runners, so that one of them can chase down a deer over a long distance. Furthermore some can throw stones and hit a fly, and they are not afraid of a rapier, for this they can escape. But with a pistol, even if not loaded, you can scare a thousand. It is said that these Hottentots [9] are cannibals, but there is no truth to that, because we buried many dead there which they let lie peacefully and untouched. Also, when a woman is to keep herself to one man, then she must permit the cutting off of the outer joint on the little finger of her left hand. In the night more than several hundred men and women gather to dance around a bonfire and clap their hands, because there are dangerous beasts here, like lions and tigers, in great numbers. There are also many ostriches, which the inhabitants know how to catch in very ingenious ways. The Elephant Master or rhinoceros is the hereditary foe of the elephant and is also found in this place. This beast is about

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96 Bjerke Jægersborg (2018, p. 76) points out that this is how Strabo, Pliny, and Dürer describe a rhinoceros attacking an elephant. NMK may have thought of the swordfish and the whale as marine counterparts to these large land animals. 'There is no beast on land that has no equivalent in the sea', he writes. Cf. the crocodile battle in Chapter 81.

97 Khoikhoi: non-Bantu nomadic pastoralists.

98 The whale: NMK calls it *hwalfisk/hwal/fisk*.

99 Whale 62 metres, swordfish 5.3–5.9 metres by 0.9 metres.

100 This shows that NMK saw a sawfish, *Pristis sp.*, not a swordfish, *Xiphias gladius*.

one and a half ells tall and three ells long,<sup>101</sup> shaped like an elephant, carrying a horn in front on its snout, which it sharpens against stones when entering battle with the elephant, and has a trunk like an elephant which goes beneath the horn. And though those who have never seen it, particularly painters, depict it with shields on the back and across the belly,<sup>102</sup> they are quite wrong, because its skin is not only thick and smooth in itself, but lies in folds one upon the next, fold upon fold, from the head and down to the rump, so that not even the strongest man can chop through its skin with any axe, no matter how sharp. Everything on this beast is useful [10] for medicine, its dung as well as other things: on Jawa I have seen its blood sold for one *riksdaler* per *lod*.<sup>103</sup> It is ashen in colour but a little blacker than that. This great promontory is visible eight or nine miles across the sea and consists of two high mountains: one is called Tafwelberget and is completely level like a table; the other is Lion Mountain<sup>104</sup> because it looks much like a lion with head, back and rump, legs and claws, lying on its belly, wearing a crown on its head. At this bay or inlet where we lay with the ships, you could often see all kinds of sea creatures, like sea horses, sea cows, which were in every respect like other horses and cows except that they had no hair and their feet were like those of seals or geese. The horse had a mane like a normal horse but the rear was like a fish. The cow went onto land to feed, and was killed by our people. There were also sea dogs, sea cats, etc. In sum, there is no beast on land that has no equivalent in the sea. Fish are also extremely abundant here, particularly when the whale drives them into the bay at flood and eats them. Occasionally it [the whale] goes too far up and the water falls from it, so that it gets stuck there and falls victim

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101 90 centimetres tall, 180 centimetres long.

102 Referring to the pictorial tradition rooted in Albrecht Dürer's famous 1515 image (Bjerke Jægersborg 2018, p. 74).

103 13,3 grammes.

104 Today, Table Mountain and Lion's Head.

to the inhabitants. It looks a lot like there might be good ore in these mountains, but because of the absence of wood they can do nothing.<sup>105</sup>

#### CHAPTER 7. TRISTAN DA CUNHA

[11] Kumba de Tristan is a mountain sitting on its own in the sea. There was nothing here except a multitude of seagulls, which were not afraid of people, but completely tame. Nor was there any fresh water here; consequently, there is good reason to call the place Kumba de Tristan, that is, a sad cliff.<sup>106</sup>

#### CHAPTER 8. MAURITIUS

Mauritius is an island, once called Serne,<sup>107</sup> that is about eight miles in circumference, and has previously been uninhabited, but is now since many years settled by the Dutch.<sup>108</sup> This island is similar to St. Helena in all its particulars, except that the mountains here are not as high. This is also a very healthy and fertile land, which, in addition to all kinds of fruit, yields the best ebony ever found in the world in great abundance. There are also great numbers of pigs and goats. Turtles occur abundantly, which are sought out by the workers who cut the ebony, and then they cut a hole in the turtle's belly with an axe, taking their fat or lard, which they use in food, and then they let her go. After a time she again gathers up as much fat as she lost. Here also is found ambergris, which comes floating ashore out of the sea, and looks like cow dung. It is greatly destroyed and eaten by the feral pigs in the land. There are no dangerous beasts or pests here, indeed, not even a mosquito or [12] fly, nor any ants. The people there say that they have never been ill since arriving. Unless a lazy person who does not want to work cuts himself

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105 That is, there is no fuel for fire-setting in mines or smelting of the ore.

106 The island was actually named for himself by its discoverer, Tristão da Cunha, in 1506.

107 Cirne on Portuguese sixteenth-century charts.

108 The Dutch settled Mauritius in 1638.

with an axe or falls, he thus cannot make himself ill there. Here they also catch great amounts of fish.

#### CHAPTER 9. MADAGASCAR AND RÉUNION

Madagasscar or S. Laurentz is an island located in Africa under the Tropic of Capricorn<sup>109</sup> which is considered to be at least as large as England and Scotland, its inhabitants being completely black and Muslims. It is a fertile land with abundant cattle, sheep, and goats. Instead of bread they eat a kind of root which they call *patatas*. These they boil and they taste like parsnip. We could not go far inland from the shore before they stole our people away, because two boatswains got too daring and went ahead of us high up on the beach, and were gone. For this reason the captain kept all the natives on the ship locked up until he received news of our boatswains. He only sent one of these *Caffers* or black Africans to tell what the case was with his brothers, that is, that eighteen were imprisoned on the ship for two Christians. The people who had abducted the boatswains took them straight to the king, who resided in a town named Manapatan.<sup>110</sup> When the messenger reached the king and told him all about his brothers' circumstances [13] on the ship, then the king was very angry about this and immediately sent, as they said when they came back, a message to another king, who lived eastward in the land at Arpoat,<sup>111</sup> to ask him for advice whether he should keep these two Christians and abandon his own people, or no. And since the Frenchman has his meeting place there on the land, for this reason the Frenchmen who were employed by the king advised him that the two Christians would be of more use to him than thirty or forty of his own people if he could only persuade them with kindness. In the meantime

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109 Madagascar's southern point, where NMK is likely to have landed, is indeed just south of the Tropic.

110 Manambato.

111 Possibly identical to *Arabasta* on a period map (*Grote atlas* VI:88). This is however on Madagascar's south-west coast, not 'eastward in the land'.

we captured more and more of the natives, and so the king had to release our Christians. To show them his tyrannical heart, however, he had all the hairs that they could see on their loins pulled out before they left him. Let everyone consider the pain they suffered, because they said that only one hair was pulled out at a time. When the captain and crew saw the tyranny that had been committed against these poor people, it was decided that as retribution we would keep as slaves sixteen healthy individuals of the natives that we had imprisoned, which were then sold. Four pairs were tied up back to back and thrown overboard into the sea. One had his nose and ears cut off and was then sent back to the king. They told us [14] that this king had many elephants walking around his court. As far as I could tell, it was a populous and fertile land with all sorts of foodstuffs. We collected large fine oysters there from trees on the shore, and from the same tree we took sour lime fruits which we ate with the oysters.

The French have a settlement here with a little fort named St. Apollonia.<sup>112</sup> They do not conduct any trade in this land, but lie here and pass the time until the Persians and Mughals<sup>113</sup> sail across the Persian Gulf and into the Red Sea to Muhammad's tomb. Then they go cruising, take the goods, sink the vessel, and kill the people. Then they sail into Arabia and sell the goods, and live at Dilpe and Rossciel.

#### CHAPTER IO. SOCOTRA

Sokotora<sup>114</sup> is a little island, about two miles in circumference, located right in the divide between Africa and Asia. And although it is no fertile island, Arabs nevertheless live there and have their income from a kind of resin that can be found there, called dragon's blood,<sup>115</sup>

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112 Réunion.

113 *Mogoller*: people from the Mughal Empire in India.

114 Socotra, an island just off the Horn of Africa.

115 For which Socotra was known already in Antiquity, cf. *Periplus Maris Erythraei* 30.

which they sell at high price to merchants. Moreover, they collect great quantities of every kind of coral from the sea floor, red, white, indeed of every colour, which they pull from the bottom with wooden pincers. It is at first quite soft, like wet glue, but when it has lain for some time in the sun it grows hard, then they break it into pieces and lathe-turn it as small or as large as they want. They also have [15] very beautiful carnelians to sell. Pirates often stop here when they come sailing from Madagascar through the Barbarian Inlet,<sup>116</sup> because this island is not far from the mouth of the Red Sea and no Moorish vessel can pass it without being noticed.

This now is briefly what I have seen and experienced in Africa. Now I will go to Asia, which I know better than Africa and Europe, beginning with the Red Sea.

## Around the Red Sea

### CHAPTER II. THE RED SEA

The Red Sea is also known as the Arabian Sea, but the Muslims call it the Mech Sea.<sup>117</sup> The inlet from the Ethiopian or Barbarian Sea into the Red Sea is very narrow in itself, and additionally there is a group of cliffs right in the middle of the passage that you have to be very careful around, so that you are not driven onto them by the current that flows out of the great Ethiopian Sea. This strait is known as *Nārwa-Sundh* or *Streto Babel-Mandel*<sup>118</sup> and is no wider at the narrowest point than that if you take a stone in your right hand and another one in your left, you can throw with the right one into Asia and with the left one [16] into Africa. It is named the Red Sea because the water looks red on

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116 The Gulf of Aden.

117 That is, the Sea of Mocha.

118 Arabic *Bab-el-Mandeb*, 'Gate of Tears'.

the Asian and Arabian side, but if you take it up in a glass or bucket it is white in itself. The reason is that in Arabia the soil is red, and the mountains along the shore seem to be made entirely of red chalk. And when it rains (which only happens once a year, and then the rain and a single wind remain steady for six months, but in the other six months you will not see a single cloud in the sky), this rain washes a lot of red material from the mountains, which runs down into the sea. This red matter eventually settles on the bottom, and thereby the water appears red. Along the shore the sun produces a lot of salt, which is completely red in itself, and in this sea is the saltiest water that I think can ever be in the world. The sand along the shore is also red. During the six rainy months the inhabitants of Arabia have to collect as much water in big deep wells as they may need during the other six months, both for themselves and their cattle, and to sell to others. But on the Ethiopian and particularly the Egyptian side, the water and the salt that is generated along the shore is pure white, as it never rains there, and never has since the Deluge. Instead the land is flooded by the Nile River, something that happens once a year. There are a lot of fish in this sea, one kind called *kaaltop*,<sup>119</sup> [17] big as a salmon and very fat, and another kind, slightly smaller, which appeared on one side as if you had touched it with a human hand, which the Arabs called *panghkumain*, meaning 'five finger fish'.<sup>120</sup> We also got a kind of fish not unlike a bream, and fat perch, along with several other kinds of unusual fish.

#### CHAPTER 12. BAB-EL-MANDEB AND A LITTLE ISLAND

When we lay off Mocha with the ship we lacked firewood for cooking, and so we sailed to a little island off Ethiopia,<sup>121</sup> that was about three

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119 Dutch, 'bald head'.

120 Indo-Pacific sergeant, *Abudefduf vaigiensis*. Cf. Hindi *pāc*, 'five'.

121 Possibly Fatma or Halib. Bjerke Jægersborg (2018, p. 42) suggests Perim, but that is not on the Ethiopian side of the strait.

German miles wide, where we got enough firewood for our needs but had to cut it ourselves from very hard wood. Most likely there had been enough forest here before, but now it had all been cut: we could find no fruit trees, nor did they<sup>122</sup> bring us any fruits, but only seeds and small cattle and sheep, asking for nothing in return but tobacco and plain weave. They liked red frieze a lot, trading a cow for an ell,<sup>123</sup> in which they cut a hole and hung around their necks so that it hung far down their backs. They also had all kinds of coral, particularly red and black, which they traded for old shirts. These *Caffers* are completely black and know nothing about covering themselves, wearing only a leaf over their shameful parts. They were quite a brutish people: they drank rice brandy (served to them by the captain) like water and then lay down as if dead. Their [18] women were very unchaste. One man came to us bringing two young girls, who he said were his own daughters. And he held in his hand a splinter of wood, about one and a half *quarters* long,<sup>124</sup> asking as much tobacco as the length of the splinter, and they might do as they pleased with his children. I was unable to determine their religion, whether they were Christians, pagans,<sup>125</sup> or Muslims. They could not be Christians as they never spoke about Christ, nor Muslims, because I saw with my own eyes that they were not circumcised.

#### CHAPTER 13. YEMEN

Rich Arabia is now also called Ajaman,<sup>126</sup> and everyone knows well why it is called Rich or Stony. Here are many towns, of which the most prominent are Mecha, Aden, Masskaeth and Zibith.<sup>127</sup> And although

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122 The island's inhabitants.

123 59.3 centimetres.

124 Twenty-two centimetres.

125 That is, polytheists such as Hindus.

126 Yemen.

127 Mocha, Aden, Muscat, Zabid; cf. the *Grote atlas* and Janssonius's 1658 map of Arabia.

the opinion of many is that this Rich Arabia belongs to the Grand Turk who lives in Constantinople or Stambolda, there is no truth to that, but, as the Turkish emperor is the defender of their religion, they give him an annual gift of honour, consisting of a large sum of money, but they do not suffer anything to be taken from them by force. This country is ruled by four lords, and the foremost of them always lives in Mecha,<sup>128</sup> and for this reason these lords swap places once a year, so that they do not only alternate on the paramount position, as happens here in Sweden [19] at the Academy of Uppsala, but also move one away from the other with their residences. When the one in Aden is to rise to the paramount power, then the one who leaves Mecha has to move to Zibith, and the one who has lived there moves to Masskalet. Thus each yields to the other until the fourth comes to Adan.<sup>129</sup> Regarding Mecha you must note that there are two towns by that name in Arabia: this one is in Rich Arabia, next to the inlet into the Red Sea. The other one is called Medineska Mecha-Talnabi,<sup>130</sup> which means a Prophet's town, and is located in Stony Arabia where no Christian or Jew is allowed to approach any closer than twelve miles on pain of death or apostasy. Because Muhammad was not only born there but is also supposed to hang in the air in a church, enclosed in a steel coffin, and held up by a magnet, in which there is no actual truth. Because at the time when I was there, in 1653, I met an apostate named Johannes, who was born in Franckfurt an Meyn<sup>131</sup> and told me as follows about Muhammad floating in the air. To wit, that the steel coffin used to hang from a magnet, but a couple of years ago the temple was so devastated by a horrific lightning strike or thunder storm that both the steel coffin and the magnet fell down, upon which not only the magnet lost its power, but the coffin was also

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128 Mocha, not Mecca.

129 *Sic.*

130 Roughly 'Mecca al-Nabi of Medina'. NMK is mixing up names here.

131 Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

destroyed. Then its holy men or priests [20] fastened the aforementioned steel coffin to four fine iron chains, and they hoisted it up under the vaulting in the same place where it used to hang. And to avoid anyone noticing that it hangs by chains, it is every morning smoked full of all kinds of incense, and the smoke is so thick under the vaulting that you cannot see anything but that this coffin hangs there floating by itself.

#### CHAPTER 14. YEMEN: MOCHA

Mecha in Streto Babel Mandel is a little town, not fortified at all; there is only a small fort on a hill south of the town with a few cannon. And although small, the town is nevertheless very populous, particularly in the season when the Persians and Mughals come with their vessels loaded with all sorts of valuable goods, and call there. Then they travel over land to Muhammad's tomb, and then the many people cannot find housing in the town but put up their beds outside. Then the town looks three or four times as large as it is in itself. And although it is not large, I have never seen such riches in any town in the entire Orient as here, particularly gold. For there is a building here, at least as large as the New Academy in Uppsala,<sup>132</sup> where from sunrise to sunset nothing is weighed but gold, minted gold in and bullion out again; indeed, such large pieces as may weigh more than half a *skeppund*.<sup>133</sup> [21] There is also great trade here in precious stones, pearls, gold and silver cloth, vast amounts of coral of every colour, agate work such as jugs, bottles, and bowls; in sum, everything a household may need of dishes and plates can be bought here in fine agate stone, and coloured both red and black. This town is also very pleasant, both from its convenience as a harbour and from the sailing, because the richest merchants of India congregate here who bring along all kinds of rare goods. Then the town

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132 Built in the 1620s and currently known as Gustavianum.

133 More than sixty-eight kilogrammes.

is beautifully built, many houses are glazed<sup>134</sup> all over the outside, and there are many churches with high towers. The sultan or governor lives in an extraordinarily beautiful house, and the round structure where he always stays is covered on the outside with fine gold. There are also Jews here in great numbers, and many Christians also live here. In particular there is a Franciscan friary in which there are four friars. Armenians also come here to trade. The English and Dutch also have their houses here where people live all year around and buy and sell. It is also a fertile place with all kinds of fruit and foodstuffs, but firewood and water are very expensive here. Drinking wine is strictly forbidden for them, but nevertheless there are wonderful grapes here. No Christian or Jew can appear drunk in the streets during the daytime if he wants to keep his life. And as there is [22] an awful heat here as well as elsewhere in Babylonia and Persia when the sun is in Cancer, because these countries are right under the Tropic of Cancer, they have very thick walls in their houses. They also build a hollow tower in the middle of the roofs, on which they hang woollen blankets when the heat begins to come, and so the wind turns downward into the houses, because from seven o'clock in the morning until four in the afternoon it is impossible for people to get anything done outdoors, due to the great heat.

#### CHAPTER 15. YEMEN: ADEN

Aden appears to be a fine town, and as I did not enter it, but sailed past, I cannot really write anything certain about it. It is located in the rock crevices, and on top of a hill is a big castle with cannon on it.

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134 Covered in glazed tile, that is.

#### CHAPTER 16. OMAN: MUSCAT

Maskalet<sup>135</sup> is also located among steep cliffs and built on high hills. The Portuguese have built this town, but then it passed by treason to the Arabs, who killed all the Christians who were there, and spared no one but those who would suffer themselves to be circumcised, because no one lived in the town but Christians. Now it is so strongly fortified that it seems to human eyes to be impregnable. These two towns are on the Persian Sea,<sup>136</sup> very high up in the air, and you can easily see them from the sea from eight miles when the weather is clear. Between these towns in the high mountains they have their gold mines.

#### CHAPTER 17. YEMEN: ZABID, PART I

[23] Zibith is a little town on the Red Sea, where one of the foremost lords also resides. The envoy Henrick Pelliconie<sup>137</sup> also went there to honour him on 24 June 1653. As soon as we arrived this lord sent one of his secretaries and one of the captains of his guard, who spoke good Portuguese and was our interpreter, asking our business. This the envoy told them, and they soon went ashore to speak of our errand. An hour or two later they returned with the reply that we could expect to speak to him on the following day. The next day around nine o'clock in the morning we were fetched from the ship with a great entourage. And when we came ashore, all of us were sat on lovely caparisoned horses and brought before the sultan or lord, with whom the envoy spoke

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135 Muscat. In addition to *Mascate* on the site of modern Muscat, Janssonius's 1658 map of Arabia also has *Mascalat* in a quite different location: at the south end of a lake some distance inland from the western shore of the Persian Gulf. He marks it with the same symbol as the region's largest towns, e.g., Mecca and Medina. Abshire et al. (2016) identify this town with Ptolemy's *Masthala* and suggest that it may be identical to modern Mezaira'a in the Liwa Oasis, UAE. Cf. Forster 1844, p. 223.

136 Aden is on the Gulf of Aden, not the Persian Gulf.

137 A Dutch diplomat, probably a member of the Pellicorne family from the southern Netherlands.

for a long time. And when he understood<sup>138</sup> what was required by this lord, gifts were soon prepared for him, viz. a large gilded goblet with a ringing clock in the lid, a gilded hand basin with a water jug, two long shotguns, two greyhounds, two six-pounder gunmetal cannon, with two pieces of scarlet woollen cloth, and golden and silver lace. And for the lord's brother, a large clock, one piece of scarlet woollen cloth, and a pair of pistols. For the highest nobility, a few pieces of [24] dyed velvet, plush, and satin, along with a lot of Japanese lacquer work and all kinds of spices. His having received these gifts, it was now settled and confirmed in writing between the sultan and the envoy that the Dutch, in the future as in the past, would be permitted to trade here. While we waited there four Catholic fathers came to us, stating that they were from St. Catherine's Mountain or Mount Sinai, and that they had now long been wandering in the Arabian and Ethiopian lands and there converted many Muslims and pagans to Christianity. These the envoy caused to be treated very well, particularly as he was himself also a Catholic. They requested that they might be allowed to accompany us farther up into the country, because they dared not travel past Mechan Tallnabi<sup>139</sup> or Medina, nor could they find any caravan that went through the Sea of Sand or Arabian Desert. The envoy granted them this request and arranged for a separate room on the ship where they might be in peace and not be disturbed.

#### CHAPTER 18. YEMEN: ZABID, PART 2

A few days later we were all fetched in state from our lodgings and invited as guests to his pavilion, which was in a beautiful garden containing lovely springs, fountains, fish ponds, and other rare artifices. Here were also all kinds of fruit trees such as figs, almonds, Persian bitter oranges, limes, lemons, plums, [25] etc., along with an unusual kind of grape

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138 Literally 'received'.

139 Mecca.

and all sorts of roses. When we sat eating a hideously large tiger came walking, but it was tame, and ate the crumbs and bones lying behind us, harming no human. Indeed, it neither ate nor took more than they would give it. As soon as the meal was finished, the secretary and some of the nobility rode with us to see the town, but they would not let us come onto the wall or into their fortifications. Thus they accompanied us to a large old building in which there had once been a mint, and which they claimed had been built by Noah. Nearby is a church that is surrounded by iron bars. In the entranceway a large piece of wood hangs from an iron chain, and is said to be part of Noah's Ark. They considered it a fine testimony of great value. From there they took us to an octagonal tower in which a horrific lion stood bound. I told the captain that at the court of King Shah Abbas<sup>140</sup> in Persia I had seen nine lions. He asked me about the king's splendour, his khans<sup>141</sup> or lords in their rule; moreover, which way I had travelled, and for how long I was there, to which I replied as much as I could and knew. Moreover, I told him about the pasha's splendour in Bagadet;<sup>142</sup> in sum, I gave him satisfaction in all that he asked me about. [26] They also let us see a well that was more than one hundred fathoms<sup>143</sup> deep, which they claimed to be the tomb of the patriarch Jacob. The water, which was cranked up in leather buckets, was so salty that we could barely let it reach our teeth. Some distance away was a square church with a flat roof in which were one hundred pillars, all hewn from a single rock. There were also many other old things that had been brought there long before the birth of Christ. A few days later we were served a farewell meal and a little gift was given to the envoy. Thus we said farewell to the sultan and rode to our lodgings. That evening we learned from an Armenian Christian

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140 This shah (NKM spells the word *kiää*) is Abbas II of Persia, reigned 1642–1666.

141 Persian provincial governors.

142 Baghdad.

143 One hundred and eighty metres.

that the Persian, Arabian, and Indian merchants had written a letter to the lord in which they allegedly reproached him for allowing great friendship and freedoms to us, who were infidel Christian dogs, but wanted to ruin them who were good faithful Muslims. Two days later, early in the morning, the secretary came with some noblemen and the captain, and escorted us half a mile outside the town where a barque lay at the shore. We went aboard with the captain, and when we came to a little castle named Kadiar we went ashore and were entertained by the captain. Then we went back onto the barque and came in the evening to the ship, where a salute was soon fired, and the captain was entertained, and again [27] given a gift. Here we also saw incense grow, with which entire large fields are planted. It drips from trees like resin, which happens twice a year, both in the spring and summer. In the spring it is red, but in the summer white. Myrrh also grows abundantly here. It is a small tree, five ells<sup>144</sup> tall, and has sharp thorns like dog rose. When you cut open the bark juice runs out like a thin resin, and when you rub it onto dead bodies they will not soon rot away, and when you put the leaves in a chest among clothes, no moth or other pest will thrive there. Two days later we weighed anchor and went along the Arabian side, to find out if there was anything on the shores that might be useful to the East India Company.<sup>145</sup>

#### CHAPTER 19. ARABIA: JEDDAH

On 8 August we came to a large fine town named Ziden,<sup>146</sup> which is on the dry shore in a beautiful bay. There we let our anchors fall at ten fathoms, to a fine sandy bottom. The town looks very large, the reason being that the houses stand far apart. They are all built of clay and plastered with white lime. It has a castle with four roundels and it is

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144 Three metres.

145 The Dutch VOC.

146 Jeddah (Leo Africanus 1846, p. 853).

good enough to stop a charge, but cannot stand a cannonball. It also has many churches. As soon as we reached the anchorage, we flew a peace flag. Soon the ruler sent a military officer of lower rank in [28] a vessel to come on board to investigate what nation we were or what our errand was. Whereupon our reply was that we were Dutchmen, who had come there in faithful friendship to trade with them, asking that we might gain a gracious conversation with him [the ruler]. He went back ashore and informed the lord of our errand, and came back aboard again with some fruit that he sold for money. Additionally he brought a strict order from the governor that we must leave immediately or he would help us on our way, saying that we stinking Christians were not worthy to walk on such holy ground, particularly so close to the birthplace of Muhammad. We tried to buy some water for money, but it could not happen. Whereupon we swiftly raised anchor and intended to go across to Saquem<sup>147</sup> in Egypt, but the current pushed us so strongly toward the west, and there was so little wind, that we drifted with the current ever deeper, more and more into the Red Sea. It was thus considered best that we should steer close to the Arabian land, to see if we might come to some place where we might, with good manners, get water. The monks that we had brought along said that we could not expect any water for a long way yet, before we were twenty or thirty miles past Medina Tanalbj<sup>148</sup> where Muhammad lies buried, which is on the border of Stony Arabia. But my opinion is that these Catholic [29] priests said that for no other reason than that they were trying to get closer to Mount Sinai.

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147 Suakin.

148 Arabic, *Medina al-Nabi*, 'Medina of the Prophet'.

CHAPTER 20. ARABIA: YANBU' AL BAHR

On 17 August we came to a place named Jamborgder<sup>149</sup> where we let our anchor fall at five and a half fathoms,<sup>150</sup> to a red sandy bottom. There we let a peace flag fly. Soon the chief of the *alidet* or village came aboard to us, asking what we wanted. He was answered that we were Christians and Dutchmen, wanting to pay for refreshments and water. This we also received.<sup>151</sup> Most of those living here were Jews, who always came aboard to peddle and trade. Beautiful gold and silver cloth is woven here as well as all kinds of silk fabric. The water that we got there was so muddy that we could not cook anything in it. The next day we weighed anchor to seek a place with fresh water.

CHAPTER 21. ARABIA: 'ZERZES'

On 26 August we came to a place named Zerzes,<sup>152</sup> which the Catholic priests recognised immediately, saying that it was the spot where the Children of Israel came ashore when they walked dry-shod through the Red Sea. They said that there was no better water to be had anywhere in all of Arabia than here. When we saw that no one would come to us from the land, we launched our little boat with the interpreter and eight musketeers, in addition to crewmen with axes, and rowed ashore. When we arrived we found few people, only a couple of Jews. We soon rowed back to the ship, launched our large boat, with [30] all the empty barrels we had, went ashore and got as much water as we needed from a group of fine wells. Then we went to view the ancient memorials of that place. There was a Turkish church, and next to it twelve pillars that had

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149 Yanbu' al Bahr.

150 Ten metres.

151 These recurring notes on the locals' attitude to Christian strangers are an aid for future travellers just as is the less frequent information about anchorage (Lidström 2015, p. 49).

152 Not identifiable in *Grote atlas* or on Janssonius's 1658 map. Located according to NMK on the Arabian shore between Yanbu and the Straits of Tiran.

sunk to more than one third of their length into the ground. We were told that the Israelites had put them there when they had crossed the Red Sea. The Jews also had a synagogue on the same site and valued it highly. On the same stones were carved in Hebrew characters the names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Many Greeks lived there too, all of whom were apostates. Both they and the Jews said that for years no Christian ship had been as far up the Red Sea as ours. We could also clearly see Mount Sinai and Mount Horeb before us. The priests made an agreement with the lord envoy and the captain that they would be taken to a strait or inlet named Bajor,<sup>153</sup> that is, the Straits of St. Catherine<sup>154</sup> near Mount Sinai, located two days' travel from the mountain. Their request was granted not only for the sake of the priests, but also to have our charts checked and thus provide all seafarers with newer and more secure information. Also, because everyone wanted very much to see these famous mountains, even though not all were permitted to do so. And the one who was most active in this [31] was our excellent Lord Pelliconie, who was, as already mentioned, a Catholic and who was keen to have his confession heard by these fathers. An additional important justification for the delay was that for six months, wind and currents would keep us from leaving the Red Sea. Then the incessant wind turned around, which by then we expected every day as the sixth month had come, and already now the wind had begun to die down. Thus refreshed, and with much-needed water on board, having conferred with the bailiff, we weighed anchor. On 30 August we entered the previously mentioned Baijo, the Straits and Inlet of St. Catherine. Here the fathers again asked the envoy and the captain to do a good deed and accompany them to Mount Sinai where they had their congregation and their

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153 Probably Spanish or Portuguese *baio*, 'bay'.

154 The Straits of Tiran at the southern end of the Gulf of Aqaba.

brethren.<sup>155</sup> Meanwhile the weather was beginning to change, and so it was decided that the envoy and the captain and some soldiers would travel with them. I was in great favour with these Catholic priests and asked them to recommend me to the bailiff, so that I could also come along and see such famous and honoured sites. And I got permission to do so. Less than half a mile from the seashore was a little hamlet named Kutziuk, where the monks went to fetch mules for us all.

#### CHAPTER 22. SINAI, PART I

[32] On the afternoon of the 31st we mounted the mules, ten of us not counting the monks, and travelled through sand and small thorn bushes. Along the way there was no water: we would have suffered great thirst if we had not brought water in leather bottles. On 2 September we came to Mount Sinai. We sat there beneath the mountain while the monks went up to tell their brethren about our arrival. When they returned they brought six other Carmelite fathers who brought warm water with which they washed our feet, kissed us, and thanked us for the great charitable deed we had done for their brothers. Before we could go up onto the mountain, however, we had to put down our weapons in a guard house where about three hundred Turkish soldiers kept watch over said mountain. All are supported by these monks who live on the mountain, and they have to keep keen watch there, fearing the Jews greatly, who seek with the greatest zeal to take this mountain from the Christians, as Moses has received the Law in that same place from God Almighty. On 3 September the envoy went to confession, and then to the Lord's Communion in the Carmelite monastery, since he was a Catholic. In the evening he asked the Carmelites to arrange for us to see some famous remains that might deserve to be told of to the [33] Christians. This was

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155 St. Catherine's monastery, founded in the sixth century and continuously active since.

also promised. The next morning we went out with two Carmelites and eight Greeks<sup>156</sup> who showed us the whole environs, as follows.

CHAPTER 23. SINAI, PART 2

*Description of Mount Sinai and Mount Horeb*

You must first note that these two mountains stand on a single foot. Horeb is called Chu Orel<sup>157</sup> by the Christians who live in Asia as well as by Muslims. It means a desert, as Stony Arabia or the Sea of Sand (where the Children of Israel wandered for forty years) begins there when you travel from the sea to Horeb. It is not very high in itself. But Mount Sinai is very high and pointed, indeed, more than four times as high as Horeb. It is still called St. Catherine's Mountain by the Christians, because the Catholics claim that St. Catherine's body, after she was tormented in Alexandria in Egypt, was taken there by six angels and found wrapped in a bloody sheet by some hermits who lived there. And though this mountain was once very difficult to get onto, the Christians have now with their own money and at great cost had 142 large and wide steps cut into the hard rock before you reach the gates themselves, so that now both camels and donkeys can [34] get up and down. Here on the mountain only two creeds have a permanent presence: the Carmelites here have five congregations and the Greeks two, and the Muslims three churches, which are all listed below. Once you have gone up the stairs you come to two tall gates which stand next to each other. In one hangs a carved stone cross, through which all Christians must go, and in the other a crescent, where all Muslims are to pass through. Immediately on the left hand when you enter the gate you come to a monastery named Santa Maria de la Cinnatura.<sup>158</sup> Next

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156 That is, Greek Orthodox monks.

157 Does not correspond to any Arabic word for desert.

158 Cincture, girdle, belt. Cf. the Cincture of the Theotokos on Mount Athos in Greece.

to it was a beautiful spice garden with all kinds of spices and roses, and fruit, such as in particular apples of Paradise, which they called *muses*,<sup>159</sup> which is as large as a man's two fists, and has leaves that are one and a half fathoms<sup>160</sup> long and a foot wide, and taste delicious. There are also apples, pears, myrtle berries, Indian figs or *pisang*,<sup>161</sup> dates, and other unfamiliar fruits. There we were served salt and fresh bread as well as all kinds of fruits and myrtle wine. All of the soil in which these trees are planted has been collected at the foot of the mountain and dragged up onto it. They also had another kind of wine which they called *liatico*,<sup>162</sup> a very expensive and delicious wine. Here are also lovely fountains from which flow excellent drinking water.

Higher up on the left hand is a monastery named [35] St. Anne. It is a beautiful monastery that we visited. There was a lovely garden, which they said was planted by John the Evangelist. These Carmelites never eat meat, but only spices, herbs, roots, and fruit. Higher up is a chapel that has a triangular tower with some ponds around it. Here we were shown a hole in which Elijah is supposed to have stayed when he fled from Jezebel, there being fed water and bread by the angel.<sup>163</sup> At the upper end near the mountaintop is a cleft rock where God let himself shine on Moses when he walked past and could not see God's face, for which reason Moses backed up, and there is still impressed into the rock, as I have seen with my own eyes, like a hole from a fat and short man, with the back of the head, back, feet, and extended arms. Finally, high up on the top is shown the place where Moses received the Ten Commandments from God Almighty. Below on the left is a monastery

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159 Arabic, *mauz*, 'banana'. NMK seems to be repeating someone else's description here, not realising that the *muses* is identical to the *pisang* that he knows very well and describes at length in Chapter 63.

160 Approximately 270 centimetres.

161 Bananas (again).

162 Liatiko is a Cretan grape variety once used to make Malvasia wine.

163 1 Kings 19.

named St. Catherine. Here the monks keep St. Catherine's body in a white alabaster coffin, which the priest shows to pilgrims and wandering Christians, with a tool made from silver. Out of these dead bones comes fat similar to oil, but it is neither oil nor balsam. Then he shows them her head and the bloody sheet in which she was found. Behind the altar they had a dry bush [36] which they said was the very one that Moses saw burning yet not being consumed by the fire. We all had to take our shoes off before being permitted to come near it. I saw it quite well but I will hardly believe that it is the same one. Below this on the left hand is another monastery named St. John the Baptist, which also has a beautiful garden, with lovely ponds or cisterns. Here the Greeks had their congregations, one named Koloizisi,<sup>164</sup> which do not keep themselves as clean as the Catholic ones. There are great differences between them, in their church services as well as in customs and food, insomuch as they eat meat and pork. They have some houses there that they call *Basilopoli*,<sup>165</sup> as they claim that two sons of kings lie buried there. All the way at the bottom below (but still inside the gate) are four Turkish churches. One in which they have allowed the Greeks and pilgrims to celebrate Mass. The second one is locked: inside (they said) there is a pit or hole in the rock, where Moses is said to have lived and fasted for forty days (after having crushed the first set of stone tablets), and now asking for new ones. In the event that he did not now dare to scale as high as before. But in the other two, the Muslims hold their divine services. And their priests who live in their churches on the mountain and at its foot (in Arabic a church is called *mossea* [37] or *messgita*)<sup>166</sup> call themselves *Nantonoss*, that is, the protectors of the holy tombs. Of which saints these are the most important: Omar, Osman, Hussein,

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164 Surely not anything to do with the corvid birds called *koloios* in ancient Greek?

165 'King's towns'.

166 Arabic, *masjid*, 'mosque'.

and Abu Bakr. The Muslims pray to them. They also greatly venerate Muhammad's daughter, named Fatimah.

#### CHAPTER 24. SINAI, PART 3

There is nothing on Horeb except some guardhouses for Arab soldiers. Having enjoyed four days and nights there, we said farewell to the fathers, Catholics and Romans as well as Greeks, who accompanied us with a great entourage off the mountain, as follows. First the Litany was sung and then they read a blessing over us. When the Greek priests learned that we were leaving, their prelate came to us with his entire retinue in the Carmelite monastery, where we had stayed, and coaxed us to dine with him. First Mass was celebrated, and then the food was set out. After we had eaten there was another Mass, and then we said farewell to them. But both the Greek and the Latin priests followed us off the mountain, singing all the way. All of them were dressed in Mass vestments, some carrying candles, some crosses, books, or holy water. Having thus descended from the mountain in such company, we found a number of mules and water at the ready for our trek to the ship. We reclaimed our weaponry, and again they read a blessing over us and sprinkled us with holy water. We then mounted and left. Two of these monks came with [38] us and showed us many famous sites along the way. In particular, half a mile from the mountain, a completely dry place where they said that Aaron's children Nadab and Abihu were consumed by fire.<sup>167</sup> From there to another place where they said that the Children of Israel are to have raised the golden calf, and worshipped it.<sup>168</sup> A mile further on was a large Turkish church, into which no Christian was admitted on pain of death. There, they said, Moses is to have stayed or slept when God spoke to him in a pillar of cloud. And in another Turkish temple which they called Beziel, they said that the bush is to

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167 Leviticus 10.

168 Exodus 32:4.

have stood that Moses saw burn but that was not consumed. And the monks said that this is the same bush that they had in their monastery. Muslims venerate these churches greatly. The following day we came back to the ship. The crew had caught such an abundance of fish that they could not salt it all. That night so much red sand came flying in on a west-southwesterly wind, so thick and in such a great storm, that no one could be on deck, so that we had to close all our hatches and pull tarred cloth over the lattice hatches. When this was over (it lasted for an hour) we could see neither deck nor water for all the sand. This gave us a strong indication that the wind had turned, and so we decided [39] to set course for Swaquem,<sup>169</sup> a town in Egypt situated on the Red Sea coast,

#### CHAPTER 25. SUDAN: SUAKIN

where we arrived on 25 September. When we came there we were stringently questioned as to whether we were pirates. We bought water from them and loaded the ships with the finest available mummies (or dead human bodies). We bought these mummies from the Jews. We were not allowed to enter the town, so the Jews came to us. Many Christians visited us, and as I understood it there were supposed to be great numbers of Christians there, and the Catholics were said to have three monasteries in there. They get these mummies from the Arabian desert or Sea of Sand, out of the sand, where they have been smothered in it, and shrivelled up from the sun's heat like a dried fish.

#### CHAPTER 26. WRITING IN THE NEAR EAST

The Arabs, Armenians, Medes, and Persians all use the same alphabet for writing, also paper made from cotton which is as smooth as if it had been gone over with a whetstone. Instead of a quill they use a straw or a reed. When their children begin to learn to write they are given (instead of paper, quill, and ink) a little thin board, about an ell long, and a little

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169 Suakin.

sack or bag of fine sand which they sprinkle thinly on the board. And so they learn to draw the letters with their finger in the sand, until they can make them correctly. Then they get pen and ink.

## Persia

### CHAPTER 27. ARMENIA, PART I

#### [40] *On Lesser Armenia*

The Armenians believe that Christ is the true God and born a Man, and as long as he walked here on earth he was both God and Man. But as soon as he went to Heaven he left human nature behind, and is now the true God and not a Man.

This country is not very large in itself, because I cannot really know the width, not having travelled around it, but travelled only the same way back as I went forward. Although this land is under the king of Persia<sup>170</sup> the inhabitants are nevertheless all Christians. There is no other religion in this country, only a few Muslims who live with the governor who is placed there by the king of Persia and lives in Eriwana.<sup>171</sup> These are an honest people, particularly to Christians from Europe, whom they love like someone descended from Heaven if he only proves that he is not circumcised. For this reason he has to show his shameful parts without any shyness. Most of the inhabitants are merchants who ply a great trade in precious stones and all kinds of expensive wares in India, with the Great Mogul of Tartary and Persia,<sup>172</sup> then bringing their wares into Europe.

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170 Abbas II, reigned 1642–1666.

171 Yerevan.

172 The Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, reigned 1628–1658.

[41] In September of 1656 I met two Armenian merchants in Amsterdam, with whom I have on several occasions spoken in Isspahan during the time when I was employed by King Shah Abbas in Persia, that is, in 1652.<sup>173</sup> One is named Karakan and the other Rudolph Constantine. This country is populous, a humble and industrious people. Here is found an abundance of barley, wheat, and wine, as well as many fine cattle and all sorts of foodstuffs. In their religion, particularly with the chanting and other church customs, they are not unlike Catholics, except that they celebrate Mass in their native tongue and their priests marry. Their patriarch at the time when I was there, named Philippus,<sup>174</sup> was a good man who lived in the city Eriwana. This city is at the foot of Mount Ararat and is an open space and can put up no resistance to an enemy. In the city there are both nunneries and monasteries. On the north side of the mountain is a little town named Nachseidwan,<sup>175</sup> that is the first settlement. Because the inhabitants believe truly that Noah, after he stepped off the Ark onto the earth, did not only perform his sacrifice there, but also built his first hut. This country is very famous: firstly, because they remain so constant in the Christian creed, also for their virtue, fidelity, and honesty to all people, particularly [42] to the Christians; secondly, for Mount Ararat which is so steep on all sides that it is impossible for anyone to get up there. In all this country there are no soldiers, except for a few who attend to the governor, but none

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173 Probably a misprint for 1650 or 1651 as it disagrees with the autobiography's chronology.

174 Philip I was the Catholicos of all Armenians from 1633 to 1655.

175 Probably a copying error: spelled *Nachschiouan* in the autobiography. Hedin (1921, p. 418) has *Nakitschevan* and Almqvist (1966, p. 340) *Nachitievian*, which probably refers to modern Nakhchavan. But that is in south Armenia far from Yerevan and thus not identical to the travelogue's little town on the north side of Mount Ararat. This may be another editorial error in the travelogue: the autobiography does not say where *Nachschiouan* is, only that Noah (and NMK) went there from Mount Ararat.

are Armenian natives. Nor are there any craftsmen other than shoemakers, tailors, and smiths, but they all support themselves through trade. Nor can any Roman papists stay for long here: in particular no monks or priests may have any convents or congregations there. You cannot travel between Issphahan and Armenia in less than thirty days with a guard and company. And with a company consisting of camels and donkeys, you cannot cover more than three good Swedish miles a day. Every year on 10 March, when the king of Persia reckons his New Year,<sup>176</sup> they pay their correct taxes so the king will have no reason to complain about them. And once a year they receive a letter of confirmation for their religious customs. As for fish and salt, they get them from the Caspian Sea.

#### CHAPTER 29. TABRIZ

##### *On Media*

Media is not a particularly large country and also belongs to the king of Persia. A very dry, mountainous, [43] and infertile place. There are no towns to speak of here, only Tauriss or Tabriss,<sup>177</sup> which was in ancient times called Eccbatana,<sup>178</sup> and is now very dilapidated and ruined by the Persians, because in the time of Shah Gesi<sup>179</sup> the inhabitants rebelled and wanted to have a king of their own. Thus the aforementioned king had all strongholds torn down and most of the inhabitants deported. Here in Tauriss can be seen the lavish palace of King Ahasuerus,<sup>180</sup>

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176 By the Julian calendar, which was used in Sweden until 1753. In the Gregorian calendar, the vernal equinox and the Persian New Year *Nowruz* usually fall on 21 March.

177 Tabriz.

178 Modern Tabriz and ancient Ecbatana are not in fact identical. Ecbatana's ruin mound is near modern Hamadan.

179 Apparently a regional ruler. 'Gesi' cannot be identified with any of the later predecessors of Abbas II.

180 The king of Persia in the Book of Esther.

and although it is very broken down, you can nevertheless tell that it was once an amazingly fine structure.<sup>181</sup> Just outside of it a Franciscan monk named Father Hieronymus showed me a spot where he said that Haman was hanged.<sup>182</sup> This Tauris is right along the Caspian Sea: they trade mainly in fish.<sup>183</sup> Here at Tauris or Tabriss (once called Eccbatana) are many high mountains which Alexander the Great conquered first before charging the town, and he obtained such an enormous treasure that it could not be described, which made Alexander so arrogant that he wanted to be hailed as a god. Here are also many memorials to this day of Alexander the Great.

#### CHAPTER 30. HAMADAN

[44] *Parthia or Parthen, currently known as Arack*<sup>184</sup>

In this country are two large and important cities: Issphahan where the king of Persia lives, and Amadan.<sup>185</sup> This city of Amadan is eight days' travel south-west<sup>186</sup> from Isphahan and was once (as it still is in Scripture) named Susa.<sup>187</sup> This city is very famous, not only for its age, but also for the fine craftsmen who live there. Here all kinds of golden, silver, and silk cloth are woven and made; indeed, the finest tapestries and blankets that can ever be found. No other people than Jews live in

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181 An unidentified structure. Nothing of this description survives in modern Tabriz.

182 Again, see the Book of Esther.

183 Both Tabriz and Hamadan-Ecbatana are in fact hundreds of kilometres from the sea and not very near any lakes either. Is NMK reporting on Ardabil here under the wrong name?

184 Here and in his autobiography NMK places Parthia in the north-western part of modern Iran. Ancient Parthia was in the north-eastern part of the country.

185 Hamadan.

186 Actually north-west.

187 Another erroneous identification: the ruin mounds of ancient Susa are about 260 kilometres south of Hamadan and were the site of only a small village in the seventeenth century.

this city except for the lord who rules it, who is a Persian and a Muslim. They are also allowed to practice their religion freely and have their church there. The governor's representatives also forced them to let us see their divine service and other notable things. Thus they first showed us the tomb of Queen Esther and Mordecai; moreover, the tomb of the Prophet Daniel, which the Jews prized greatly. Outside the city at the River Ulaj,<sup>188</sup> which runs through the city, stood a white pillar where they said that the Prophet Daniel supposedly had the vision about four great rulers in the world. The Christian Armenians showed us a beautiful house, [45] though very dilapidated, which they claimed to be the synagogue from which the Three Kings travelled to offer the Saviour gold, frankincense, and myrrh. This place is very healthy and pleasant, abundant in all kinds of foodstuffs. Among everything else found here is a kind of white wine which, though its taste is a little bitter, is nevertheless very healthy for a person. These Jews have the same manners in selling and buying as the Persians, in that they sell firewood, milk, water, wine, etc.: in sum, all kinds of foodstuffs, etc.

#### CHAPTER 31. ISFAHAN

Issphahan is the royal seat of Persia and is in its extent three times the width of Paris in France. And though I have never been to Paris, and so cannot know about its size, it is true that Isfahan (which was once, and still is on maps, named Hagistan) is so large that it takes six days to travel on horseback around it outside the walls, but three days inside them. It has four suburbs, of which the finest is Julfwa,<sup>189</sup> which is at least

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188 The river or canal Ulai is mentioned twice in the Book of Daniel (8:2, 16) but the name has not been current in recent centuries. NMK is extrapolating from his belief that Hamadan is identical to biblical Susa.

189 New Julfa, Isfahan's Armenian quarter, founded in 1604 by means of forced population displacement (Della Valle 1989, p. 122; Hedin 1921, p. 311).

as large as all of Stockholm with Norrmalm and Ladugårdslandet.<sup>190</sup> Here all the Christians live and have their own jurisdiction and court. The judge is an Armenian and keeps court as magnificently as a prince. And if it happens that a Turk has done an injustice to a Christian, then [46] the case will be heard in the Turkish *Kadi*, and the Turk punished by his authorities. But if the guilt is with the Christian, then he is sent to the Christian Council, and they cannot pardon anyone, but must immediately punish the criminal. The Christians can freely practise their faith here, indeed, the king himself often joins their congregations and watches their divine service with great solemnity. The monks are in great favour with the king, and are strictly protected, particularly the Augustinians, because they have a beautiful church there. The Carmelites have two, the Franciscans also two, but the Armenians have six.

#### CHAPTER 32. THE COURT OF THE SHAH

With respect to the splendour and court of the Persian king, the ruling lord at the time when I stayed there was a very good young man named Shah Abbas,<sup>191</sup> whom I and many other European Christians served as soldiers for eighteen months. In 1652 his age was twenty-two years.<sup>192</sup> He already had a little son and a daughter, and in addition to his recognised wives he had four hundred concubines, all of whom were daughters of the country's most important lords. He is certainly a Muslim, but nevertheless he likes to hint that he is friendlier to the Christians than to his own people. All his tableware, such as dishes, plates, and bowls, is of fine gold, indeed, some are so large that you cannot carry them in your hands, but on your head. Many are even so heavy that they have to carry them on stretchers [47] trimmed with gold. And on all these

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190 Today the urban precincts of Norrmalm and Östermalm. NMK is likely thinking only of the minor parts that were densely built up in his day.

191 Abbas II, reigned 1642–1666.

192 He was born on 30 August 1632 and was not in fact twenty-two in 1652.

vessels, instead of royal arms, he uses a mark roughly like this: (see illustration).



In his stable where the royal horses are fed, and which are one hundred in number, there is exceptional cleanliness. All are tethered with golden chains and shod all around with golden shoes, covered with the finest golden cloth that is made and woven in the country. The vessels or tubs in which water is fetched for them are all of fine Arabian gold. For each horse in the stable hang beautiful saddles with saddle blankets, finely decorated, one better than the next, with diamonds, turquoises, sapphires, rubies, etc.; in addition, the most splendid that can ever be, studded with big pearls. In sum, everything you see there is nothing but pure gold, indeed the hinges that the gates hang on, as well as everything else. On one side in the gatehouse he has a mountain cat<sup>193</sup> standing, which injures people when he can reach them. He is the size of the largest lynx but grey in colour. On the other side a mountain rat shut in a cage: she was so tame that she took bread from people's hands. Every time I walked past her she scratched the bars with her claws because I always gave her something to eat from my hand. She was just like a rat in colour and shape, but was the size of a half-year-old pig. Outside the gate lay [48] nine lions which were only tethered with thin ropes around their necks, and each had a little dog to play with. One was white as snow but tawny at the front; the others were pale, and none of them did people any harm.

CHAPTER 33. PERSIA: THE SHAH'S HUNTS AND  
BENGT OXENSTIERNA'S GRAFFITI

For hunting he uses falcons, among which is a white raven with a red beak, which is as swift in striking birds as the falcons. He also has two

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193 SAOB suggests that this is a Pallas's cat, *Otocolobus manul*. That feline is however typically far smaller than a lynx.

hundred leopards which have been trained so that no game in the fields or forests can pass them by without their catching it in three leaps. And if a leopard does not catch the beast in three leaps, then it puts its tail between its legs, retreats and is ashamed. In sum, this king's splendour, along with the activities in this city, of all kinds of crafts, of the number of people, is too hard for me to describe from fresh memory, and it would take a long time. Instead, those who have Olearius's diary<sup>194</sup> about the Holsatian envoys' journey to Persia can experience this city's particulars in detail. Thus I want to move on briefly to the Kingdom of Persia itself, and name the towns that I have visited, and describe them in simple terms. Here in Issphahan and the suburb Julfa, where all Christians live, I found the late Lord Bengt Oxenstierna's<sup>195</sup> name in an Augustinian monastery inscribed with a nail on the wall in Latin. And it goes as follows in Swedish.<sup>196</sup>

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194 Adam Olearius (Ölschläger; 1599–1671) served as secretary to an ambassador from Frederick III, Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, to the shah of Persia in 1635–1639 (Brancaforte 2003). Olearius published a book about his experiences in 1647 which was re-issued in 1656 and appeared in English in 1662.

195 Bengt Bengtsson Oxenstierna (1591–1643) was a Swedish royal councillor and diplomat who travelled extensively in continental Europe and the Near East (Hedin 1921; Potts 2021). He was the first Swede to make a documented visit to Persia and served briefly at the court of Shah Abbas I. The year 1611 stated by NMK is, however, erroneous. Lord Bengt began his journey to Persia in 1616. NMK reports similar inscriptions in Shiraz and Baghdad (Chapters 41, 48). This odd recurrence may have been invented to please the travelogue's publisher Count Per, who was Lord Bengt's brother-in-law (Almqvist 1966, p. 346). NMK omits the Shiraz inscription in his autobiography. He may in fact have been inspired to invent all three inscriptions when reading the just cited Olearius: this author reports (1647, p. 366) that he saw Bengt Oxenstierna's name carved on a caravanserai wall near Qasvin.

196 NMK's Swedish version of the inscription is in rhymed couplets. If the original inscription was indeed in Latin (and if it is not fictitious), then NMK must have translated it quite freely. I have aimed to preserve the sense but not the rhymes.

[49] My God is a good companion to me  
And virtue is in close company with me,  
Thus I fear no danger,  
I was not proud even in success;  
But I go everywhere unafraid  
Bengt Oxenstierna, a good Swedish baron  
In the year 1611,  
Since our Saviour was born.

#### CHAPTER 34. PERSIA: NATURE AND CULTURE

##### *Persia or Farsia*

It is a very fertile country with wheat and barley, which they sow twice and reap twice a year. Also a very mountainous country, where lovely grapes grow in great abundance all year round, both winter and summer, so that when one vine blooms, then the second is unripe, the third half ripe, and the fourth ripe. And this goes on continuously every year. They also love gardens greatly, where they have all sorts of plants, roses as well as fruit trees such as pears, white apples, almonds, plums, all kinds of sweet and sour limes, as well as several unknown to us, very large and delicious melons and watermelons,<sup>197</sup> which cool a person excellently. They have many wondrous springs or fountains in their gardens. Here are found the best horses that can ever be in Asia. So many dates grow in the countryside that they even feed their donkeys, sheep, oxen, and [50] cows with them. Here are abundantly found the best sheep that can ever be in the world. Of the most valuable trees, there are very tall cypresses here, and another one called *Arbor de Raiss*,<sup>198</sup> which is at least one Italian mile around including the branches, and more than six thousand men could stand under it, and regardless of how hard

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197 Or, less likely, 'water lime fruits': the first edition has *WatnLemoner*.

198 Banyan tree, *Ficus benghalensis*; Spanish, *árbol de raíz*, 'tree of root' (Gold 1806, 'Flying foxes and banyan tree').

it rained, not a drop would fall on them. Its branches are so long that they hang to the ground, and grow up again, they droop down again, and grow up again, so that one branch can easily reach for more than a half quarter of a mile from the trunk itself. It has large leaves but bears no fruit, but when you break a branch from it, a white sap oozes out, which if it gets into a person's eye, they will immediately go blind. Here are also a lot of deer, wild boar, which the Persians do not eat, but they do eat wild donkeys. Here is also a beast of prey which they call jackal, not unlike a wolf. These catch or greatly wound both birds and beasts, indeed, if they do not protect their dead in solid and deep tombs, then they dig them up and eat them. The Christians believe that this is the hyaena of which the naturalists write.<sup>199</sup> Several kinds of bird are found here, but no geese, only chickens and partridges, several hundred together in a flock. Large and small turtle doves, cranes, herons, storks, crop-geese,<sup>200</sup> etc. The pelican is also seen here, but it never cuts up its chest [51] over its dead chicks,<sup>201</sup> nor is its beak suitable for it to cut with in this manner, as the naturalists report. The Persians are white in complexion, though tending a little toward yellow. They are a proud, greedy, warlike people, similar to the Poles in their dress, except for the headgear, for which they have a mandel or turban. The king can in a matter of days muster several thousand cavalry of which some are

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199 Hyaenas and jackals occupy similar ecological niches but are not in fact closely related.

200 *Kroppgäss*, an unknown species. Danish *kropgaas* and German *Kropfganz* mean pelican, but NMK mentions the pelican separately here. In analogy with Swedish *kroppduva*, a *kroppgäs* would be a goose that can inflate its crop. But NMK states that there are no geese in Persia (which there are in fact – he may be thinking of domestic geese). John Latham (1824, p. 238) equates the crop-geese noted by earlier authors in South Africa with the Chinese goose, a domesticated variety of the swan goose *Anser cygnoides*.

201 Referring to the earlier version of the pelican's tale from the third century *Physiologus* (pp. 9 f) where it kills and resurrects its chicks, not the more widespread one where it simply feeds them with its own blood.

equipped with mail coats, bows, and arrows, and some with pikes. He uses nothing in particular for the infantry, they have extremely heavy muskets, and strike the cock over towards the muzzle and not to the stock. Their matches are of cotton. On campaigns he also uses cannon, but they are all managed by Christians. At the time when I was there, the artillery was directed by an Englishman and a Holsatian. On the border between Parthia and Persia is a little town named IIsikas<sup>202</sup> where only Muslims live, and they are all farmers. Here also is grown the best wheat in the country, for which they are very famous, and when they say that 'this is *Nun de Iesikass*',<sup>203</sup> then they love it more than any other grain grown in the country.

#### CHAPTER 35. YAZD

Iessedh<sup>204</sup> is a beautiful city, about two Italian miles in circumference. Here rules a relative of the king named Sultan Mesadie. The city is surrounded by a wall, but this wall is not very strong, but just next to the city is a high mountain [52] on which is a castle with some cannon, and many soldiers. No foreigner is allowed to go there, and the soldiers stationed there are never permitted to leave for as long as they live. There is only one road or narrow path up there, and everything they need is pulled up there by billy goats and little donkeys. Here are also beautiful buildings, particularly their churches, all built of glazed stone. There is also great trade here in all kinds of goods, particularly precious stones, gold and silver cloth, all kinds of golden and silken fabrics, cotton fabric, tapestries, blankets, etc. Not to mention all kinds of foodstuffs. Several thousand soldiers are also stationed here, who diligently stand guard on the walls. The Christians, more than a thousand souls, live in

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202 Izadkhast (Floor 1999, pp. 72, 86, and note 49).

203 Persian *nun-e Izadkhast*, 'bread of Izadkhast'. Floor (1999, p. 82, note 49) also reports sources for this saying.

204 Yazd.

a suburb named Kombella<sup>205</sup> where the Catholics have two Franciscan monasteries and one Carmelite one, which enjoy great privileges here, and walk in their processions about town, as safe as if they were in Rome. The Christian congregation there grows day by day so that there is no longer room for them all, and they have to move elsewhere. I once saw in a church more than sixty Persians and Moors who have allowed themselves to be baptised by their own free will, and have received the Christian creed. This city is famous among the Persians and is called *Koss de Iessedh*<sup>206</sup> because the most beautiful women live here.

CHAPTER 36. KOHURESTAN AND KISHI/GUR-I-BAZARGAN

[53] Korastan<sup>207</sup> is a little open town, roughly a little larger than Strängnäss;<sup>208</sup> everyone who lives here is Christian and they have two Catholic monasteries here, and an Armenian one. They associate very well with each other, and are extremely keen to receive a European Christian, particularly one who can speak some Latin with their priests, because they think (as the monks have deceived them into believing) that the Latin language is a language of angels, and only religious officials may use it. This was a very good-hearted, and merciful people who beseeched me to stay longer with them. Some of them are merchants but most are farmers.

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205 The former Christian quarter of Yazd is named Gozargah.

206 *Koss/Kosse* was a medieval name for Yazd itself. It is not clear why the local women's looks would inspire anyone to call the city 'The Yazd of Yazd'.

207 Kohurestan in Khamir County between Lar and Bandar Abbas (Floor 1999, pp. 79, 88, and note 126).

208 A Swedish cathedral town on Lake Mälaren whose population in 1650 was about six hundred according to [Ortshistoria.se](http://Ortshistoria.se), Stads- och kommunhistoriska institutet, University of Stockholm. Kohurestan on the other hand is a small settlement at a bridge in a wasteland and does not seem ever to have had hundreds of inhabitants or several monasteries. It is not clear which place NMK is describing.

Kurbazarihan<sup>209</sup> is a little town where all the inhabitants are Jews, and all are silk weavers, and they are severely forced and pressed by the ruling lord named Mahomet Roskar. I must say that they were dishonest people, because they sold us food and water for money, and grain and dates, and it was all spoiled and there was also very little of it. A few Muslims lived there, they were much more honest than the Jews.

CHAPTER 37. SHAHREZA/QOMSHEH

Commisia<sup>210</sup> is a pretty little town where everyone is a Muslim. They received us very well and let us buy whatever we wanted, because here we had to stock up on water and food for three and a half days, as next on our journey was a high mountain named Udian,<sup>211</sup> which takes three and a half days [54] to travel over. Before you reach the town, about a quarter of a mile away, you see large roundels around the town with many square gates, as if they were all large forts, but they are nothing

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209 Near modern Kishi in Khamir County between Lar and Bandar Abbas (Gaube 1979, p. 46; Floor 1999, pp. 79, 88, and note 125). Jean Chardin (1811, VIII, p. 494) calls it *Courbazargan* and describes it as an uninhabited caravanserai or watering place in a dry hilly area one day's march from Kohurestan. *Gur-i-bazargan* means 'cemetery of the merchants', cf. Hedin 1921, pp. 417, 422. Though NMK clearly travelled the Bandar Abbas–Lar road past Kohurestan and Kishi, here again he seems to have misremembered the name of the little Jewish town tyrannised by Mahomet Roskar. Or is he inventing things to paint an anti-Semitic contrast?

210 Modern Shahreza in Isfahan Province. Shahreza and nearby Qomsheh-Commisia were separate settlements in NMK's day but are now joined under the former name. NMK's description of Qomsheh agrees in several particulars with those of other travellers from the period (Floor 1999, pp. 71 f, 86).

211 The distance between Shahreza-Qomsheh and Persepolis is 250 kilometres as the crow flies. This is far more than NMK's stated three and a half days' travel and there is more than one mountain to negotiate. But on this way there is in fact a village that was once named Ujan: modern Kenas-e Sofla in Eqolid County; cf. Floor 1999, pp. 73, 86, and note 63.

but dovecotes,<sup>212</sup> in which they have thousands of tame pigeons, and the inhabitants are not permitted to trade in anything but pigeons. Just outside town is a little church with a round tower, in which is a tomb that they venerate greatly, saying that there lies buried one of Muhammad's greatest apostles named Abu Bakr.<sup>213</sup> Many lamps burn here both night and day, we Christians were not allowed to enter. Nearby was a masonry fish pond in which was clear running water, through iron grilles, in which went large fish like salmon, not unlike carp, that had big gold rings in their snouts. They were so tame and unafraid that they took chewed bread from the hands of people, but no one dared touch them even the slightest on pain of death. Here we had to wait until the man we had sent returned, who had gone over the mountain to find out if there was any caravan or guard troop on the road that could meet us, or if any camped on the other side, to ask them to remain until we could cross over.

#### CHAPTER 38. MOUNT UJAN AND THE RUINS OF PERSEPOLIS, PART I

Once our runner returned we began the ascent on the following day, and went [55] with our guard troop more than three Swedish miles daily. And we had taverns everywhere along the road where we could stay overnight, and had at least three hundred beasts of burden with us. When we began ascending we saw the clouds or sky cover above us, and when we had gone up we saw them both above and below us. The next day a storm came and took away two donkeys with their loads because they walked beside the road. Four camels fell to their deaths. And this mountain is nothing but hard grey rock without any forest or the slightest heather or brush. The cuckoo made itself heard constantly, night and day. The nightingale was heard with its sweet melodies

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212 Chardin (1811, III, p. 386) reports three thousand dovecotes surrounding Isfahan. Their main purpose was to amass pigeon droppings as manure for melons.

213 This was actually the tomb not of Caliph Abu Bakr, but of the Shah Reza who gave the town its modern name.

below the mountain. When we were at the peak we could see very far around us. The caravaners told us that brigands would hide in crevices all along the road and often attacked weak parties, but we saw none. Beside the road we saw many little towers, about four or four and a half ells high,<sup>214</sup> in which brigands had been walled up. Because as soon as one is apprehended, they bind his hands and feet and then wall him up in such a thing by the road, where he must starve to death.<sup>215</sup> On the fourth day, counted from when we began to ascend the mountain, we came down and rested at a hamlet named Majn.<sup>216</sup> Then we were to travel across a wide plain, three days across, and when we were [56] at the middle of it we saw nothing but the sky and the earth (like when at sea, sky and water), no village, town, hamlet, or forest, except for some high mountains that reached high up into the air, of which the tallest was named Tsiel Monar. Here Darius is said to have had a fortified and invincible palace, but his main seat was in Persepolis,<sup>217</sup> because its ruins are less than three Italian miles from the aforementioned castle. Not only is this mountain one Italian mile wide, but also as wide above as at its foot, and furthermore so steep on all sides that it is impossible for anyone to get up there.<sup>218</sup> And there is only one way up

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214 2.4–2.7 metres.

215 Melchisédech Thévenot reports a mile marker at Dih-i Kuh just north of Lar into which a brigand had been shut as punishment: Floor 1999, p. 84, note 106.

216 Majin (Hedin 1921, p. 426; Floor 1999, p. 74 and notes 64–65).

217 NMK's information is confused: he has duplicated and moved a group of ruins along with its name. The ruins of ancient Persepolis are located sixty kilometres north-east of Shiraz at the foot of Mount Kuh-i-Rahmat. The site was known in the seventeenth century in Persian as *Čehel Menār*, 'Forty Minarets' (Della Valle 1663, p. 302; 1843, p. 246; Floor 1999, note 73). NMK spells this name *Tsiel Monar* and reports that it denotes a lofty mountain with an ancient fortress, located a few kilometres from Persepolis. In what follows he describes this mountain fortress in terms that make it clear that he has actually visited Persepolis itself, not a subsidiary stronghold.

218 This is an accurate description not of any mountain, but of the great terrace on which all the monumental buildings at Persepolis stand.

to the habitations themselves, which is hewn into the hard bedrock, as stair steps four ells long,<sup>219</sup> and you have to walk more than a hundred and some, then you come to a large and tall royal gate, under which lie two dragons carved from stone. Then you walk about another twenty or thirty steps before you come to the buildings themselves. There you enter a large vault carved with all kinds of flowers and decorations, and you must note that these buildings in the mountain are not masonry but all the houses and figures are excavated and carved in the bedrock. For this reason the palace is named Tsiel Monar, because it once stood on forty pillars. Because *tsiel* is forty in Persian and *monar* is pillars, and every pillar consisted of three stones, [57] and each stone was seven ells high, so each pillar was twenty-one ells tall.<sup>220</sup> Most of these have now fallen, only eleven survive. On each pillar a particular animal lies carved in stone, the eyes of which bulge as if they had an overwhelming weight to bear. On one lies an elephant, on the second a camel, the third a horse, the fourth a buffalo, the fifth a pig, etc.<sup>221</sup> And inside the mountain itself are sixteen apartments, all of which were once completely gilded inside. All the images and figures are carved like large ogres or giants. In one of the largest halls you could see two men, each sitting on a horse, and each wore a crown on his head. One was small-bodied, the other one large, and they had a ring between them that they were tugging at, and it seemed as if the smaller man would pull both the ring and the other man to him. In another hall, Darius was carved, sitting on a victory chariot drawn by two horses. Before him walked a group of women holding all sorts of musical instruments in their hands, and after him walked armed soldiers. In another a man stood and made sacrifice with incense, and a lot of people stood around him. In sum,

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219 2.4 metres.

220 12.5 metres. The first edition has the misprint '12 Aln' for 21 ells.

221 This strongly suggests the figurative column capitals of the Apadana hall at Persepolis.

you could see where bedrooms, a kitchen, and other rooms had been, because in the kitchen was carved a ladle, pots, and dishes. But these are now so shamefully destroyed by a crowd of thoughtless peasants who lived [58] nearby in the surrounding villages, that is, Mirpasko, Apgarem, Pologorg, and Siamsesange,<sup>222</sup> who hacked away the images with iron, carried firewood and fire up into the building, and spoiled and burnt it everywhere, so that it is a great shame to see how they have torn down and wrecked it.

#### CHAPTER 39. THE RUINS OF PERSEPOLIS, PART 2

They did this for the reason that when some European envoy or other prominent men have asked the king to view this house, they were accompanied there by Persian cavalry by which these peasants have suffered much forced billeting and trouble, and so they did not know better than to destroy this house in the hopes of freeing themselves from such hardship. But when Shah Sefi<sup>223</sup> learned of this, he had the noses and ears cut from all who lived in these hamlets, men, women and children, so that I have seen many there running around without either noses or ears at the time when I was there. The top of the mountain is as flat as if it had been planed, and you go up there through the houses on stairs. Up there were four hollow wells, a pond in which to wash yourself, and a fish pond where there were still fish. There also stood three trees; one a cotton tree,<sup>224</sup> the other a nut tree, and the third a lime-fruit tree. On one side of the topmost staircase was a little room in which stood something like a large chest carved from stone, and the lid on it, as if they had upended a baking trough over it, or another domed [59] chest lid. There, it was said, was an aristocratic tomb. And while the mountain

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222 Hedin (1921, p. 428) explains: Mirkasgon, Ab-i-germ, Polvar. Floor (1999, pp. 74, 86–87, and note 68) offers several attested alternative spellings for these three names. Neither author can identify *Siamsesange*.

223 Safi, father of Abbas II, reigned 1629–1642.

224 *Bombax ceiba*?

is more than one Italian mile high straight up into the sky, there are in the middle of the mountain's eastern side, between the foot and the top hill, two large doors, and there seem to be entrances inside them. Here it is alleged that Darius had his treasury. How they can have gone there and back again I cannot deduce otherwise than that they have hoisted themselves up and down with ropes from above. Because they cannot have gone down, since there can be no tree so tall that they could have made themselves ladders of it. Now this house is nothing but an owl's nest, and many storks have their nests there.

#### CHAPTER 40. TWO OTHER PALACE PLATFORMS

A quarter of a mile from this Tsiel Monar are two other mountains, but not quite as high, which are also very steep on all sides. And nor is there more than one way up, though not hewn with stair steps, but cobbled with stone in another manner. On top they are also completely level, and you can see where the houses were (but these are masonry), in the same manner where the marketplace was. There were very deep wells hewn from the bedrock, which were now completely dry, so deep that when we let big stones fall we lay for a long time and listened before they hit the bottom, and while the stone was falling, it gave off such a mighty thunder as if you had fired a whole *kartouwe*.<sup>225</sup> In these wells a great number [60] of pigeons roosted. We went up onto one of the smallest mountains at seven o'clock in the morning, and did not come down until after three o'clock in the afternoon. In this field Alexander the Great defeated Darius, and then after the victory was his, he intentionally set fire to Persepolis.

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225 A class of heavy siege guns whose sizes were reckoned as a double, whole, half, or quarter *kartouwe*.

CHAPTER 41. SHIRAZ, PART I: SEXUAL MORES

Schiras, or the new Persepolis, was once the royal seat of Persia. But now that Issphahan has begun to flourish, the Persian kings have moved there as the air is healthier than in Schiras. This city is about two Italian miles in circumference and very famous for the fine wine pressed here, because in all of Persia there grows no better wine than here. And this city of Schiras is ruled by a distinguished prince named Sultan Karathan Osman, a most pious lord, who has much love for the Christians, and often visits the monks in the monasteries, and never leaves without giving them something. Much trade goes on here, with golden and silk fabric, particularly with wine and rose water, because the Persians sell the grapes to the Christians and buy the wine back, as they cannot press anything themselves. Here also are made large amounts of amphon or opium, which the Persians eat when they want the courage to fight. Nowhere in all of Persia do the Christians and Muslims get along better together [61] than here. The Christians have two congregations here, one Dominican and one Franciscan monastery; the Armenians also have two churches here. In the Dominican monastery I also found inscribed on the wall the late Lord Bengt Oxenstierna's name with the heading as previously mentioned in the description of Issphahan.<sup>226</sup> Here are beautiful churches which, when the sun shines, give such a blaze back that it is impossible for anyone to gaze at them, because some are gilded and others glazed.<sup>227</sup> The Muslims alleged that in the Turkish church, which was gilded all over its roof, there was such holy water that whoever washes themselves in this water will immediately be healed, whatever illness he might suffer from. And they say that Muhammad's foremost apostle Ali, who also had Muhammad's daughter, named Fatimah, for his wife, was to have blessed this water with his words, which is not to be believed. And though there are public whorehouses in this city (and

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226 Cf. Chapters 33, 48.

227 That is, tiled.

they are everywhere), which anyone is permitted to enter, Christian, Turk, and Jew, nevertheless such women as step from their marital beds are severely punished. Indeed, if their husbands learned that they had even allowed their faces to be seen by a stranger, then there are two high pillars, equally wide at the top and the base, with brick staircases inside, which they must pass through with [62] the executioner until they arrive at the top, and then she is thrown down. But no duty is exacted from the adulterer. Great and gross sodomitic sins are also carried on in public here, both with young boys and also with little donkeys that they always keep stabled for this purpose, which are not punished.

CHAPTER 42. SHIRAZ, PART 2: A LARGE PARK AND  
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

In this city there is an enormous park planted very densely with all kinds of fruit trees, in addition to flowers. Here are some fine pavilions with holy water in almost every building (that is, running water, where you can refresh or cool your body in the great heat of the sun), and also many fish ponds. And this park is a double labyrinth, because if you enter, and have not been instructed by the park servants, it is impossible for anyone to get out of the park. I have heard told that a pregnant donkey accidentally got away from its handlers in this park, and she was then never seen or encountered by the staff until the donkey foal might be two years old. Then it was keenly enquired to whom the donkey belonged, and a poor peasant arrived who recognised his donkey. And the foal followed its mother, and was then almost two years old, and in the meantime had not been seen by any stranger or the park servants. Now imagine how dense the woods are (which nevertheless consist of fruit trees) [63] and how large this park would have been and still is in its full width, which I have also personally viewed a little of, that the donkey entered so secretly, gave birth to its foal there, and was found again two years later by the rightful owner. I have also heard a trustworthy man (though he was a Muslim) tell that a distinguished person of high pedigree, who had fallen from

grace with the king, is to have fled into this same park, and lived there secretly for many years with the guards' knowledge and consent, until he came back into favour again. I can hardly believe that there is any city in the entire Orient where Christians have greater freedoms than here. Persians and Muslims who have been baptised and have accepted the Christian creed keep a wooden cross standing on their houses such as do the European and Armenian Christians. And conversely, as much as the Christians are loved there, so are the Jews by contrast hated and despised.

#### CHAPTER 43. LAR

Lara is a small and very nice town, very famous for its fine craftsmen, and the copper and tin mines there. The town itself lies between six high mountains from which are extracted copper and tin, and on the two mountains to the east are castles occupied by cannon and soldiers. A lot of sheet metal is made here, from which is fashioned dishes, flagons, cooking pots, and everything needful in a household, all of which, [64] particularly the dishes, are tinned inside and out. Because all over Persia, in the homes of the high and the low (except for the king and the chancellor), are used no other vessels than tinned copper: neither gold, silver, nor porcelain. Fine springs also issue from these mountains, whose water they can artfully pipe and lead wherever they want, into their gardens as well as onto their fields far outside town. The steward was a Hungarian and an apostate from the Christian creed, and though there was no more than one Christian monastery and few Christians, he was not good to them, but did them only harm. I saw no domestic pigs in any other town or place than this, which he kept at his court, and they went in and out. I do not know if he ate them.

#### CHAPTER 44. ESTAHBAN AND ITS BEZOAR

Two days' travel from this town is a place named Stabbaron,<sup>228</sup> where the finest bezoar can be had, which the Persians call *pazar*,<sup>229</sup> that is, an antidote. And there is a great number of goats, not at all unlike our European ones, which eat a particular kind of grass that grows there, which causes a chestnut-brown stone to grow in their bladder, the size and shape of a chicken egg, and when it is complete or ripe in its life, the goats can no longer walk, and then they are killed. The king keeps this place and the goats under strict guard. These are judged and valued as the best, and when [65] you want to test the stone, you must take a little fine saw (because it can be cut) and cut it in two. If it is genuine, then inside it looks as when you slice a red onion in two, that is, with little rings one outside the other. Additionally there are two other kinds of bezoar, one found in the belly of monkeys, the other in the stomach of wild boar, which are in themselves fairly good, and greyish in colour. Nevertheless, this bezoar of Stabbaron is better than the others.

#### CHAPTER 45. BANDAR ABBAS

Gammeron is a little town that the Persians call Bander Bassier, that is, the king's Supreme Town of Knights, because it is located right on the shore of the Persian Gulf,<sup>230</sup> and there is no other port in the whole country. Here the king has his customs house, and collects an enormous toll from all foreigners who dock there with their vessels, both from Asia and Europe, except for the English ones, that all go free of toll,

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228 Estahban in Persian. Pedro Teixeira (1902, Appendix C, p. 242) calls it *Stahabanon*, 'where graze the *pagens* that produce the *pazar* stones'.

229 Persian *pad-zahr*, 'antidote'.

230 NMK's information is confused. *Gameroon*, *Cameron*, and *Gombroon* were early English names for Bandar Abbas at the Strait of Hormuz. His place-name *Bander Bassier* is however equivalent to modern *Bandar Bushehr*. This city is also on the south coast of Persia, but is not located anywhere near the Strait of Hormuz where NMK correctly places his *Gammeron*.

which annoys the Dutchman greatly. No very great trade is done here, but all goods are taken up into the country. There are no Christian monasteries here, but large numbers of Jews and Bania<sup>231</sup> who always and continuously ply their dishonest small trade.

#### CHAPTER 46. HORMUZ AND THE PEARL FISHERY

Ormuz<sup>232</sup> is a particularly large province that belongs to the king of Persia, and extends far along the coast of the Persian Gulf, [66] thus bordering on the Great Mughal. It is also however a little island, about five Italian miles in width, which the Spaniard has in the past appropriated and fortified,<sup>233</sup> built a castle on it, which is maintained to this day (but now manned with Persians), and on it are the same number of cannon as the days of the year, that is 365. And since the Spaniard began to antagonise the king of Persia somewhat, and took away the fine pearl bank there (which annoyed him greatly), thus with the help of the English, who surrounded the city from the sea with their ships, the Persian<sup>234</sup> recently conquered this castle on land, and depredated it deplorably, sparing no one, nor giving any quarter unless they wanted to allow themselves to be circumcised, of whom I still saw some in Persia, who are despised by all. The king of Spain has praised this little island above all others in the world, saying that if the whole world were a gold ring, then this little island of Ormuss might show itself as a stone on it.<sup>235</sup> The reason that he held it in such high regard is that he could obtain several barrels of gold a year from its pearl bank, which is close nearby, and the pearls are collected from the sea floor as follows. Next to this Ormuss

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231 An umbrella term for certain Indian merchant and money-lender castes within the Vaishya main group.

232 Hormuz Island and Province, which was a Portuguese client state until the time of Abbas I. NMK incorrectly identifies the colonial power as Spanish.

233 The Portuguese conquered Hormuz Island in 1507.

234 Abbas I with naval support from the English East India Company, in 1622.

235 A sixteenth-century Persian saying according to Hedin (1921, p. 378).

are two islands, one named Kissmus (that is, a grape or raisin),<sup>236</sup> the other Careka (that is, a swift cat).<sup>237</sup> [67] Along these two islands are many pearl banks or shallows which these pearl catchers, some hundreds or six hundred, visit every day, and make their living in the following manner. They dive under water at a depth of eighteen fathoms,<sup>238</sup> and the ones who are old use no weight on their legs, but the young who are learning tie a kind of wood that is very heavy to their feet in order to sink better. But before they go down into the water they tie their boats up both fore and aft so they lie still. Now they have a rope of two hundred fathoms<sup>239</sup> or more, one end they tie to the boat, and the other around their waist. At their waist they tie a big leather sack, which hangs onto their legs, or to the knees. On the arm they tie a big sponge, which they fill with oil, in which they can breathe both out and in, when they wish or need to. With this they speed down to the bottom, and they can stay down there for more than an hour before they come up. Indeed, as long as the oil lasts in the sponge, they can stay under water. And although the water in the Persian Gulf is very salty, they have very healthy vision, and their eyes are never ruined. They see very well with them on the sea floor, just as if they were on land, and pick or collect their sacks full of seashells or mussels, time and time again, and when the sack is full they help themselves with their hands, and so they have the mussels in the boat, and [68] put their sponges back into the oil. These mussels are shaped just like oysters, though many are wider and larger than a dinner plate, in which there are sometimes three, four, or five, sometimes no pearls at all. And if you break the shell while the fish itself is still alive, then the pearls might also easily perish. Thus they are tossed into big

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236 Qeshm Island. *t Eylandt kismis* on a chart from c. 1660 (*Grote atlas* VI:58). Cf. Persian *keshmesh*, 'raisins'.

237 Misprint for *Lareca*, modern Larak Island. *Lareeck* on a chart from c. 1660 (*Grote atlas* VI:58).

238 Thirty-two metres.

239 Three hundred and fifty-six metres.

mounds (like the largest ever house) in the heat of the sun, where the fish must finally die, and so the shell cracks into two pieces, then the pearls are collected undamaged from the shells. And meanwhile a poisonous stench comes from the rotting fish. The fish is thrown into the sea, but they collect the shells from which they burn lime. The pearls are brought to the castle Ormuss, not by the *kanna*,<sup>240</sup> but big barrels. And on these banks there is no danger to the divers, whether in this or that, as happens every day on the pearl bank named Keylegatan<sup>241</sup> situated in India on the Malabar Coast, between the island Tzeyton<sup>242</sup> and the mainland, where the divers are taken by crocodiles every day, of which shall be told later.<sup>243</sup> And curiously on this island of Ormus is found a kind of salt which is processed by the sun and has a high golden colour, like ducat gold, is highly prized, and fine healing oils are burnt from it.

## Mesopotamia

### CHAPTER 47. BASRA

Bassora<sup>244</sup> is a fairly large and strongly fortified [69] town located straight out from Euphrates and Tigris where the two rivers join and flow into the Gulf of Persia, nineteen Italian miles from Bagadet.<sup>245</sup>

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240 2.6 litres.

241 Chilaw. Misprint for Keylepatan (cf. Chapter 73). NMK reports many names with *-patan* (more correctly *-patnam*) in the region but none with *-gatan*. Chilaw is on the west coast of Sri Lanka and not, as NMK states, on the mainland's Malabar Coast.

242 A misprint for *Tzeylon*, that is, Ceylon or Sri Lanka. The southernmost stretch of the subcontinent's shoreline is known as the Pearl Fishery Coast.

243 Chapter 73.

244 Basra.

245 Baghdad. The distance between these cities is 446 kilometres as the simurgh flies, which would make the Italian mile a highly improbable 23.5 kilometres long.

Here the king<sup>246</sup> has two strong castles and always several thousand men stationed, being very fearful of the Turkish emperor<sup>247</sup> who has a very strong fort named Balsera,<sup>248</sup> manned with many soldiers, on the south side of the river, which is in Arabia. No foreigner is permitted to come into these towns. Both of these, Turkish and Persian, are very afraid of each other, lie there looking one at the other, and the distance between them is no farther than that they might easily shoot at each other with cannon.

#### CHAPTER 48. BAGHDAD

Bagadet or the New Babylon once belonged to the king of Persia, but a few years ago<sup>249</sup> the Turkish emperor took it from him with arms. Allegedly it is nearly unconquerable, both by nature and then its strong walls, and forts armed with cannon, and also by the location, because the Euphrates and the Tigris join here, and make an island, and then they run together again between Bassora and Balsera into the Persian Sea. And the city itself with its suburbs is larger than all of Stockholm's Norrmalm and Ladugårdslandet. In the city proper lives a vizier pasha who keeps himself very handsomely. And you could not go safely alone into the city because of the several thousand Turkish soldiers [70] garrisoned here. This city is decorated with many Turkish churches, which are very beautifully ornamented on the outside. But no Christian dares look inside for fear of his life. In all market squares are beautiful fountains, and the city can never suffer any hardship for want of water. Great trade is pursued here by Chaldaeans,<sup>250</sup> Indians, Armenians, etc. But few Persians come here. Here are also enormous gardens. This pasha holds a

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246 The Persian shah.

247 The Ottoman emperor in Istanbul.

248 Actually an alternative form of *Basra*.

249 Murad IV retook Baghdad from the Persians in 1638.

250 That is, the locals.

daily legal court here with capital punishment, and intense questioning of any people who arrive or leave the city, both his own [people] as well as foreigners. And there all foreigners – Muslims, Christians, Jews, and pagans – must give a ducat a month, and even if a person did not stay for more than a single night in the city or one of the suburbs he must immediately pay a ducat or a Hungarian ducat. And before any foreigner is allowed into the city he is listed at the gate, both his own name and his host's. If the guest happens to leave, then the host has to pay for him. Here are two fine suburbs, one Baltah, the other Ctesiphonta.<sup>251</sup> All who live in Baltah are Christians and all are Roman Catholics. Here lives a bishop, who is a Frenchman and very old, named Bernhardus L. Hey, an honest man. He is also a cardinal and thus he styles himself high-born. He maintains his estate, court, and table like a princely person. [71] Every day there are a large number of monks with him here who come and go in all countries. Every day he holds meetings and questions the fathers who arrive, who present large and long records of how many Christians they have converted, and then receive further instructions as to whatever else they must do. In the same manner a young monk is always sent with them, who must learn the language of the country and the minds of its inhabitants, which the older one has learned, and must continue to learn. This bishop has a very great income from Catholic rulers in Europe, particularly the king of France, with which he also supports the other fathers. His envoys travel around everywhere, and [where] they are most used to staying they have their congregations and retreats, as in Arabia, Chaldea, Mesopotamia, or Diarbegh,<sup>252</sup> Assyria or Assarum, Persia, Cathaja, Tartarie, the Mughal's lands, Costa

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251 Not identical to the ancient city of Ctesiphon which was thirty-five kilometres downstream along the Tigris from Baghdad.

252 Diyarbakır.

Malebar,<sup>253</sup> Narsinga,<sup>254</sup> and Costa Caromandel,<sup>255</sup> all the way to the Ganges. There another bishop lives in the town of Piplipatan,<sup>256</sup> who oversees the fathers who teach in Awa, Pegu, and China. Here<sup>257</sup> the Christians have beautiful monasteries, whose number is six, and they have very delightful gardens. In the monastery where the bishop lives, the late Lord Bengt Oxenstierna had inscribed his name in the hall where the ecclesiastical court is convened, with the abovementioned words, which he has written in Issphahan and Schiras.<sup>258</sup> They must buy both wine and [72] other foodstuffs that they need from Arabia and Persia. Among everything else to see at the monastery, the bishop had a frog in his kitchen which stood tied around the waist with a silver chain and lived under a stone where all the refuse was poured out. She was one and a half ells long and three quarters of an ell across the back.<sup>259</sup> Whenever a sheep was butchered the offal was tossed to her, which she immediately devoured. She had two eyes in her head that burned like fire, the size of two normal chicken eggs. When they stuck a hand in her mouth she suckled it like a calf. In the past there had also been a lizard, which was dead then and its skin stuffed with cotton. This one, as she always ran around freely both day and night (also the frog and she lay at night under the stone in the kitchen), for this reason if the cooks had left anything in the kitchen in the evening, which should be

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253 Misprinted as 'Costa, Malebar'.

254 The Vijayanagara Empire, cf. Chapter 77.

255 The Coromandel Coast, the southernmost part of India's east coast.

256 Pipili in modern Odisha, where the VOC had its head office for Bengal. "The Hollanders have [...] Several factories [...] in the Dominions of the Mogul, at [...] Pipilipatan" (Duval 1685, pp. 205 f). Erling Sandmo (2015, pp. 15, 22) mistakenly discounts the town as fictional because of Bernhardus Hey's giant kitchen frog. He also misunderstands the word *fyrfota*, which SAOB glosses as '(water) lizard' with examples from 1639 on.

257 In Baghdad.

258 Cf. Chapters 33, 41.

259 Eighty-nine by forty-five centimetres.

behind locked doors, particularly fresh recently butchered meat that usually hung on the walls, this lizard immediately stole it and dragged it to the frog, which they then both ate.

#### CHAPTER 49. PERSIAN CRAFTSMEN AND TRAVEL SPEED

In all of these Persian towns mentioned above things are very nicely ordered with the craftsmen, in that all have to live together in one street, and not mix with any other tradesman, who lives in another street; all the smiths here, tailors, shoemakers, weavers of gold [73] and silver cloth there. In sum, everyone (indeed, even the take-away cooks) must have their own designated streets. As for the distances travelled in a day, on which I have touched repeatedly before, they vary. Because between each tavern or hostel is little more than two Persian *coss* (that is, miles) which together make a bit less than a Swedish mile, and that is a normal day's travel, while you [can actually] travel three Swedish miles with a caravan or an armed party consisting of loaded donkeys and camels.

#### CHAPTER 50. FALLUJAH AND THE RUINS OF BABYLON

Felugo<sup>260</sup> is the remains of old Babylon, located nine Italian miles (that is three Swedish miles) from Bagadet, and you have to cross the Euphrates near Bagadet. And the ruins themselves are more than sixteen German miles in circumference, so that nothing is visible but one stone on another, and from here all stones are fetched (and still fetched daily by slaves and other draught animals such as donkeys and camels) from which the city of Bagadet is not only protected and reinforced, but also built, particularly in Baltah where the Christians live. Because the Christians have to pay dearly for every stone fetched from there, not only for the monasteries, but also for their own homes. There is nothing left to see in the ruins but the lions' den in which Daniel is said to have

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260 Fallujah.

sat,<sup>261</sup> and the furnace into which the three men were thrown who did not want to worship the statue that Nebuchadnezzar had erected,<sup>262</sup> [74] and a piece of the pillar where this statue stood; likewise a little square building of black stone said to be Daniel's summer or prayer house, but now all very dilapidated because of the great earthquakes that occur every year. Of which both the den and the oven were built in the Year of the World 3434, and 536 years before the time of Christ. But the city itself was begun 1,788 years after the creation of the world and 2,183 years before the birth of Christ. As for the Tower of Babylon, of which is told in Genesis 2, you can find no remains of its site or foundations, on which it would have stood. Because Bishop Berndt L. Hey told me that he had received an explicit order from the king of France to carefully research the site on which this tower would have been built. For this reason he sought out the oldest men he could find in Chaldea and Arabia and asked them if they might have any knowledge of the site, which they affirmed. Then, he said, one showed me this spot, the other, another, the third, yet another, etc. He thus could not draw any certain conclusion as to where this site would have been. For this reason those who claim to have been there and seen the tower's wall go greatly astray. Except that it is true that a piece of the town wall is visible, of which is said that it was built by Nimrod or Semiramis, so wide that if two or three wagons met each other, they [75] could easily go past one another without any damage. But now it is quite ruined. Still, you can note that it was once very thick. Many believe this wall may possibly be part of the Tower of Babylon, which it is nevertheless not, and it is older than the lions' den and the masonry oven into which the three men were thrown 1,646 years after the beginning of the world.

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261 Daniel 6.

262 Daniel 3.

The bishop gave me his personal certificate that I had visited these ruins and learned about their characteristics. Here are a lot of hauntings in the nights, so that no person can enjoy any rest there.

And this is now very shortly about the south and west parts of Asia, as much as I have seen. Now I shall move on to East India, beginning with the Grand Mughal's lands, and now India is the best and noblest country on Earth, which produces the loveliest and best fruits for us, which serve us both for sustenance and pleasure. India fills the entire world with gemstones, pearls, spices, medicine, and incense, and this land can fully well be called the Earthly Paradise, and includes many kingdoms and countries.

## India's Malabar Coast

CHAPTER 51. SURAT AND BIJAPUR'S INSANELY BRAVE INHABITANTS  
Suratte<sup>263</sup> is a beautiful town, located in the country of Gussaratte,<sup>264</sup> on a strait or inlet. Before you reach the town itself you have to travel [76] between two fortified Portuguese towns, one named Diu and the other Dive.<sup>265</sup> They are heavily fortified and located on two promontories, so that the Mughal cannot<sup>266</sup> force them. The town of Suratte itself is not particularly well fortified, but has a square castle with heavy cannon, and with soldiers from the Moor. Great trade is conducted here by various foreigners. The English and Dutch each have their place in which they

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263 Surat.

264 Gujarat.

265 NMK or his editor appears to have misunderstood an alternative spelling of Diu as a separate town.

266 The first edition has *iu thet kan* here, 'understandably it can', a misprint for *inthet kan*, 'cannot'.

always travel to and fro with goods, between Brochia,<sup>267</sup> Amadabat,<sup>268</sup> and Agra. In addition there are a great number of Bania here who are very cunning in trade and the art of counting, so that no Jew exceeds them in their dishonest small trade. For this reason no Jews can trade or stay there, only a few who travel to Wiciapour<sup>269</sup> to buy gemstones, particularly diamonds, because the best ones in all of the Orient are found here, and are cut from the mountains. This king of Wiciapour<sup>270</sup> with his entire people are soldiers and support themselves exclusively by plunder. And although they are subordinate to the Mughal, they do nothing at his bidding, but when he needs them he has to pay them what they demand, and he cannot subjugate them, neither with arms nor with words, because they live in the mountains and have placed such strong guard on all the passes that it is impossible for anyone to reach them. These reckless people are so unrestrained [77] that they do not fear death and consider it the greatest shame in the world to flee from any person or wild beast. A single one will happily go against a hundred men and not let himself be captured, but rather be struck down.

#### CHAPTER 52. MORE ABOUT BIJAPUR'S INHABITANTS

Four of these people stayed for a time in a house, and eventually a fire broke out in the house, which they did not try to put out, saying to each other, should we be afraid of fire? No, it should fear us. Three of them thus burned to death, the fourth fled, and when he came to his other companions telling them about their [the dead men's] demise, they immediately killed him. And such a fellow came riding up to a wide and deep well, at which his horse stopped, wanting to make a detour around it, which made the foolhardy man act rashly, so he spurred the horse

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267 Bharuch.

268 Ahmedabad.

269 Bijapur-Vijayapura.

270 At this time Mohammed Adil Shah, reigned 1627–1656.

on, wanting it finally to jump across, but it fell, breaking both his own neck and the horse's. One young nobleman of this reckless party who wanted to prove his manly prowess once and for all said that he did not fear anything in the world. And to prove his manliness he promised to go up against a tiger, which he also did. And he knew where a tiger lived on a mountain, so he went there alone against it. But he had wrapped and protected his left arm and his entire chest with fabric, which was stuffed full of cotton, holding in his right hand a particularly short and sharp blade.

[78] When the tiger caught sight of him it made a leap towards him; in this leap he put his left hand in the maw of the beast, and swiftly stabbed its throat with his short blade, so that the creature fell dead onto him right away. But the foolhardy nobleman died, too, a few days later because he had taken a blow from the tiger on his right shoulder.

#### CHAPTER 53. REINCARNATION, GUJARATI CULTURE

Their wives burn themselves alive when the men die. The true Mughals<sup>271</sup> are completely black in colour and Muslims. But the Bania are a blackish sallow and pagans.<sup>272</sup> These are merchants, craftsmen, and farmers, and in particular they are extremely skilful bookkeepers and counting masters. In their creed they follow Pythagoras's opinion that the soul of a person was lent to them by the gods, and when a person dies it then moves into another being, such as an ox, a cow, a donkey, a buffalo, etc., or whatever lives on the earth. For this reason they can never kill or eat anything that has received life, fearing that they might eat something of their own parents, family, or friends. And when they let their water, day or night, which both men and women do sitting down, they let it fall into their hand little by little and then throw it widely around them in order that no little bug, ant, or other pest might inadvertently [79] be

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271 *Mogoller eller Mogorer.*

272 That is, Hindu polytheists.

killed by the water, and they then would be the cause of their loss of life. And as they always let lamps burn all through the night, they cover the fire with thin films so that no mosquito that flies by night will destroy itself in it. When I was in the town of Surat we captured lice in paper and went to the Bania, killing one or two of them as they watched. When they saw this they immediately gave us money for them<sup>273</sup> and let them loose here and there in their houses. We did the same with pigeons too that we bought from the Moors.<sup>274</sup> The birds are so tame at these people's houses that they fly in and out, indeed, so brave that they (almost) take the food out of their mouths. Furthermore they are fed every day on the roofs, indeed, both four-legged animals and birds. If they [the Bania] find them [the animals] ill they immediately take them home, tend to them, and groom them, as if they were people.<sup>275</sup> In all the houses in this town, among the Christians as well as the Moors and Bania, little squirrels run across the walls in the same multitudes as flies do in our houses. As soon as a Christian or Muslim happens to touch slightly one of their drinking or cooking vessels, either on purpose or by accident, they will never use it again, but throw it away immediately. Their women walk about in long white coats, have big gilded silver discs in their ears, one made like a sun and the other like a moon. They are a very uncouth [80] people. I saw a girl there who had had her monthly period in her fifth year, and when she was six years old she had given birth,<sup>276</sup> and I saw both the baby and the mother.

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273 That is, for the remaining live lice.

274 Della Valle (1989, p. 133) reports the same 'joke [on] simple little Indians' inflicted on Bania who had settled in Isfahan.

275 Similarly, Della Valle (1989, p. 222) visited a bird hospital in Khambhat.

276 Cf. Pliny, *Natural History*, Book 7, Chapter 2: 'Among the Calingæ, a nation also of India, the women conceive at five years of age'.

#### CHAPTER 54. INDIA: GUJARATI RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS

Their priests are called Brahmins, and they walk about with a length of yellow fabric around the waist. Only the right shoulder and arm are visible. They look very disgusting, as their hair trails far after them and is full of cow manure. They rub it onto their bellies, indeed, use it in their food, and consider this manure like balsam, because they say that it is a blessed soul that has moved into a cow. They walk in the streets, holding a wooden vessel in one hand and a broom in the other, with which they sweep the streets clean everywhere in front of them, in order not to step on some bug and kill it by accident. They are such a stubborn crew that they will never let themselves be persuaded, and although there are several hundred Catholic priests in Diu, Diwe, and Daman (all of which are fortified towns inhabited by the Portuguese), they have never managed to convert a single Bania to the Christian faith.

#### CHAPTER 55. THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND COINAGE OF GUJARAT

Here in Surat are snakes that have two heads, one at each end, and they crawl with one end forward for one month and with the other the next, and cause great injury to people. In the sea, like also in the Persian Gulf, are copious numbers of grey snakes, an ell long, which are triangular, [8i] and these are eaten by all people, Christians as well as Moors. Oxen here are very small, and all have a hump on the back like a camel. They are used for carts in which both Christians and Moors ride. Cows are used for riding, and are completely festooned with big bells. This province of Gussuratte is very fertile, yielding abundant wheat, barley, rice, and cotton. Here is also produced the best indigo, butter, wax, etc. In sum, there is a great abundance of all foodstuffs here and all kinds of fish. The area also offers a kind of wine that is tapped from palm trees, called *terij*.<sup>277</sup> It is a very healthy drink, cooling a person greatly in the strong heat, and you can never get drunk or have any adverse effect from it.

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277 Bengali *tari*.

It has a delicious flavour tending both to the sweet and the tart. Silver and gold, copper, tin, lead, sulphur, saltpetre, etc. are abundant here. Fine gold coins are also struck here, called *achab*, as large and heavy as a *portugaleus*.<sup>278</sup> Another coin made from silver is called *ropia* and corresponds to half a *riksdaler*. A smaller, named *mamodie*, is worth one *riksort*. And yet another silver coin is valued at six *öre silvermynt*. Of copper they have *peijss*, corresponding to one *öre kopparmynt*. They also use almonds as money, and six make a *peijss*, so you can [82] buy oil, a lamp, milk, etc. for two almonds.<sup>279</sup> The finest cotton grows here on tall trees, as tall and thick as large aspen trees, which are furry all the way from the root to the top, both branches and twigs, and when the wool is ripe the leaves fall off, and so it is torn off like moss, and this is done twice a year.

#### CHAPTER 56. DIU AND DAMAN

In this province are the two<sup>280</sup> aforementioned Portuguese towns Diu, Diwe, and Daman. And they are so well fortified that they cannot be forced by the Mughal, and several thousand Christians live in them. All sorts of people can freely enter there except for Jews and Bania. The Dutch have often requested permission of the Great Mughal to attack these towns, but it is never allowed. Because if the Dutchman had managed to conquer them, he would have caused the Moors great mischief.

#### CHAPTER 57. INDIA: GOA AND VENGURLA

Wingula<sup>281</sup> is a little place of refreshment for seafarers, and though there is a Moorish governor here, nevertheless everyone who lives there is Christian and descended from the Portuguese, both mestizos and

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278 On the Indian coinage, see introduction.

279 Imported to Gujarat from Persia (Floor 1999, p. 74 with references).

280 *Sic.* This strengthens the hypothesis that *Diwe* is just an alternative spelling for *Diu*.

281 Vengurla.

castizos.<sup>282</sup> Their women are very wanton. Fresh water runs up the mountainside here against nature, and this place is five miles from Goa. And a kind of silver coin is used there which corresponds to one *marck* of good coin, and is called *larins*,<sup>283</sup> and is shaped like a trouser hook, or if you had bent a brass wire with some Moorish letters punched onto it.

#### CHAPTER 58. THE MALABAR COAST

[83] Goa is a beautiful fortified town where the royal representative from Portugal resides, and it was once called Kalicut.<sup>284</sup> Here the Kosta Malebar begins, and consists of these two kingdoms, Kalicut and Dekan.<sup>285</sup> The inhabitants are completely black with long black hair, and handsomely shaped. The ones who live along the coast are mostly Christians, and among them live many Portuguese, who have children with their daughters. Here the Catholics have many churches in the inland. These were once a very evil and barbaric people but have now been made quite tame by the Portuguese. And in addition to Goa they have two fortified towns here on the Kosta Malebar, Cochin, and Tuticore,<sup>286</sup> which went over to the Dutchman after being taken by storm in 1657. The Dutch dealt harshly with the townsfolk: removing several thousand Malabars, [selling] them as slaves, and looting and destroying their churches. Here also is found an enormous quantity of pepper, particularly long pepper.<sup>287</sup> Cardamom grows here, which is very fine and large, and it can be planted everywhere. But before the Malabars sell it they boil it in water to make it lose its power. There is also a kind of chicken here that is as large as a turkey, and those go quite astray who

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282 The children of a European parent and a mestizo parent.

283 The *larin* currency was named for the Persian town of Lar and circulated around the Arabian Sea.

284 Not identical to either Kozhikode-Calicut or Kolkata-Calcutta.

285 The Deccan Plateau and Sultanates were not in fact part of the Malabar Coast.

286 Kochi and Thoothukudi-Tuticorin.

287 *Piper longum*, as opposed to the currently more popular *Piper nigrum*.

believe that turkeys<sup>288</sup> have come from Calicut in India, because there are no turkeys anywhere in all of the East Indies, [84] even though the English and Dutch have often brought turkeys from Europe to the East Indies, because they have died as soon as they arrived. These Malabars suffer great injury in their gardens: they are never safe from the tigers there, neither night nor day, particularly those who live in the country. Both men and women go about completely naked, hiding only their shameful parts with a little cloth, and the greatest ornaments with which they decorate their bodies are silver and brass rings around the arms, fingers, and feet. Furthermore, they have such long ears that they hang half an ell down to the waist. And many may think that their ears are so long because they were born that way by nature: but no, they cut a round hole in each earlobe and hang thick lead rings from them which stretch and pull them bigger and longer every day. And they increase this weight more and more every day until the ears become the way they want them. Then they remove the lead rings and put on gold rings instead. The same manner is used among the Sinhalese, or those who live in Ceylon. They also have a single language, the same writing and alphabet; instead of paper they use green palm-tree leaves that are more than three ells long in themselves, and no more than two fingers wide, for which they use no ink, but inscribe the letters onto the leaves with an iron stylus [85] or a sharp hardwood splinter. This is used all over India except for Persia and the Mughal Empire. They have paper made from cotton, but the Chinese and Japanese have paper made from silk and cotton. They however do not write with a quill, but with a brush.

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288 *Kalkoniske Höns* (i.e., 'turkey chickens').

# Sri Lanka

## CHAPTER 59. THE CASTE SYSTEM

Ceylon is an island, five hundred miles in circumference. It has its own king who lives in a city named Kandia.<sup>289</sup> They are a black people, and all who live inland are pagans. (This island was once joined to Kosta Malebar.) But those who live on the left-hand<sup>290</sup> coast of the island are all Christians, and here the Portuguese have had three heavily fortified towns: Nigumbo, Columbo, and Fonte de Galle.<sup>291</sup> All the Portuguese in the land, indeed even the Christian inhabitants, are used as slaves, [the slaveholders] by no means allowing them to hear any Catholic priest, and they do not want to educate them in the Calvinist creed,<sup>292</sup> and so they [the slaves] are now neither Christians nor pagans. This king can at short notice mobilise ten thousand soldiers who use no other weaponry than little short bent sabres, pikes, and assegais (these are pikes that they throw with their hands). He keeps a very fine rule in the land, particularly with all kinds of social positions, so that the nobleman must remain such and take the daughters of noblemen for wives; a merchant cannot leave his [86] social position, but must remain a merchant, and take the daughters of merchants, and also his children and all his descendants. A peasant, a beggar, a dancer, or whatever craft it may be has to remain in their occupations with all their descendants, and never abandon them except for when he wants to become a laskarin<sup>293</sup> or soldier. The tailor's and shoemaker's crafts are never used here, because they all run around naked and bare-footed. But of all the social positions none is so despicable as the smiths, in particular the

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289 Kandy.

290 *Wenstre*, possibly a misprint for *westre*, 'west'.

291 Negombo, Colombo and Galle or Pointe de Galle.

292 As offered by Dutch priests.

293 Misprinted as *caskarin* in the first edition.

goldsmiths, who may never come under anyone else's roof, nor anyone else under theirs, and even less drink from vessels or share a dish with them, and nevertheless everyone has to put their trust in them. When they are given work, it is thrown to them like a bone to a dog, and when they deliver the work they have to go far towards them [their employer] and lay down on their faces, covering their eyes with both hands, and speak to them [their employer] in this manner, then they [the employer] pay them [the smiths] whatever they want for their trouble or work.

#### CHAPTER 60. ELEPHANT AND CROCODILE EXECUTIONERS

Trials are carried out very strictly here, using no other executioners than elephants and crocodiles, which they call *caymans*. The designated elephant is one of the largest beasts in the country, a horrendously ugly creature, his teeth are fitted with copper and also sharpened. When attacking wrong-doers he grabs them [87] with his trunk and throws him high in the air, and then lets him come unhurt back onto the trunk, carrying him before the authorities, as if he were asking if there might not be any pardon for him. But if there is no pardon, he throws him high again and lets him fall on the ground. Then when he lies on the earth he tears the head from the body with the trunk, and then digs a hole in the ground and buries the transgressor.<sup>294</sup> Then the authorities give him some *kannor*<sup>295</sup> arrack (this is rice brandy) for his trouble, and also some fruit. Now God has given the elephant such reason, or planted into nature, that when the one to suffer death is innocently convicted, then it will never touch the slightest hair on him or ever allow itself to be forced to.

He keeps the crocodiles in a pond, fenced around so that they cannot get out, to which perpetrators are thrown. They are awfully large: the

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294 Execution by elephant is likewise attested on Sri Lanka about the same time by the Englishman Robert Knox (1681, Chapter 6).

295 A unit of volume of 2.6 litres.

smallest one is twenty-four or twenty-five feet<sup>296</sup> long and has a maw that is wider than a man's outstretched arms from fingertip to fingertip. A crocodile has four rows of teeth in its mouth, two above and two below in the mouth, and the teeth all interlock. With one bite it can take away both horse and man. It also has four eyes, two above the maw and two below the maw. Its greatest strength [88] is in the tail, with which it strikes very hard, and is not as fast on land as in the water, because on land it cannot turn around very well because of its body and short legs. But they usually lie in the water and stay in freshwater streams, which are abundant here in this country. People there must always cross in little boats, which it [the crocodile] overturns with its tail and then takes away as many as there are inside. It also lays eggs which are hatched by the sun, and the young come out. In warm weather here on Ceylon I have seen thirty or forty lie together basking in the sun on the beach near a stream's mouth.

#### CHAPTER 61. TRIAL BY BOILING OIL

I have also seen a curious trial here, and then I saw the punishment follow immediately. Two brothers who were neighbours came to disagree or argue over a piece of farmland, on which was usually sown *cadien*,<sup>297</sup> which is a kind of grain similar to hemp seed, which they cook with pork, and the plot that they argued over may have been of about a quarter of a *tunnland*'s<sup>298</sup> seed corn. One said that it belonged to him and the other claimed it as his, so the issue could not be settled, and a trial was held outdoors. The case was carefully examined and deliberated by the designated judges, but no verdict was given but that a fire was lit on which a clay bowl full of oil was placed. When it got seething [89] hot

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296 7.3–7.6 metres.

297 Apparently some variety of millet.

298 A Swedish *tunnland* is about 4,940 square metres. The field that the brothers quarrelled over would have measured about 1,235 square metres, that is, a square 35 metres on a side.

three copper coins (which they call *pitkess*) the size of copper half *öre* coins were thrown in, and these the rightful owner of the plot or field had to take out with his bare hands. One of them did this fearlessly and without any injury or slightest burn. When the other one saw this he did not dare repeat it, but the land was assigned to the one who took the coins out of the seething oil, and the other was taken by the head, and tied to a tree, and a short string was put over his neck and forehead, which they twisted up with a piece of strong wood so hard that his skull cracked like an egg.

#### CHAPTER 62. HEALTH EFFECTS OF AIR

This island of Ceylon is one of the most fertile lands known on earth, and thus it is called the Earthly Paradise. It gives off such a lovely fragrance across the sea that when you are seven or eight miles from the shore a sick person can regain their health from it. But when you have been for a time in the country you discover a poisonous and very unhealthy air there, so that you catch an epidemic illness there that cannot be cured by any treatment until you are moved to another air. Then you shortly have a change, either to death or life. And if you grow very fat there, you can still never feel full or void your bowels, and still not feel any pain or burning, except for a little headache, [90] but you become so short of breath that you cannot walk three steps before you have to take a rest.

#### CHAPTER 63. THE BANANA PLANT

Here the earth is always green and the finest bitter oranges, lemons, limes, pomegranates, etc. grow all year round. All over India a kind of fruit grows that is called *pisang* or *bananass*,<sup>299</sup> which is flavourful and pretty, and grows quite strangely, and is an unusual fruit. The *pisang* tree is about four fathoms tall and two ells wide<sup>300</sup> at the base; it has

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299 Cf. Chapter 23 where NMK calls the fruit 'Indian fig', *pisang* and *muses*.

300 Approximately 7.1 metres tall and 1.2 metres wide.

no branches, but leaves, and every leaf is as long as the tree itself is tall, furthermore two or three ells wide,<sup>301</sup> but tapering towards the end, and the top itself is not wood, but leaves fused together, and you can cut down the tree with one blow of an axe. Its fruit hangs in a bunch under the leaves, so large that a man can hardly lift it. When the fruit is ripe it is all yellow, and each berry is more than half a quarter of an ell<sup>302</sup> long and looks like the teats of a cow, with a thin peel or skin on the outside, which you pull off with your fingers. The fruit itself tastes very sweet, but is not firm or dense, but as if you were biting into dough. I do not believe that there is any lovelier or better-tasting fruit in the world than this. The Christians, particularly the Portuguese, call it *figo*,<sup>303</sup> and will never cut it with a knife but break it apart. And although it is yellow, there is nevertheless a black core, which [91] looks like a man hanging on a cross when you cut it. They say that this is the forbidden tree from which Adam and Eve ate in Paradise.<sup>304</sup> Because as soon as they had eaten the forbidden fruit their eyes were opened, and they covered themselves with fig leaves, and these leaves<sup>305</sup> are very useful for that purpose, and you can easily cover your whole body front and back with the smallest leaf. Once this tree has borne fruit it bears no more. But you have to cut it off at the root, and in four months' time a new bearing tree grows again.

#### CHAPTER 64. VARIOUS

The very best cinnamon grows wild here in the greatest abundance, whole forests full. And no one may take it off the trees except special craftsmen who ply no other trade than this, and they are called *ska-*

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301 1.2–1.8 metres.

302 Fifteen centimetres.

303 Portuguese 'fig'.

304 Genesis 2–3.

305 The banana plant's.

liers.<sup>306</sup> The outer bark is grey, it is cut away and discarded. The inner is ashen in colour, it is cut into square pieces and then rolled up. When allowed to lie for a while in the sun it turns red, and within three years the bark grows back. This tree bears no fruit or flowers, its leaves are like apple leaves, and it is not very tall. Here are all kinds of fruit that are unfamiliar to us Europeans. It is also a mountainous country. In particular there is a very tall mountain in the middle of the country which the Christians call [92] Piko aff Adam,<sup>307</sup> and they allege that Adam lies buried there. But the pagan inhabitants call it Piko Oden, and every one of them comes every year on 3, 4, 5 April (which is their New Year<sup>308</sup>) to sacrifice to their idol, which they call Jacka, that is, Satan or the Devil. Because if you say *Vade pro deos*, that is, 'God be with you' to a Ceylonese, he will stand there and sneer and look angry. But if you say *Pallia Jackan*, that is, 'May the Devil take you', he lays his hands before the other's feet, as if thanking him for the well-wish. In addition to the grey mountains there are also many large and tall crystal mountains here, which give off such reflections, particularly when the sun is shining, that you cannot look at them. On a starry night you can make out all the stars of the heavens in the crystal.

#### CHAPTER 65. ELEPHANTS

As fertile and lovely as this country is, it is also full of all kinds of ugly and venomous beasts, such as in particular wild elephants, of which the best and largest are found here. They are caught in a curious way every year in the months of September and October, which is their time of mating or heat. They [the elephant catchers] have tame cow elephants that have been taught to go at night to a particular spot in the woods

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306 From Dutch *schillen*, 'to peel'?

307 Adam's Peak in mixed Portuguese and Swedish.

308 The Sinhalese New Year, *Aluth Avurudda*, is celebrated on 13 or 14 April in the Gregorian calendar.

where they know that the elephants congregate. These [the wild elephants] follow them [the cows]. In a big and wide field a narrow stable with very strong beams and bars is built, no wider than that one can go in [93] after the other. They cover it with green leaves so that no one can see but that it were dense woods. Here the cows go in at one end and out at the other, but all the others who follow must stay in there, and strong bars are slid into place both in front of them and behind so they cannot move, and their feet are shackled with iron chains. The elephant catchers know how to bind them neatly in there. Then they let them stand there for fourteen days during which they are given no food or drink, but they poke them every day with sharp hooks and irons until they are so exhausted that they can barely stand. Then tame elephants are brought forth whose teeth have been half sawed off. An untamed elephant is tied between two tame ones, and if it proves unwilling and does not want to become domesticated they poke it in the side with their stumpy teeth, or hit it on the side with the trunk, and it has to wander about between them all day tied up, and in the evening it is returned to the stable. It having then gone between them for some days, the elephant catchers enter for the first time and give them all kinds of fruit that can improve their strength, starting to speak with them and cajole them, also sit on top of them, and then let them loose with the others. In this manner this frightful and ugly animal is domesticated in but a short time. She [the cow elephant] carries her foetus for three years, and even though [94] they are the largest beasts among the world's four-legged animals, nevertheless they bring into the world quite small young. She has her teats between the forelegs, and when feeding the calf she lifts it up with her trunk, and always carries it with her trunk when she walks. An elephant never runs, but walks, and striding along it can overtake a horse no matter how hard it runs. Its strength is indescribable, as are other of its characteristics. Only these elephants found in Ceylon are considered the noblest and best. Because when elephants from other parts encounter a Ceylonese one they immediately fall to their knees and point their trunk towards the sky, as if they wanted to honour and

greet them as being the most distinguished. Because in the town of Battawia in Jawa a Ceylonese elephant went begging every day in all the shops, particularly the ones that sold sugar and fruit. One day however twelve enormous beasts came from Siam and stood in a stable behind the castle, and they were ridden every day through town to the freshwater inlet to wash themselves. Whenever they met or saw this little one they fell on their knees, putting their snouts straight up, greeting him. Additionally, the elephant also has the discernment (I am speaking of the tame ones) that when he sees a person of noble or high descent, no matter how poorly he may be dressed, [95] he immediately falls down and honours him. But conversely, when someone of base descent is dressed and decorated however finely, they walk past him as if they did not see him. In sum, this creature has more than human reason in many ways, so that they are lacking nothing but speech and language.

#### CHAPTER 66. APES AND MONKEYS

There are no tigers or leopards here, but monkeys and baboons in great abundance that cause great damage to the plantations, because the inhabitants cannot sow and plant faster than the monkeys steal. And when they go plundering several hundred gather together, and if they meet with a human they immediately kill her. The inhabitants call them *rullwaiss* and say that they are humans as well as they are, and might speak if they wanted to, but they are afraid of work. Baboons, which they call *oranghgutans* (that is, forest men) are very large and like humans in every way except that they are furry, though hairless on the inside of the hands and on the face. They immediately attack a human unless he is well armed. Wherever he finds a woman he rapes her, and in Pelicatte<sup>309</sup> I have seen a woman who was pregnant with a baboon's baby, and who also gave birth to a furry baby. As soon as it came from the womb it first jumped onto a wooden bar, then onto a door, and

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309 Pulicat, a Dutch trading centre on the Coromandel Coast 1608–1825.

finally into a tall tree, and then it escaped: because their art or skill was to aid themselves. Some of the monkeys [96] here are pitch black and have a big white beard<sup>310</sup> so that they look like a Moor. Some red, brown, tawny, and grey, of various sizes. When they hear a crocodile they immediately drive it from the shore and into the water with their shrieking and shouting.

#### CHAPTER 67. BUFFALOES, LIZARDS, SHREWS, LEECHES

Buffaloes here always stay a few hundred together, they are all ice grey, and point their horns very far backwards so that they can cause no damage with them. But with their feet and sharp hoofs they pierce a human, and there is no escaping them, but whatever gets in their way they trample. But someone who comes upon them by accident on some occasion, can be saved with a hat. They always keep to marshes, particularly to escape the great midday heat, and are greatly attacked by leeches. They have no hair because it rots off them in the ooze, marshes, and wetlands. The *leuwa* is a four-legged beast not unlike a crocodile, but greener in colour, and the largest are no more than two ells<sup>311</sup> long. It has very short feet and never hurts a human. It always stays in hollow trees where ants have their abode, which are its food, and other little bugs crawling on the ground. It is caught and slaughtered because it has a very white and delicious meat. It has two tongues in its mouth, one over the other. [97] Musk shrews<sup>312</sup> or greycats run about the houses in great numbers and do no other damage than that wherever they let fall their water, either on food or clothes, then it smells very strongly of it. Leeches live in the grass so densely that it cannot be described or written. Wherever a person sits down unawares (particularly when the dew is on the grass), several hundred will attack him and suck his blood. If he

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310 Purple-faced langur, *Semnopithecus vetulus*.

311 About 1.2 metres.

312 Asian house shrew or grey musk shrew, *Suncus murinus*.

lies down to sleep they drain the blood from him so he can no longer walk on his feet. For this reason all soldiers bring salt on campaigns. When they find one on their body they put a grain of salt on it, and it shortly falls off, but if you rip it from your body it [the body part] will soon swell up.

#### CHAPTER 68. VENOMOUS CREATURES

The cobra<sup>313</sup> is a snake, almost a quarter<sup>314</sup> long. I do not think there can ever be a more venomous animal in the world. It is black and has a pointed head. At the ears it has two wings that are round like two glasses, which it can pull in or spread as it wishes. When it becomes aware of a human it throws up its wings or spectacles and flies at her. Wherever it then touches her she ruptures before she can say the Lord's prayer, and there is no cure for its bite, which I saw on a standard bearer<sup>315</sup> who was bitten during the night at a place named Mature,<sup>316</sup> who did not walk three steps [98] before he was dead. And before we got him into the guardhouse he ruptured in our hands. The following morning the black Lascars came and killed it, and I got to see this, but we were warned not to come too close. In my opinion this is the basilisk that everyone talks about. Many scorpions infest the houses here, and you have to take great care in the night, when they primarily seek people. But as long as she [a person] sleeps it does not touch her, but as soon as she moves it stings her. I was stung twice by them, and I suffered such pain that I did not know where to turn before I received scorpion oil. They can never stand the heat of the sun, but (I have seen this with

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313 NMK has *Cobra Capel* after Portuguese *cobra-de-capelo* 'hat snake'. Cf. the older Dutch *koperkapel* that survives in modern Afrikaans.

314 A *quarter* usually implies one quarter of an ell, but fifteen centimetres would not be an impressive length for the cobra. Nor would a quarter of a fathom (forty-five centimetres). It is not clear what NMK means.

315 *Fendrich*.

316 Matara.

my own eyes) if it gets into the heat and cannot get into some hole, it immediately turns up its tail and stings its own back, which kills it immediately. Its bite is like a bee sting. The centipede is a venomous worm that causes people a worse burn with its sting than the scorpion does. It is the length and thickness of a normal man's finger and has many feet closely spaced all the way from the head to the tail, and at the end of it are four sharp spines, as long as hedgehog spines and similarly shaped. These too keep to the shade and cannot stand any sunshine. On the ships [99] these are found as well as the scorpions, which come aboard accidentally with the firewood.

CHAPTER 70.<sup>317</sup> THREE FURTHER SPECIES OF SNAKE

Here is also a kind of grey snake, not very thick, but an ell long, which hangs from trees, particularly where deer and boar make their daily certain way to rivers to drink. Then they let themselves fall onto their bodies, thus causing them injury. They also hang themselves up near hamlets, and if they hit a person, she will suffer great pain, and is in mortal danger, unless she receives a cure. At times when I and others were ordered up into the country, and had to lie down at night in the woods, and under the open sky, and always have a fire, then we had to watch out carefully for a kind of small snake which was snow-white and blind (they must no doubt have caught our scent) and came creeping stealthily to the fire. Any person who was stung or bitten by them had to chop off that limb or die. There was also a kind of snake that was green as grass all over. These the inhabitants took and ate, saying that they were not poisonous, nor did any injury.

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317 When the chapter division was introduced in the second edition, number 69 was skipped over. This represents no lacuna in the text, just a mistake in the numbering.

#### CHAPTER 71. CHAMELEONS

I must not forget the good and virtuous chameleon. He is not quite a quarter foot long but four-legged like a lizard, with a little tail, has a head like a toad, and on top of it a comb like a cock's, on its back it has [100] a little hump like a camel's, from which it has its name. Some of the natural philosophers write that he is said to be able to subsist entirely on wind without food for eight days, some say for three weeks. This is not true, because I have caught it (as they ran around inside our houses in great numbers) and kept it in a cage, where the wind could blow in onto it from all sides, but the poor creature did not live even for two days. But it is true as is written, that it can change its colours, because in the blink of an eye it will change to blue, grey, green, purple, yellow, white, orange, red, etc., except black. If it finds a person sleeping out on the ground, it either sits next to or on them, and takes care that no dangerous animal, such as a crocodile, snake, etc., will come too close. If it discovers anything of that sort, it runs onto their face and sticks its tail into the nostrils to wake them up. During the night in the houses (because lamps burn all night) it guards the people from scorpions, centipedes, and other venomous creatures that might appear.

#### CHAPTER 72. VARIOUS

*Kuliss* or bearers are a separate people among these inhabitants, who are not allowed to do anything but carry and drag. The heavier their loads, the faster they run. But when off work they cannot take a step, because if they have nothing else to carry they tie two stones together [101] and put them on their necks, with which they then run like whippets. Here is also another kind of people of whom some have a leg, some both legs, as thick as a log or an elephant's leg, and are born into the world like that. They will not confess to being inconvenienced by them. And after St. Thomas the Apostle had preached not only in China and Kosta Malebar, he also built himself a chapel here in Ceylon; there the apostle is said to once have prayed, when someone came at him secretly from behind and speared his leg with a pike, from which this villain's leg is said to

immediately have grown so large, and all his kin and descendants to this day are born with this distinguishing trait. And the Portuguese call them St. Thomas's Robbers. The Catholics claim to have his bones in the town of St. Thomae on the Kosta Koromadel.<sup>318</sup> When two brothers among the pagans of Ceylon visit each other, among all the other pleasures that one brother offers the other, he must lie with his wife at night as long as he stays. Because everyone is free to take as many wives as he pleases. Soldiers enjoy the freedom that whatever house they visit (except that of a nobleman), they strike the door with their rapier or pike and call out 'Po, po, po', and then the host must immediately come out and the soldier go in. He is free to play with his wives and daughters however he himself wants and pleases.

#### CHAPTER 73. PEARL DIVING

[102] Keylepatan's pearl bank<sup>319</sup> is a large village or hamlet where several hundred pearl fishers live. And the pearl bank itself is a bit less than half a mile from the shore, east<sup>320</sup> of Nigumbo. These catch pearl mussels every day from the shallows in great abundance, also in the same manner as on the bank at Ormuss.<sup>321</sup> But here they go down with the greatest peril for their lives, because crocodiles lie hidden in the shallows, and not one day passes without them taking someone away.

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318 On the outskirts of modern Chennai: see Chapter 78.

319 Chilaw, from Tamil *Cilāpam*, 'pearl fishery'. Swedish *perlebanck*, 'pearl bank', is misprinted as *Peleback*.

320 A misprint for west, as Chilaw and Negombo are on Sri Lanka's west coast: no oyster bank can exist half a mile inland from the city.

321 Hormuz: see Chapter 46.

# The Maldives

## CHAPTER 74. THE MALDIVES

The Maldivian Islands belong to the king of Ceylon<sup>322</sup> and are located west of Ceylon. There are eleven thousand of them, and they all lie close together in a row. On some live people, and on others no one can live as they lie very low. The inhabitants are all pagans just like the Sinhalese. They conduct no trade except with palm nuts, which grow here in great quantities, and use no other source of nourishment, and supply almost all of India west of the Ganges with them. The scales or bast fibre that cover the nut they use instead of hemp, of which they make ropes and cordage. They build their vessels from the same nut-tree wood, which they tie together with ropes made of the same hemp or bast, not using the slightest nail or iron fitting. They make sails for themselves of the leaves. In sum, everything needed for their vessels, both the cargo and everything, consists of these palm nuts. Otherwise these islands are very populous, and [103] [there are] in addition evil pirates. Whenever they even see a ship on the sea they head towards it with a few hundred canoes, bringing quicklime, always making certain to come upwind, then they storm [the ship] with their vessels, regardless of getting cuts, and throw the quicklime at them [the seamen] to blind their eyes.

# India's Coromandel Coast

## CHAPTER 75. RELIGION

Kapo de Kamerin<sup>323</sup> is a promontory or a long headland that reaches west into the sea and east onto the mainland, dividing Malebar and

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322 At this time most likely Rajasinha II of Kandy, reigned 1635–1687.

323 Cape Comorin, Kanyakumari.

Koromadel from each other.<sup>324</sup> And while there are many towns on Koromadel, which belong to the king of Kolkunda,<sup>325</sup> only the following are known to me. The inhabitants are called *gentiwer*,<sup>326</sup> for the reason that they are very inveterate pagans, celebrating a curious divine service, in that they pay great attention to capturing birds, and which animal they encounter in the morning. Because when they get up in the morning, they stand in their doorways and look carefully for which bird they first see flying, particularly hawks, which are very common there, whose souls are said to be the souls of soldiers that have died. They run towards these as they fly, and make sure that they come flying over their right-hand shoulder, so they will succeed in whatever they may try that day. Moreover, when in the morning they encounter a camel, horse, donkey, or cow that has something to carry, this pleases them greatly, etc. with many other follies. They celebrate their divine service mainly at night in the churches, and their idol is called [104] Pogada,<sup>327</sup> and he is cast from copper. They let lamps burn before him both night and day, he is terrible to look at, is made with an elephant's head and trunk, four human arms, his belly also like a human's, from whose navel comes a snake, the feet with double wings. Outside Pogade or the church door are big images of lions, elephants, buffaloes, cows, horses, etc. carved from stone, before which the wretched people fall down in adoration. When their idol, as often happens, is fetched from the temple and put on a wagon drawn by two cows, these poor people throw themselves under the wheels and let the wagon go over them, through which many lose their lives, believing that they will thereby gain eternal life.<sup>328</sup> They

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324 That is, it separates the Malabar Coast from the Coromandel Coast.

325 The sultan of Golconda, at this time Abdullah Qutb Shah, reigned 1626–1672.

326 Gentiles.

327 Here NMK misapplies Portuguese *pagoda* or the general Prakrit term for the divine, *bhagodī*, to this specific deity, Ganesha. A few lines later he instead calls the temple building Pogade.

328 Della Valle (1989, p. 136) reports the same juggernaut self-sacrifice.

also have a particular gold coin that they also call *pogada*,<sup>329</sup> the size of a bean, on one side nothing is minted, but on the other is the image of their idol.

#### CHAPTER 76. FOUR TOWNS

Negepatan<sup>330</sup> is a little town consisting of wooden houses built from bamboo, which is a particular kind of reed. But there are a few clay houses where the most prominent people live. Their trade is mainly in cotton and lime, which they burn from mussel shells.

Tegnepatan<sup>331</sup> is also an idolatrous town, where there are nothing but churches, where the country's commoners always come to sacrifice to their idols. The inhabitants make their living from the sacrifices, [105] and most of them are priests of the idols.

Tranquebar or Danskeborgh<sup>332</sup> was founded by the king of Denmark. There is nothing to distinguish the town except for the castle itself being so well fortified that it could never be conquered by any pagan potentate. But when the Danish merchants received no supplies from Denmark for many years, and also lost their vessels in the country, so that they could no longer conduct any trade in the country, they had to live on loans, particularly ones given to them by the Dutchman. And when he discovered that the Danes in the fort began to weaken, he offered the Danes supporting troops, which they accepted, but after the Dutchman was allowed to man all the posts, he threw out everyone who would not serve him. There were negroes there who spoke fluent Danish. At the time when I was there the Danes' priest, named Father Niels, lived in a hamlet and had taken a pagan wife.

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329 Such pagoda coins were issued by many Indian and colonial powers.

330 Nagapattinam.

331 Fort St. David in modern Cuddalore.

332 Tharangambadi.

Sancte Joriss<sup>333</sup> is a beautiful and strongly fortified castle that belongs to the English, and they deal very honestly with the inhabitants, who never permit anyone but the English to trade with them. This fort is next to a pagan town named Kaliotte, where no one but linen weavers live.

#### CHAPTER 77. A PRINCELY FUNERAL

Narsingapatan is the capital of Narsinga [106] where the king of Gollunda has a prince<sup>334</sup> with whom all Christians who want to trade there (such as the Portuguese, English, and Dutch) always have to maintain good friendship. The town is mainly clay houses, and with houses built of reeds on the outskirts, in which no one but linen weavers live, who weave the finest cotton fabric that can be found anywhere.<sup>335</sup>

This prince showed me very great favour, as in 1654<sup>336</sup> I was severely ill in an epidemic on Ceylon, and could not find any cure to help me, but was sent to Palikatte.<sup>337</sup> Here through a healthier air I was (thank God) somewhat better, as this air had the effect that the fluid began to flow through nose, eyes, and ears. There was a governor at Palikatte Castle<sup>338</sup> at the time named Lorentz Putt,<sup>339</sup> born in the See of Bre-

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333 Fort St. George in modern Chennai.

334 The Vijayanagara Empire was known as Narasinga in the West, in memory of its one-time ruler Narasimha Raya II, reigned 1491–1505. After a long decline this Hindu state had lost its independence in 1646, the year before NMK left Sweden. Thus his note that its ruler was subordinate to the Muslim sultan of Golconda. The old capital at Hampi had been destroyed in 1565 after the Battle of Talikota: the last imperial capital that NMK visited was instead at Chandragiri.

335 NMK sees no contradiction in linen weavers weaving cotton.

336 Probably actually 1652 or 1653.

337 Pulicat, a Dutch trading centre on the Coromandel Coast 1608–1825.

338 Fort Geldria, built by the Dutch in 1613.

339 Laurens Pit (1610–1684), Dutch governor of Coromandel 1650–1663 (Davidson Love 1913, pp. 116, 197, 525; Raychaudhuri 1962, pp. 50, 69, 146, 217).

men,<sup>340</sup> at whose court I mostly stayed and won the favour of his sons, who not only practised their languages, but were also great lovers of music, singing, and playing, with whom I mixed daily. At this time the old nayak<sup>341</sup> of Narsingapalan<sup>342</sup> died, and the son who was to come after him to the rule invited the aforementioned governor to his father's pyre, because among the pagans it is considered the greatest dishonour to bury the dead. This message did not pass the governor by, partly to enter a new alliance with [107] the young nayak, partly to see this sumptuous fire. When I learned what was in the offing I diligently asked the governor's sons to apply on my behalf that I too might join, which was also allowed me. And as I was still somewhat ill I could not ride, but was carried in a litter. When we came to Narsingapatan we were well received the first evening, according to pagan custom, but could not see or speak with the young nayak until after the cremation. Towards noon the following day we were accompanied by the prince's servants to the place where the cremation would be performed. And a particularly high platform had been arranged for us Christians from which we could see the whole event, not just unhindered, but well. When we arrived a few thousand people had gathered and sat down in a ring, inside which lay dry firewood and straw, all doused in oil, and around it large pots of oil. Then they came with the dead man, carrying him in a litter where he sat upright, dressed in white according to the Moorish manner, with open eyes, having a pinangh in his mouth (this is a kind of fruit that Indians eat to get drunk<sup>343</sup>) and a big gold chain around his neck. Before him went all kinds of musicians with drums, hand drums, flutes,

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340 On the River Weser near Hamburg in Germany.

341 NMK spells this gubernatorial or sub-regal title *neiko*. The particular nayak here was not the last Vijayanagara emperor, who, though powerless, lived until about 1680. Instead the deceased would seem to be the first of the subordinate rulers at Chandragiri under Golcondan hegemony.

342 *Sic.*

343 An areca or betel nut, *Areca catechu*.

several curiously shaped trumpets, some short and some [108] over three fathoms long.<sup>344</sup> After the dead man followed a large crowd of women who walked among [the] Brahmins or their priests. Then followed the young nayak with his councillors. And finally a large mounted troop with bows and arrows. The dead man was shortly set down and all the Brahmins stood around him. Eventually a priest threw a yellow sheet over him, and so the priests put him on the straw and then lit it. When he was in full flame more than thirty-five or thirty-six women began to dance around the pyre, each carrying a pot of oil on her head, and in the middle of dancing some of them jumped, one after the other, into the fire, whereupon more oil and straw were swiftly thrown onto them. But when they suddenly jumped, they and everyone else shouted so loudly that we were quite frightened. Five armed men, who had been his personal servants, galloped at top speed into the same fire, not one after the other but all of them at once. Onto them were thrown enormous amounts of straw and oil so that not just the fire and the flame, but also the great shouting and calling from the spectators stood highest in the air. And as most of the dust and smoke drifted thickly into our faces in the spot where we stood, most of our party fell ill. But I, who had been taken there in a sickly state, was so changed, and attacked by worse illness, that no one expected any life in this world for me. As [109] the governor saw that all hope of life was lost, he left me there, and on his departure he tearfully gave me over into the hands of God. Meanwhile he handed me over to the young nayak or prince who immediately put me under strong guard. And he sent me whatever I asked for (indeed, more than I needed), particularly the finest water anyone could wish for. But the worst thing was that no one understood me, nor I them. For this reason the nayak had a Portuguese boy join me after a few days, who knew the pagan language. After staying there for more than two weeks, and meanwhile walking alone in the town, particularly

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344 More than 5.3 metres.

at the nayak's court, among these pagans like a sheep among wolves, several women began to visit me frequently, marvelling at how it could be possible that a man could be so white by nature, as I always went about naked, hiding only my shameful parts with a little cloth. They spat in their hands and rubbed at my body, supposing that I had dyed myself. As time passed, and I longed for Palikatte, as I was in fairly good health, I went with my interpreter to the nayak and asked him to graciously grant me an escort through the country, which he did not refuse me. He summoned his councillors, and in full view of them all I was served boiled rice, fish, and fruit that I had to eat. [110] But first I asked for water to wash my hands, and then I stood up before the food and said the Lord's Prayer loudly so that everyone heard. Then I sat down to eat on the floor. When I had eaten I asked for water to wash myself again, and said the prayer again. According to the interpreter, these pagan lords were greatly surprised to see that I pressed my hands together when praying, and gazed steadily on high, and also washed despite being clean and white before. Then the nayak shortly had me clothed in pagan Moorish white dress and gave me four pagodas<sup>345</sup> (worth one ducat each according to our coinage<sup>346</sup>) and a passport written on a palm leaf, with which I bade them farewell in the Christian manner. Twelve men were sent along with me, four trumpeters and eight servants, and a cow had been prepared for me to ride on, which had a fine caparison with many bells and sheet-brass plates. In every hamlet that I passed I was assumed to be a minor prince. Everyone, old and young wanted to see me, and nobody left me without giving me something. As I approached Palikatte the trumpets began to sound and the governor sent some people towards us, believing that some envoy was on his way, and when they reached us they recognised me. Then I followed them

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345 Here the first edition has the expected *pagoda* rather than *pogada* as earlier in the book.

346 A Swedish ducat coin was worth about two *riksdaler*.

riding on a [111] cow all the way to the governor's door. All the soldiers stood at attention and some cannon on the rampart were fired. I was shortly fetched into the governor's presence and told him everything that had happened to me. My escort received great gifts and went back with their ornamented cow.

#### CHAPTER 78. THE COROMANDEL COAST AND BENGAL

S. Thome<sup>347</sup> is a Portuguese town with strong walls and ramparts around it, in which they have many monasteries and churches. And among other things they say that Thomas the Apostle lies buried there, whose bones they still have. Everyone who lives here is Christian, and although the Dutchman has often tried to take the town, the king of Golkonda and the nayak of Narsingapatan have not permitted it.

Pelikatte<sup>348</sup> is a little pagan town where linen weavers live who weave all kinds of pretty linen fabrics, and are skilled at painting and printing. But the castle is very strongly fortified and belongs to the Dutchman. Here I saw two women burn themselves alive, and once they were burnt their bones were collected and buried, on which was put a little tower, and food and fruit around it, which was eaten by hawks and other birds.

Masulipatan<sup>349</sup> is a little pagan town. Here the English and the Dutch only have a fort each where they live uninterruptedly and conduct their trade.

[112] Bengala is a province by the Ganges. In the town of Piplepatan<sup>350</sup> a son of the Great Mughal resides who rules the country. And this is how far the rule of the Great Mughal or Indostan<sup>351</sup> stretches. And the

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347 Fort St. Thomas on the outskirts of modern Chennai.

348 Pulicat.

349 Machilipatnam.

350 Pipili in modern Odisha, where the VOC had its head office for Bengal (Duval 1685, pp. 205 f).

351 Hindustan.

Ganges is very wide at its mouth, more than two or three miles. There is also a Catholic bishop in Piplepatan.

## South-east Asia

### CHAPTER 79. MYANMAR AND THE MALAY PENINSULA

Here begin the kingdoms of Awa and Pegu,<sup>352</sup> and, as I have not been there, I can report nothing about them. But it is a certain fact that they are all inveterate pagans. And these places, Awa, Pegu, and Malacka,<sup>353</sup> are all called Ophir, where Solomon obtained gold and other things for the construction of the Temple in Hierusalem, all the conditions of which seem to be similar.

### CHAPTER 80. GREAT NICOBAR ISLAND

Nikobaer is a rather large island and is located almost at the very middle of the sea lane when you sail from Bengala to Sumatra or Malacka. At this island we had to let our anchor drop, both because of a headwind and a current. The inhabitants soon came aboard to us with a large number of grey parrots, for which they asked any manner of iron tools and old nails in return. And as no one wanted to trade with them, they shortly broke the neck of the parrots and ate them raw. So many came that we eventually began to fear them, so we had to fire a few cannon. Then most of them fled, but not all. They were very enterprising, got into all openings, and whatever loose iron they [113] found they took. They were a large and ugly people, a blackish sallow in colour. In the rear they had a tail hanging like a cat's tail, but bald, and they could toss it however

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352 Two polities in modern-day Myanmar, both of which fell in the 1550s. At the time of NMK's travels the area constituted the Restored Taungoo Kingdom. His use of the older terms probably reflects his source literature and the fact that he never travelled there.

353 See Chapter 81.

they liked, like a cat does.<sup>354</sup> Our mate took a little boat and four men to investigate if there might not be anything useful and appropriate for eating or refreshing oneself with. But when the time was long past and he did not return, everyone wondered about it, particularly that they stayed overnight. In the morning the captain sent our big launch, well manned, with two little cannon in the bow. But when we came ashore and began to shoot, everybody fled into the forest. First we found our boat, completely broken apart and the nails removed, then where it smoked on the mountainside. When we came there we found the bones of the dead whom they had butchered and eaten. Then we went back aboard and made our report on what had happened.

#### CHAPTER 81. THE MALAY PENINSULA, SUMATRA, JAVA

Malacka is also called the Golden Chersonese.<sup>355</sup> It is not only a large region but also a heavily fortified town built by the Portuguese and then taken by storm by the Dutchman. It is located just below the midline or even day and night line. The country is very fertile, overflowing with sugar, rice, beans, *cadian*,<sup>356</sup> and all kinds of fruit and palm trees. Among other trees there is a particular one called the tree of sorrow,<sup>357</sup> [114] which is so dry during the day as if it had no life in it. But in the evening, as soon as the sun goes down, it begins to bloom, and at midnight the flowers are fully open. Shortly it begins to drop the leaves a

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354 People with tails were an idea common in NMK's environment: the Dutchman Jacob de Bondt (1656) travelled with the VOC some decades before NMK did and reported that such people lived in the mountains of Borneo. Cf. Pliny, *Natural History*, Book 7, Chapter 2: 'In other places again [in India], there are men born with long hairy tails, and of remarkable swiftness of foot'.

355 The geographers of Classical Antiquity used this name to refer to the Malay Peninsula, while to NMK it means a) the peninsula, b) the town there that would grow into modern Malacca City, and c) the Strait of Malacca.

356 Apparently some variety of millet: cf. Chapter 61.

357 Night-flowering jasmine, *Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*.

few at a time, and as the night nears its end, the leaves also fall off,<sup>358</sup> so that when the sun comes up again over the country, all the flowers lie under the tree, and this it does every night all year round.

Among other creatures here is an animal called *efma*,<sup>359</sup> the size of a year-old pig, and shaped in its mouth like a hare, fore-feet like goose feet and rear ones like human feet. They have pointy spines like a hedgehog, about an ell long, with which they injure people. Tigers, crocodiles, buffaloes, and elephants can also be found here, as well as monkeys, deer, rabbits, ibex, and beavers. Among all the dangerous animals there are big snakes, ten or twelve ells long.<sup>360</sup> Fish are also caught here in great abundance, which they without net or hook catch with their hands. Because as the land is low, when the ebb or flood grows, the water goes high up onto the land, and the fish rise, both small ones and large ones. And when the water begins to sink again, the fish stay in pools and pits, and cannot get out until the water begins to rise again. In the meantime, when [115] the people notice that the water begins to sink, they go onto the beach and chase the fish back up again, and so they are easily caught by hand. Once a swordfish had ended up in a pool or pit where it lay wallowing and could not get out, since the sea had left it behind. And there are many crocodiles in the swamp that wait for the water to sink so they can eat fish. A large crocodile came along and found the swordfish: it immediately attacked the fish, which swiftly got itself turned around and cut up the crocodile's belly with its sword.<sup>361</sup> When we arrived we found the crocodile dead next to the swordfish. But we killed the fish too and ate it. Also there are all kinds of delicious shellfish here and people catch enormous shrimp. One fish in the sea is

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358 This is probably an editorial error. NMK may have meant that first the *flowers* fall off, then the leaves.

359 Malayan porcupine, *Hystrix brachyura*.

360 Six to seven metres.

361 Cf. the whale battle in Chapter 6.

called a sea apple,<sup>362</sup> spiky on the outside like a heckling comb and no larger than an egg. If you happen to tread on it you suffer great pain. The inhabitants here are sallow-skinned and Muslim, a good-looking and well-made people.

#### CHAPTER 82. SUMATRA

Lesser Sumatra, or Jawa, is an island where only two kings live: the preeminent one at Akin<sup>363</sup> on the east point, the other in the island's middle at Jambe.<sup>364</sup> This island was once joined to Malacka<sup>365</sup> and counted as part of Ophir,<sup>366</sup> [116] as it produces (like Awa and Pegu do) gold, ivory, and beautiful peacocks. But now the sea has cut it off from the mainland, in the same manner as Ceylon from Malebar.<sup>367</sup> The strait is called the Golden Chersonese and it is little more than half a mile wide between the two land masses. Without doubt, when the ships of King Solomon were there it was an inlet, and then it has been cut through

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362 This apparently does not refer to the *Paracucumaria* and *Pseudocolochirus* sea cucumbers currently known as sea apples (they are safe to tread on), but to a venomous sea urchin. NMK had lived on the shores of Lake Mälaren and the Baltic Sea where he would not have learned about sea urchins.

363 Aceh.

364 This is confusing to a modern reader. NMK is describing modern Sumatra, the major Indonesian island closest to mainland Malaya. Though larger than modern Java, it was known to early European travellers (including Marco Polo) as 'Lesser Java'. NMK calls modern Sumatra 'Lesser Sumatra, or Java'. He places Aceh on the island's east point instead of its northwest point, which may be an error by the editor or printer. His *Jambe*, modern Jambi, is however not too far from central modern Sumatra, just as he says. In Chapter 90 NMK states that there is confusion (among Europeans, *nota bene*) as to whether Greater Java (modern Sumatra) is a separate island or part of the land mass to the east (modern Java).

365 The Malay Peninsula across from Sumatra.

366 1 Kings 9:28, 10:11, 22:48; 1 Chronicles 29:4; 2 Chronicles 8:18, 9:10.

367 The Malabar Coast of south-west India. You could in fact walk from India to Sri Lanka until a cyclone cut off the Adam's Bridge land bridge in 1480.

by the strong tides, because the land is quite low. The king of Achin<sup>368</sup> is powerful both on sea and land. He often has himself ferried over with his elephants (of which he owns a great number) to the mainland and wages great war on the king of Pegu.<sup>369</sup> The king of Jambe<sup>370</sup> is his subordinate. The country is populous, with sallow-skinned inhabitants, all Muslims and warlike. They often use poisoned poniards called *kris*, pikes, and assegais. The land is fertile, particularly with respect to pepper, most of which is grown here. The east part of the island is fairly healthy, but around Jambe it is so unhealthy that if a person happens to go to sleep on the ground, they fall gravely ill. Indeed, some never rise alive to their feet again.

The inhabitants, similarly to in Greater Jawa and Malocea, spend their days on the ground in bamboo houses. But for the nights they have separate houses on four posts, and have to climb a ladder, and then [117] pull this up again, so that tigers will not reach them in the night.

Here are also all kinds of venomous snakes, particularly big ones that devour both people and pigs. I have also seen a spider here that was as big as a walnut, furry, and that had large teeth in its mouth. There are excellent fish here of all kinds, particularly all kinds of shellfish, which shine like mother of pearl, from which they burn lime, which they use with *pinangh*,<sup>371</sup> which is a fruit, similar in appearance to a nutmeg, that they chew with a little of this lime and from which they become drunk. There are many whose teeth the lime has all eaten away so that

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368 The ruler of Aceh at the time was in fact a woman, Sultana Taj ul-Alam Safiatuddin Syah, reigned 1641–1675.

369 The last king of Pegu in Lower Burma (or the Hanthawaddy Kingdom) lost power in 1552. The potentate that the king of Aceh harassed would have been the ruler of the Restored Taungoo Kingdom, roughly equal in extent to modern-day Myanmar.

370 Ageng Tirtayasa, reigned 1651–1683, ruler of the Banten Sultanate on east Sumatra and west Java, or his predecessor.

371 Areca or betel nut, *Areca catechu*.

they are not able to speak, and instead use gold teeth, and when they eat they take these out.

#### CHAPTER 83. THAILAND AND CHINA

Siam<sup>372</sup> is a beautiful kingdom on the mainland, and although he [its king] is a mighty king, he nevertheless pays tribute to the king of China. And although the Tartar had conquered all of China by force, nevertheless he fell in Siam in 1656.<sup>373</sup> His capital<sup>374</sup> is named Odia, but is called Aiotheka and Iudea.<sup>375</sup> He is a pagan, and all his subjects are a whitish sallow, with flat faces and snub noses. He has himself hailed as a god and has a white elephant that he rides occasionally.<sup>376</sup> I believe that these inhabitants are magicians, because when they see crocodiles they throw themselves into [118] the water, swimming towards them, and play with them as they would with some domesticated animal, and come away unharmed. All kinds of goods are made here: foodstuffs, silver, copper, iron, tin, wax, saltpetre, silk, and cotton in great abundance. China has been and was once judged to be the largest, finest, and richest kingdom in the whole world, very famous for its fine craftsmanship, its inhabitants' skills, good sense, and learning. Particularly their mandarins or highly learned teachers who are strictly questioned on law, the art of star gazing, medicine, and when they reach that elevated position they must never walk again, but are carried in litters. It would take a long time to write about this kingdom, and while I have only been to some coastal places I found nothing but a country destroyed by the Tartar. Nevertheless he has allowed the inhabitants to freely practice their religion, crafts,

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372 The Ayutthaya Kingdom in modern Thailand.

373 Tartar rule: the ethnically Manchurian Qing Dynasty, declared in 1636 but not securely in control of all China until 1683. NMK visited during a time of warring dynasties.

374 The Siamese king's capital, not the Tartar's.

375 Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya.

376 Cf. Barbosa 1918, p. 155.

and trade. And the Chinese are a hard-working people, tireless at all work, no matter how unclean. They have torn down the wall that was between Tartary and China, which was four hundred miles long. They have taken the king and the nobility away as prisoners. And none of the nobility there have resisted the Tartar or caused him any losses, except for one named Eeqwa<sup>377</sup> who beat the Tartar repeatedly. And when he died his son [119] Kokokhinga<sup>378</sup> assumed command after his father, but had no great success, and was chased from the mainland and went to an island named Aionam.<sup>379</sup> But in time he plundered and committed great atrocities with his ships on the Chinese side among his compatriots. Then in 1655 when we loaded refreshments there on the island he eventually wanted to keep some of our crew with him. Here is used no other money than brass, which they keep hanging on a ribbon. The Portuguese have a beautiful fortified town here in China named Makaou, in which great trade is conducted. And here are many monasteries and churches, and several hundred Chinese that they have converted to Christianity. Indeed, the king himself who was taken away by the Tartar had been baptised along with his entire household. They named him Constantine,<sup>380</sup> but as it proved too difficult for the Chinese to say Constantine they began to call him Tamtim (that is, a great light).

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377 A powerful merchant-pirate-admiral named Zheng Zhilong (1604–1661) who, after supporting the last Ming Emperors, defected to the Qing in 1646. At his baptism he was named Nicholas Iquan Gaspard, the middle name of which is what NMK renders as ‘Eeqwa’. He was the father of Koxinga.

378 Koxinga, Zheng Chenggong (1624–1662), a Ming loyalist naval commander along the south-east shores of China, who was powerful from 1650–1662. NMK calls him ‘Arch-Pirate’ in Chapter 84.

379 Hainan.

380 Constantine-Tamtim’s Chinese name was Zhu Cixuan. He was the third son of Zhu Youlang, the last Southern Ming emperor, who reigned over a dwindling territory 1646–1662 as the Yongli emperor. Constantine’s baptism was part of a desperate bid to gain Western support against the Qing. Father and son were executed in 1662 and Constantine never became emperor.

This town has repeatedly been harassed by the Tartar, but he has been beaten and had to retreat.

#### CHAPTER 84. TAIWAN

Ilia Formosa, also called Taiowan, is an island about three hundred miles in circumference. Half of the island belonged to the Dutchman at the time when I was there in 1655. It is a beautiful, healthy, and fertile land of rice, cotton, beans, wheat, sugar, etc., in sum, of all kinds of foodstuffs. But the greatest benefit [120] they had was from gold sand that they got from running water coming off the mountains. They have two strong forts here, one named Zelandia and the other Backsamboy.<sup>381</sup> The inhabitants are a blackish sallow, and all the Dutchman's subjects are Christians. But others are pagans, and cannot be subjugated by the Dutchmen as they live in the high mountains, where they have their cattle, rice fields, and all gardens, and need nothing from those who live in the lowlands. But they often come to them and sell gold sand, accepting only cotton clothing in return. Those who live in the mountains have a different language from those who live below, and they cannot understand each other. And although the Dutchman has often tried to get up to them in the mountains, when he finally gets up there the inhabitants have swiftly run away onto another mountain, between which they had a hanging bridge, braided from rattan or Spanish reeds. And when the Dutchman came after them they cut the bridge, and the ones on it broke their necks. All the inhabitants are very fast runners and very accurate in throwing their javelins, hunting a lot of deer and wild boar, which are abundant here and cause great injury to the people. They eat the venison raw and drink the blood with spoons. I heard that in 1659<sup>382</sup> the arch-pirate Kokothinga had come here by surprise

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381 Fort Zeelandia and Redoubt Zeeburg, the latter on Baxemboy Island (Andrade 2011, pp. 128 f). Both sites are in modern Tainan City.

382 By 1659 NMK had been back in Europe for three years. The Siege of Fort Zeelandia that he or his editor describes actually took place in 1661–1662.

with his fleet to the island's rear, invading with a few thousand [121] Chinese, because the country was open to him everywhere, and killed all the inhabitants who did not live in the mountains, both women and children, and got rid of the Baxamboj fort by chance.<sup>383</sup> Then he could force the other castle Zelandia, in which was Governor Fredrich Cojet,<sup>384</sup> born a Swede, who defended himself as long as he could and had gunpowder and bullets. But the worst thing was that they had no fresh water, because the castle was on a little dry sandy islet and surrounded by the briny sea. For this reason everything they needed, both food and water, had to be fetched from Baxamboj. He thus had to seek terms, which the Chinese honoured until the Dutch ships came and took them away from there, taking them to Battavia.<sup>385</sup>

#### CHAPTER 85. HAINAN

Aionam is a little island, about forty or fifty miles in circumference.<sup>386</sup> Here Kokothinga stayed in 1655 with his party. We were permitted to get water, and there was a freshwater lake some distance from the seashore, with a lot of crabs similar to brown crabs. When we got them up out of the water and they had lain for a while in the sun, they soon turned to stone so that you could break them in two like a tobacco pipe. We took sticks or poles which we poked into the water, and all that got wet became stone, and the rest wood. All our water barrels and water skins turned to stone. We dared not stay there any longer, because we [122] feared this pirate greatly, as he began to surround us with boats.

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383 Redoubt Zeeburg on Baxamboj Island was destroyed by a storm in 1656 and never rebuilt.

384 Fredrik Coyet (1615–1687), a Swedish nobleman and Dutch governor of Formosa (Müllern 1963).

385 Jakarta.

386 Hainan/Aynam/Aionam is in fact much larger than that, comprising an area whose size is between that of Sicily and Taiwan.

CHAPTER 86. THE MALUKU ISLANDS, PART I: TERNATE

Tarnado<sup>387</sup> is one of the Moluccan Islands that has its own king. And the king of Spain<sup>388</sup> first discovered these islands, and swiftly gained a foothold here, and built his fortress, with which they then subjugated the inhabitants. When the Dutchmen learned of these inhabitants they made friends with them and received permission to build themselves a fort, teaching the inhabitants the use of arms, particularly muskets and cannon. This also helped greatly in getting the Spaniard thrown out, in a similar manner as on Amboina.<sup>389</sup> The inhabitants are all Muslims, fine and well-made people, all black, having long hanging hair, and are good soldiers. And although there is little on this island of any use, except for a little cloves, although there can be little profit from it, it is like a key to the other islands. They use a kind of bread that they call *sagu*,<sup>390</sup> which they make from the pith inside a kind of tree, from which they also tap a drink that they call *saguwer*. The bread tastes as if you bit into any very hard and poorly raised bread, but has no flavour at all. The reason that so little cloves grow here is that the Dutchman had all the trees destroyed in order so that the Spaniards would not have any benefit from them. The people of Tarnado, Amboina, and all Malays are skilled dancers, [123] which they call *sagalilla*, and they always dance with their sabres, which are made from hardwood, more skilfully than Poles, in pairs turned towards each other, performing many cuts and fencing jumps against each other, always using a long shield on the left arm. This is a mountainous land, particularly a very tall mountain that burns night and day.<sup>391</sup> In the night you see the blue flame that reaches up into the sky, and no one dares anchor their ships any closer than

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387 Ternate Island.

388 Portuguese explorers c. 1510.

389 Ambon Island, taken from the Portuguese by the VOC in 1605. The Spanish abandoned Ternate in 1663.

390 Sago, made from the pith of certain palm trees, mainly *Metroxylon sagu*.

391 Mount Gamalama, Ternate's central volcano.

a mile from this fire or this burning mountain. On windless nights, particularly early in the morning, you find the deck covered with ash. Now and then big rocks fly from the mountain that touch down far out in the sea.

CHAPTER 87. THE MALUKU ISLANDS, PART 2: UNDERGROUND ALBINOS

As on Amboina, there are a strange kind of people here who are called Kakurlacko.<sup>392</sup> They are considered pests and are exterminated wherever the inhabitants find them. They are snow white, both the skin and the hair, although the inhabitants are black, and stay in secret underground dens during the day, where no one can find them except with much difficulty. And in the daytime they see no more than the stone does, so when they get dug up during the day they crawl around as if their eyes had been put out. But during the night they see better the darker it gets, and then they commit robbery and thievery, as they take from the inhabitants all that they have planted and sown when it gets dark. They also have a language of their own which [124] they speak only with piping noises,<sup>393</sup> and which is not the same as the country's own language. Our captain asked the Ternate people to have one of these Cakurlackos, and he was given a woman who at first could not eat any boiled food, nor knew to cover herself in the least, because she could not see anything. But as she got used to it or was forced into the sun and daylight, she came to better sight, but lifted her feet high. There are a lot of big mountain snakes here on these Maluccan Islands, that devour both people and livestock. There are no buffaloes, cows, or other

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392 Dutch *kakkerlakk* 'cockroach', probably applied to these possibly fictitious underground albinos because, like the bugs, they avoid bright light (Broberg 1975, p. 195). The word was borrowed into Swedish in the form *kackerlacka* no later than 1751 (SAOB), and is still current to denote the bugs.

393 Cf. Herodotus, *Histories* 4:183 – the Troglodytes 'speak a language which bears no resemblance to that of any other nation; but they screech like bats'.

such beasts here, only pigs, which the Ternate people never eat, but only the Christians.

CHAPTER 88. THE MALUKU ISLANDS, PART 3: AMBON ISLAND

Amboina<sup>394</sup> is one of the foremost among the Moluccan Islands, which supplies the whole world with cloves. And these inhabitants were once subjects of the king of Tarnado, but then the *orang kaias* or nobility of Amboina made themselves into a government and separated themselves from their king. Meanwhile the English had put down strong roots there and were in good graces with the inhabitants. The Dutchman also had his habitation there and conducted a great trade, and had almost the entire clove forest on his territory. And although the English caused the Dutch no harm, nevertheless the Dutch plotted how to get rid of the English, and so they plotted secretly with the Amboinese, who [125] struck them all down in the night and looted their property and goods.<sup>395</sup> Then no Englishman was permitted to trade there, but when they now want cloves they have to buy them from the Dutchman. Now he [the Dutchman] has built several forts there, and still they try daily to subjugate the Amboinese, who are however truly fearless soldiers. Because on campaign the Dutchman can do nothing about them, but they have now taken (by arms) the entire clove forest from the Dutchmen, and if he wants cloves, he now buys from them. They use no other weapons than pikes and big swords or blowpipes, and wooden sabres. The darts that they shoot from the blowpipes are made from fish teeth, particularly swordfish<sup>396</sup> teeth, with a hook. And as all Christians run about naked, these inhabitants (when they receive word that they [the Christians] are about to go out) lie in ambush for them, and when they

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394 Ambon Island.

395 The Amboyna massacre of 1623.

396 Chapter 6 makes clear that NMK writes 'swordfish' when he means sawfish, *Pristis sp.*

come walking, they [the inhabitants] blow a dart or arrow from their blowpipes that is covered with strong venom, and wherever it hits a person, so that the dart sticks inside the flesh, that person must die unless he swiftly gets human faeces to eat (which they commonly carry around in a covered wooden vessel), because it causes vomiting, and so drives the venom from the heart. Otherwise, as it is a mountainous and forested country, indeed so cramped that people cannot walk side by side two persons at a time, nor even less four, but one man after another in a line, [126] the inhabitants know where to go through with their troops. So it is their custom to hang themselves up securely from tall trees that grow next to the road, bringing their wooden sabres, and as soon as he [the person who has suspended himself] notices that the rear [of the troop] approaches, he keeps a keen eye on the last man in the troop. The moment that he [the last man] has passed him, he lets himself fall, and with one blow he cuts off either the head or the arm, and then he begins to run. They boil the flesh from all Christian heads that they get, and use the skull dome as drinking bowls. Here in the woods are such numbers of all kinds of parrots, ravens, lories,<sup>397</sup> and little parakeets, which fill the woods with such screeching and calling that no one can hear anything else. When the inhabitants want to catch them alive they shoot them with blunt arrows so they fall down, but soon recover. But the other ones, that they want for food, they shoot and kill swiftly. Here are big ravens of various colours who are the true Indian ravens. Big snakes also live here that cause great injury to the pigs and the people.

#### CHAPTER 89. THE MALUKU ISLANDS, PART 4:

##### BANDA, NUTMEG, AND BIRDS

Banda is a little island, about five or six miles in circumference, and more famous than all the other islands in the world as nutmeg grows only here,

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397 Grey go-away-bird, *Corythaixoides concolor*.

which supplies the whole world, not just with the leaves or the flower, but also the fine product extracted from it, and balsam and oil from the roots, although they are nevertheless [127] undamaged. The trees that they grow on are similar to pear trees, only a little slimmer. When the nutmegs grow they are the size (with the husk) of a man's two fists. The outermost husk looks like that on walnuts, but bigger and paler, from which they cook a mash, but it overcomes a person and she gets so sleepy that she cannot tell if it is day or night. And when the outermost husk cracks in the sun (which is a sign that the fruit is ripening) the nutmeg flower appears, which is at first red, then flesh coloured, and then orange. But in front of the flower is a little film between the shell and the flower, which is as hard as any nutshell. Inside this is the seed or nutmeg, which, after being beaten out of the shells, is thrown into limewater or it will not last long. These trees have a strange nature so that one of them is male or masculine, which carries long nuts that have no flavour, but similar to if you bit into a piece of tallow. From this all the others that grow within a mile or more have their seed. And if you will chop into this tree, then the others that grow around it will also perish and dry up. These trees never allow themselves to be planted by human hand, but there is a kind of bird here called *eme* or cassowaries. These swallow [128] the nutmeg with everything as they fall from the trees, which pass swiftly through their bodies and out again, and from this a tree shortly grows.

This cassowary or *eme* is a bird, larger than an ostrich, has three claws on each foot, is pitch black, has no wings and no tongue, and a sharp shell on its head. For this reason it cannot fly but can run as fast as a horse, and when it runs everything that stands up to it is knocked over, both people and other animals. I have also seen them tame, which walked among the people in the houses. They threw stones the size of chicken eggs into their mouths, which devoured them, and swiftly came out the other end. They swallowed glowing embers and red-hot pieces of iron and did not balk. In sum, whatever food they ate, it soon went through them. Birds of Paradise live only here. The inhabitants that still remain

(although they are slaves) only have dead ones to trade. They claim (as do those Dutchmen who have lived there for many years) never to have seen them alive, but always to find them dead on the ground. Writers on nature call them *apoda* because they are said to have neither wings nor feet, which is as true as they write about the elephant, the leopard, the crocodile, the chameleon, etc. Because I have brought two of them with me to Sweden, which I gave to noble lords, and they had both feet and wings.<sup>398</sup>

[129] The kinglet is a little animal that has all the colours that can be found in the world, and nor is this one ever found alive, but always dead on the shore. It is even more expensive than the Bird of Paradise.

There are no dangerous or venomous creatures here on Banda. As regards the island's inhabitants, they were once their own masters, and graciously first permitted the English to live there. Then they let themselves be persuaded by the Dutchman, who shortly began to build forts, and strengthened himself more and more every day, and finally came there with his navy, and went ashore with troops, and killed first all the English and then the inhabitants, excepting a few who are now slaves there. Thereby the Dutchman keeps the entire nutmeg trade to himself.

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398 One of these lords was Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie. His bird skin was passed on to the naturalist Olof Bromelius, whose son Magnus von Bromell donated it to Uppsala University in 1707 (Bernström 1951, p. 617; Löwegren 1952, p. 59).

## CHAPTER 90. JAVA

There is great uncertainty about this Greater Jawa:<sup>399</sup> some say that it is an island, but most consider it to be joined to the land to the east.<sup>400</sup> Be that as it may: I have only seen the north coast, and on that side there are four kings who are very powerful and have their own separate kingdoms. The most powerful one is the king of Matram<sup>401</sup> (which is the same as a brain), the second one from Japara.<sup>402</sup> Both of them are cruel and blasphemous tyrants towards the Christians. They have fought several wars with the Dutchman and caused them many [130] losses. Particularly when these had first founded the town of Battawia in the Kingdom of Jackatra<sup>403</sup> and expelled its king<sup>404</sup> who then had to seek refuge with the two aforementioned kings, who would almost have overpowered them [the Dutchmen] unless the English had come to their aid, whereby the two in trusting unity began to fortify the town so heavily that they feared no revolt of the Javanese. But when the Dutchman saw an opportunity he struck secretly and murdered all the English, and so kept the city to himself. Such is the reward of fidelity. The third king is from Bantam,<sup>405</sup> who is very honourable, just like the king of Balumban.<sup>406</sup> They let both Englishmen and Portuguese trade with them, indeed these live freely and safely in their houses there, but they are never permitted to build any fortifications. All these inhabitants who live along the coast are Muslims, but inland they are pagans. This

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399 Modern Java. Cf. Chapter 81.

400 Bali. The strait is in fact only c. two and a half kilometres wide.

401 The Mataram Sultanate.

402 Jepara.

403 Jakarta.

404 Dutch VOC forces ousted Prince Jayawikarta of the Banten Sultanate from the future site of Batavia in 1619

405 Banten.

406 NMK's Pallumbam/Balumban equals Palembang or Bandar Lampung on modern Sumatra.

is a fertile land of foodstuffs such as rice, sugar, *cadian*:<sup>407</sup> in sum, all kinds of fish and game, particularly birds, peacocks, and turtledoves, and enormous numbers of wild chickens that do not lay their eggs under their wings, but the sun hatches them. Here are also four-legged animals, and deer and pigs, particularly those deer that are not even a quarter<sup>408</sup> high and very subtle in all their limbs, so that you look at them with greater pleasure. They also have tame buffalo cows [131] that are milked every day, and their milk is very thin and weak, in that they eat fruits that are used to loosen the bowels, such as tamarind, cassia, fistula, senna, etc.,<sup>409</sup> from which they get diarrhoea. There are all too many dangerous creatures here of many kinds, such as crocodiles, tigers, scorpions, etc. Particularly salamanders, which the inhabitants call *jecko*,<sup>410</sup> because it lives in hollow trees and old houses where it sits during the night and calls ‘jecko, jecko, jecko,’ etc. It is shaped like a frog with a tail like a lizard. That which is written about it,<sup>411</sup> that it will put out a fire when thrown into it, is not true. It just dies and burns in the fire. But it can put out some embers as it is very cold. If it lets its water and it comes on a person, then he must die shortly. A *jecko* or salamander had come by chance into the armoury of the governor of Battawia, and there it touched a gilded cuirass intended for the king of Japara,<sup>412</sup> and it had got so wet that it was completely ruined, because big pieces fell out. I also saw a dried *jecko* that a man kept as a curiosity, and although it had been dry for many years, when he put it on some hot stones, it crawled as if alive.

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407 Apparently some variety of millet: cf. Chapter 61.

408 Probably here a quarter of a fathom, 0.45 metres.

409 *Tamarindus indica*, *Cassia fistula*, *Cinnamomum cassia*, *Senna alexandrina*.

410 Tokay gecko, *Gecko gecko*.

411 Pliny, *Natural History*, Book 10, Chapter 86. NMK equates the gecko with Pliny’s salamander (Bjerke Jægersborg 2018, p. 71).

412 Jepara.

I saw a snake there, twenty-five feet or twelve and a half ells long,<sup>413</sup> that had swallowed a deer. [132] It was caught however, because its nature is that when it has swallowed something large, it cannot leave the spot until it is digested, and it was brought to the governor, who immediately had its mouth cut open.

#### CHAPTER 91. THE COCONUT TREE AND FRUIT BATS

Finally I cannot pass by this noble palm tree that grows all over India and is called *cocos*. The Indians get everything they need for their livelihood and household from this tree. Firstly nuts grow on it of which the largest contain about a *kanna*,<sup>414</sup> and have a thick husk outside the shell proper. They make milk and oil from the core. They make ladles, spoons, and drinking cups from the shells. Rope, cable, musket match, and all kinds of little ribbon from the husk. The most delicious greens from the palms or crown. They tap wine from the tree itself, which tastes like mead in the morning, then like Rhenish wine towards eight o'clock, and after noon it is vinegar, which forever remains constant.<sup>415</sup> In the night come very large bats that are so big that a man can barely reach their wingtips with his arms spread wide, which get drunk from this sap, and are then collected from under the tree, killed and eaten. I have picked drunk ones up and nailed them onto the walls with a rusty nail. When they came back to their senses and had slept off the drunkenness, they bit off the nails as if they had bit off a tobacco pipe. They have a mouth like that of a fox. [133] The inhabitants roof over their houses with palm tree leaves and build boats from the trunk itself.

So be it briefly said for now.

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413 7.4 metres.

414 2.6 litres.

415 Here NMK describes the swift fermentation process of sap tapped in the morning. Sap tapped in the evening also tastes like mead at first.

#### AFTERWORD

In 1656 I determined once, after long and arduous travels, to visit my dear homeland. I thus received my discharge from the general who was at the time at Battavia, named Lord Johan Matzsucker,<sup>416</sup> and was ordered to embark on a ship named *The White Elephant*.<sup>417</sup> So, in God's name we weighed anchor and sailed away on 3 February, and with us were two other ships, that is, the *Magd van Enckhysen*<sup>418</sup> and the *Rotterdam*.<sup>419</sup> We had enough to do before we got through the Streto Sunda<sup>420</sup> because of the strong current that falls between Pallumbam<sup>421</sup> on Greater Java and PepparLerdam [on] Sumatra.<sup>422</sup> Nevertheless we came in a few days to anchor beneath a high mountain named Krakatou.<sup>423</sup> Here no one dared land for the many snakes. This mountain is visible for at least sixteen miles across the sea. And both the Dutchmen who sail to Batavia and the Englishmen who sail to Bantam have a good indication in this mountain when they come from Europe so that they do not sail past

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416 Joan Maetsuycker (1606–1678), governor-general of the Dutch East Indies 1653–1678.

417 *De Witte Olifant* was a *spiegelretourschip* East Indiaman built in 1639 in Amsterdam and scuttled at Batavia in 1665. [www.vocsite.nl/schepen/detail.html?id=10755](http://www.vocsite.nl/schepen/detail.html?id=10755).

418 *De Maagd van Enckhuizen* was a galiot built in 1654 in Amsterdam and taken by the enemy at Negombo in 1665. [www.vocsite.nl/schepen/detail.html?id=11566](http://www.vocsite.nl/schepen/detail.html?id=11566).

419 *De Rotterdam* was a *spiegelretourschip* East Indiaman built in 1641 in Amsterdam and scuttled in 1661. [www.vocsite.nl/schepen/detail.html?id=10894](http://www.vocsite.nl/schepen/detail.html?id=10894).

420 The Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra.

421 NMK's Pallumbam/Balumban equals Palembang or Bandar Lampung on modern Sumatra. He has got Sumatra and Java mixed up here: 'Greater Java' should read Lesser Java.

422 *PepparLerdam, eller Sumatra* should probably be understood as Pepper Leerdam on modern Java. An inlet on Java near Labuhan on the Sunda Strait is labelled *Peppersbajj* on a seventeenth-century map from a Dutch portolano. Not clear why NMK refers to it as *Pepper Leerdam* here.

423 Krakatoa, notorious for a volcanic eruption in 1883 with worldwide atmospheric effects and for a tsunami in 2018.

the Streto Sunda. On 9 February we set sail, and soon we found the singular and constant wind that we kept for five months, [134] almost until we reached eight degrees near the even day and night place. During this time we sailed seventy, sixty, fifty, forty, indeed never less than thirty miles from sunrise to sunrise, and charted our course through the great Indian Ocean to the great promontory of Africa.<sup>424</sup> There we refreshed ourselves. Then to St. Helena, where we loaded firewood and fresh water in addition to some feral pigs and goats. And to Ascension Island, where we caught a great number of turtles. Then we went swiftly past the even day and night line, which we crossed for the last time the night after Whitsun, because on Whitsun we had the sun to the north at noon, and the day after to the south at noon. We saw the North Star for the first time at six degrees north of the line, in the night from the top of the main mast, very slightly above the earth.<sup>425</sup> So we went past the Canary Islands, north of Ireland, Scotland, and England, to avoid Turks and other pirates who often search intensely for the East India-men. But praise be to God, we came safely into Ulie<sup>426</sup> on 9 September. When we sailed from Jawa we were 360 and some souls with women and children. And when we dropped anchor in Ulie only 140 remained, all the other dead of dropsy.<sup>427</sup> And out of these 140 there were finally no more than 14 men who could man the tiller and take in the sails.

After having taken treatment for [135] dropsy for fourteen days in Amsterdam, I sailed for Stockholm on a ship named *Söderstiernan*. Praise be to God, I arrived there safely on 22 October 1656, thanking God who had showed me the grace that I was again worthy to hear God's holy and beatific word, and partake of his sacred and most worthy meal, which I had not enjoyed in eight years and seven months.

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424 The Horn of Africa.

425 Above the horizon.

426 The Vlie, a passage between two of the West Frisian Islands, Vlieland and Terschelling.

427 Oedema is a symptom of terminal scurvy, that is, vitamin C deficiency.

During these eight years and some months I went below the even day and night line six times, with both the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.

I ask every right-minded Christian to consider what adversity I suffered over this period: I have often been plagued by rare and poisonous illnesses that are completely unknown to us Europeans, and dealt under greatest mortal danger with barbarian peoples, in particular with the most evil and inveterate pagans, among whom for a long time I never saw nor even less tasted beer, bread, or wine, and sometimes had to run around naked like a brute, and was tyrannised beyond all measure by the sun's heavy heat, never safe in forests, bushes, and mountains because of tigers, leopards, lions, elephants, wild buffaloes, crocodiles, baboons, scorpions, and many kinds of venomous snake, etc. In addition to various hardships and battles at sea that I have endured among foreign nations, such as Dutchmen, French, Portuguese, various barbarian and Indian pirates; I have also fought under my most gracious lord's and king's Carolus Gustavus's (now blessedly with God and glorious in remembrance) flag in two battles at sea. One was against the king of Denmark in 1657 which involved the Swedish and Danish navies on 12 and 13 September between Ystedh or Cimbris Hampn and [136] Danish Möön.<sup>428</sup> The other was between the Swedish Crown and the Dutchman in Öresundh in 1658 on 20 October.<sup>429</sup> I will thus in all humility end with this, and say with the poet:

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428 Ystad, Simrishamn, and Møn. The 1657 Battle of Møn was indeed fought on 12 and 13 September (Julian calendar) off the southern coast of Scania. It had no decisive outcome: no ships were sunk or taken, and less than two hundred men died.

429 Misprinted date. The Battle of the Sound took place on 29 October (Julian calendar) 1658. Though six ships were sunk and about six hundred and fifty men died, the outcome was inconclusive.

Before we can come to live in peace and quiet  
We must have great troubles and trust in God's grace<sup>430</sup>

\*

We went through fire and water,  
but you brought us to a place of abundance.  
PSALMS 66:12 (NIV)

\*

Who followeth vertue may go see,  
the Arabian desertes fell:  
The Ethiops black the rugged Getes,  
the Indes in health and well.

MARCELLO PALINGENIO STELLATO (A.K.A. MARCELLUS PALINGENIUS STELLATUS AND PIER ANGELO MANZOLLI)<sup>431</sup>

\*

Nils Mattsson Kiöpingh  
A Swede of Västmanland



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430 *För än wij komma till att boo / I Rooligheet och Stillheet, / Måste wij hafwa stoor Oroo, / Och lijta på Gudz Mildheet.* Three eminent specialists have kindly looked at this for me but have been unable to attribute the quotation.

431 *Qui pollet virtute, Arabum deserta, nigrosque / Æthiops, rigidosque Getas lustrabit, et Indos.* Marcellus Palingenius Stellatus, *Zodiacus vitae*, Book II, lines 358 f. English translation Barnabas Googe, *The Zodiacke of Life*.

# THE LITERARY AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF KIÖPING'S TRAVELOGUE

## Afterword by Carina Lidström

In the spring of 1647 Nils Mattsson Kiöping, having obtained permission from the Swedish Crown, travelled to Holland with the intention of studying navigation. This was the beginning of nine years of adventurous travels, mostly in Asia. Holland, which during the seventeenth century dominated the East Asia trade, was an obvious point of departure for someone wanting to travel in the East. In the autumn of 1648, after assaults, captivity, and accidents, Kiöping's real adventures began as he finally left Holland on a ship of the VOC, *Vereenigde Ostindische Compagnie*, destined for Batavia.

Today we can read about these adventures – about what he saw and experienced – in his travelogue and to some extent also in his autobiography. In this afterword I will give some notes on the literary and historical context of Kiöping's travelogue. Though it is a narrative that contains information, its focus – and probably a great deal of its appeal to the reading public – is to some degree on perils and on strange and wondrous things that Kiöping encountered (or sometimes heard of or read about) during his travels. It first appeared in print in 1667 together with two other narratives of journeys to distant corners of the world. Two of these were written by Swedish travellers: Kiöping's travelogue and the travel journal of the Swedish sea captain Olof Erickson Willman. These were the first two travelogues by Swedish travellers, written

in the vernacular, to be printed.<sup>432</sup> Kiöping's narrative was reprinted several times in different versions. On page 176 onwards in this volume Martin Rundkvist lists the editions, and from this printing history it can be deduced that Kiöping's travelogue was popular reading far into the eighteenth century.

#### KIÖPING'S TRAVELOGUE IN THE CONTEXT OF SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY SWEDISH TRAVEL NARRATIVES

In view of the popularity of Kiöping's tales of perils and marvels in the East, it might seem surprising that his travelogue was for a long time something of an anomaly in Swedish literary history. When writing my overview of Swedish travelogues 1667–1829, *Berättare på resa*, I found only one printed travelogue that resembles Kiöping's narrative: A collection of letters attributed to Bauman, the son of the mayor of the Swedish town of Västervik, printed in 1764 with the title *En resa til Africa och Ost-Indien* [A journey to Africa and the East Indies], has a similar focus on hardship and exotism – on curiosities and wonders or even grotesquerie.<sup>433</sup>

Kiöping's travelogue may for a long time have been an anomaly in Swedish literature through the way it tells of adventures and things that are unbelievable but true, but it was not the only travelogue written in the vernacular by a Swedish traveller to be published during the seventeenth century. There was of course Willman's narrative, which, though it also describes exotic things and experiences, has a more sober and factual approach than Kiöping's. Kiöping's and Willman's travelogues were soon followed by other narratives of journeys. In 1679, the Historiographer Royal Johan Hadorph published the Swedish *envoyé extraordinaire* Clas Brorsson Rålamb's report from an embassy to the Sublime Porte

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432 Willman's travelogue has been translated into English by C. Blomberg; Willman 2014.

433 Lidström 2015; Salan 1764.

in 1657–1658. The astronomer Johan Bilberg's description of an expedition to the Arctic Circle in the summer of 1695 was published later the same year.<sup>434</sup> Another Swedish scientific expedition to the polar area took place in 1698: The natural historian and botanist Olof Rudbeck the younger travelled to inventory the flora and fauna of the northern parts of Sweden. His travelogue – part one of a projected twelve – was printed in 1701 and marks the end of a 'first wave' of Swedish travelogues. It would be more than forty years before the next travelogue written in Swedish by a Swedish traveller was printed.

#### SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY TRAVELS TO THE EAST

Kiöping travelled far and wide for a considerable time, even by today's standards. It is probable that Kiöping's Swedish contemporaries regarded it as exceptional to have seen so many faraway places. Nevertheless, Kiöping was far from the only Swede, let alone the only European, to have travelled in the East. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, thousands of Europeans explored the (from a European perspective) newly discovered regions of the world. Their travels were predominantly associated with Christian missions, with trade, and with colonialism.

The seventeenth century saw the emergence of the East India trading companies. Thanks to these, more people than ever travelled more extensively than ever before. The largest companies were the English East India Company and the Dutch VOC. With the VOC, almost 320,000 persons travelled to East India during the seventeenth century.<sup>435</sup> This means an average of more than three thousand people every year. At the time of Kiöping's travelogue – that is c. 1660 – half of the VOC employees were from the Dutch Republic. The remaining half were recruited from other countries. According to Willman, whose travelogue was published in the same volume as Kiöping's, there were

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434 Rålamb 1679; Bilberg 1695.

435 The information on the VOC is taken from Nováky 1997.

twenty-four Swedes stationed in Batavia in 1654, and, as can be seen from Kiöping's travelogue, the Swedish nobleman Fredrik Coyet was stationed in Batavia as an agent for the VOC.

The VOC was far from the only trading company that gave sailors and craftsmen an opportunity to travel to faraway places. I have already mentioned the English East India Company, but also France and Denmark were among the countries where similar trading companies were founded. The Swedish East India Company was not founded until some decades into the eighteenth century, but at the time of Kiöping's travels there were two Swedish colonial projects: New Sweden – a Swedish colony along the Delaware River in America – and the Swedish Africa Company. The latter was, according to several researchers, despite the epithet 'Swedish', a Dutch enterprise, but it nevertheless opened possibilities for Swedish sailors to travel to Africa.<sup>436</sup>

#### NARRATIVES FROM VOYAGES WITH THE TRADING COMPANIES

Trading company voyages were documented in writing, mostly in the form of ships' logs and sailing instructions.<sup>437</sup> These were of great importance since it was not until the early eighteenth century that it would be possible for seafarers to find an exact geographical position by determining the longitude. A ship's logs described, among other things, landmarks, coastlines, rocks, shoals, and currents by which it was possible to determine an approximate position. The logs also often included information on where it was possible to obtain provisions and fresh water, the attitude towards strangers at different places, safe landing sites, as well as places to avoid. Other documents in which information from voyages was recorded were merchants' journals where could be found detailed information on business transactions, weights and units, asides with notes on mores in foreign places (important facts

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436 Nováky 1990.

437 Lidström 2015, pp. 23 f.

in connection with trade), as well as information on languages, politics, religion, and climate. To put it briefly, they contained everything that could be advantageous to know in connection with trade and barter. Often parts from other journals or logs that were considered useful were also inserted.

Spain and Portugal were forerunners when it came to European sea voyages, and it is in these nations that many of the earliest narratives of travels in the East originate.<sup>438</sup> The Portuguese and Spanish kings and private entrepreneurs patronised maritime explorations from the fifteenth century and onwards. In connection with this, Vasco da Gama discovered the sea route to India in 1497 and, following this, Spain and Portugal gained what was in effect a monopoly on the East India trade. As a part of their colonisation, the Iberian countries sent Jesuit missionaries to various parts of Asia, and several Jesuit collections of letters and pamphlets were published during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In contrast to the ships' logs and merchant journals, these focused to a greater degree on culture, religion, language, and sometimes also on medicine and botany, in the places where the missionaries were stationed.

In the 1590s the Portuguese monopoly began to crumble. This was due to many reasons, but as a matter of curiosity, it can be mentioned that one of the factors sometimes cited is, if not a travelogue proper, then at least a text on travels: In 1596 Jan Huygen van Linschooten published his book *Itinerario* containing Portuguese maps and sailing instructions that he, during his time as a secretary for a Portuguese bishop, had culled in secret. This meant that information on the sailing routes to several places in the East became officially known, and thus enabled other countries, e.g. England, the Dutch Republic, and France, to participate in the East India trade. The English East India Compa-

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438 My notes on European travelogues from voyages in the East during the seventeenth century are, unless otherwise stated, based on Lach & Van Kley 1993, pp. 301–303.

ny was founded in 1600 and two years later – 1602 – with the English company as a model, the VOC was established.

It is in the Netherlands that we find most publications about travels to the East. According to American historians Donald F. Lach and Edwin J. Van Kley, it is probable that during the seventeenth century more books, pamphlets, and newsletters were published in the Netherlands than in the rest of the European nations together. Amsterdam became the continent's greatest book market and Holland was thus not only one of the dominant nations in the East India trade but also the centre of book production. However, book production in France and England was also burgeoning, and though the Thirty Years War had taken its toll on the German book market, it was still relatively flourishing. Books about the East, the Americas, and Africa were in great demand and the printing houses did their utmost to satisfy the interest of the reading public. The printing house of De Bry in Frankfurt and the Amsterdam printers published extensive collections of illustrated voyages that were frequently translated and reprinted. A well-known Dutch collection when it comes to travels with the VOC is Isaac Commelin's *Begin ende voortgangh van de Nederlantsche Geoctroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie*.<sup>439</sup> In England Samuel Purchas continued Hakluyt's project (begun in the sixteenth century) of publishing English versions of reports from travellers from different times and nations. A similar collection of translations, mostly of travelogues from the Orient, *Relations de divers voyages curieux*, was published 1663 in France by royal librarian Melchisédech Thévenot.

To put it briefly: a plethora of travel-related literature was thus published in different European countries – the extensive annotated bibliography of Lach and Van Kley on literature on Asia printed during the seventeenth century takes up almost three hundred pages of Volume III in their monumental *Asia in the Making of Europe*.

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439 Commelin 1646.

The collections of travel reports and travel facts I have touched upon so far do not have much in common with Kiöping's travelogue. His narrative belongs to a genre consisting of more personal narratives, often of adventurous and dramatic experiences, written by sailors. Quite a few travelogues of this kind were published in Holland and Germany.

During their voyages, the sailors, like Kiöping, encountered rough seas, were shipwrecked, and subsequently faced what were often terrible experiences. Willem Ysbrantszoon Bontekoe's *Journal, ofte gedenkwaerdige beschrijvinghe van de Oost-Indische reyse van Willem Ysbrantzoom Bontekoe van Hoorn*. [Journal or memorable description of the East Indian voyage of Willem Bontekoe from Hoorn, including many remarkable and dangerous things that happened to him there] was published in 1646, the year before Kiöping left Sweden.<sup>440</sup> In the Dutch Republic it was published in at least thirty editions during the seventeenth century. In 1648 it was translated into German and, according to Lach and Van Kley, into 'almost every European language', though not, as far as I can see, into Swedish.

The popularity of Bontekoe's travelogue derived from the almost uninterrupted series of crises and catastrophes that he relates in his narrative. One of the main themes in Bontekoe's travelogue is the suffering of the brave traveller, and apparently Bontekoe's adventures were considered an embodiment of Christian courage and fortitude in adversity.

Later in the century other personal and dramatic narratives of adventures proved popular. A Dutch example is *Vervarelyke Schip-breuk van 'T Oost-Indisch Jacht 'Ter Schelling'* by the sailor Frans Jansz. van der Heiden (1675). van der Heiden's travelogue is similar to Bontekoe's and Kiöping's in that it tells a personal story of a long and adventurous journey with many perils – a shipwreck on a desert island and cannibalism are two

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440 About Bontekoe and his travelogue, see Lach & Van Kley 1993, p. 474 f.

of the ingredients.<sup>441</sup> Equally dramatic was the travelogue of the ship's surgeon Wouter Schouten. His *Oost Indische voyagie* (1676) describes many dramatic happenings, among others the Dutch loss of Formosa in 1662 and the subsequent trial and banishment of Fredrik Coyet.<sup>442</sup>

There were also travelogues written by Germans sailing with the VOC. The Dutch historian Roelof van Gelder has studied the autobiographical travelogues of forty-seven Germans sailing with the Dutch East India company, among others Jürgen Andersen's and Volquard Iversen's journals, which were published in heavily edited versions by Adam Olearius, geographer, mathematician, and librarian to Frederick III, Duke of Holstein-Gottorp.<sup>443</sup>

In these autobiographical travelogues a recurrent motif is the suffering traveller who has endured perils and hardships, but thanks to God and Providence, has returned safely home. The motif has a long history. At least in travelogues from the Christian era, the safe return had moral implications. Travelling without what was considered a legitimate purpose was seen as a vanity; the traveller was supposed to have an errand, and to learn something from his travels.<sup>444</sup> The latter is evident not only from the travelogues but also from the wealth of apodemic literature – literature on the art of travel, consisting mainly of lists of questions that the traveller was supposed to answer during his journey to make sure that he really observed and learned.<sup>445</sup> Many of the travelogues written in the early modern period are constructed as narratives of spiritual achievement, as stories of personal growth and God's providence. A safe return was considered proof of God's sanction. It proved that the

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441 Lach & Van Kley 1993, p. 496.

442 Ibid. p. 497.

443 van Gelder 2004. Regarding Olearius's edition of the journals of Andersen and Iversen, see Lach & Van Kley 1993, pp. 533 f.

444 Bepler 1994, pp. 183–193.

445 On the apodemic tradition, see Stagl 1995.

journey was not undertaken in vain, and it was hence also proof of the virtue of the traveller.

The suffering and virtuous traveller is an important aspect of Kiöping's persona. On several occasions he mentions accidents that he has met with during his travels, how he has been exposed to violence and dangers or suffered from illness. At the end of his narrative Kiöping, through a long catalogue of what he has endured, once again emphasises the suffering that his journey had involved, and through one of the quotes with which he rounds off his afterword he explicitly stresses that it is thanks to God's providence that he has returned: 'we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance. Psalms 66:12 (NIV).'

#### WONDERS AND MARVELS

Kiöping's travelogue not only tells of adventures and perils, but in his narrative he also provides what appears to be reliable facts on climate, social mores, coinage, etc. Some of his 'facts' however, read more like fiction. His travelogue is also a narrative of curiosities and wonders in distant places, of exotic phenomena verging on the marvellous.

The idea that on the fringes of the known world – particularly in the East – strange creatures and phenomena are to be found, goes a long way back.<sup>446</sup> In antiquity narratives of wonders and unbelievable things within the subjects of geography, natural history, and human culture even constituted a genre of their own: *paradoxa*. Much older travel literature can be seen against the background of this genre. Well-known examples are the narratives of Antiphanes of Berge and Pytheas of Massalia, both from the fourth century BCE. They both claim to have sailed to the uttermost limits of the world where they had seen things that are unbelievable but true. There was even a term for this kind of motif – *ápiastos* – 'not to be trusted', 'not credible', 'beyond belief' or

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446 On the ideas of the alien qualities of the 'edges of the earth' during antiquity, see Romm 1992.

perhaps, as James Romm has suggested, ‘unbelievable but true’.<sup>447</sup> To some extent this tradition is also discernible one hundred years earlier in Herodotus’ *Histories*. Whether readers or listeners were really supposed to believe these ‘unbelievable stories’ is not clear. The Greek geographer Strabo (first century BCE) remarks that travel writers may tell exciting and entertaining stories – *muthoi* – but that these must not be told as if they were facts or experiences – *historia*.<sup>448</sup> Strabo’s remark implies that travellers were prone to lying, and the traveller as liar is a literary motif at least as old as Western literature as we know it today. Odysseus, on his return to Ithaca, appears in the disguise of a lying traveller, and several centuries later lying travellers feature in novels (or rather romances) by Antonius Diogenes (c. 150 CE) and Lucian of Samosata (c. 100 CE).

The tradition of wonders and marvels, of curious things that exist on the fringes of the world, survived well through late antiquity and the Middle Ages into the Renaissance and the Early Modern Period. *The Alexander Romance* in the third century includes these kinds of motifs, and Isidore of Seville, in the seventh century, included several of these motifs in his *Etymologiae*, a compilation of material and lore dating back to antiquity.

Narratives of marvellous things also feature in travelogues written during the Middle Ages. The most famous is probably Marco Polo’s and Rustichello da Pisa’s *Il milione* (commonly called *The Travels of Marco Polo*) from the late thirteenth century. *Il milione* tells of many strange things, and in its time was considered to be a compilation of lies, though today it is sometimes judged differently. In the first decades of the fourteenth century, two friars, the Italian Franciscan Odoric Mattiussi and the Dominican Brother Jordanus, both wrote travelogues from the East which feature descriptions of marvels and wonders. Brother Jordanus, who reported from his missions in India, even called his narrative *Mira-*

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447 Liddell & Scott 1966; Romm 1994, p. 103.

448 Strabo 1928.

*bilia descripta*. Sir John Mandeville from England – or perhaps Jehan de Mandeville from France – was an influential, and possibly fictive, travel writer from the late Middle Ages. Though opinions vary on whether he really travelled anywhere, or even on whether he really existed, a travelogue authored in this name appeared in the late fourteenth century. This narrative was translated into several European languages, and for several centuries it provided travellers with ‘information’. Today *The Travels of Sir John de Mandeville* is thought to be a compilation of material from older manuscripts – among others Odoric Mattiussi’s report from China.

When it comes to wonders and marvels there is thus a plethora of medieval sources, not just travelogues. Several of the motifs that feature in travel narratives from antiquity into the early modern period are included in medieval bestiaries as well as in emblem books and even in treatises on natural history.<sup>449</sup>

The wonders and marvels continue to feature in travelogues from the early modern period. Explorers such as Christopher Columbus and, later, Sir Walter Raleigh – just to mention two of the more well-known travellers – report on mermaids and unicorns.

With Raleigh we have reached the seventeenth century and the medieval wonders had of course by then lost some of their currency, but curiosities and wonders were still on the agenda, albeit in a somewhat different way. The mid-seventeenth century was the era of the Baroque

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449 The bestiaries and the emblem books were books with images of animals – real and mythical – accompanied by brief texts. Through the texts the animals were allegorised and moralised, and by reading, viewing, and meditating, the reader was supposed to gain a deepened existential understanding, to gain wisdom and insight, or to simply wonder at the marvel of God’s creation. The bestiaries belong mainly to the medieval era while emblem books belong to the early modern era. Emblems were images which together with brief texts – mottos – were supposed to be read in much the same way as the bestiaries. Some of the animals of the bestiaries appear in the emblems which, however, also feature motifs other than animals. See, e.g. Cohen 2008, p. 35.

aesthetic. The Baroque aesthetic favoured effects of the strange, curious, and unexpected. Terms for desired effects were, e.g. *meraviglia* – wonder – and *stupore*, which indicate that a reader or spectator should be wonderstruck and even dumbfounded by the strange, artful, or marvellous phenomena with which she or he was confronted.

This aesthetic ideal appears also in relation to the cabinets of curiosities – collections of objects or specimens that would later be categorised under different disciplines, such as natural history, ethnography, or archaeology. The specimens were often displayed together with artefacts and religious or historical relics, sometimes also antiquities. In a cabinet of curiosities could thus be found, e.g. two-headed calves, foetuses of Siamese twins, narwhal horns, salamanders, bezoars, etc., side by side with intricate carvings from the East, the drum of a shaman, etc. A basic assumption was that the cabinets of curiosities should contain things that induced wonder; the cabinet of curiosities presupposes a certain attitude, a certain stance. It is not impossible to see some of the curiosities that still featured in travelogues from the seventeenth century against the background of the cabinets of curiosities as well as against the Baroque aesthetic in general.

The kind of curiosities and marvels travellers wrote about varied depending on the purpose of the journey and the travelogue, but also on which of the four corners of the Earth the traveller had visited. Different motifs and phenomena belonged to different parts of the world. The American literary historian Mary Baine Campbell has described the motifs belonging to descriptions of the East as a ‘Matter of the East’: ‘an emphatically marvellous body of traditional lore and symbol available to anyone who undertook to set a narrative in Asian territories.’<sup>450</sup> Some of the motifs of the Matter of the East can be traced as far back as the fourth century BCE and to fragments of the Greek physician Ctesias’s

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450 Campbell 1988, p. 47.

description of India.<sup>451</sup> Campbell emphasises that the Matter of the East appears in ostensibly factual accounts as travelogues and geographic descriptions as well as in fictional narratives. Men with two faces, ants as big as dogs, dragons, and griffins are just a few examples.

These strange species are not found in Kiöping's travelogue but, regardless of this, his narrative contains descriptions of things that are unbelievable but true, and which are to be found in the Eastern parts of the world. Some of them, such as salamanders, amphisbaenae, or bezoars, featured in cabinets of curiosities or in emblem books and bestiaries. When describing a salamander, Kiöping explicitly mentions cabinets of curiosities, and in connection with this he also refers to the salamander's mythical properties.

His description of the 'snakes that have two heads' in Surat coincides with descriptions and images of the amphisbaenae to be found in, among other works, Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*. Isidore in his turn refers to Lucian of Samosata. From Isidore the amphisbaena then made its way into the medieval bestiaries where it seems to have had a rather vague allegorical meaning – primarily it seems to have had the function of causing readers to marvel at its strangeness, though it could probably be seen as an ouroboros motif, that is, as a symbol for eternity.<sup>452</sup>

A sense of magic or wonder also appears in Kiöping's description of the coconut palm, a tree with many connotations within the Jewish and Christian tradition as well as in the Egyptian and Greco-Roman religions. In his description Kiöping emphasises the usefulness of the palm tree. It is a generous tree since there is nothing that cannot be of use to humans. Even the wooden part, the trunk, provides a liquid that in a seemingly miraculous way changes itself during the day, from mead to wine to vinegar:

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451 See, e.g., 'Ctesias' in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*.

452 Eriksson 2009, pp. 50 f.

They tap wine from the tree itself, which tastes like mead in the morning, then like Rhenish wine towards eight o'clock, and after noon it is vinegar, which forever remains constant.

These seemingly almost magical changes of the liquid can of course easily be explained in terms of fermentation – but Kiöping's description endows the process with a sense of wonder.

A similar combination of detailed empirical observation and wonder is apparent in his description of the banana plant and its fruit. Tangible and vivid details coexist with an interpretation of the banana as the forbidden fruit and the leaves of the plant as the leaves with which Eve and Adam covered themselves after the Fall.

In descriptions like these it is possible to discern a verifiable reality behind the wonders, while at other times the only conclusion a modern reader can draw is that Kiöping is telling a tall tale, such as when he writes that the waters of Aionam (Hainan) turns everything that it touches into stone, or when he describes the Indian gems that grow on plants.

Considering that Kiöping travelled and wrote in the mid-seventeenth century, and that the Scientific Revolution was not far away, this kind of narrative might seem passé. However, several of the wonders and curiosities Kiöping described were still current, not only in the cabinets of curiosities but also in the travelogues of the seventeenth century. The curiosities in Kiöping's narrative are thus not as dated as might be supposed.

How travelogues about wonders and curiosities were read and how they were intended to be interpreted by readers in earlier times is debated. Were the travellers seen as liars? Or were the wonders part of an accepted world view? These questions of course have different answers in different times, but one interpretation is that earlier travel narratives described the world according to what has been called 'a mythical preunderstanding'. By this is meant that travellers perceived and described reality based on fictional accounts that they had read and

heard about and, on the same basis, readers perceived their accounts as factual. This argument has sometimes been used to explain how the rhinoceros became a unicorn and how sea lions and other sea creatures were described as mermaids.

Another perspective is that the wonders described in travelogues did not necessarily have any reference to reality. The conventions of the genre and rhetoric dictated that these kinds of descriptions should be included anyway. They were not lies, but a different kind of truth. The readers were expected to read them as emblems and meditate on the wonders to find deeper truths in them. Literary historian Jonathan P.A. Sell terms this a rhetorical *episteme* in contrast to an empirical ditto.<sup>453</sup>

At least in relation to Kiöping's travelogue, I find it problematic to choose between an empirical or a rhetorical stance. It seems to me that there are probably instances of mythical preunderstanding as well as rhetorical conventions with and without references to reality – maybe also the odd lie to entertain and impress. At some points in the text it seems likely that he reports the lies or tall tales of others in good faith, and probably some of his descriptions are coloured by a mythical preunderstanding.

It is not surprising that opinions on Kiöping's narrative have varied widely. It can, for instance, be mentioned that the Swedish eighteenth-century writer and *littérateur* Carl Christoffer Gjörwell stated that Kiöping's travelogue ought to be forgotten.<sup>454</sup> This indicates that he regarded it as a collection of tall tales, while Linnaeus seems to have found at least some qualities in the travelogue or at least in Kiöping's description and interpretation of the banana plant, which he subsequently named *Musa paradisiaca*. Swedish author and playwright August Strindberg, who came upon Kiöping's travelogue while working as a librarian at the National Library of Sweden in the 1870s and 1880s,

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453 Sell 2006, *passim*.

454 Regarding Gjörwell's verdict, see Almqvist 1977.

regarded Kiöping as a ‘completely naïve writer’.<sup>455</sup> Explorer Sven Hedin on the other hand, judges Kiöping’s travelogue as factual.<sup>456</sup> Today historian Gunnar Broberg characterises Kiöping as a ‘keen observer with something of a Linnean receptivity’.<sup>457</sup>

I would like to add the following: Perhaps the descriptions of things that are unbelievable but true could be seen as possessing an aesthetic quality, a literary quality to enjoy? *Ápistos* is after all, as I have already stated, a term for such motifs.

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455 Strindberg 1987.

456 Hedin 1921, pp. 415–440.

457 Broberg 1975, p. 199.

# TIMELINE

Sources unless stated otherwise: autobiography, travelogue, Muncktell 1843, Forsell 1948, Almqvist 1965, and Almqvist 1975–1977.

## Parents and youth

1620, 19 Nov. Parents Matthias Nicolai Thunaemontanus and Magdalena Carlsdotter are wed in Västerås.

1621. Father becomes headmaster of the town school in Arboga.

1621, 23 June. NMK is born in Arboga.

1624. Father becomes vicar of Romfartuna.

1630. Father becomes provost of Köping.

1637, 7 Nov. NMK expelled from school in Västerås for stealing.

1638. Accused of shoplifting in Köping.

1641, 23 Feb. Mother dies.

1641, 6 Mar. NMK matriculates at Uppsala University with his brothers Karl, Johan, and Jöran/Georg.

1646, 3 May. Father dies.

## 1647

14 April. NMK receives a royal letter of recommendation to travel abroad.

Sails to Holland, joins the merchant navy, is captured by pirates, and is held hostage for seven months at Grevelin.

## 1648

Signs onto a privateer at Dunkirk, fights a sea battle off the Vlie, is wounded and captured, taken to Amsterdam, and released.  
22 Oct. Signs on as a boatswain with the Dutch East India Company.

## 1649

30 April. Arrives at Jakarta on Java, is assigned to soldier duty.

## 1650

Sails to the Malabar Coast, south-west India, and from port to port there.  
Sails to Bandar Abbas, Iran, travels inland to various towns, including the road from Bandar Abbas to Lar past Kohurestan.

## 1650–1651

Employed for either 'some months' or 18 months as a soldier by Shah Abbas II in Isfahan, Iran. Chapters 18, 28, 32.  
Takes part in the Persian subjugation of the former Kingdom of Kandahar, Afghanistan.  
Returns to Isfahan, is discharged, travels to Hamadan and Tabriz, Iran.  
Travels to Yerevan and Nakhchavan, Armenia.  
Returns to Isfahan.

## 1651

Returns to the Persian coast, enters the service of Philips Angel van Leiden, sails with him to Basra, Baghdad, and Fallujah in modern Iraq.

## 1652

Returns to Basra, sails to Sri Lanka, enlists as a soldier, works as an elephant catcher.

Falls severely ill, is sent to Pulicat on the mainland's south-east Coromandel Coast, convalesces at Fort Geldria. Chapter 77.

Still not having fully regained his health, NMK goes with the Dutch governor Laurens Pit to attend the cremation of a provincial governor under the Sultan of Golconda, probably at Chandragiri, where he relapses into severe illness. Chapter 77.

Convalesces in the care of locals at the provincial capital, returns to Pulicat. Chapter 77.

## 1653

Enters the service of Hendrik Pellicorne, sails to Yemen and up the Red Sea.

24 June. In Zabid, Yemen: waits with Pellicorne upon the town's ruler on the 25th. Chapters 13, 17.

8 Aug. In Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Chapter 19.

17 Aug. In Yanbu' al Bahr, Saudi Arabia. Chapter 20.

26 Aug. In 'Zerzes' on the Arabian shore between Yanbu and the Straits of Tiran. Chapter 21.

30 Aug. Enters the Gulf of Aqaba. Chapter 21.

31 Aug. Disembarks in Sinai and heads inland. Chapter 22.

2 Sept. Arrives at St. Catherine's monastery. Chapter 22.

6 or 7 Sept. Leaves the monastery. Chapter 24.

27 Sept. In Suakin, Sudan. Chapter 25.

Returns to the Coromandel Coast and sails from port to port there.

## 1654

Sails to Malacca City, probably leaves on 28 February for Sumatra and then sails on to Jakarta, where he leaves Pellicorne's service.

Is recommended by Pellicorne to Fredrik Coyet, with whom he sails along the coasts of modern Vietnam and south China.

## 1655

On Hainan. Chapter 85.

Shipwrecked off Taiwan and badly wounded, convalesces in Coyet's household, probably on Taiwan itself (where Coyet would become Governor in 1656). Chapters 83–84.

24 December. Arrives at Java.

## 1656

3 Feb. Sails from Jakarta on *De Witte Olifant*. Afterword.

In Table Bay. Chapter 6.

On St. Helena. Chapter 4.

9 Sept. Arrives at the Vlie, severely ill with dropsy, spends two weeks convalescing in Amsterdam. Meets two Armenian merchants previously encountered in Isfahan. Chapter 28, Afterword.

22 Oct. Arrives in Stockholm.

## Back in Sweden, later years

- 1657, 10 March. Appointed sub-lieutenant in the Swedish navy.
- 1657, 12–13 Sept. Fights in the Battle of Møn.
1658. Marries Margareta Mattsdotter.
- 1658, 29 Oct. Fights on the ship *Fides* in the Battle of the Sound.
1659. Works as a naval tax collector in Scania, among other tasks on dry land.
- 1660, 29 Oct. Discharged from the navy as full lieutenant.
- 1666–72. Couple supported by Per Brahe with money, foodstuffs, and clothing (demonstrably; possibly also before and after this period).
- 1667, Sept. Travelogue published by Per Brahe at Visingsborg.
1670. One of the couple's three children dies.
1674. Travelogue's second edition published by Per Brahe at Visingsborg.
1676. Couple lives with two children at Danvikstull in Stockholm.
- 1680, 12 Sept. Per Brahe dies.
- 1680, 22 Nov. Per Brahe's estate disburses 30 copper *daler* to NMK's widow for his funeral.
- 1681, 29 Jan. St. Clare's parish in Stockholm receives payment for the digging of NMK's grave and for the use of a funeral pall and a cloth-covered stretcher.

# INDEX OF NAMED EARLY MODERN PEOPLE

- Abbas II (1632–1666). Shah of Persia 1642–1666, son of Shah Safi. NMK served as a soldier in his personal company in 1650–1651. Chapters 18, 28, 32, autobiography.
- Andersdotter Dalekarla, Sara. Second wife of NMK's father. Loenbom.
- Angel van Leiden, Philips (1616–1683). Dutch merchant, painter, and author who employed NMK as his interpreter in Persia and Mesopotamia in 1651–1652. Autobiography.
- Brahe, Per the Younger (1602–1680). Count, *riksdrots*, royal councillor, etc. NMK's patron and probably his second cousin. Printer's introduction.
- Carlsdotter, Malin (d. 1641). NMK's mother, possibly an illegitimate daughter of Carl Stenbock. Loenbom.
- Charles X Gustav (1622–1660). King of Sweden 1654–1660. Cousin of Queen Christina. Afterword, autobiography.
- Christina (1626–1689). Queen of Sweden 1632–1654, assumed actual rule in 1644. Cousin of King Charles X Gustav. Autobiography.
- Constantine (d. 1662), a.k.a. Tamtim, Zhu Cixuan. Third son of Zhu Youlang, the last Southern Ming emperor, who reigned 1646–1662 as the Yongli emperor. Father and son were executed in 1662 and Constantine never became emperor. Chapter 83.
- Coyet, Fredrik (1615–1687). Swedish nobleman and Dutch governor of Formosa. NMK travelled as part of his staff along the coasts of Southeast Asia in 1654–1655. Chapter 84.
- Gesi. Unidentified Persian provincial ruler who put down an uprising in Tabriz. Chapter 29.
- Gyldenstolpe, Nils (1642–1709). Count and diplomat who worked as Count Per Brahe the Younger's secretary in the early and mid-1660s. Loenbom found NMK's autobiography among his papers. Loenbom.

- Hey, Bernhard/Berndt L. Cardinal and Catholic bishop of Baghdad, of French extraction. Chapters 48, 50.
- Hieronymus. Franciscan monk in Tabriz in Persia who showed NMK biblical sites. Chapter 29.
- Johannes. German from Frankfurt am Main who converted to Islam and met NMK in Yemen in 1653. Chapter 13.
- Kankel, Johann (1614–1687). German printer employed by Count Per Brahe the Younger at Visingsö. Printed the first (1667) and second (1674) editions of the travelogue.
- Karakan. Armenian merchant whom NMK met in the Persian capital Isfahan in 1652 and in Amsterdam in 1656. Chapter 28.
- Karathan Osman. Ruler of the Persian city of Shiraz. Chapter 41.
- Koxinga (1624–1662), a.k.a. Zheng Chenggong. Ming loyalist naval commander who was powerful from 1650–1662 along the south-eastern shores of China. NMK calls him ‘Arch-Pirate’ in Chapter 84. Son of Zheng Zhilong. Chapters 83–85.
- Loenbom, Samuel (1725–1776). Historian who published NMK’s autobiographical essay in Stockholm in 1773.
- Maetsuycker, Joan (1606–1678). Governor-general of the Dutch East Indies 1653–1678, based at Batavia/Jakarta. Afterword.
- Mahomet Roskar. Ruler of a little Persian town or a larger area including it, misidentified by NMK with the caravanserai Gur-i-bazargan. Chapter 36.
- Mesadie. Ruler of the Persian city of Yazd and a relative of Abbas II. Chapter 35.
- Niels. Danish priest at Tharangambadi-Tranquebar on the Coromandel Coast who stayed on after the Dutch took over and who married a local Hindu woman. Chapter 76.
- Pellicorne, Hendrik. Dutch envoy to Arabia and the Coromandel Coast of India who employed NMK as his steward and interpreter in 1653–1654. Probably an otherwise obscure member of the Pellicorne family from the southern Netherlands and a relative of Jean Pellicorne of Antwerp. Chapters 17, 21, autobiography.

- Philip I. Patriarch or Catholicos of all Armenians 1633–1655. NMK met him in Yerevan in 1650. Chapter 28.
- Pit, Laurens (1610–1684). Dutch governor of Coromandel 1650–1663. Born in the See of Bremen in Germany. Chapter 77.
- Rudbeckius, Peter Johannes (1578–1629). Poet, professor at Uppsala, member of parliament, predecessor to NMK's father as provost of Köping. Loenbom.
- Rudolph Constantine. Armenian merchant whom NMK met in the Persian capital Isfahan in 1652 and in Amsterdam in 1656. Chapter 28.
- Safi (1611–1642). Shah of Persia 1629–1642, father of Shah Abbas II. Took severe action against monument despoilers around Persepolis. Chapter 39.
- Stenbock, Karl Gustavsson (c. 1537–1609). Fief-holder at Kalmar Castle, brother of Gustavus I's third wife Queen Catharina, and possibly NMK's maternal grandfather. Loenbom.
- Thunæmontanus, Matthias Nicolai (d. 1646). Provost of Köping and NMK's father. Loenbom.
- Zheng Zhilong (1604–1661), a.k.a. Nicholas Iquan Gaspard or in NMK's writing 'Eeqwa'. Powerful Chinese merchant-pirate-admiral. Father of Koxinga. Chapter 83.

# EDITIONS OF NMK'S TRAVELOGUE

1667. *Een kort beskriffning vppå trenne resor och peregrinationer, sampt konungarijket Japan: I. Beskrifwes een reesa som genom Asia, Africa och många andra hedniska konungarijken, sampt öijar, medh flijt är förrättat aff Nils Matson Kiöping, ... II. Förstelles thet stooro och mächtige konungarijke Japan, sampt thes inwånares handel och wandel. III. Beskrifwes een reesa till Ostindien, China och Japan, giordh och beskrefwen aff Oloff Erickson Willman, ... IIII. Vthføres een reesa ifrån Muszcow till China, genom Mongul och Cataija, öfwer strömen Obij, förrättad aff een rysk gesandt, som til then stoore tartaren Niuki war skickadh. Visingsborg. 261 pp. [Online at [gupea.ub.gu.se](http://gupea.ub.gu.se), [litteraturbanken.se](http://litteraturbanken.se), [regina.kb.se](http://regina.kb.se), and [runeberg.org](http://runeberg.org)]*

1674. *Een kort beskriffning vppå trenne reesor och peregrinationer, sampt konungarijket Japan: I. Beskrifwes een reesa som genom Asia, Africa och många andra hedniska konungarijken, sampt öijar, med flijt är förrättat aff Nils Matson Kiöping, ... II. Beskrifwes een reesa till Ost Indien, China och Japan: III. Med förtälliande om förbenembde stooro och mächta konungarijketz Japan tillstånd, sampt thesz inwånares handel och wandel: förrättat och beskrefwin aff Oloff Erickson Willman, ... IV. Vthføres een reesa ifrån Muszcow till China, ... Visingsborg. 309 pp. [Online at [litteraturbanken.se](http://litteraturbanken.se), [urn.kb.se](http://urn.kb.se)]*

1743. *Beskrifning om en resa, genom Asia, Africa och många andra hedna länder, som är giord af Nils Matson Köping ... förbättrad och tredie gången uplagd ... Stockholm: Lars Salvius. 184 pp. [Online at [litteraturbanken.se](http://litteraturbanken.se), [urn.kb.se](http://urn.kb.se)]*

1759. *Beskrifning om en resa, genom Asia, Africa och många andra hedna länder, som är gjord af Nils Mathsson Köping ... Förbättrad och fjerde gången uplagd.* Västerås: Johan Laurentius Horn. 170 pp.
1790. *Beskrifning om en resa, genom Asia, Afrika och många andra hedna länder, som är gjord af Nils Mathsson Köping ... Förbättrad och femte gången uplagd.* Västerås: Johan Laurentius Horn. 160 pp.
1961. *Nils Matson Kiöpings resa. Parallelltexter ur andra och tredje utgåvorna. Svenska texter.* Ed. Ture Johannisson. Stockholm: Svenska Bokförlaget. [Not the full text: parallel annotated excerpts from the 1674 and 1743 editions.]
2005. *Een kort beskrifning vppå trenne resor och peregrinationer, sampt konungarijket Japan.* E-text at [runeberg.org](http://runeberg.org). (1667 edition + NMK's autobiography transcribed by Martin Rundkvist.)
2016. *Nils Mattsson Kiöpings resa. Reesa som genom Asia, Africa och många andra hedniska konungarijken sampt öjar medh flijt är förrättat.* Ruins förvandringar 2. Ed. Martin Rundkvist. Stockholm: Ruin. ISBN 978-91-88241-03-0. 171 pp. (1667 edition's text + NMK's autobiography.)

# ILLUSTRATIONS

P. 2. Title page from the travelogue's first edition 1667. National Library of Sweden, Stockholm, F1700/3296 (var.a). Digitized in 2016. Online at [regina.kb.se](http://regina.kb.se).

P. 17. Photo by Holger Ellgaard 2019, Wikimedia, CC BY-SA 4.0.

P. 186. Last page from the travelogue's first edition 1667, p. 136.

Vignettes from the travelogue's first edition 1667, p. 245.

Maps by Maria Grum and Malin Rosvall.

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36. Donske Möön. Then andre emellan Cronan Sverige och Hållens-  
daren vthi Greflundh Anno 1658. then 29. Octob: Will altså her  
medh vthi största eenfaldigheet sluta/ Och medh Poeten säga:

För än wij komma till att bo  
I Kooligheet och Stillheet /  
Måste wij hafwa fioer Doo/  
Och lista på Gudz Mildheet.

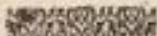
Psalm 66. v. 12.

Wij äro komne genom Eldh och Watn/men  
Du hafwer vthfördt oss/ och wedher-  
qweckt oss.

Palingius.

Then som är beprydd medh Dngden /  
Han kan reesa igenom Ökenen /  
Vthi the Arabers Landh:  
En skal honom stee tå Fahra/  
Om han hoos Zuder mon wara/  
Eller Aethiopers Landh.

NICOLAVS MATTHIÆ  
Kiöpingh/  
WestmanniaSvecus,





E G Y P T

S A U D I  
A R A B I A

S U D A N

Y E M E N

Mediterranean sea

St. Catherine's

Yanbu' al Bahr

Jeddah

Suakin

Zabid

Mocha

Aden

R  
e  
d  
S  
e  
a

Blue Mandeb



ARMENIA

Yerevan

Nakhchavan

Tabriz

Hamadan

I R A N

Isfahan

Shahreza

I R A Q

Baghdad

Fallujah

Babylon

Basra

Ujan

Persepolis

Shiraz

Estahban

Lar

Gur-i-bazargan

Kohurestan

Bandar Abbas

Hormuz

The Gulf

Gulf of Oman

Muscat

O M A N



INDIA

Arabian  
sea

MALDIVES

SRI  
LANKA

Diu

Surat

Daman

Bijapur

Vengurla

Goa

Machilipatnam

Chandragiri

Pulicat

Forts St. George  
& St. Thomas

Fort St. David

Tharangambadi

Nagapattinami

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Kandy

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The Swede Nils Mattsson Kiöping (1621–1680) was a priest's son and a bastard grandson of the Queen's brother. From 1648 to 1656 he travelled around the coasts of Africa, Arabia and southern Asia before returning home and becoming a naval officer. He left two longer pieces of writing: the first book in Swedish about the area he sailed in, published in 1667, and an autobiographical essay published posthumously in 1773. This annotated volume contains the first translation into another language of both.

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Introduction, translation and notes by the archaeologist Martin Rundkvist of the University of Łódź – or as he would have been known in 1650: Martin Persson Stockholm.

With an afterword by Carina Lidström, senior lecturer at the School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences at Örebro University.



ISBN 978-91-88763-26-6

ISBN 978-91-88763-32-7 (pdf)

ISSN 0083-6788

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