

Magellan document

Source: This was transcribed from the paper-book of a Genoese pilot, who came in the said ship, who wrote all the voyage as it is here. He went to Portugal in the year 1524 with Dom Amriqui de Menezes. Thanks be to God.

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Scanned by: J. S. Arkenberg, Dept. of History, Cal. State Fullerton. Prof. Arkenberg has modernized the text.

They sailed on the 24th day of the month of August of the said year from this port of St. Julian, and navigated a matter of twenty leagues along the coast, and so they entered a river which was called Santa Cruz, which is in fifty degrees, where they took in goods and as much as they could obtain: the crew of the lost ship were already distributed among the other ships, for they had returned by land to where Fernando de Magalhaes was, and they continued collecting the goods which had remained there during August and up to the 18th September, and there they took in water and much fish which they caught in this river; and in the other, where they wintered, there were people like savages, and the men are from nine to ten spans in height, very well made; they have not got houses, they only go about from one place to another with their flocks, and eat meat nearly raw: they are all of them archers and kill many animals with arrows, and with the skins they make clothes, that is to say, they make the skins very supple, and fashion them after the shape of the body, as well as they can, then they cover themselves with them, and fasten them by a belt round the waist. When they do not wish to be clothed from the waist upwards, they let that half fall which is above the waist, and the garment remains hanging down from the belt which they have girt round them. They wear shoes which cover them four inches above the ankle, full of straw inside to keep their feet warm. They do not possess any iron, nor any other ingenuity of weapons, only they make the points of their arrows of flints, and so also the knives with which they cut, and the adze and awls with which they cut and stitch their shoes and clothes. They are very agile people, and do no harm, and thus they follow their flocks: wherever night finds them there they sleep; they carry their wives along with them with all the chattels which they possess. The women are very small and carry heavy burdens on their backs; they wear shoes and clothes just like the men. Of these men they obtained three or four and brought them in the ships, and they all died except one, who went to Castile in a ship which went thither.

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Fernan de Magalhaes would not make any further stay, and at once set sail, and ordered the course to be steered west, and a quarter south-west; and so they made land [i.e., in the Phillipines], which is in barely eleven degrees. This land is an island, but he would not touch at this one, and they went to touch at another further on which appeared first. Fernando de Magalhaes sent a boat ashore to observe the nature of the island; when the boat reached land, they saw from the ships two paraos come out from behind the point; then they called back their boat. The people of the paraos seeing that the boat was returning to the ships, turned back the paraos, and the boat reached the ships, which at once set sail for another island very near to this island, which is in ten degrees, and they gave it the name of the island of Good Signs, because they found some gold in it. Whilst they were thus anchored at this island, there came to them two paraos, and brought them fowls and cocoa nuts, and told them that they had already seen there other men like them, from which they presumed that these might be Lequios or Magores; a nation of people who have this name, or Chiis; and thence they set sail, and navigated further on amongst many islands, to which they gave the name of the Valley Without Peril, and also St. Lazarus, and they ran on to another island twenty leagues from that from which they sailed, which is in ten degrees, and came to anchor at another island, which is named Macangor, which is in nine degrees; and in this island they were very well received, and they placed a cross in it.

This king conducted them thence a matter of thirty leagues to another island named Cabo, which is in ten degrees, and in this island Fernando de Magalhaes did what he pleased with the consent of the country, and in one day eight hundred people became Christian, on which account Fernan de Magalhaes desired that the other kings, neighbors to this one, should become subject to this who had become Christian: and these did not choose to yield such obedience. Fernan de Magalhaes seeing that, got ready one night with his boats, and burned the villages of those who would not yield the said obedience; and a matter of ten or twelve days after this was done he sent to a village about half a league from that which he had burned, which is named Matam, and which is also an island, and ordered them to send him at once three goats, three pigs, three loads of rice, and three loads of millet for provisions for the ships; they replied that of each article which he sent to ask them three of, they would send to him by twos, and if he was satisfied with this they would at once comply, if not, it might be as he pleased, but that they would not give it. Because they did not choose to grant what he demanded of them, Fernan de Magalhaes ordered three boats to be equipped with a matter of fifty or sixty men, and went against the said place, which was on the 28th day of April, in the morning; there they found many people, who might well be as many as three thousand or four thousand men, who fought with such a good will that the said Fernan de Magalhaes was killed there, with six of his men, in the year 1521.

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Seeing this, they agreed to go to another island, where they had had some dealings, to see if they could get some provisions. Then they met with a contrary wind, and going about a league in the direction in which they wished to go, they anchored, and whilst at anchor they saw that people on shore were hailing them to go thither; they went there with the boats, and as they were speaking to those people by signs, for they did not understand each other otherwise, a man at arms, named Joam de Campos, told them to let him go on

shore, since there were no provisions in the ships, and it might be that they would obtain some means of getting provisions; and that if the people killed him, they would not lose much with him, for God would take thought of his soul; and also if he found provisions, and if they did not kill him, he would find means for bringing them to the ships: and they thought well of this. So he went on shore, and as soon as he reached it, the inhabitants received him, and took him into the interior the distance of a league, and when he was in the village all the people came to see him, and they gave him food, and entertained him well, especially when they saw that he ate pig's flesh; because in this island they had dealings with the Moors of Borneo, and because the country and people were greedy, they made them neither eat pigs nor bring them up in the country. This country is called Dyguaçam, and is in nine degrees.

The said Christian seeing that he was favored and well treated by the inhabitants, gave them to understand by his signs that they should carry provisions to the ships, which would be well paid for. In the country there was nothing except rice not pounded. Then the people set to pounding rice all the night, and when it was morning they took the rice and the said Christian, and came to the ships, where they did them great honor, and took in the rice and paid them, and they returned on shore. This man being already set on shore, inhabitants of another village, a little further on, came to the ships and told them to go to their village, and that they would give them much provisions for their money; and as soon as the said man whom they had sent arrived, they set sail and went to anchor at the village of those who had come to call them, which was named Vay Palay Cucara Canbam, where Carvalho made peace with the king of the country, and they settled the price of the rice, and they gave them two measures of rice which weighed one hundred and fourteen pounds for three fathoms of linen stuff of Brittany; they took there as much rice as they wanted, and goats and pigs, and whilst they were at this place there came a Moor, who had been in the village of Dyguaçam, which belongs to the Moors of Borneo, as has been said above, and after that he went to his country.

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Close to this island is another which has many myrobolans, and the next day they set sail for the other island, which is nearer to the port of Borneo; and going along thus they saw so many shoals that they anchored, and sent the boats ashore in Borneo, and they took the aforesaid Moorish pilots on shore, and there went a Christian with them; and the boats went to set them on land, from whence they had to go to the city of Borneo, which was three leagues off, and there they were taken before the Shahbendr of Borneo, and he asked what people they were, and for what they came in the ships; and they were presented to the King of Borneo with the Christian. As soon as the boats had set the said men on shore, they sounded in order to see if the ships could come in closer: and during this they saw three junks which were coming from the port of Borneo from the said city out to sea, and as soon as they saw the ships they returned inshore: continuing to sound, they found the channel by which the port is entered; they then set sail, and entered this channel, and being within the channel they anchored, and would not go further in until they received a message from the shore, which arrived next day with two paraos: these carried certain swivel guns of metal, and a hundred men in each parao, and they brought goats and fowls, and two cows, and figs, and other fruit, and told them to enter further in opposite the islands which were near there, which was the true berth; and from this position to the city there might be three or four leagues. Whilst thus at anchor they established peace, and settled that they should trade in what there was in the country, especially wax, to which they answered that they would willingly sell all that there was in the country for their money. This port of Borneo is in eight degrees.

For the answer thus received from the King they sent him a present by Gonzalo Mendes Despinosa, captain of the ship Victoria, and the King accepted the present, and gave to all of them China stuffs: and when there had passed twenty or twenty-three days that they were there trading with the people of the island, and had got five men on shore in the city itself, there came to anchor at the bar, close to them, five junks, at the hour of vespers, and they remained there that evening and the night until next day in the morning, when they saw coming from the city two hundred paraos, some under sail, others rowing. Seeing in this manner the five junks and the paraos, it seemed to them that there might be treachery, and they set sail for the junks, and as soon as the crews of the junks saw them under sail, they also set sail and made off where the wind best served them; and they overhauled one of the junks with the boats, and took it with twenty-seven men; and the ships went and anchored abreast of the island of the Myrolobans, with the junk made fast to the poop of the flagship, and the paraos returned to shore, and when night came there came on a squall from the west in which the said junk went to the bottom alongside the flagship, without being able to receive any assistance from it.

Next day in the morning they saw a sail, and went to it and took it; this was a great junk in which the son of the King of Lucam came as captain, and had with him ninety men, and as soon as they took them they sent some of them to the King of Borneo; and they sent him word by these men to send the Christians whom they had got there, who were seven men, and they would give him all the people whom they had taken in the junk; on which account the King sent two men of the seven whom he had got there in a parao, and they again sent him word to send the five men who still remained, and they would send all the people whom they had got from the junk. They waited two days for the answer, and there came no message; then they took thirty men from the junk, and put them into a parao belonging to the junk, and sent them to the King of Borneo, and set sail with fourteen men of those they had taken and three women; and they steered along the coast of the said island to the north-east, returning backwards; and they again passed between the islands and the great island of Borneo, where the flagship grounded on a point of the island, and so remained more than four hours, and the tide turned and it got off, by which it was seen clearly that the tide was of twenty-four hours.

Whilst making the aforesaid course the wind shifted to northeast, and they stood out to sea, and they saw a sail coming, and the ships anchored, and the boats went to it and took it; it was a small junk and carried nothing but cocoa-nuts; and they took in water and wood, and set sail along the coast of the island to the north-east, until they reached the extremity of the said island, and met with another small island, where they overhauled the ships. They arrived at this island on the day of our Lady of August, and in it they found a very good point for beaching the ships, and they gave it the name of Port St. Mary of August, and it is in fully seven degrees.

As soon as they had taken these precautions they set sail and steered to the south-west until they sighted the island which is named

Fagajam, and this is a course of thirty-eight to forty leagues: and as soon as they sighted this island they steered to the south-west, and again made an island which is called Seloque, and they had information that there were many pearls there: and when they had already sighted that island the wind shifted to a head-wind, and they could not fetch it by the course they were sailing, and it seemed to them that it might be in six degrees. This same night they arrived at the island of Quipe, and ran along it to the south-east, and passed between it and another island called Tamgym, and always running along the coast of the island, going thus, they fell in with a parao laden with bread in loaves, which is bread made of a tree which is named cajare, which the people of that country eat as bread. This parao carried twenty-one men, and the chief of them had been in Maluco in the house of Francisco Serram, and having gone further along this island they arrived in sight of some islands which are named Semrryn; they are in five degrees, a little more or less. The inhabitants of this land came to see the ships, and so they had speech of one another, and an old man of these people told them that he would conduct them to Maluco.

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As soon as they arrived at the island of Tydor, which is in half a degree, the King thereof did them great honor, which could not be exceeded: there they treated with the King for their cargo, and the King engaged to give them a cargo and whatever there was in the country for their money, and they settled to give for the bahar of cloves fourteen ells of yellow cloth of twenty-seven tem, which are worth in Castile a ducat the ell; of red cloth of the same kind ten ells; they also gave thirty ells of Brittany linen cloth, and for each of these quantities they received a bahar of cloves, likewise for thirty knives eight bahars: having thus settled all the above mentioned prices, the inhabitants of the country gave them information that further on, in another island near, there was a Portuguese man. This island might be two leagues distant, and it was named Targatell; this man was the chief person of Maluco; there we now have got a fortress. They then wrote letters to the said Portuguese, to come and speak with them, to which he answered that he did not dare, because the King of the country forbade it; that if they obtained permission from the King he would come at once; this permission they soon got, and the Portuguese came to speak with him. They gave him an account of the prices which they had settled, at which he was amazed, and said that on that account the King had ordered him not to come, as they did not know the truth about the prices of the country; and whilst they were thus taking in cargo there arrived the King of Baraham, which is near there, and said that he wished to be a vassal of the King of Castile, and also that he had got four hundred bahars of cloves, and that he had sold it to the King of Portugal, and that they had bought it, but that he had not yet delivered it, and if they wished for it, he would give it all to them; to which the captains answered that if he brought it to them, and came with it, they would buy it, but otherwise not. The King, seeing that they did not wish to take the cloves, asked them for a flag and a letter of safe conduct, which they gave him, signed by the captains of the ships. While they were thus waiting for the cargo, it seemed to them, from the delay in the delivery, that the King was preparing some treachery against them, and the greater part of the ships' crews made an uproar and told the captains to go, as the delays which the King made were nothing else than treachery: as it seemed to them all that it might be so, they were abandoning everything, and were intending to depart; and being about to unfurl the sails, the King, who had made the agreement with them, came to the flagship and asked the captain why he wanted to go, because that which he had agreed upon with him he intended to fulfill it as had been settled. The captain replied that the ships' crews said they should go and not remain any longer, as it was only treachery that was being prepared against them. To this the King answered that it was not so, and on that account he at once sent for his Koran, upon which he wished to make oath that nothing such should be done to them. They at once brought him this Koran, and upon it he made oath, and told them to rest at ease with that. At this the crews were set at rest, and promised them that he would give them their cargo by the 1st December 1521, which he fulfilled within the said time without being wanting in anything.

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