

**CALCOEN: A DUTCH NARRATIVE
OF THE SECOND VOYAGE OF
VASCO DA GAMA TO CALICUT,
PRINTED AT ANTWERP CIRCA
1504**

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OF VASCO DA GAMA TO
CALICUT

Printed at Antwerp circa 1504

WITH INTRODUCTION AND TRANSLATION

BY J. Ph. BERJEAU




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Introduction.

HE name of Vasco da Gama is not even mentioned in the following narrative, but there is no doubt it applies to the second voyage of the great navigator to India; and as the book is no translation of any previous work in Portuguese, Spanish, or Italian, we must come to the conclusion it was written by a Dutch officer or sailor, who took an active part in the expedition. The dates, events, and places mentioned agree with all we know of the second voyage of the Portuguese Admiral, whilst our narrative, until now unnoticed by bibliographers, supplies interesting details unmentioned by Galvão, Ramusio, Castanheda, Faria, Barros, &c.

Some ten years ago a well-known bibliophile, who had the book, asked me to translate it for him into French; I did so hastily, and was not quite satisfied with my translation. But having had lately the good fortune to find again the original and my translation bound together in the British Museum, and the trustees

of the great English national library having kindly allowed me to take a fac-simile of it, I am enabled to offer the public a reproduction of this interesting document, with an improved translation into English.

The book begins with a "hors d'œuvre" personal to the writer, and relating to one of the unfortunate expeditions undertaken by the Portuguese on the coast of Barbary against the celebrated Barbarossa, but that is disposed of in half a page.

In so early a narrative of voyage in countries unknown to the author, it was to be expected the names of places could not be accurately written; but with a little trouble it is easy to reconcile the spelling with the modern names.

Thus, the first land seen after the departure from Lisbon, on the 10th of February, 1502, is called *Kenan*, which undoubtedly is Cape Non on the west coast of Africa, opposite the Canaries. The name of Cape Verde, the next station, is omitted, but its distance from Portugal accurately stated. On the 29th of March the expedition lost sight of the Polar star, and on the 2nd of April they were under the Line, and in the southern hemisphere a week later.

Then, they were beaten about by a storm which during twelve days drove them out of their track. Another heavy storm caught them about the stormy cape misnamed that of Good Hope.

On the 14th of June they arrived before *Scafal*

(Sofala), in Kaffir-land, which our author calls the Paepian's country, very likely from the kingdom of Sabia, near by. Vasco da Gama went to Sofala with only four ships, the remainder of his fleet having been ordered to sail direct for Mozambique, which our author calls *Miskebije*.

On the following 18th of July they left Sofala for *Hyla*, which is a misprint, later corrected in the book as *Kyle*, for Quiloa, where the king was obliged to pay tribute and homage to the King of Portugal.

Melinda, where they should have arrived on the 20th of July, is the next stopping place; but they missed it and went to the cape of Saint Mary, which must be the Ras Mory, forming the eastern point of the Island of Socotra, and whose Arabic name answers to Cape Saint Mary. The island was then mainly inhabited by Greek Christians. L'abbé Prévost, "Histoire des Voyages," vol. i. p. 80 (La Haye, 1747, 4^o), says: "Mais un vent impétueux le poussa huit lieues au-delà de cette ville dans une baie, où il trouva plusieurs vaisseaux Mores et quelques-uns de Calcut dont il se faisoit."

There, our author says, they left the country of the Paepians; for Kaffir-land was at that time supposed to reach Abyssinia in the north and the Cape on the south, and they sailed for *Marabia*, no doubt a misprint for Iram-Arabia.

On August 21st they saw for the first time the land of India and the great city of *Combaen*, the Cambaeth

of Marco Polo, the modern Cambay, on the river Cobar (Saubermattee).

The next station, called *Oan*, is no doubt Goa, where the Portuguese come into collision with the Indians, take 400 ships, and burn them after having killed their defenders. The island of *Auidibe*, where they took water and landed 300 of their invalids, is Anjeeveeva, which for a long time after was a station where all the Portuguese ships called before touching the continent of India.

The *Monteyl* of our author, in the kingdom of *Cannaer* (Cananor), is the Mount Ely of Marco Polo. There they watched for the Mecca ships, attacked the *Merii*, plundered it, killed and burnt all the people on board, on the 1st of October.

Our author does not say that in this action, so dishonourable for the memory of Vasco da Gama, the children from the captured ships were saved and brought on board the Admiral's caravel, as it was affirmed later by other historians.

On the 27th of October they sailed from Cananor, and arrived at *Calcoen* (in Sanscrit Khalikhodon, in English Calicut), where they fought during three days against the troops of the *Samudrya-radja* (the king of the sea-shore), whom early European writers call the *Zamorin*. Then, already, Flemish merchants, who had come through Egypt or Persia, were established in Calicut, as it is stated in King Manoel's "Copia de una lettera," (*Roma*, 1505):—Vi fonò mercadati

d' tutte quelle parti e d' mercantia como Bruges i Flan-
dria, Venetia i Italia."

The barbarous device resorted to by Vasco da Gama of sending adrift towards the town a ship loaded with the cut heads, hands, and feet of his prisoners of war, has been related and censured as it deserves by later historians of the expedition.

The kingdom of Granor, mentioned as situate between *Calcoen* (Calicut) and *Kuffchaim* (Cochin) is no doubt that of Travancore, where our author says there were a great number of Christians and Jews, living under the same prince. Like all early travellers to India, Vasco da Gama and his companions mistook the sectators of Brama and Bouddha for Christians, because they worshipped the images of the Virgin Mary brought in the Portuguese ships, mistaking them for the representation of Maha Madja holding in her lap her son Shakya. The similarity of the name of the Indian goddess, no less than the aureolas surrounding the heads of the mother and son, induced the Portuguese to make the same mistake when they entered a native temple. No doubt there were at this time in the Indian Peninsula a certain number of Nestorians, but not so large as the Portuguese imagined. The figures of 25,000 Christians and 300 Christian churches given by our author as established at *Coloen* (Culan, Quilom), as well as the repugnance of the so-called Christians to deal, eat, or drink with persons of another creed, clearly show the mistake.

The town mentioned from hearfay as *Lapis* is Meliapour near Madras, where, according to a mediæval tradition, St. Thomas the Apofle was put to death, whilst another fays it was in the town of Calamina, whence his body was transported to Edeffa, which our author calls *Ediffen*, fating it is four days' diftant from Meliapour. The Portuguefe maintain that having found the body of the faint in the ruins of the latter town, they carried it to Goa, where it is ftill worfhipped; but this affertion is fubftantiated by very flender proofs indeed.

Our author calls the betel, *tombour*; whilst Alvaro Velho names it *atambor*, both being mifnomers, from the page carrying the box which contains it being called *tombular*.

The civet-cat is fo clearly defcribed that it was impoffible not to tranflate by *muft* the word *iubot*, although it is not to be found in any old or modern Flemifh or Dutch dictionary.

In relating the fecond battle which Vafco da Gama, on his return from Cochin, fought with a fingle fhip againft the king of Calicut on the 12th of February, 1503, the Dutch narrator does not mention the timely arrival of Vicente Sodre, who with the remainder of the fleet decided the action, and prevented the defeat of Vafco da Gama. While the latter began his return voyage to Portugal, Sodre remained behind to blockade the Red Sea.

Whether the two iflands, which the returning expedi-