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Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

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The Voyage of François Leguat of Bresse

The publications of the Hakluyt Society (founded in 1846) made available edited (and sometimes translated) early accounts of exploration. The first series, which ran from 1847 to 1899, consists of 100 books containing published or previously unpublished works by authors from Christopher Columbus to Sir Francis Drake, and covering voyages to the New World, to China and Japan, to Russia and to Africa and India. François Leguat (1637–1735) was a French Huguenot who became the leader of a group of seven Huguenot refugees forced to colonise the island of Rodriguez in 1693, after the French claimed their intended destination, the Ile de Réunion. He remained on the island for two years, before escaping via the neighbouring island of Mauritius; after imprisonment in Jakarta, he returned to Europe in 1698. Volume 1 describes his journey to Rodriguez and provides descriptions of the island's now extinct flightless birds and giant turtles.

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Frontmatter

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The Voyage of François Leguat of Bresse

*To Rodriguez, Mauritius, Java,
and the Cape of Good Hope*

VOLUME 1

EDITED BY SAMUEL PASFIELD OLIVER



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Frontmatter

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Frontmatter

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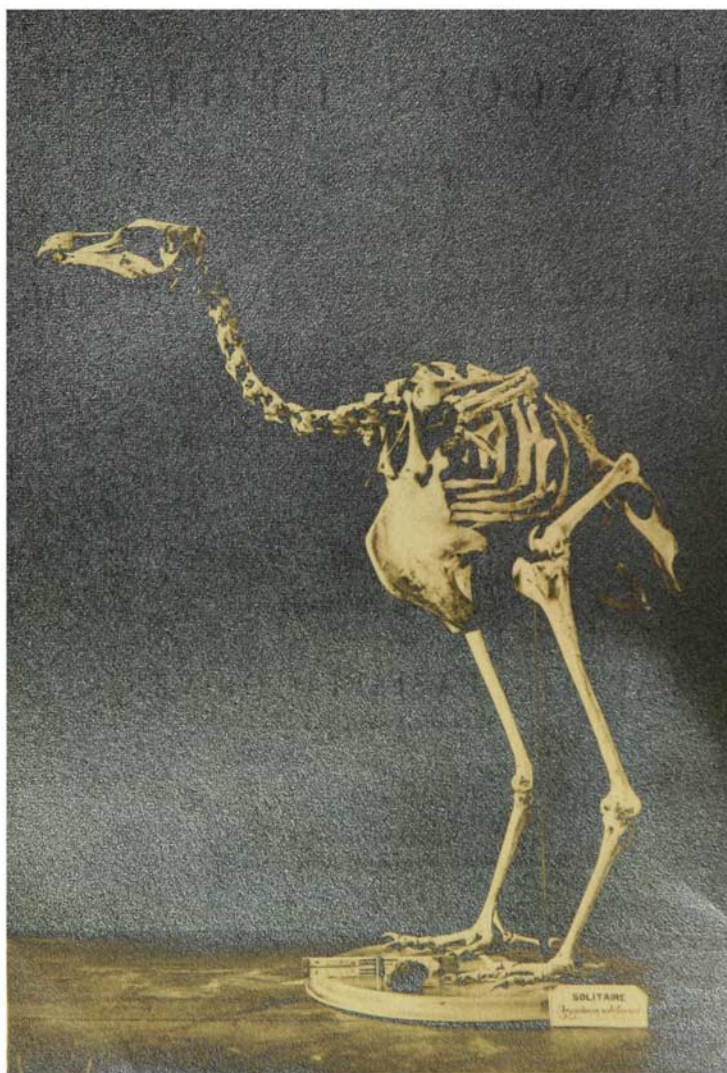
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978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)



SKELETON OF LEGUAT'S SOLITAIRE.
PEZOPELIAS. SOLITARIA. in the
Museum of Zoology Cambridge.

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Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

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*"Si forte necesse est
Indiciis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum."*

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS	viii
EDITOR'S PREFACE	ix
BIBLIOGRAPHY	xv
INTRODUCTION	xvii
CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS	lvi
ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA	lx
DEDICATORY LETTER TO HERR CHRISTIAN BONGART. DUTCH EDITION	lxii
TABLE OF CONTENTS IN HEADINGS OF CHAPTERS. DUTCH EDITION	lxiii

ENGLISH EDITION.

TITLE OF ORIGINAL ENGLISH EDITION	lxix
LETTER OF DEDICATION TO THE DUKE OF KENT	lxxi
AUTHOR'S PREFACE	lxxv

FIRST PART.

Voyage and Adventures of Leguat and his Companions until their departure from the Island of Rodriguez	1
Autobiographical Monument inscribed by the Author	127

viii CONTENTS.

ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS.

Frontispiece: Skeleton of Leguat's Solitaire, *Pezophaps Solitaria*
Chart of Island of Rodriguez, by Capt. Wharton, R.N., 1874¹ . xvii
Frontispiece of Original French Edition, facsimile . lxix
To face Title of original English Edition.

PART I.

Carte de l'Isle de Diego Ruys ou Diego Rodrigo, facsimile . 1
L'Isle de Bourbon or Mascareñas, facsimile . . . 41
View of Rodriguez, looking south, by E. Higgins, 1843² . 43
Chart of Mathurin Bay, by Capt. Wharton, R.N., 1874¹ . 48
View of Port Mathurin, looking west, by E. Higgins, 1843² . 50
Plan de l'Habitation, facsimile 64
Le Solitaire, or the Solitary-Bird, facsimile 80
Palæornis exsul, from *The Ibis*³ 85

¹ Reduced from Admiralty Charts.
² From lithograph in *The Dodo and its Kindred*, by Strickland and Melville.
³ For description, see Appendix B, p. 387 *et seq.*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

IN the following story of the remarkable adventures and sufferings endured by François Leguat, events are narrated which belong to a period considerably later than that of any other travels or voyages treated of in former publications undertaken by the Hakluyt Society ; nevertheless, the date of the personal record follows somewhat closely upon the time of the latter portion of William Hedges' diary,¹ to which, indeed, it forms a not altogether unfitting sequel, by affording information regarding the system of Dutch administration and colonisation in the East Indies, and at the Cape, towards the end of the seventeenth century, and by giving a graphic sketch of the circumstances of French Huguenot emigration from Europe to South Africa at that epoch. The chief modern scientific interest, however, in Leguat's description undoubtedly hinges upon the circumstantial delineation which he gives of the curious bird-fauna then extant in the Mascarene Islands, the subsequent destruction of which has rendered the personal observations of the philosophic Huguenot invaluable to naturalists, marked as they are by such evident simplicity and veracity.

¹ The last entry in Wm. Hedges' diary is dated 1688, and Leguat's narrative commences in 1689.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

It is now the pleasurable duty of the Editor to acknowledge and place on record, in the commencement of this volume, the kindness and ready assistance which he has met with in every branch of his inquiries from numerous literary and scientific friends during its preparation. First and foremost, it is to M. James Jackson, the well-known librarian of the Société de Géographie, that the Editor owes his acquaintance with the early French editions of the Huguenot author. To the researches of M. J. Codine, of the same Society, are due the more exact knowledge, which geographers possess, as to the approximate date of discovery of the several Mascarene Islands, on which subject most erroneous views had previously been entertained. It is regrettable that want of space has compelled the abridgment of M. Codine's admirable reasoning on this subject.¹ M. Sauzier's discovery and reproduction of the rare Du Quesne *Mémoire*² have contributed largely to the better comprehension of several of Leguat's allusions, although there is yet reason to doubt whether the particular *Mémoire* from which the quotations were taken has been absolutely identified. Several of M. Eugène Muller's notes have been utilised by permission of the annotator, and the clues afforded by the Appendix of the small edition of Leguat's book, republished by the Librarian of the Arsenal at Paris, have been found most suggestive. Naturally, the contribu-

¹ *Vide* Appendix A, p. 308.

² *Vide* Introduction, *infra*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

xi

tions of M. Alph. Milne-Edwards to the *Annales des Sciences Naturelles*¹ and other periodical scientific journals have been largely used for the elucidation of the natural history of Rodriguez; it would be impossible to illustrate any work on the Mascarene Islands without incurring a heavy debt to this celebrated naturalist. M. Gabriel Marcel, of the Bibliothèque Nationale, has taken an infinity of pains in answering, most minutely and categorically, numerous and somewhat pertinacious questions, which have been addressed to him by the Editor on various points, bibliographical and geographical, in connection with this publication, thereby aiding largely towards its correctness. M. A. Bouquet de la Grye, the French Hydrographer, most courteously enabled the Editor to obtain an accurate transcript of the Abbé Pingré's original manuscript journal at Rodriguez, hitherto unpublished, which has proved most useful in elucidating certain doubtful points. Mr. R. W. Shufeldt, of the Smithsonian Institution (Washington, U.S.), has readily permitted the reproduction of his clever restoration of the Giant bird of Mauritius, whose existence, however, is still problematical; and Mr. Van Kampen has been good enough to revise whatever passages have been translated from the Dutch of Valentyn by Mrs. Salmon. The thanks of the Hakluyt Society are due to all the above foreign contributors to their work, as well as the Editor's personal gratitude for their very sympathetic help and encouragement.

¹ *Vide* Appendix B, p. 320.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Having, as in duty bound, first of all made his too inadequate acknowledgments of what he owes to his friendly helpers across the seas, the Editor must now proceed to offer his no less sincere thanks to those of his own countrymen who have communicated so freely to him the results of their patient investigations of all branches of science treated of in the following notes.

Pre-eminent among zoologists and ornithologists, the Professor of Zoology at Cambridge (where Strickland and Melville's collection finds an honoured position), and his brother, Sir E. Newton (to whose indefatigable explorations the world owes the rehabilitation of Dodo, Solitaire, Aphanapteryx, and their congeners), have furnished far more material for notes and explanatory illustration of Leguat's text than the Editor has been able to treat properly or satisfactorily within the space at his command. Moreover, the learned Professor and his brother have taken much personal trouble to secure for the Editor, not only access to the rich store of osteological remains of the Mascarene birds in the museum (which, by the way, is constantly acquiring fresh *trouvailles* from the cave earths of Rodriguez and Mauritius), but also a photograph¹ of the skeleton of the bird which has conduced to render Leguat's name immortal. These scientists, so profoundly skilled in the subject of most enticing interest in Leguat's history, have also assisted the Editor by

¹ The photograph taken for Mr. Bidwell in November 1889, has been reproduced by Messrs. Morgan and Kidd, of Richmond.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

xiii

their critical perusal of his proof-sheets, so far as they concern their special department.

Whilst the avi-fauna of the Mascarenes has received such close attention from Professor Alfred Newton and Sir Edward Newton, the flora of Rodriguez has been subjected to keen examination and classification by Professor Isaac Bayley Balfour, of Edinburgh; and in the report to the Royal Society, which resulted from his visit to the island in connection with the Transit Expedition of 1874, the Editor has been able to find all he could possibly desire in the task of identifying the plants mentioned with much *naïveté* by the Huguenot writer two hundred years ago. Mr. J. G. Baker, F.R.S., and Mr. Scott Elliot, of Kew, have also aided the Editor by suggestive advice in the difficult and unaccomplished problem of ascertaining the identity of a certain poison-tree of Mauritius, mentioned as causing disastrous effects on the old traveller. Professor Günther, likewise, has readily given all information asked of him with regard to the wonderful tortoises of the same islands; whilst Professors J. Legge, Sir Thomas Wade, and K. Douglas have courteously proffered helpful suggestions as to Leguat's rather confused ideas of the Chinese philosophers.

Dr. R. Rost, of the India Office, has rendered most important assistance to the Editor by permitting him to consult the various books of travel in the Library, which could not easily be elsewhere obtained. Indeed, his cordiality and kind advice

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

have helped the Editor not a little. It may not be out of place also here to record the very great boon which the London Library has proved itself to be for any writer who resides out of town, and at a distance from the British Museum, when engaged on a work requiring constant references.

The secretary of the Hakluyt Society has obligingly revised, suppressed, altered, and added to many of the Editor's original notes throughout the first part. Whilst thanking him for his efforts to secure additional correctness by his revision, the Editor is reluctantly compelled to dissent from some of the conclusions arrived at and published by his coadjutor, especially in those notes on the Banyan, the Pandanus, and the Pepper, wherein Mr. Delmar Morgan differs from the opinion formed after personal observation by that expert botanist, Professor Bayley Balfour.¹ Finally, the revision of the second part by Mr. Clements R. Markham, and his timely correction of a very important mis-statement in the first part, deserves the hearty recognition and thanks of the Editor. Mr. Wm. Griggs, by his admirable *facsimile* reproductions of the original plates, has largely contributed to the complete illustration of the text.

S. PASFIELD OLIVER.

MORAY HOUSE, STOKES BAY, GOSPORT.

16 May 1891.

¹ *Vide* pp. 65, 67, 103, 104, etc. The entire list of the numerous notes furnished by Mr. Delmar Morgan is given in the Index. The Supplementary Note on the Dugong is especially valuable.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

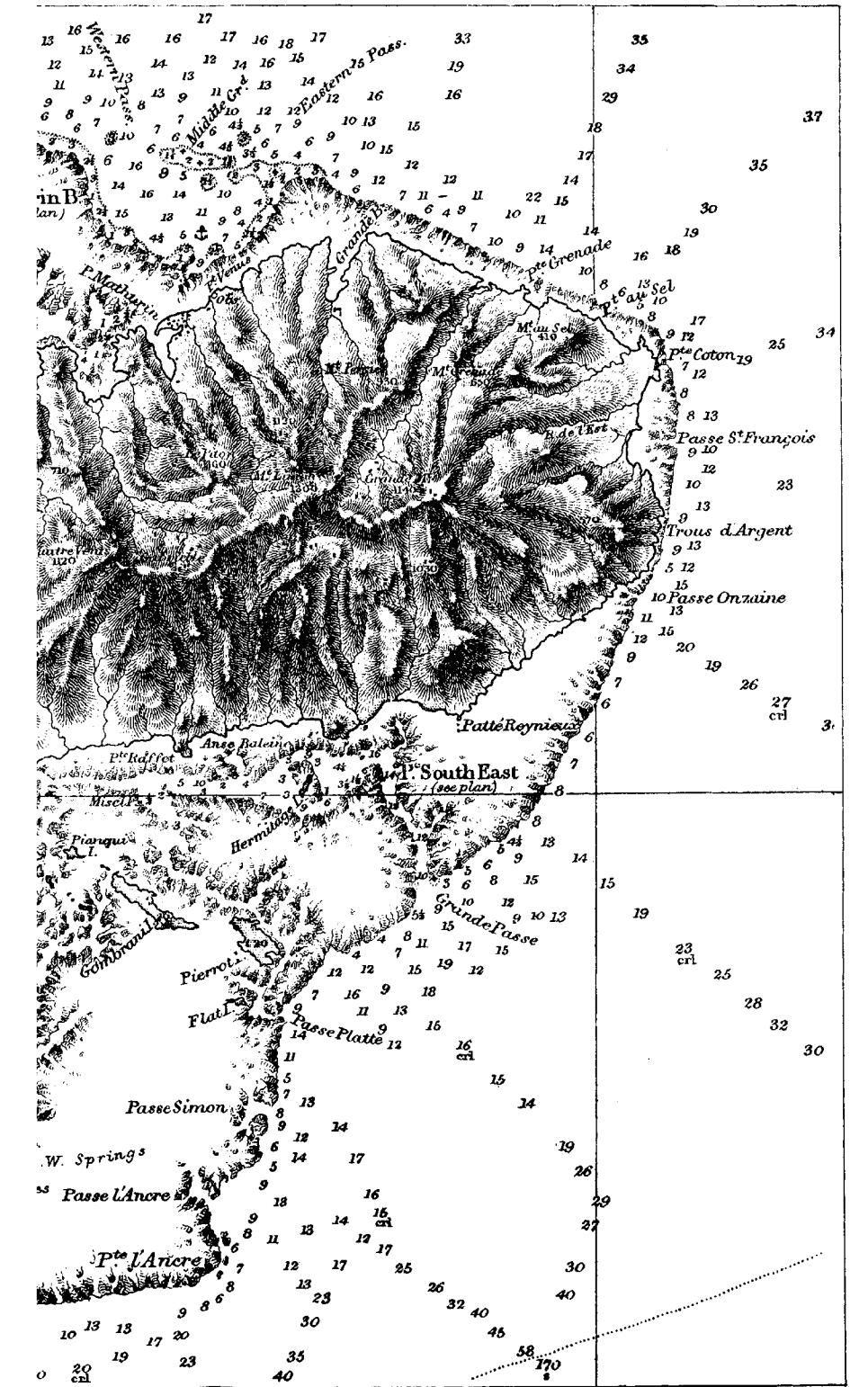
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Cambridge University Press
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Frontmatter
[More information](#)





Cambridge University Press

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Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION.

FIVE or six years before the deaths of Cardinal Richelieu and his sovereign, Louis XIII—that is, about the year 1637-38—François Leguat appears to have been born in Bresse, a small province (represented at the present day by the department of Ain, on the Savoyard frontier) between the confluent streams of the Rhône and Saône rivers. Our author's ancestor, Pierre le Guat, is mentioned as the Seigneur of la Fougère, in the *Histoire de Bresse et de Bugey*, by Samuel Guichenon.¹ Of his early days little is known; but, according to his own account, when over fifty years of age, he was driven into exile, in consequence of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), and with many others took refuge in Holland in the year 1689. At this time the Marquis Henri du Quesne, son of the celebrated naval commander of that name, was projecting, under the sanction of the States-General and the directors of the Dutch East India Company,

¹ The arms of LE GUAT FOUGERE are given in the *Indice Armorial*, as : “d'azur à une fasce d'or, à un Lyon passant de mesme en chef, & 3 estoiles aussi d'or, en pointe.” Guichenon writes : “Je n'ay point veu de plus ancien Seigneur de la Fougere que Pierre le Guat, Secretaire de Charles Duc de Savoye vivant en l'an 1511 & 1534, qui fit bastir la maison & en acquit le fief.” (Vide *Histoire de Bresse et de Bugey*, par Samuel Guichenon, Seigneur de Painesuyt, Lyon, 1650, p. 54.)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xviii

INTRODUCTION.

the establishment of a colony of French Protestant refugees in the island of Mascaregne, now known as Ile de la Réunion. The Marquis had previously published¹ a glowing description of this island (which he proposed to name Eden), the largest of the group discovered by the Portuguese in the preceding century, but as yet imperfectly explored and vaguely marked as Las Mascarenhas in the old maps and portulans; so that many refugees were desirous of becoming colonists in the new paradise of the southern hemisphere, and two ships were chartered for the purpose of taking possession of this hitherto supposed uninhabited island, to one of which Leguat was officially appointed as major.

On learning, however, later, that a French squadron² was under orders to sail for this island (which had, indeed, been re-annexed in 1674 by M. de la Haye, the French *Viceroy des Indes*, for the French East India Company), the Marquis du Quesne suspended the preparations for his abortive scheme, following the precise injunctions of his father, never to take up arms against the French Government, and, instead, contented himself with fitting out a small frigate, *La Hirondelle*, whose

¹ Vide *Un Projet de République à l'Ile d'Eden (l'île Bourbon) en 1689*, par Le Marquis Heuri du Quesne. Réimpression d'un ouvrage disparu, par Th. Sauzier, Paris, 1887.

² A squadron of six ships, commanded by M. du Quesne-Guiton, left l'Orient de Port Louis, on the 24th February 1690, for the East Indies; but not for Mascaregne. The Father Tachard, often quoted by Leguat, was a passenger for Siam in one of the ships.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION.

xix

commander was directed to reconnoitre the islands of the group, and to take possession of whatever island was found unoccupied and suitable for colonisation. This change of plan does not seem to have been communicated to the small band of adventurers who embarked as emigrants under the idea that they were to be landed on the Isle of Eden, the terrestrial paradise of their anticipations, and the small expedition finally left Texel on the 10th July 1691.

The commander of the *Hirondelle*, M. Vallean, whom Leguat charges with the basest treachery, having professedly discovered at the Cape that Mascaregne had been formally annexed by the French Compagnie des Indes Orientales (who had placed M. Vaubolon there as governor), passed by this delightful island, which, in truth, fully justified the praises and descriptions of the Marquis, tantalising the scurvy-stricken colonists by the enchanting prospect it exhibited to their eyes, and continuing his voyage to the eastward, anchored off the smaller island of Rodriguez¹; and here, on the 1st May 1691, Leguat landed with eight of his fellow-adventurers, somewhat disappointed with the unexpected change in their programme, but sufficiently pleased with the place to decide that they would remain for two years and see how fortune might

¹ In the official colonial reports this island is now always styled Rodrigues, but in the Admiralty charts and sailing directions it preserves the name Rodriguez, and this latter nomenclature is adopted in the present work.

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978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xx

INTRODUCTION.

favour them. The *Hirondelle* shortly afterwards sailed for Mauritius, having landed arms, utensils, seeds, and provisions, in addition to the private stock of supplies and necessaries which each colonist had provided for himself.

It is the record of the careful personal and detailed observations, made by Leguat on the then existent fauna and flora of the island, during this period of seclusion from the world, that has rendered the simple story of the Huguenot exile so deeply interesting to naturalists of the present day; and, consequently, in the following notes and appendices which accompany the text of the original translation, the confirmation of Leguat's remarks upon the appearance and habits of the remarkable birds and animals, now altogether extinct, by the late investigations of modern men of science, has been especially dwelt upon; for the veracity of the main facts recorded in this charming narrative of adventure has been fully established in the most notable particulars by eminent authorities in Europe.¹

¹ "Telle est l'idée que Leguat nous donne du *Solitaire*; il en parle non seulement comme témoin oculaire, mais comme un observateur qui s'étoit attaché particulièrement et long-tems à étudier les mœurs et les habitudes de cet oiseau; et en effet, sa relation, quoique gâtée en quelques endroits par des idées fabuleuses,* contient néanmoins plus de détails historiques sur le *Solitaire* que

* "Par exemple, au sujet du premier accouplement des jeunes solitaires, où son imagination prévenue lui a fait voir les formalités d'une espèce de mariage; au sujet de la pierre de l'estomac, etc." —As it happens, this so-called fabulous story of the stone has been fully confirmed.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION.

xxi

After a residence of two long years' duration in Rodriguez, the settlers, wearied with discontent and hopeless of assistance, constructed a boat, in which they succeeded in reaching Mauritius after a most hazardous voyage. Unfortunately, they had only escaped from one evil to fall into greater trouble, for the avarice of the governor of the Dutch convict establishment caused them to be treated with the utmost cruelty and injustice. They were imprisoned on an exposed rocky islet at a long distance from the shore, and in attempting to escape, one of their number perished miserably. At last the survivors, who had contrived to send news of their sad plight to Europe, were transmitted, still in confinement, to Batavia, where they disembarked, in December 1696, only to be again thrown into prison. After examination, however, before the Dutch Council their innocence was established, but they were unable to obtain the slightest redress for the pain and suffering they had endured, or compensation for the losses they had sustained. It was not until March 1698, after the proclamation of the Peace of Ryswick, that Leguat and two others, the sole survivors of the original party, landed at Flushing.

At this period crowds of French refugees were

je n'en trouve dans un foule d'écrits sur des oiseaux plus généralement et plus anciennement connus. On parle de l'autruche depuis trente siècles, et l'on ignore aujourd'hui combien elle pond d'œufs, et combien elle est de tems à les couver." (*Le Solitaire*. Art. par M. de Guenau de Montbeillard, *Histoire Naturelle par Leclerc de Buffon*, par C. S. Sonnini. An. IX.)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

streaming over to Britain, and it is interesting to hear what a friend of Leguat, writing at this period (1697-1698), says on this subject. M. Henri de Valbourg Misson (not Maximilien Misson, whose connection with Leguat will afterwards be discussed) writes :

“The *French* Protestants that fled into *England* are so spread over the whole Country, that it is impossible to be certain or so much as guess at their Number. Besides the eleven Regiments which are wholly made up of them, there are some in all the other Troops. A vast many of both Sexes are gone into Service in various *English* Families ; so that there is scarce any considerable House, where you may not find some of our Nation. Many have set up Manufactures in the Country and Churches at the same time : Abundance went to *Scotland* and *Ireland*, to *Jersey* and *Garnsey*. At present there are Two and twenty *French* Churches in *London*, and about a Hundred Ministers, that are in the Pay of the State, without reckoning those that are arriv'd at other Means of subsisting.” (M. Misson’s *Memoirs and Observations in his Travels over England* (1697-98). Written originally in French, and translated by Mr. Ozell, 1719.)

Among others of his compatriots Leguat now migrated from Holland to England, where he seems to have settled for the remainder of his life. He was about sixty years old, but it was not until 1708, when he was a septuagenarian, that the manuscript of his *Relation* was printed and published in London, in French and English simultaneously, whilst a French edition was published in Amsterdam,¹ and

¹ Original French Title:—“Voyages et aventures de François Leguat et de ses compagnons en deux isles desertes des Indes Orientales. Avec la relation des choses les plus remarquables qu'ils ont observées dans l'isle Maurice, à Batavia, au Cap de

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION.

xxiii

a Dutch version was printed at Utrecht *in quarto*.¹ These original editions were soon followed by German translations printed at Frankfort and Leipsic in 1709, another French edition was produced in London in 1720, and an abridged edition appeared later in 1792. [There was another abstract translation published under the title of *The French Robinson*,²

Bon Espérance, dans l'isle de Sainte Hélène, et en d'autres endroits de leur route. Le tout enrichi de cartes et de figures." (Two vols., 12mo. London and Amsterdam, Mortier, 1708.)

¹ Original Dutch Title :—"De gevaarlyke en zeldzame Reyzen van den Heere François Leguat. Met zyn byhebbend Gezelschap Naar twee Onbewoonde Oostindische Eylanden. Gedaan zedert den jare 1690, tot 1698 toe. Behelzende een naaukeurig verhaal van hunne scheepstocht; hun tweejaarig verblijf op het Eylandt *Rodrigue*, en hoe wonderlyk zy daar af gekomen zijn. Als meede De wreede mishandelingen door den Gouverneur van Mauritius; hun driejaarig bannissement op een Rots in Zee; en hoe zy door ordre der *Compagnie t'Amsterdam*, buyten verwagting, daar afgehaald en naar *Batavia* gevoerd wierden. Uyt het Frans in't Neerduyts overgebracht. En met noodige Landkaarten en verdere Figuren voorzien. *Te Utrecht*. By Willem Broedelet, Boekverkoper op den Dam, 1708."

Translation :—"The perilous and wonderful voyages of Herr Francois Leguat and his companions to two uninhabited East Indian Islands, made between the years 1690 and 1698, containing a minute account of their voyage, of their two years' stay on the Island of Rodrigue, and of the wonderful escape from it. Likewise, of the cruel ill-treatment by the Governor of Mauritius, of their banishment during three years on a rock in the sea, and how they were unexpectedly fetched away by order of the Company at Amsterdam and taken to Batavia. Translated from the French into Dutch. With the necessary maps and other illustrations."

² German abstract.—Der Französische Robinson, oder F. L.'s Reisen und Begebenheiten in Bibliothek der Robinsone, 1805.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xxiv

INTRODUCTION.

and one¹ was prepared but never published in 1846.]

The book was well received, and reviewed favourably by the literary journals of the day, so that its publication brought its author into notice, and Leguat became acquainted with Baron Haller² and other scientists of that day; among others who thus came to know him was Dr. Sloane, the secretary of the Royal Society. The adventurous traveller remained in exile in England, and, from a contemporary notice in the *Bibliothèque Britannique*,³ it appears that he attained the great age of ninety-six years before he died at or near London in September 1735.

According to M. Eyriès,⁴ in the *Biographie Universelle*, the narrative of Leguat's voyage was

¹ "One of these adventurers (Huguenots or refugee Protestants of France), M. Leguat, has left a narrative of their sojourn on the island, which, after relieving of its excessive prolixity, I purpose publishing under a separate form." (*England's Colonial Empire*, vol. i, by C. Pridham, 1846.)

² Baron Albert de Haller, a well-known anatomist, botanist, and almost universal genius, was born at Berne, 1708, came to England in 1727, so he could only have known Leguat when the latter was in his extreme old age, nearly a nonagenarian.

³ *Bibliothèque Britannique, ou Histoire des Ouvrages des savans de la Grande Bretagne pour les mois de Juillet, Aout et Septembre*, 1735, tome v. Under heading "Nouvelles Littéraires":—"Mr. Leguat est mort ici au commencement du mois de Septembre, âgé de nonante & six ans & aint conservé jusqu'à la fin une grande liberté de corps d'esprit. C'est le même qui publia en 1706, la Relation d'un Voyage, dont voici le titre. . . ."

⁴ M. Jean Baptiste Benoit Eyriès, author of the *Abrégé des Voyages Modernes*. See *Biographie Universelle, Ancienne et Moderne*, tome xiii. Paris, 1819.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION.

XXV

generally supposed to have been published by a certain unfrocked Benedictine monk, named Frédéric Auguste Gabillon. This person was an ingenious literary adventurer, who, having completed his studies in Paris, joined the order of the Théatins, but soon, repenting the sacrifice of his liberty, escaped from his convent and fled to Holland, where he shortly after professed the reformed religion. Being without resources, he worked at compilations for booksellers, but getting into debt went over to England, where he took the name of Jean Leclerc (a noted journalist) and imposed on several persons of distinction.¹ It is certainly possible that this renegade may have imposed on the simple-minded

¹ “Mais à propos de Mr. *Le Clerc*, vous ne serez pas fâché, que je vous raconte une aventure où il a quelque part, sans qu’il le sache. Vous avez parlé autrefois dans vos *Nouvelles* du Sr. *Gabillon*, Theatin, venu de France en Hollande, au sujet d’un Livre, où il prétend expliquer les motifs de sa Conversion. Mais vous n’avez pas, je pense, jugé à propos de parler de celui qu’il fit l’année passée contre Mr. *Le Clerc*. Vous savez qu’il avoit taché de le dédier chez vous à diverses personnes, qui l’avoient refusé. Mais vous ne savez pas, qu’il a eu la hardiesse de le dédier ici (Londres) à Mr. le Duc. . . . * dont il a surpris l’honnêteté. Peu de temps après voyant que cela ne réussissoit pas à son gré, il a changé de batterie. Il est allé voir quelques Théologiens Anglois de cette Ville, qui ne connoissent Mr. *Le Clerc* que de réputation, & leur a dit qu’il étoit ce même Mr. *Le Clerc* sur quoi on lui a fait civilité. . . . On a, de plus, dit, qu’il avoit contracté des dettes, & attrapé un Libraire, chez qu’il a pris des Livres à crédit. . . .” (*Nouvelles de la République des Lettres, op. cit.*)

* Possibly the Duke of Kent, to whom Leguat’s English edition was dedicated.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01351-2 - The Voyage of Francois Leguat of Bresse, Volume 1

Edited by Samuel Pasfield Oliver

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xxvi

INTRODUCTION.

Leguat ; and, indeed, President Bouhier (as evidenced by a note in his handwriting in his own copy of Leguat's book) was of opinion that Leguat owed to Gabillon *les faits altérés* and the digressions on the advantages and disadvantages of marriage, which are so prominent in our author's work. Baron Haller, who, as already mentioned, knew him personally, always declared that Leguat was a frank and sincere man ; nevertheless, M. Bruzen de la Martinière, also a contemporary, in his *Geographical Dictionary*, does not scruple to class Leguat's Voyage among "the fabulous travels which have no more reality than the dreams of a fevered brain". Ever since, this very inaccurate judgment has not seldom been held by many. On the other hand, the observations of Leguat have been amply confirmed by the evidence of his contemporaries and of voyagers who followed in his footsteps ; while recent investigation has proved the general correctness of his observations in a remarkable degree.

M. Jacques Bernard (the successor of Pierre Bayle), in his continuation of Bayle's *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres*, for December 1707, noticed Leguat's volume when first published, and made the following critical remarks on its authorship :

"The Preface of this Book is not by the Author of the Work. He who has composed it maligns various persons of merit, some of whom will perhaps scorn to notice his insulting expressions, and others will not fail to retaliate on the first opportunity. I (M. Jacques Bernard) have already received from two separate sources a Memoir and a Letter