

PETER FLORIS,
HIS VOYAGE TO
THE EAST INDIES
IN THE GLOBE,
1611-1615

W.H. Moreland



THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY

Peter Floris, his Voyage to the East Indies in the Globe, 1611–1615

The Contemporary Translation of his Journal

Edited by
W.H. MORELAND

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1611-1615

The Contemporary Translation of his Journal

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W. H. MORELAND, C.S.I., C.I.E.

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P R E F A C E

THE reader will find in the Introduction such preliminary information as seems to be required regarding the personality of Peter Floris, and the objects of his voyage in the *Globe*. Here it will suffice to mention a few details of the lines on which the volume has been prepared.

The language and spelling of the manuscript are reproduced without adjustment, but the use of capital letters and italics has been modernised. Punctuation has presented some difficulty, mainly because the translator did not break up the long, rambling sentences which must have characterised the lost original, in common with so much of the Dutch commercial literature of the period; to break up his version now would involve occasional alterations in the wording, which would be contrary to the practice recognised by the Society, and all that has been found possible is to make the text easier to follow by the free use of colons and semi-colons. Square brackets have been used according to the ordinary practice to indicate either necessary insertions or brief explanations; parentheses, on the other hand, have a special and technical significance. It is clear that the manuscript was never finally revised, and it contains a number of alternative phrases written above the line, with no indication of the translator's preference for one over the other; in these cases I have selected the phrase which seems to be more appropriate, and, for convenience in printing, have placed the alternative alongside it in parentheses instead of above the line. The division into chapters, too, has been made for convenience; the manuscript is continuous.

In the foot-notes Indian words and names have been transliterated on the system followed in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*; the vowels have the continental values, while the consonants are pronounced as in English, and, except that I have used *q* for one of the Arabic gutturals, no attempt is made to distinguish in cases where two or more Indian consonants are represented in English by a single character. Words belonging

to other Asiatic languages are given as a rule in the form used by the authorities whom I have consulted, but in the case of Siamese words I have represented the aspirated consonants in the usual way, instead of by the method favoured by Mr W. A. R. Wood in his *History of Siam*, on which I have drawn so largely: for instance, I have written Phya where Mr Wood wrote P'ya. In order to save space, references in the foot-notes have been abbreviated; the full titles of the works so quoted will be found in the List of Authorities at the end of the volume.

The writer of the Journal was allusive as well as fond of detail, and I am indebted to a large number of scholars for generous help in elucidating the resulting obscurities of the text. Assistance on particular topics has been acknowledged in the foot-notes, but in this place it is my privilege to thank those who have allowed me to consult them on numerous questions relating to various departments of knowledge. Dr Krishnaswami Aiyangar, Sir Richard Burn, Sir Wolseley Haig and Mr C. E. A. W. Oldham have been my chief helpers on Indian matters; Professor D. G. E. Hall and Mr G. H. Luce on Burma; Dr H. G. Quaritch Wales on Siam; Mr C. J. Purnell on Japan; and Dr C. Otto Blagden on the Malay Peninsula. For information on points of Dutch language and history I have to thank Dr W. R. Bisschop and Professor P. Geyl, while Mr R. Bylsma has been most generous in tracing records of the period in the Rijksarchief at The Hague; and finally, Sir William Foster, the President of the Society, has given his invaluable assistance and advice at every stage from the preparation of the transcript of the Journal down to the revision of the last proof.

W. H. MORELAND

December, 1933

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INTRODUCTION

§ 1. The PLACE of the VOYAGE in COMMERCIAL HISTORY

THE *Globe*, which made the seventh Voyage for the East India Company, was the first English vessel to engage in the trade of the Bay of Bengal and the Gulf of Siam; and consequently, the Journal of the voyage possesses the interest which attaches to all records of the experiences of pioneers. It has also a peculiar interest of its own, in that it enables us to realise, better perhaps than any record which has yet been published, the true inwardness of a prolonged trading voyage in the earliest days of the Company. It will be recalled that at first the Company had no capital of its own, nor did it engage in trade on behalf of the members as a body. When it decided that a Voyage should be undertaken, that is to say, that one or more ships should be sent out to the East, a subscription list was opened to provide the requisite capital, and the members who subscribed became the 'adventurers' for that particular Voyage, bearing the entire risk, and dividing the entire proceeds in proportion to the amounts they had subscribed.

Such a Voyage had necessarily to be self-contained, for when a ship had once left the English Channel, she could expect no help, except by accident, until she returned. There were, of course, no diplomatic or consular agents representing England in eastern seaports: the captain and merchants had to conduct their own diplomacy, and, on occasion, fight their own battles. The Company, again, had no permanent establishments in Asia, other than a not too efficient 'factory', that is, agency, at Bantam. The ship might perhaps get help from officers of other Voyages whom she might run across in eastern waters: it was equally possible that such a meeting might result in competition or intrigue, to the injury of both ventures. Casualties among staff and crew had to be provided for in the ship itself; commercial intelligence had to be picked up as occasion served; and carefully

laid plans might have to be hurriedly revised in the light of political or economic changes, which occurred sometimes with disconcerting rapidity. All these features, and others, are illustrated in the Voyage of the *Globe*. By training and experience, if not actually by birth, the writer of the Journal was a Dutchman, and he possessed in some measure the national gift for elaborating details so as to present an artistic whole; from the written record we can follow not merely the course of the enterprise, but the workings of the writer's mind, from the day he left Gravesend, in January, 1611, until, more than four years later, he was ready to sail from Bantam to return to England.

The seventh Voyage belongs to what may be described as the second phase in the direct commercial intercourse between England and the East. Just at the outset, the East India Company followed the practice of the various Dutch ventures of the preceding years, and despatched its ships on an out-and-home voyage to the spice ports. Experience, however, proved very quickly that the spice trade, important as it was, could easily be overdone. Competition in the producing markets led to a heavy increase in cost: competition in the consuming regions led to heavy falls in price; and the large profits of the earliest ventures could not be maintained for long. Elimination of this injurious competition was one of the chief objects of the amalgamation of the various Dutch interests into the powerful Dutch East India Company, established in 1602; but there still remained the competition between Dutch and English, buying in the same eastern markets, and selling in the same regions of Europe. For both Companies alike, a policy of expansion was found to be essential: a larger variety of eastern goods had to be purchased, and new markets had to be explored, both for the provision of these goods and for the sale of European produce.

The rapid development in these directions can be traced in the commissions issued by the English Company for successive Voyages.¹ The commission issued in 1601 to Lancaster for the first Voyage contains no hint of expansion. The objective of the second Voyage, sent out in 1604, was still limited to the spice ports, but now endeavours were to be made to procure other

¹ *First Letter Book*, 4, 51, 114, 240, 295, 328.

commodities, such as silk, "wherewith theis parts of Christendome have not been glutted as with spices". The third and fourth Voyages, sent out in 1607 and 1608, were directed to explore new waters, and were concerned with the Red Sea and Western India as well as with the spice ports; the fifth, which was in fact an offshoot of the third, consisted of a single ship, which sailed in 1609 only for the spice ports; while the sixth was again concerned largely with Western India and the Red Sea.

So far, no vessel had been sent to the Bay of Bengal, but by the year 1607 the Directors of the Company had become alive to the possibilities of that region, and clause 44 of Keeling's commission for the third Voyage ordered that the factors to be left at Bantam should investigate the possibilities of such places "as Mesapatania [*i.e.*, Masulipatam] in the partes of Bengalla Cheremandall St. Thome or any other places fitt for trade . . . the omission of seekeinge out whereof all this while hath retourned to our greate losse, and to the benefit of the Hollanders, who have beene laborious and industrious therein". These instructions were repeated in the following year, but there is no record of anything having been done to comply with them; and in 1609 the position was that the Directors were alive to the possibilities of the Bay of Bengal, but had no precise information regarding it.

To conclude these preliminary observations, it may be noted that the system of separate Voyages wore out very quickly. The records of the change of policy are no longer extant, but it is known¹ that, some time in the year 1613, the Company decided on the formation of a Joint Stock, by which a succession of Voyages should be conducted as parts of an orderly whole; and the news of the inception of this third phase had reached Bantam when the *Globe* arrived there at the beginning of the year 1615.

§ 2. The INCEPTION of the VOYAGE

The movement which led to the despatch of the *Globe* was initiated by two Dutchmen, who for the present will be described as Peter Floris and Lucas Antheunis, the names under which

¹ See the Introduction to *Letters Received*, ii, where the subject is discussed at length.

they presented themselves in London; their identity and antecedents will be discussed in a later section. It is uncertain, however, whether Floris and Antheunis were the first, or the only, Dutchmen to offer their services to the English Company at this time.

In November, 1609, the Company was approached¹ by a Dutchman giving the name of Florence (*i.e.*, Florens, or Floris) Devyne, who stated that he had been employed on the Coromandel Coast, and proposed that, if the Company would send a small ship to those parts with a capital of 6000*l.* under his direction, he would guarantee them a return of three for one, and would be satisfied with the balance of profit as his remuneration. A committee was appointed to discuss this proposal with the projecter, and a week later a letter, drafted by the Governor, was ordered to be sent to him in Holland. Here the story breaks off abruptly: the Governor's letter is not extant, and the Court Minutes, containing the records of the Company's proceedings, are missing for the period from January, 1610, to December, 1613. It is impossible therefore to say whether 'Florence Devyne' was identical with one of the two Dutchmen who inspired the despatch of the *Globe*, or was acting independently of them: no person of that name can be traced in the records of the Dutch factories on the Coromandel Coast, and the name was most probably a pseudonym. All that can be said is that in the autumn of 1609 the Company was considering a project for entering the Coromandel trade with the aid of Dutch experience.

For the action taken in the following year we are dependent, in the absence of the Court Minutes, on a series of documents preserved in a record which was printed in 1893, and is known variously as the 'Miscellaneous Court Book', 'The Register of Letters etc. of the Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies', and 'The First Letter Book of the East India Company'. What is probably the earliest of these documents in point of time, though it is the last of them in the book, is the note² of "A discourse dellyvered to Mr

¹ *Court Minutes*, 18th and 25th November, 1609.

² *First Letter Book*, 427.

Governor, by Peter Floris and Lucas Antheumes [*sic*] of their pretended [*i.e.*, proposed] Voyage". The proposal was for a Voyage lasting nearly four years, to start in November, 1610, and visit successively the Coromandel Coast, Bantam, Patani and Siam, the Coromandel Coast again, Patani and Siam again, and finally to leave Bantam for England in December, 1613, or January, 1614.

This document is not dated. It is reasonable to infer that the discourse was delivered after 26th January, 1610, when the Court Minutes break off, for, if it had been earlier, there would probably have been some reference to it in that record. It may further be assumed that the discourse was an early incident in the negotiations, before the Voyage had been decided on, and consequently it must be several months earlier than January, 1611, by which time the required capital had been raised, the ship had been procured, and all necessary business transacted. The next document to be cited shows that a preliminary agreement regarding the Voyage had already been made on 27th March, 1610; and, if, as is probable, the discourse was earlier than this, its date would be February or early March.

The preliminary agreement was subsequently cancelled, and its terms are not on record. The next document is the agreement¹ which definitely laid down the conditions of the Voyage. It purports to have been made on 13th December, 1610, but its contents indicate that part of it must be much earlier, and we must infer that the date was left blank in the settled draft, and filled in only when all preparations had been made, and the time had come to sign and seal the fair copies. The principal indications of this fact are two. In the first place, the body of the agreement contemplated an investment of 12,000*l.* in all, but later clauses explain that owing to increased charges the capital had been raised to about 14,000*l.*: obviously the wording of the earlier part of the agreement belongs to the stage of estimation, while the addenda relate to ascertained facts. In the second place, the two projectors, Floris and Antheunis, misspelt in the document as Floris and Athewmes, were allowed to invest 1500*l.* of the original capital—600*l.* in cash, and the balance "in

¹ *First Letter Book*, 363.

June or Julie next followinge the date of theis presentes". As the text stands, this second payment would have fallen due in the summer of 1611, when the *Globe* had been six months on her voyage; but the money was wanted for her equipment, and must have been paid in 1610, not 1611. The project must thus have been definitely settled before June, 1610, but after 27th March, the date of the preliminary agreement, in other words, some time in April or May.

The agreement provided that the two Dutch projectors and one Englishman, Robert Browne, who had been employed for some time as factor at Bantam, should act together as chief merchants in the business of the Voyage. Floris and Antheunis, but not Browne, were to have a commission on profits if they amounted to "*centum per centum*" or more, the rate rising from 4 to 10 per cent., according to the amount of the profit; they were to give their whole time, and their best powers, to the conduct of the business; and they were to furnish security, as was usually done, for the due performance of their duties, and also "for the deliveringe up in writeinge of a true and just accompt of all there proceedings in the said voyadge", a provision which doubtless accounts for the existence of this Journal.

Certain clauses dealing with the possibility of one or both of the projectors dying during the Voyage indicate that they were not to receive any salary, for the Company bound itself to pay to their executors or administrators the amount due as commission and the net proceeds of their investment, but no provision was made for their wages. According to the practice of the time their current expenses, on land as well as on the ship, would be defrayed out of the funds of the Voyage, but they would not receive the lump sum of accumulated wages which ordinary factors drew on the conclusion of their engagement; instead, they would receive whatever commission they had earned.

The next documents to be noticed are the commissions¹ for

¹ *First Letter Book*, 359 ff. for the Royal, and 369 ff. for the Company's, commission. These documents mark a departure from the usual practice of naming the same officers in both commissions, for the first was issued to Hippon alone, and the second to Hippon and the three chief merchants jointly; presumably it was considered undesirable to entrust aliens with the execution of martial law.

the Voyage. The Royal Commission, issued to Anthony Hippon, an experienced navigator who had been master of the *Dragon* on the third Voyage, and had now been chosen to be captain of the *Globe*, was in the usual form, enjoining the strict observance of international obligations, and empowering the captain to maintain discipline, and, in case of need, to apply "our Lawe called Lawe Martiall". Two commissions issued by the Company are on record, and a comparison of their contents bears out the suggestion made by the Editors of the *First Letter Book* that Floris and Antheunis may have been dissatisfied with the terms of the earlier document. These commissions bear no dates, but there is no doubt that the one which is placed second in the *Letter Book* was the operative document, for, unlike the first, it provided for the strengthening of the factory at Bantam, which the Journal shows was in fact done, while a memorandum,¹ written at Patani in the year 1613, quoted as the 9th article a clause which bore that number in the second commission, but did not appear in the first.

The main difference between the two commissions lies in the more precise definition of responsibility effected by the later one. Under it the chief merchants were to be entirely independent of the captain in all matters of trade, and were to have full control over the four factors appointed to the ship; under no circumstances could they be displaced during the voyage. The captain was to sail where the chief merchants directed, while anyone who even suggested a premature return was to be severely punished. On the other hand, the captain was to have full government over the ship and crew, and possibly it was in deference to Hippon's experience that several clauses dealing with details disappeared from the second commission. Provisions in regard to sanitation (clause 4 of the earlier document), records of the course (5), precautions during watering and the like (12, 13), care of empty casks (18), alterations in cabins (21), salutes (22), or avoidance of the Channel ports (28), may have been considered unnecessary in the circumstances; but it is a little surprising that among the omissions are two articles which were at this period common form—the prescription of morning

¹ *Letters Received*, i. 296.

and evening prayer, and the prohibition of blasphemy, theft, drunkenness, gambling, and other forms of misconduct. It would be futile to speculate as to the motive for these latter omissions, and all that need be said is that entries in the Journal show that prayers were in fact part of the daily routine, while drunkenness and gambling were, at the least, common.

The only unusual clause in the commission is the provision (16) that the captain and crew should defend and preserve the two Dutch merchants from their countrymen in the East, who, it was apprehended, "will seeke to doe them wronge and all the villanie they may". Happily no occasion seems to have arisen for putting this clause into operation; Floris, at least, was usually on excellent terms with the compatriots he met at Bantam, at Patani, and on the Coromandel Coast.

No details of the actual equipment for the Voyage have been preserved, but the agreement specified that the ship should be of about 400 tons, with a company of 80, including the merchants. A Dutch factor¹ described the *Globe* as about 170 last, or, say, 350 tons, and this figure may be taken as substantially accurate. The form in which the capital stock was sent out is not on record, but we may assume that the bulk of it was in reals of eight, while the Journal mentions incidentally that the cargo included some lead and some woollen cloth, but does not hint at the presence of any other goods. Nothing else is recorded of the preparations for the Voyage, but they were completed in time for the *Globe* to leave Gravesend on 5th January, 1610, according to the Old Style which Floris used for the occasion, corresponding to 15th January, 1611 (New Style).

Lastly, reference may be made to one other document. The Calendar of State Papers records² that on 27th November, 1610, royal permission was given for the East India Company "to admit into their society merchants strangers, aliens, or denizens to trade with them in common stock". The date and the circumstances indicate that the primary object of this grant must have been to regularise the position of the two Dutch merchants who contributed to the common stock employed in setting out

¹ *Golconda*, 63.

² *Cal. S.P.* ii. no. 495.

the *Globe*; and doubtless they were formally admitted to membership of the Company, though, in the absence of the Court Minutes, no record of the admission has survived.

§ 3. THE TRADE CONDITIONS ENCOUNTERED

The first objective of the Voyage was the Coromandel Coast: the reason was that the countries to be visited farther east bought very little except cotton clothing, and the artisans on the Coast had for long specialised in the supply of these markets. A fuller account of the commercial activities of this part of India will be found in *Relations of Golconda* (Hakluyt Society, 1931); here it will suffice to indicate briefly the nature of the goods to be purchased, the methods of procuring them, and the influence of the administration on commercial transactions.

The cloth to be purchased may be classified as piece-goods and apparel. The former consisted of plain cotton cloth, usually bleached, but sometimes dyed red or blue, and sold either by the 'piece' of conventional size, or by the 'corge', that is, the score of pieces. Cloth of this kind had a large regular sale, but in the markets which the *Globe* was to serve the chief demand was for goods which could be brought into wear at once, and which may be called apparel, if we remember that no elaborate tailoring was involved in their preparation. The most important article was the skirt, then known in commerce as *tapé*, which consisted simply of a piece of cloth of correct size and pattern, worn by both sexes wrapped round the waist. There were also shawls or wraps for the shoulders, of the same general type, turbans for the head, and sashes or girdles for the waist.

For skirts and wraps in particular, the most important features were the style and pattern. In these matters the consuming markets were intensely conservative, each locality required its own familiar types, and even a slight divergence from the accepted standards might suffice to render the goods unsaleable. In some cases the patterns were produced by the use of coloured yarns, but for the markets with which we are concerned they were usually either printed or 'painted', to use the

contemporary term. Printing with wooden blocks applied by hand was practised in many parts of India, and the product was known by the name of *chint*, now familiar in its English form as chintz; Gujarāt, on the west coast, was the principal exporter of these goods.

On the Coromandel Coast¹ the pattern was more usually produced, not with a block, but with an instrument described sometimes as a pen, and sometimes as a brush; and cloth which had been treated by this process was called by the Portuguese *pintado*, that is, 'painted'. English merchants followed this Portuguese usage, and described the goods as 'painted' cloth, or sometimes 'pintadoes', while the craftsmen who made them became 'painters'; and Dutch merchants of the period used the equivalent term *geschilderd* (from *schilderen*, to paint), though some modern writers prefer to substitute *gebatikt*, a participle formed from *batik*, which is the local name of a similar process still practised in Java. These 'painted' goods formed the bulk of the trade with which we are concerned.

Merchants had thus to be familiar with the precise forms and patterns of the goods demanded by the markets which they proposed to visit. They had also to know where to buy the goods they wanted, for there was a certain amount of specialisation in the commercial production of the Coast: weaving and bleaching, dyeing and 'painting', were practised in all centres, but some of them were more important than others for particular specialities. Thus the dyes obtainable in the northern centres, Masulipatam and Petapoli, were superior to those found farther south, and dyed pieces were ordinarily bought in them. On the other hand, some of the southern centres had specialised in the patterned cloths in demand for export, and Pulicat in particular had an old-established reputation for 'painted' goods for the markets farther east.²

¹ The fullest extant description of the processes employed on the Coast seems to be that which was recorded in 1742 by the Jesuit Father R. Cœur-doux, an English translation of which forms the Appendix to Mr MacIver Percival's *The Chintz Book* (London, 1923).

² See *The Book of Duarte Barbosa* (Hakluyt Society, 1921), ii. 132. The translation speaks of 'printed cotton cloths'; the phrase in the text is '*panos pintados dalgodam*' (painted cloths of cotton).

A somewhat similar statement of the position, made in the Introduction to *Relations of Golconda*, was questioned by a writer in the *English Historical Review* for April, 1932, who suggested that at this period Masulipatam was the chief source of 'painted' cloth of the finest quality, and that the speciality of the southern coast was rather cloth woven of dyed yarns. It may well be the case that the 'painted' products of the north were superior in artistic quality, but the export trade was not interested in such exquisite designs as, later in the century, were to become the rage in England; novelty and originality were ruled out by the conditions prevailing in the eastern markets, which insisted on meticulous reproduction of cheap, stereotyped designs; and in 'painting', as in other Indian crafts, the production of work of the finest quality must have depended mainly on the patronage of wealthy amateurs. A precise account of the position at this period has been compiled by Dr Terpstra¹ from the Dutch commercial records. The Dutch merchants, he tells us, looked primarily to the northern centres, Masulipatam and Petapoli, for bleached and dyed piece-goods, while Pulicat, in the south, was by far the most important source of the 'painted' cloth which they required; and, before they succeeded in establishing themselves in the town, they had arranged to import its products to Masulipatam for re-export thence.

These facts were naturally familiar to the chief merchants on board the *Globe*, two of whom had gained their practical experience in the Dutch factories on the Coast. The first call made by the vessel was consequently at Pulicat, to see if any business could be done; but the merchants learned to their surprise that a monopoly of its trade had recently been granted to the Dutch by the ruling King, the representative of the dynasty of Vijayanagar. They therefore sailed north, and established themselves in Petapoli and Masulipatam, the chief seaports of the kingdom of Golconda, where no similar obstacles existed, and where they were confident of obtaining a satisfactory cargo to order.

While the annual production on the Coast was very large, when judged by the standards of the time, the stocks available in the markets were ordinarily small, and a cargo of any size

¹ *De Indische Gids*, March, 1915, p. 335.

could not be procured out of hand. The artisans, who worked as individuals, were unprovided with capital, and were thus unable to manufacture for stock; the first thing for a buyer to do was to place orders, and give advances in cash; and, this having been done, the ship must wait until the goods ordered were delivered. One branch of the equipment required by a successful merchant was ability to manage this business, so that the goods should be made promptly, of the right quality, and at a reasonable price: a not less important qualification was ability to deal with the local authorities.

It may be said, not merely of Golconda, but of almost the whole Indian seaboard, that at this period foreign merchants were welcomed if they came prepared to pay cash for what they wanted, or provided with goods for which there was a demand; and the rulers of the various countries were anxious, broadly speaking, to foster sea-borne commerce. Customs duties were low, and complaints usually received a favourable hearing at the Courts; the difficulties which arose were created by the local, not the central, administration. In Golconda, the chief executive posts were held on the farming system, and fell usually to the highest bidder at an annual auction. The Governor, as he was called by Europeans, when he had once secured the farm, had in practice very wide powers, while any default in his payments to the treasury might involve the bastinado. The business of administration was thus highly speculative, and a Governor had the strongest possible motives for collecting every penny he could, without regard to the future of a region with which his connection might be merely temporary.

The troubles of foreign merchants in Golconda usually centred either in heavy local duties which were claimed in addition to the customs, or in demands for presents and forced loans to the Governor as a condition of his favour; and both these topics are adequately illustrated in the Journal of the *Globe*. Peter Floris, who, as will be explained later on, had lived for several years in Masulipatam, was well acquainted with these obstacles to profitable trade, and, though on this occasion he had somewhat the worst of a final dispute with the Governor, he was able to sail for Bantam on the first of February, 1612, after less