

Historical Narratives & Travelogues (Text & Images)

TEXT 1: Passage from *The Travels of Marco Polo* by Rustichello da Pisa (c. 1300)

Marco Polo (September 15, 1254 – January 8, 1324) was a Venetian merchant who traveled through Asia between 1271 and 1295. The published account of his travels gave Europeans their first look into China, Japan, and other parts of Asia.

CHAPTER IX. CONCERNING THE ISLAND OF JAVA THE LESS. THE KINGDOMS OF FERLEC AND BASMA:

Now let us resume our subject, and first I will tell you of the kingdom of FERLEC. This kingdom, you must know, is so much frequented by the Saracen merchants that they have converted the natives to the Law of Mahomet—I mean the townspeople only, for the hill-people live for all the world like beasts, and eat human flesh, as well as all other kinds of flesh, clean or unclean. And they worship this, that, and the other thing; for in fact the first thing that they see on rising in the morning, that they do worship for the rest of the day.

Having told you of the kingdom of Ferlec, I will now tell of another which is called BASMA. When you quit the kingdom of Ferlec you enter upon that of Basma. This also is an independent kingdom, and the people have a language of their own; but they are just like beasts without laws or religion. They call themselves subjects of the Great Kaan, but they pay him no tribute; indeed they are so far away that his men could not go thither. Still all these Islanders declare themselves to be his subjects, and sometimes they send him curiosities as presents. There are wild elephants in the country, and numerous unicorns, which are very nearly as big. They have hair like that of a buffalo, feet like those of an elephant, and a horn in the middle of the forehead, which is black and very thick. They do no mischief, however, with the horn, but with the tongue alone; for this is covered all over with long and strong prickles [and when savage with any one they crush him under their knees and then rasp him with their tongue]. The head resembles that of a wild boar, and they carry it ever bent towards the ground. They delight much to abide in mire and mud. 'Tis a passing ugly beast to look upon, and is not in the least like that which our stories tell of as being caught in the lap of a virgin; in fact, 'tis altogether different from what we fancied.

CHAPTER XII. CONCERNING THE ISLAND OF NECUVERAN: When you leave the Island of Java (the less) and the kingdom of Lambri, you sail north about 150 miles, and then you come to two Islands, one of which is called NECUVERAN. In this Island they have no king nor chief, but live like beasts. And I tell you they go all naked, both men and women, and do not use the slightest covering of any kind. They are Idolaters. Their woods are all of noble and valuable kinds of trees; such as Red Sanders and Indian-nut and Cloves and Brazil and sundry other good spices. There is nothing else worth relating; so we will go on, and I will tell you of an Island called Angamanain.

CHAPTER XIII. CONCERNING THE ISLAND OF ANGAMANAIN: Angamanain is a very

large Island. The people are without a king and are Idolaters, and no better than wild beasts. And I assure you all the men of this Island of Angamanain have heads like dogs, and teeth and eyes likewise; in fact, in the face they are all just like big mastiff dogs! They have a quantity of spices; but they are a most cruel generation, and eat everybody that they can catch, if not of their own race. They live on flesh and rice and milk, and have fruits different from any of ours.

TEXT 2: Passage from Walter Raleigh's "*The discovery of the large, rich, and beautiful Empire of Guiana, with a relation of the great and golden city of Manoa (which the Spaniards call El Dorado)*"; written c. 1620..

Sir Walter Raleigh (c. 1552–1618) was one of the most important figures of the Elizabethan era and played a key role in English colonization of North America.

The fourth river to the west of Caroli is Casnero: which falleth into the Orenoque on this side of Amapaia. And that river is greater than Danubius, or any of Europe: it riseth on the south of Guiana from the mountains which divide Guiana from Amazons, and I think it to be navigable many hundred miles. But we had no time, means, nor season of the year, to search those rivers, for the causes aforesaid, the winter being come upon us; although the winter and summer as touching cold and heat differ not, neither do the trees ever sensibly lose their leaves, but have always fruit either ripe or green, and most of them both blossoms, leaves, ripe fruit, and green, at one time...

There is no country which yieldeth more pleasure to the inhabitants, either for those common delights of hunting, hawking, fishing, fowling, and the rest, than Guiana doth; it hath so many plains, clear rivers, and abundance of pheasants, partridges, quails, rails, cranes, herons, and all other fowl; deer of all sorts, porks, hares, lions, tigers, leopards, and divers other sorts of beasts, either for chase or food. It hath a kind of beast called cama or anta (tapir), as big as an English beef, and in great plenty. To speak of the several sorts of every kind I fear would be troublesome to the reader, and therefore I will omit them, and conclude that both for health, good air, pleasure, and riches, I am resolved it cannot be equalled by any region either in the east or west. Moreover the country is so healthful, as of an hundred persons and more, which lay without shift most sluttishly, and were every day almost melted with heat in rowing and marching, and suddenly wet again with great showers, and did eat of all sorts of corrupt fruits, and made meals of fresh fish without seasoning, of tortugas, of lagartos or crocodiles, and of all sorts good and bad, without either order or measure, and besides lodged in the open air every night, we lost not any one, nor had one ill-disposed to my knowledge; nor found any calentura or other of those pestilent diseases which dwell in all hot regions, and so near the equinoctial line.

TEXT 3: Passage from: *CAPTAIN COOK'S JOURNAL DURING HIS FIRST VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD MADE IN H.M. BARK "ENDEAVOUR" (1768-71): A Literal Transcription of the Original MSS. with notes and introduction edited by Capt. W.J.L. Wharton, R.N., F.R.S. Hydrographer of the Admiralty..*

Captain James Cook (1728–1779) was a British explorer, navigator, cartographer, and a captain in the British Navy. Between 1768 and 1779 he made three voyages to the Pacific; he was the first European to visit Hawai'i, the eastern coast of Australia, and New Zealand.

From what I have said of the Natives of New Holland¹ they may appear to some to be the most wretched People upon Earth; but in reality they are far more happier than we Europeans, being wholly unacquainted not only with the Superfluous, but with the necessary Conveniences so much sought after in Europe; they are happy in not knowing the use of them. They live in a Tranquility which is not disturbed by the Inequality of Condition. The earth and Sea of their own accord furnishes them with all things necessary for Life. They covet not Magnificent Houses, Household-stuff, etc.; they live in a Warm and fine Climate, and enjoy every wholesome Air, so that they have very little need of Cloathing; and this they seem to be fully sensible of, for many to whom we gave Cloth, etc., left it carelessly upon the Sea beach and in the Woods, as a thing they had no manner of use for; in short, they seem'd to set no Value upon anything we gave them, nor would they ever part with anything of their own for any one Article we could offer them. This, in my opinion, Argues that they think themselves provided with all the necessarys of Life, and that they have no Superfluities.

(The native Australians may be happy in their condition, but they are without doubt among the lowest of mankind. Confirmed cannibals, they lose no opportunity of gratifying their love of human flesh. Mothers will kill and eat their own children, and the women again are often mercilessly illtreated by their lords and masters. There are no chiefs, and the land is divided into sections, occupied by families, who consider everything in their district as their own. Internecine war exists between the different tribes, which are very small. Their treachery, which is unsurpassed, is simply an outcome of their savage ideas, and in their eyes is a form of independence which resents any intrusion on THEIR land, THEIR wild animals, and THEIR rights generally. In their untutored state they therefore consider that any method of getting rid of the invader is proper. Both sexes, as Cook observed, are absolutely nude, and lead a wandering life, with no fixed abode, subsisting on roots, fruits, and such living things as they can catch. Nevertheless, although treated by the coarser order of colonists as wild beasts to be extirpated, those who have studied them have formed favourable opinions of their intelligence. The more savage side of their disposition being, however, so very apparent, it is not astonishing that, brought into contact with white settlers, who equally consider that they have a right to settle, the aborigines are rapidly disappearing.)

¹*New Holland was the name given to what is today known as Australia*

TEXT 4: Passage from Henry Morton Stanley's *Through the Dark Continent Or The Sources of the Nile Around the Great Lakes of Equatorial Africa and Down the Livingstone River to the Atlantic Ocean.*, published 1879.

Stanley was a Welsh-American explorer and journalist famous for exploring Central Africa and his search for the missionary explorer David Livingstone ("Dr. Livingstone, I presume?").

One hears much about "the silence of the forest" – but the tropical forest is not silent to the keen observer. The hum and murmur of hundreds of busy insect tribes make populous the twilight shadows that reign under the primeval growth. I hear the grinding of millions of mandibles, the furious hiss of a tribe just alarmed or about to rush to battle, millions of tiny wings rustling through the nether air, the march of an insect tribe under the leaves, the startling leap of an awakened mantis, the chirp of some eager and garrulous cricket, the buzz of an ant-lion, the roar of a bull-frog. Add to these the crackle of twigs, the fall of leaves, the dropping of nut and berry, the occasional crash of a branch, or the constant creaking and swaying of the forest tops as the strong wind brushes them or the gentle breezes awake them to whispers. Though one were blind and alone in the midst of a real tropical forest, one's sense of hearing would be painfully alive to the fact that an incredible number of minute industries, whose number one could never hope to estimate, were active in the shades. Silence is impossible in a tropical forest.

...

Our terrors are numerous. First, the rocks and rapids, the plunging cataract and whirling pool, which fortunately are passed, and which we pray we shall not have to encounter again. Then the sudden storm, which now blows each day up river, and, first wrinkling the face of the river, soon raises heavy brown waves, like those of a lake, which, having already suffered from, we are careful to avoid but the greatest danger, an ever-recurring one, is that which we have to encounter each time the wild howling cannibal aborigines observe us. Indeed, the sense of security is short-lived, our pleasure evanescent; but the sense of danger is always present, and pervades our minds whether in our sleeping or our waking hours.

IMAGE 1: Hans Burgkmair

Hans Burgkmair the Elder (1473-1531) was a German painter. The Kingdom of Cochin was a late medieval coastal kingdom in Southern India. King Unni Goda Varma of Cochin welcomed Pedro Álvares Cabral on 24 December 1500 and negotiated a treaty of alliance with Portugal.

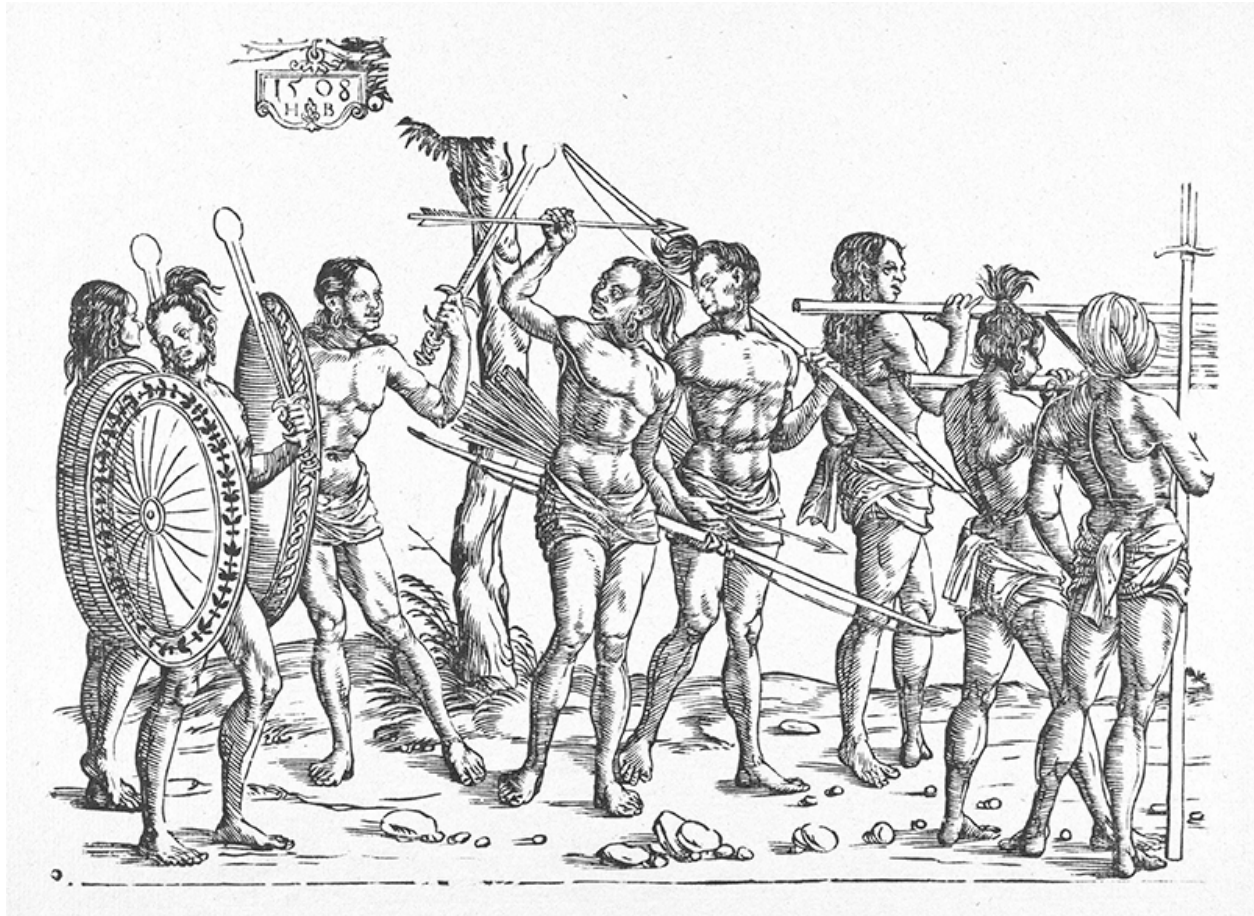


Figure 1: *Left Side of King Cochin* by Hans Burgkmair (from his *Set of Exotic Races*, 1508)

IMAGE 2: Theodore de Bry

Theodor de Bry (1528 – 1598) was an engraver, goldsmith, editor and publisher, famous for his depictions of early European expeditions to the Americas. Most of his [illustrations] were based on first-hand observations by explorers, even if De Bry himself, acting as a recorder of information, never visited the Americas.

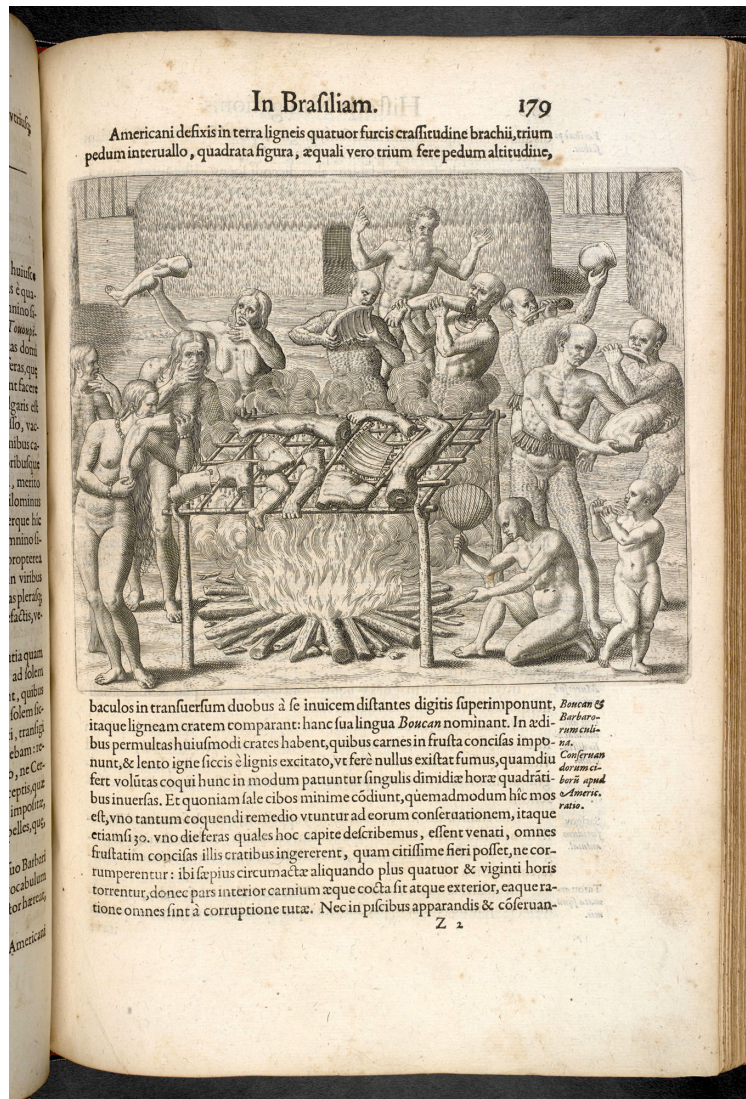


Figure 2: Illustration from Theodor de Bry's *Collected travels in the east Indies and west Indies* (1594).