

Adventures and Encounters
Europeans in South-East Asia

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With a Foreword by
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KUALA LUMPUR
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
OXFORD SINGAPORE NEW YORK
1995

and they made the famous fortress in the place where it now is, on the site of the great mosque, strong, with two wells of fresh water in the towers, and two or three more in the bulwarks. On one side the sea washes against it, and on the other the river. The walls of the fortress are of great width; as for the keep, where they are usually built, you will find few of five storeys like this. The artillery, both large and small, fires on all sides. Meantime *Utemuta Raja*, his son, son-in-law, and another relative, were beheaded because they were found engaged in Malayan intrigues and trying to darken the cloves.

Tomé Pires, *Suma Oriental*, translated by A. Cortesão, Hakluyt Society, Vol. 90, 2nd series, London, 1944, pp. 254-9, 278-81.

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Magellan the Missionary

ANTONIO PIGAFETTA

In 1493 the Pope had allocated most of the Western hemisphere to Spain, and thus it was possible for a Spanish expedition to open a sea route to South-East Asia across the Pacific. Ferdinand Magellan, who commanded the expedition which sailed in 1519, was himself a Portuguese with personal knowledge of the East. In his famous circumnavigation of the world, he reached what became the Philippines in 1521.

Antonio Pigafetta, an Italian and a Knight of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, was aboard one of Magellan's ships and, after the return to Europe, wrote the classic account of the voyage, in which Magellan himself had been killed in an ill-judged landing on the island of Mataram, near Cebu.

As with the Portuguese, the Spaniards' purpose was not only to open a trade route but to convert local peoples to Christianity. When Magellan reached Cebu in April 1521, he instructed the local ruler in 'the faith of Christ' and persuaded him to lead his subjects in a public conversion (described in the passage below), which

was the beginning of a sustained effort at proselytization, continued by Roman Catholic missionaries in the Philippines in later years.

After Magellan's death, his flotilla went on to visit Brunei, of which Pigafetta gave the earliest description. It appears that throughout the voyage Pigafetta made notes, as the basis for his account of the voyage, and that he picked up a smattering of Malay. Appearing before the Emperor Charles V in September 1522, Pigafetta formally presented 'a book written by my hand', but the extant record, called 'the Relation' was written in 1524 under the patronage of Pope Clement VII. Four versions, three in French and one in Italian, of the Relation, possibly adaptations of the text composed by Pigafetta have survived in libraries in Italy and France. He died in the 1530s.

SATURDAY following a scaffolding was made in the open space, fitted with tapestry and palm branches, because the king had promised our captain to become Christian on Sunday. He told him not to be afraid when our artillery fired on that day, for it was the custom to load it on those feasts without firing stones or other balls.

Sunday morning, the fourteenth day of April, we went on shore, forty men, of whom two were armed, who marched before us, following the standard of our king emperor. When we landed the ships discharged all their artillery, and from fear of it the people ran away in all directions. The captain and the king embraced one another, and then joyously we went near the scaffolding, where the captain and the king sat on two chairs, one covered with red, the other with violet velvet. The principal men sat on cushions, and the others on mats, after the fashion of the country. Then the captain began to speak to the king through the interpreter to incite him to the faith of Jesus Christ, and told him that if he wished to be a good Christian, as he had said the day before, that he must burn all the idols of his country, and, instead of them, place a cross, and that everyone should worship it every day on their knees, and their hands joined to heaven: and he showed him how he ought every day to make the sign of the cross. To that the king and all his people answered

that they would obey the commands of the captain and do all that he told them. The captain took the king by the hand, and they walked about on the scaffolding, and when he was baptised he said that he would name him Don Charles, as the emperor his sovereign was named; and he named the prince Don Fernand, after the brother of the emperor, and the King of Mazzava Jehan: to the Moor he gave the name of Christopher, and to the others each a name of his fancy. Thus, before mass, there were fifty men baptised. After mass had been heard the captain invited the king and his other principal men to dine with him, but he would not. He accompanied the captain, however, to the beach, and on his arrival there the ships fired all their artillery. Then, embracing one another, they took leave.

After dinner our chaplain and some of us went on shore to baptise the queen. She came with forty ladies, and we conducted them on to the scaffolding; then made her sit down on a cushion, and her women around her, until the priest was ready. During that time they showed her an image of our Lady, of wood, holding her little child, which was very well made, and a cross. When she saw it, she had a greater desire to be a Christian, and, asking for baptism, she was baptised and named Jehanne, like the mother of the emperor. The wife of the prince, daughter of this queen, had the name of Catherine, the Queen of Mazzava Isabella, and the others each their name. That day we baptised eight hundred persons of men, women, and children. The Queen was young and handsome, covered with a black and white sheet; she had the mouth and nails very red, and wore on her head a large hat made of leaves of palm, with a crown over it made of the same leaves, like that of the Pope. After that she begged us to give her the little wooden boy to put in the place of the idols. This we did, and she went away. In the evening the king and queen, with several of their people, came to the sea beach, where the captain had some of the large artillery fired, in which they took great pleasure. The captain and the king called one another brother.

At last, in eight days, all the inhabitants of this island were baptised, and some belonging to the neighbouring islands. In one of these we burned a village because the inhabitants would not obey either the king or us. There we planted a cross because the people were Gentiles: if they had been Moors, we should have erected a column, as a sign of their hardness of heart, because the Moors are more difficult to convert than the Gentiles. The captain-general went ashore every day to hear mass, to which there came many of the new Christians, to whom he explained various points of our religion. One day the queen came with all her state. She was preceded by three damsels, who carried in their hands three of her hats: she was dressed in black and white, with a large silk veil with gold stripes, which covered her head and shoulders. Very many women followed her, with their heads covered with a small veil, and a hat above that: the rest of their bodies and feet were naked, except a small wrapper of palm cloth which covered their natural parts. Their hair fell flowing over their shoulders. The queen, after making a bow to the altar, sat upon a cushion of embroidered silk, and the captain sprinkled over her and over some of her ladies rose water and musk, a perfume which pleases the ladies of this country very much. The captain on that occasion approved of the gift which I had made to the queen of the image of the Infant Jesus, and recommended her to put it in the place of her idols, because it was a remembrancer of the Son of God. She promised to do all this, and to keep it with much care.

In order that the king might be more respected and obeyed, the captain-general got him to come one day at the hour of mass with his silk robe, and summoned his two brothers, one named Bondara, who was the father of the prince, and the other named Cadaro, and some of his chief men, whose names were Simiut, Sibuaia, Sisacai, Magalibe, and others whom it is unnecessary to name separately; and he made them all swear to be obedient to their king, whose hand they all of them kissed. He then asked the king to swear that he would always be obedient and faithful to the King of

Spain, and he took the oath. Then the captain drew a sword before the image of the Virgin Mary, and said to the king that when such an oath had been taken by anyone, he should rather die than be wanting to his oath. After that he himself promised to be always faithful to him, swearing by the image of our Lady, by the life of the emperor his sovereign, and by the habit which he wore. He then made a present to the king of a velvet chair, and told him that wherever he went he should always have it carried before him by some of his attendants, and showed him the way in which it should be carried. The king told the captain that he would do all this on account of the affection which he bore him, of which he wished to give him a token, preparing for that purpose some jewels to present to him; these were two rather large gold rings for the ears, two others for the arms, and two for the ancles, all of them adorned with precious stones. The finest ornaments of the kings of these countries consist in these rings, for otherwise they go naked and barefooted, with only a piece of cloth from the waist to the knees.

The captain-general, who had informed the king and all those who had been baptised of the obligation they were under of burning their idols, which they had promised to do, seeing that they retained them and made them offerings of meat, reproved them severely for it. They thought to excuse themselves sufficiently by saying that they did not do that now on their own account, but for a sick person, for the idols to restore him his health. This sick man was a brother of the prince, and was reputed to be the most valiant and wise man in the island, and his illness was so severe that for four days he had not spoken. Having heard this, the captain, seized with zeal for religion, said that if they had a true faith in Jesus Christ, they should burn all the idols, and the sick man should be baptised, and he would be immediately cured, of which he was so certain that he consented to lose his head if the miracle did not take place. The king promised that all this should be done, because he truly believed in Jesus Christ. Then we arranged, with all the pomp that was poss-

ible, a procession from the place to the house of the sick man. We went there, and indeed found him unable to speak or to move. We baptised him, with two of his wives and ten girls. The captain then asked him how he felt, and he at once spoke, and said that by the grace of Our Lord he was well enough. This great miracle was done under our eyes. The captain, on hearing him speak, gave great thanks to God. He gave him a refreshing drink to take, and afterwards sent to his house a mattress, two sheets, a covering of yellow wool, and a cushion, and he continued to send him, until he was quite well, refreshing drinks of almonds, rosewater, rosoglio, and some sweet preserves.

On the fifth day the convalescent rose from his bed, and as soon as he could walk, he had burned, in the presence of the king and of all the people, an idol which some old women had concealed in his house. He also caused to be destroyed several temples constructed on the sea shore, in which people were accustomed to eat the meat offered to the idols. The inhabitants applauded this, and, shouting 'Castile, Castile,' helped to throw them down, and declared that if God gave them life they would burn all the idols they could find, even if they were in the king's own house.

These idols are made of wood, they are concave or hollowed out behind, they have the arms and legs spread out, and the feet turned upwards; they have a large face, with four very large teeth like those of a wild boar, and they are all painted.

Since I have spoken of the idols, it may please your illustrious Highness to have an account of the ceremony with which, in this island, they bless the pig. They begin by sounding some great drums (tamburi), they then bring three large dishes, two are filled with cakes of rice and cooked millet rolled up in leaves, and roast fish, in the third are Cambay clothes, and two strips of palm cloth. A cloth of Cambay is spread out on the ground: then two old women come, each of whom has in her hand a reed trumpet. They step upon the cloth and make an obeisance to the sun: they then clothe themselves with the above mentioned cloths. The first of

these puts on her head a handkerchief which she ties on her forehead so as to make two horns, and taking another handkerchief in her hand, dances and sounds her trumpet, and invokes the sun. The second old woman takes one of the strips of palm cloth, and dances, and also sounds her trumpet; thus they dance and sound their trumpets for a short space of time, saying several things to the sun. The first old woman then drops the handkerchief she has in her hand, and takes the other strip of cloth, and both together sounding their trumpets, dance for a long time round the pig which is bound on the ground. The first one always speaks in a low tone to the sun, and the second answers her. The second old woman then presents a cup of wine to the first, who, whilst they both continue their address to the sun, brings the cup four or five times near her mouth as though going to drink, and meanwhile sprinkles the wine on the heart of the pig. She then gives up the cup, and receives a lance which she brandishes, whilst still dancing and reciting, and four or five times directs the lance at the pig's heart, at last with a sudden and well aimed blow she pierces it through and through. She withdraws the lance from the wound, which is then closed and dressed with herbs. During the ceremony a torch is always burning, and the old woman who pierced the pig takes and puts it out with her mouth, the other old woman dips the end of her trumpet in the pig's blood, and with it marks with blood the forehead of her husband, and of her companion, and then of the rest of the people. But they did not come and do this to us. That done the old women took off their robes, and ate what was in the two dishes, inviting only women to join them. After that they get the hair off the pig with fire. Only old women are able to consecrate the boar in this manner, and this animal is never eaten unless it is killed in this manner.

Antonio Pigafetta, *The First Voyage Round the World by Magellan*, translated by Lord Stanley of Alderley, Hakluyt Society, Vol. 52, 1st series, London, 1874, pp. 92-8.

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Malacca and Batavia (Jakarta) under Dutch Control

BALTHASAR BORT AND GEORGE EARL

When the Dutch became the dominant European power in South-East Asia in the seventeenth century, they applied their formidable powers of organization to control of regional trade from their main bases of Malacca and Batavia (present-day Jakarta). The two passages below offer contrasting pictures of the system in its heyday and its decline, when the restoration of regional free trade incidental to the foundation of Singapore in 1819 began a new era, which is illustrated by passages later in the anthology.

Balthasar Bort was Governor of Malacca from 1665 to 1677, and the first passage is part of his account of his stewardship. Dutch warships patrolled the Straits to compel local seafarers to come to the Dutch port—willy-nilly—where they had to pay prescribed duties to the harbourmaster (Shahbandar) unless the Governor of Malacca himself sanctioned remission (Bort's paras. 3 and 8). Cargoes of pepper, tin, and resin had to be sold to the Dutch (for export to Europe) at controlled prices 'on pain of confiscation'; essential foodstuffs must be offered to them for purchase (para. 24). Vessels leaving the port needed passes (paras. 21 and 37) specifying their approved destination. In the end, the regime, which Bort and his kind viewed with such complacent satisfaction, overstretched Dutch resources and proved self-defeating.

George Earl (1805-65) here describes Batavia in 1832. For all the opening disclaimer, it is a hostile description reflecting the British dislike of the methods of the Dutch and of their continuing efforts to shut British ships out of trade in the Netherlands East Indies (now Indonesia). At this stage in his career, Earl was a merchant mariner on a voyage from Australia, but later he became a practising advocate, and then an official in Singapore and Penang. His book, first published in 1837, early in his career, reflects the optimism and confidence, sometimes misplaced, of the nineteenth-century pioneers. Earl struggled with ill-health as he grew older, and died at sea while returning to Europe in the hope of recovering from chronic malaria.