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The Dodo's last island – where did Volkert Evertsz meet the last wild Dodos?

by

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The last eye-witness account of a living Dodo in the wild was in 1662, when some of the survivors from the shipwrecked *Arnhem* were exploring the east coast of Mauritius to find a good spot to spend their exile. They waded at low tide over to an island, where they found Dodos. “Amongst other birds were those which men in the Indies call *doddaerssen*. They were larger than geese but not able to fly; instead of wings they had small flaps, but they could run very fast. One of us would chase them so that they ran towards the other party who then grabbed them; when we had one tightly held by the leg it would cry out, then the others would come to its aid and could be caught as well” (Olearius 1670, Cheke 1987, Wissen 1995). It is significant that they found these birds only on an islet, which would have been relatively inaccessible to introduce predatory animals. The writer, Volkert Evertsz (or Iversen), found goats there (see below), but did not mention any other feral livestock – goats, deer, monkeys and rats will sometimes swim, pigs do not; no feral cats were present in Mauritius at this date.

Since I drew attention to this sad scenario in my ecological history (Cheke 1987), there has been speculation as to which offshore islet Evertsz and his friends camped

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out on. In my earlier work, I did not attempt to locate it, and simply referred to “an islet (off the east coast?) accessible on foot at low tide”. Since then there has been a tendency to believe it was Ile aux Aigrettes (e.g. Moree 1998, J Mauremootoo *in litt.*), though Staub (1996) suggested Ile aux Cerfs/Mangénie or Ile d’Ambre. Ile aux Aigrettes has a most unsuitable surface for bare-footed sailors to be running about on - their feet would have been cut to shreds on the sharp limestone. More significantly it is not accessible on foot at any time, as the shallow sands are cut with deeper trenches requiring swimming. The Ile aux Cerfs/Mangénie group and Ile d’Ambre are more easily reached. Most other islets (all along the east coast apart from Ile des Deux Cocos) are too small to have supported all the goats, tortoises and birds that Evertsz reported. The only other islet of sufficient size is Benitiers, but its location does not fit the descriptions Evertsz gave of the coast he explored.

When researching the ecological history, I only had the short passage about the Dodo translated from the black-letter text of the original Dutch [Fig 1], p 16, and Wissen (1995) only added a couple of extra sentences to mine. Recently, I have discovered in the British Library an 18th century English manuscript translation of almost all of Evertsz’s account of his time in Mauritius¹. This text allows the islet to be reliably identified. As this account has never been published in English, and the original Dutch book is very rare, I have reproduced it in full as an appendix (Fig 1).

Evertsz and his companions crammed into the ship’s longboat after the *Arnhem* sank, reached the coast of Mauritius on 20 February 1662 after nine days at sea, hungry and dehydrated. Evertsz gave little indication of the whereabouts of their landing, but it was near a river and a mountain. On landing, they all ran to a river they had seen as they came in. A cyclone the next day forced them to move to a higher ground towards the mountains to avoid the sea-spray. After the storm abated, they sought shelter and found “a hollow rock beneath which more than two hundred people might easily shelter and keep themselves perfectly dry from the rains”². For several days they explored the shore, catching fish with iron nails they found in a “piece of wood from an old kind of bridge”. Now 1662 was in the period between

¹. No complete English translation of Evertsz adventures has been published; the MS translation in the Mackenzie Collections in the British Library (ex India Office; 1822 collection, No 13a) forms part of a larger series of accounts of Mauritius compiled by Henrick van Quellenburgh to refute French traveller Jean-Baptiste Tavernier’s *Six Voyages ...* (published in 1679) which cast the Dutch in a poor light (Blagden 1916). Evertsz is not mentioned in Blagden’s catalogue, no doubt because Quellenburg did not refer to him by name. Quellenburgh’s original text entitled *Vindiciae Bataviae ofte Refutatie van het tractaet van J B Tavernier ...* (Amsterdam 1684) is not listed in Toussaint & Adolphe’s *Bibliography of Mauritius* (1956).

². This was clearly a lava tube, but one which did not flood in heavy rain!

the two periods of Dutch settlement, and the first colony did very little engineering, though a road was built to facilitate communication with Flacq from the HQ at Fort Frederik Hendrik [= Vieux Grand Port] (Moree 1998, Pitot 1905). I have found no record of a bridge, but the obvious place that would have benefited from such a construction would have been Grande Rivière Sud Est which separates the plains of Flacq, with some of the best ebony, from the coast under the Bamboo Mountains leading to Grand Port. I therefore think their landing place and first camping area was on the southern shore of the GRSE estuary, after which they crossed the river and moved gradually north. Evertsz never mentioned a fort or its ruins in his account, and I suspect the men did not penetrate south-westwards as far as Grand Port. There are caves near Trou d'Eau Douce which may have been where they sheltered. At one point they dammed a small tidal estuary to trap fish; one can only speculate where this was, as there are many suitable places along the coast. It is never clear from the narrative what sort of distances the men walked and explored. As they saved virtually no possessions apart from the clothes they were wearing, the account must have been written from memory some time after the events described, so some vagueness and inconsistencies are to be expected. The tidy progression from desperate starving sailors to fat, merry and successful islanders also has more than a touch of fantasy about it. The manuscript translation from Quellenburgh omits the account of their rescue which follows in the original account (Olearius 1670) after the end of the narrative given here.

After some time the men split into groups of friends, and Evertsz's group, trying to avoid others they did not get on with, set off along the coast (direction not specified) to find a quiet spot to live. After initially settling by a large stream, the arrival of others forced them to "leave this part of the island entirely". Confusingly, Evertsz then says they moved on only "about half a mile" before finding "a tolerably high" island they could wade across to at low tide, which proved to have all they needed to live on. There were easy-to-catch goats, tortoises, Dodos and 'mountain partridges' [Red Rails]³ cabbage palms (*palmistes*, *Dictyosperma album*), and most significantly a fresh water stream. The only lagoon island with permanent fresh water is Ile d'Ambre; it is also the highest, rising to 10 m (33 ft) according to Saddul (1995), and I suggest that this is where the remaining Dodos survived. Additional evidence is that Ile d'Ambre was renowned for large numbers of goats during the early years of the second Dutch occupation in the later 1660s (Pitot 1905); Dodos,

³. The Dutch term used was *berghoenders*, literally 'mountain hens' but close to the term *veldthoenders* generally used by the first Dutch visitors to describe Red Rails *Aphanapteryx bonasia*, and indeed used by Evertsz himself earlier when first referring to 'partridges' (see Fig 1, para 2, line 3).

however, were not mentioned. In relation to the survival of Dodos at this late date, it is significant that Evertsz did not mention pigs as among the islet's animals. Pigs, generally thought to be the Dodo's worst predators (Pitot 1905, Cheke 1987), are very reluctant swimmers. Although the goats could perhaps have got there on their own, it is more likely that they had been put there deliberately by Dutch settlers, as Evertsz says they found ears cut as if for ownership identification on some of the animals.

Early descriptions of the islets within Mauritius's fringing reef are few, although they are occasionally mentioned in passing. The first detailed description I have found dates from October 1829, when Julien Desjardins wrote an article on Ile d'Ambre (Desjardins 1829). He noted that "one can, at low tide, go there on foot with water up to the waist, taking care however to avoid the channel". Although he did not describe a typical stream, he reported that "towards the middle of this island there is a low point on the side of which a rock-fall has formed a little hollow where water filters across the ground and even becomes drinkable though it is cloudy" (my translation). By then the island had been clear-felled and used for sugar cultivation and later for grazing, so the fresh-water supply might well have deteriorated since 1662. Even now, according to Saddul (1995), the numerous roundish depressions "often contain fresh water accumulations", and the 1: 25 000 map shows pools linked to an inlet by a stream⁴.

Evertsz left unsaid whether the group killed all the Dodos on the islet, but they could easily have done so during their 3-4 month stay. Eventually they left the islet and were rescued in May 1662 by an English ship, the *Truro* (Moree 1998). The accounts by other survivors who spent their entire time on the mainland do not mention Dodos except in passages clearly borrowed from older writings, and say nothing original about the fauna in general (Wissen 1995, Moree 1998). The Dodo had probably been extinct on the mainland, or nearly so, since about 1640 (Cheke 1987), Wissen 1995); there were no unequivocal sightings after the 1630s. Peter Mundy, one of the most meticulous of 17th century travel writers specifically commented on *not* seeing any during his visit in 1638 - he had seen captive ones in

⁴ Directorate of Overseas Surveys (UK) map Y881 sheet 2 (1981). Pools are also shown on Ile aux Cerfs (sheet 6), and, bizarrely, a short stream on Ile aux Aigrettes (sheet 10), where there certainly is no such thing (pers. obs.)!

Surat (India) some years earlier (Mundy 1608-1667), Barnwell 1948, Cheke 1987)⁵. By the mid-1660s the word ‘Dodo/Dodaars’ had transferred to the Red Rail *Aphanapteryx bonasia* - both John Marshall in 1666 (Khan 1927) and Pastor Hoffman in 1673-5 (Hoffman 1680) used the term in conjunction with very clear descriptions of Red Rails (Cheke 1987). Only Hubert Hugo, who was Governor during Hoffman’s tenure as the island’s priest, appears to have used the word in its original sense. He had been to Mauritius before, when privateering in the service of the French on the *Zwarte Arend*, and picked up some of the survivors from the *Arnhem* in November 1662; these did not include Evertsz who had already left (Moree 1998). Five slaves escaped from Hugo’s ship, and in 1673 he recaptured a slave “who had been in the woods for 11 years” (probably one of the original escapees) and quizzed him about Dodos. The slave said he had only seen them twice, in very remote places (Pitot 1905)⁶. Much later on Lamotius referred to dodaarsen being caught by his men in 1687 and 1688 (Moree 1998), but as his journals have not been published and there is no suggestion that he described the birds so named (Cheke 2001), I suspect he too was referring to Red Rails, which we know still survived at that date (Cheke 1987). Benjamin Harry’s famous “Dodos, whose flesh is very hard”, eaten when he visited Mauritius on the *Berkeley Castle* in 1681 (Barnwell 1948) also lacked any supporting description. However, his assessment of the meat echoed Marshall’s remark for his ‘dodos’ (i.e. Red Rails) in 1666; “they are good meat when roasted, tasting something like pig, and their skin like pig skin when roasted [sic], being hard” (Khan 1927, Cheke 1987); I suspect he too was referring to *Aphanapteryx*.

5. I am currently re-evaluating Dodo accounts for a revision (Cheke & Hume, in press) of my earlier ecological history, and, without giving the full explanations here, have concluded that of the late (post 1635) reports: (1) François Cauche probably never visited Mauritius at all, getting his report from the crew of an associated ship that spent five months on the island in 1638; (2) Johannes Nieuhoff did not see a Dodo in Batavia around 1653, but borrowed his description from Piso, who in turn took it from the earliest Dutch visitors; (3) we have no idea when the Dodo sent from Batavia to Japan in 1647 left Mauritius, although it is likely to have been in the early 1640s; (4) We have no idea when the live bird seen in London in 1638 by Sir Hamon Lestrange left Mauritius, but English ships were regular visitors - for instance the *Discovery* and the *Exchange* were there in 1634, and the *Discovery*, *Blessing*, *Jonas* and *Palsgrave* in 1636 (Barnwell 1950-54); (5) There may also have been a living bird in Holland in 1638.

6. Evertsz and 19 others were rescued in May 1662 by the English ship *Truro*, a further 34 were taken off by Hugo’s ship the *Zwarte Arend* in November, when the slaves escaped. Moree (1998) claimed that the slaves were never heard of again, but when Hugo recaptured the man in 1673, he alleged that his surviving companion had killed a survivor from the *Arnhem* (Pitot 1905), which fits the report that one of the seven still left on the island in early 1663, Pieter Salomonsz, was killed by the ‘caffers’ who had escaped from Hugo’s ship (Moree 1998).

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ken 'er 't beel af / en droogden hen in de zon / en ook ten deel in de rook : want het was onmogelijk dat wy hen alle konden koken en braden. Doch dewyl wy geen zout hadden / en de visschen slechts met zeewater bespyngden / so hadden wy 'er weinig deeg af / en lieren hoerpe adem daar na. Wy namen booz zehet slach van zout te maken / gelijk ik in Ambona gezien had. Wy lagen op een platte steenslip beel hout by mallander / staken 't aan / en goren gedurighlyk zeewater daar op ; en als het hout tot asch geband was / bedden wy de zelfde in een linne doek / gaten zout water daar op / en maakten pekkel / die wy in de doppen van hoeknoten hooften ; en in dezer boegen bequamen wy goet wit zout. Onze andere makkers / die van ons gescheiden waren / en ons quamen bezoeken / waren hier ober verwondert / en leerden van ons deze kunst van zout te zieden.

Dewyl wy hant / zout / en oberbloet van visch hadden / lieren wy lust ontvarens ons vischgerichten / ook vleesch 't eten. Wy zagen wel vogels / velshoenders / wilde bokken / en andere wilde beesten : maar wy waren so afgemat / dat wy hen niet konden najagen ; en dies halven moesten wy ons een tijt lang met visch behelpen. Toen 'er regen quam / en onze visch / die noch niet genoeg in de zonnescijn gedroogt was / nar toerd / begon sy te stinken ; 't welk ons de plaats te bang maakte. Wy gingen dies halven beeder / en quamen aan een grote bloet / daar wy een hut maakten / met boozneemen van daar een wijl tijt onze woning te houden. Toen wy hier vijf dagen getweest hadden / quamen anderen van ons volk / die wy niet gaerne zagen / ook in deze plaats / daar sy zich neder sloegen. Wy berieten dies halven dit getweest / en gingen omerent een half mijl strandwaarts op / en zagen neffens ons enige kleine Eilanden / onder de welken een / dat carnelijs hoog was / en veel bosch had / ons besonderlyk wel geviel ; dewyl wy zagen dat wy toen het water gevallen was / zonder zweemmen / en slechts met beutwading / daar aan konden komen. Wy namen van ons gereetschap / en gingen daar mee op dit klein Eiland / daar wy een beek met barsch water vonden / in de welke goede visch was. Niet verre van deze beek maakten wy / onder een boom / een bequame hut / daar in wy tegen de regen / en hitte der zon zehet en beschut konden sijn. Wy vonden hier ook veel wilde bokken / en alderhande gevogelte / 't welk niet zeer schut was ; dewyl sy misschien geen menschen / die hen verbolgden / gewent waren te sien. Wy zagen ons aan / bleven staan / en lieten ons naby hen komen. Onder andere vogelen waren 'er ook / die men in Indien boddaerffen noemt / en groter dan ganzen sijn / de welken niet konden vliegen : dewyl sy / in plaats van vleugels / slechts kleine blimmen hebben ; maar zeer snel lopen. Wy jaagden hen mallander toe ; in boegen dat wy hen met de handen konden grijpen : en als wy een aan 't been vast hielden / en deze vogel daar ober groot getier maakte / so quamen anderen hier toe lopen / om de gebangen te helpen ; daar booz sy zelven ook gebangen toerden. Wy lieren hier ook enige verghoenders ; en wilde bokken konden wy srijgen so veel / als wy begeerden. Wy jaagden hen op een rook / die van 't land naar de zee uitsiep / en als een hangend Eiland maakte. Wy liepen dan met ons bijden op hen aan / en grepen hen. Enige van d'oude bokken hadden sneden in d'oren ; 't welk ons dee vermoeden dat sy van de Hollanders / toen sy 't Eiland Mauricius betwoonden / daar gezet sijn. Wy bequamen ook veel lant- en zeeschilpadden / van de welken enigen so groot waren /

Zy maken
zout.

Zy begeeren
zich op een
ander eiland.

Dooderf-
sen gevan-
gen.

Wilde bok-
ken.

Schilpad-
den.

Fig 1. The page from Evertsz's account (Olearius (1670), where he encounters Dodos on the islet.

Appendix

[Transcript of the 18th century manuscript translation in the British Library of Quellenburg's version of Evertsz's account as used (without any mention of Evertsz!) In his *Vindiciae Bataviae* (1684). The manuscript is not always easy to read, and some words were impossible to decipher with certainty. These are placed between slashes (/), with dots replacing any completely indecipherable part; I have somewhat modernized the punctuation, but retained the grammar and spelling of the original, occasionally supplying words (in square brackets []) that the translator has apparently left out].

When on the 20th February about noon at 10 o'clock, we beheld the shore of the Island Mauritius, it indeed kindled much joy amongst us. We praised and thanked God for his great wonders he had bestowed upon us and thus by the Grace of God we came with sun set on shore after we had nine days /row/ed in our boat upon the wild sea.

On coming on shore, everyone of us ran as hard as he could towards a River we had descryed not far from the place where we had landed, there we refreshed our wearied/soul/. I had never before in all my life taken a sweeter draft than at this river. We were much exhausted from the excess of fatigue we had been obliged to undergo, and we were so weak and feeble on our legs that scarcely we were able to walk, because we had during all the times, namely for nine days, taken neither wet nor dry food sustaining ourselves only by drinking our own urine. We remained on shore during all the night, sitting together, where we got still a very heavy wind and shower of rain, having nothing beneath which we could shelter ourselves; and /.../ the greater part of our people had but very few clothes on their body, for we had all leapt from /.../ the wreck nearly just so as we were.

On the following morning, when we had drunk plenty of fresh water, we then consulted and deliberated upon the best means in what manner we might get something to eat, in order to satisfy our hunger. Accordingly, we went about in search of something, dividing ourselves one here and the other there, when here and there we found some mustard leaves, all of which we took along with us, and on the sea-side we picked up some shell snails which we ate raw, because we had no fire to prepare them, yet they [were] nevertheless most excellent. On the succeeding night, a dreadful tempest arose, accompanied by a heavy wind and great showers of rain, making such a noise and roaring as if all the elements would fall in and mix

together. Such a tempest is called a Hurricane, by which frequently many ships are lost. We sat beneath in the open air under the canopy of Heaven, thoroughly wet and cold from the water that poured down upon us, and which the boisterous sea threw at us on the shore, and which beat in such a manner at us that completely we sat inundated in it. The sea-water at first was not so troublesome to us as was the rain water, because it was warmer than the other and gave us not so much cold, but when afterwards it rose so high that we were in danger of been [being] devoured, and that we were obliged to move higher up towards the mountains whence again the cold rain water came pouring down upon us. This became more troublesome to us and dismayed us entirely for we had now no other thoughts but that this was our last day of life. Therefore we prayed most fervently to God almighty to grant us a happy issue if it is His will that here we should /lay/ for death. However, God again bestowed in this instance upon us His power, that with day-break the weather abated and became gradually calm.

Had we in that tempest been still in our boats and up [at] sea, we should then undoubtedly have sank [= sunk] to the bottom; we could therefore from this evidently perceive God's Providence and merciful care, namely in having just one day before landed from the rage and perils of the tumultuous sea. It was therefore evident that God [chose] to show us His wonderful goodness and aid in order that we should make known the same with others.

On the succeeding days we again went about to look whether we could not find a save [= safe] spot where we might shelter ourselves against any wind and rain, when at last we found a hollow rock, beneath which more than two hundred people might easily shelter and keep themselves perfectly dry from the rains. Having found this Rock and determined to make it our abode, we then again separated and went in search of some food. We found there many palmtrees from which we took the soft parts and ate it instead of bread. We further found a piece of wood from an old kind of bridge, from out of which we took the iron spikes, the points of which we sharpened and having fastened them to the end of a long stick, we went thus armed to the bank of the river, which was of fine white sand, where we saw many turbot, which we caught with our pointed spikes. Some of our people made Nets of the soft bark of young trees and twigs, with which we caught many good fish. We also got oysters, shell-snails and turtles, yet we were still obliged to eat everything raw, for we neither had fire nor material to make any, because everything had got thoroughly wet from the late heavy rain.

The skipper or master, together with the boats-wain at length resolved to go in the boat to Madagascar, there to try whether they could from thence proceed to India. They had however great difficulty before they were able to bring the boat, which by the late tempest had by the sea been driven to a very great distance upon the shore, again into the water. Thirteen of the crew went with the Master in the boat, and having provided themselves with as much provision as they could get for their intended trip, they at last departed, leaving us behind, without that afterwards we ever heard any more from them. As for us that remained behind, we imagined that during our stay on this Island, we would not be at a loss where to get something for us to eat if but we could kindle a fire and obtain some salt of which we were now most in want. Therefore we prayed most fervently day and night to God Almighty that he would please to assist us in this, and which at length He in His mercy granted unto us.

One of our remaining people (a very old man) went into the woods, where he found a great quantity of dry moss, and putting part of it on the pan of his Pistol, which in the general consternation he had taken with him from the wreck, without any cartridges, he kindled a fire with it, which afterwards he blew up to a large flame of fire. It is however very astonishing that previously we had frequently in vain tried the same expedient, and that same at length, we [? = he] had nevertheless succeeded. At the sight of this fire, we committed great rejoicing, and brought as much dry trees and faggots together as possibly we could, making first a very large fire, and afterwards some little ones at several different places, in order that when one should extinguish, the others would then still remain burning.

Hereupon we separated, but those who [were] intimate friends, having [been] at close next to one another in the Boat, from the time we left the wreck, till we arrived here on this Island, separated not, but remained with their five or six together.

On separating we took our road mostly toward the sea-side, and after a little journey we came alongside a Brook, falling into a Lake, which the sea had made in retreat, being about a pistol-shot broad. We noticed that there were many fish which, when the ebb/flamed/again must [go] back with the streaming water into the sea. At this we sounded the entrance of this Lake, and found it was not deeper than a little above the knee, and about three fathom broad. Upon this we shut up this entrance in the centre with sticks, fastening them together about three inches from each other, so that with Tide the entrance became perfectly dry. In this manner, we inclosed an incredible multitude of the finest and most excellent fish we had ever seen and

which were tolerably large, and which we could not have counted in two days. Thereupon we called out to some of our separated mates to come and assist us, so that when they came each of them took as many of these fish as he desired, taking of them and drying them partly in the sun and partly by the smoke of fire, for it was impossible for us to boil or roast all of them. But we had no salt, and that we were obliged to sprinkle them merely with sea-water, in consequence enjoyed but little benefit of them, because they tasted very bad and afterwards gave us a kind of asthma. However, we at length resolved upon making salt in manner as I have seen the people do at Amboina, and accordingly we set ourselves at work gathering a good quantity of dry wood, placing it upon a flat rock and setting it on fire, we then continually poured sea-water upon, and boiling a kind of salt/pickle/ in cocoa-nut shells, we got in this manner very good white salt. Our other mates who had separated from us wondered much when on visiting us they beheld the success of our labor [= labour] and learned of us the art to make salt also.

As now we had fire, salt and abundance of very fine fish, we became desirous to have also meat by our fish. We certainly saw lots of birds and quadrupling [? = quadrupeds]: partridges, wild goats & c, but we were so much tired that we could not run after them, and we were therefore obliged to make shift for some while longer with our fish. But when a rain came, and our fish having not yet sufficiently dried in the sun, they began to smell, filling our abode with such a nasty stifling air that we could bear it no longer. Wherefore, we abandoned our place and proceeded further on, when we came to a large stream, on the bank of which we made a hut, intending to stay there for some while. We had scarcely been here five days, others of our people, but whom we did not like for our Neighbours, also came to make this place their abode, we therefore left this part of the island entirely, proceeding forwards about half a mile towards the sea-side, where not far from us we beheld some small islands amongst which there was one that seemed tolerably high and overgrown with plenty /sward/ and which particularly pleased us much. Having observed that when the /?? Shar ??/ [= tide] had fallen, we could without swimming approach this small island merely by fording across the water, we took up our utensils and crossed over to it, where on our landing we found to our great joy also a small rivulet with fresh water, and which likewise contained very good fish. We made not far from this little stream a comfortable Hut, beneath the branches of a thick and lofty tree, where we were perfectly safe for [= from] the rains and sheltered against the heat of the sun. Here we also found many wild Goats and all kind of Birds, which were not shy at all, because they very likely were not

used to see men pursuing them, and which came us exceedingly well to pass having neither barrel nor ammunition to shoot them. These animals on our coming up to them stared at us and remained quiet where they stand, not knowing whether they had wings to fly away or legs to run off, and without so much as moving either one step forwards or backwards, suffering us to approach them as close as we pleased.

Amongst these birds were those which in India they call Dod-aersen (being a kind of very big goose); these birds are unable to fly, and instead of wings, they merely have a few small pins, yet they can run very swiftly. We drove them together into one place in such a manner that we could catch them with our hands, and when we held one of them by its leg, and that upon this it made a great noise, the others all on a sudden came running as fast as they could to its assistance, and by which they were caught and made prisoners also. Here we also got some Mountain Partridges; and as to wild Goats, these we could get as many as we pleased. We needed only to drive them together into a corner, running from the land towards the sea-side and making a kind of projecting island, when afterwards we ran with our five men amongst them, catching in this manner as many of them as we pleased. Some of the old goats had cuts in their ears, which made us suppose that they had been left there by the Netherlanders at the time they dwelled here on this island. We also got here many land and sea turtles, of [which] some were so big that with two or three of our people standing upon their shell they were still able to creep away. Their flesh was of as pleasant a taste as that of fowls, and their shells were used for our plate and other utensils.

As now we not only had fish but also meat of fowls, other birds and wild Goats in abundance, and that moreover we were able to eat all this either boiled or roasted, according to our own pleasure, and that further we likewise found many palmtrees there, of which we cut off the top or heart, which is very white, substantial and pleasant to eat, and which tree at the same time produced also a kind of palm wine or toddy for our drink, we in consequence lived as hearty and delicately as in our situation we could wish, wherefore we resolved to remain here a whole year, and indeed some of us would have wished to remain here for life, if but only they could have got Clothes and Women, for whom by the delicate food rather dainties, they grew very desirous. The palm wine tasted so good that now and then we made tolerably free with it, so much so that at times we became somewhat merry, drinking the health of our *grad* Relations and friends at home. Thus, we lived daily in a flourishing and careless condition, forgetting even the name of the months and the days of the week.

We once went at the time of the Ebb with four of us to the large island Mauritius which is situated about a /?? ped..ners ??/ shot from our small island, there to visit our fellow mates. We found these at different places here piece and there scarce of them, appearing very lean and poor. They wondered much at beholding us thus fat and smooth. We had as a present for them brought with us some salt, which we gave them, and instructed them at the same time in the art of making it, at which they rejoiced much, thanking us most cordially for our having assisted them. *Behold now, reader, the scraggy island I have described to you according to the fair truth of it, but of which Mr Tavernier writes ...* [I have put in italics the place where Quellenburg as editor takes over from Evertsz's story].

ERRATUM

a phrase accidentally omitted from the description of easily approachable animals on p.21 as been added to this pdf version, and other minor errors corrected;
the author saw no proofs of this paper - ASC, june 2009