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978-1-108-04587-2 - The British Mariner's Directory and Guide to the Trade and Navigation of the Indian and China Seas

H.M. Elmore

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The British Mariner's Directory and Guide to the Trade and Navigation of the Indian and China Seas

Henry Mathias Elmore (about whom little is known) was a sailor in the Royal Navy who quit in 1783 and set out for Calcutta to be involved with the East India Company's growing trade. Elmore worked as a commander on its ships, and he decided to write this account of sailing to and within the East, which was published in 1802, in order to share his navigational knowledge and to correct earlier inaccuracies. Although much of the work consists of specific, technical directions for piloting ships around Asia, Elmore's instructions give a vivid picture of the complexities of nineteenth-century navigation and the tribulations of sailing during this time. Some of the voyages he describes include sailing around the Indonesian islands and to the Malay coast, and how to reach China from Calcutta. Elmore also includes notes about locations of valuable commodities, such as spices, tea or gold, available for trade.

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Under the Patronage of the Hon. East India Company.

THE BRITISH MARINER'S
DIRECTORY AND GUIDE

TO THE

TRADE AND NAVIGATION

OF THE

INDIAN AND CHINA SEAS.

CONTAINING

INSTRUCTIONS FOR NAVIGATING FROM EUROPE TO INDIA AND
CHINA, AND FROM PORT TO PORT IN THOSE
REGIONS, AND PARTS ADJACENT:

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE TRADE, MERCANTILE HABITS, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS,
OF THE NATIVES.

By H. M. ELMORE,

MANY YEARS A COMMANDER IN THE COUNTRY SERVICE IN INDIA, AND LATE
COMMANDER OF THE VARUNA EXTRA EAST INDIAMAN.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY T. BENSLEY, BOLT-COURT, FLEET-STREET;

AND SOLD BY BLACKS AND PARRY, NO. 7, LEADENHALL-STREET.

1802.

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TO

HUGH INGLIS, Esq. CHAIRMAN;
DAVID SCOTT, Esq. DEPUTY;

AND THE OTHER DIRECTORS OF THE HONOURABLE EAST INDIA
COMPANY, FOR THE YEAR 1800, viz.

Sir FRANCIS BARING, Bart.
JACOB BOSANQUET, Esq.
JOSEPH COTTON, Esq.
Sir LIONEL DARELL, Bart.
WILLIAM DEVAYNES, Esq.
SIMON FRASER, Esq.
CHARLES GRANT, Esq.
PAUL LE MESURIER, Esq.
Sir STEPHEN LUSHINGTON, Bart.
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ROBERT THORNTON, Esq.
WILLIAM THORNTON, Esq.
SWENY TOONE, Esq..

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Honourable

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Honourable Sirs and Gentlemen,

THE Patronage which you were pleased to bestow on my Work, demands from me the most grateful acknowledgements. Accustomed to munificent and liberal acts, no praise of mine can be wanting to confirm the reputation the Honourable Court has acquired, in giving at all times its ready assistance to bring forward whatever may tend to the extension of science or the propagation of useful knowledge.

In the present instance, I trust that I may be excused in observing, that, on the safe navigation of the Indian and China Seas, and the commerce attached to it, depends, in a great measure, the mercantile prosperity of the Company; and that I have paid the greatest attention to those important objects, the following sheets will afford convincing proofs.

May

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May I be emboldened to hope, that, if what I have written, on a subject of so much moment to your concerns, should have the good fortune to merit your approbation, I may look forward with pride and pleasure to your future consideration and support?

I have the honour to subscribe myself with great respect,
Honourable Sirs and Gentlemen,

Your most obedient,

and very devoted,

humble servant,

H. M. ELMORE.

*No. 16, Burr Street,
30th March 1802.*

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author, conscious of his own inability, deems it necessary to inform the Public, that these Instructions were not originally written with a view of being laid before them; but, having shewn them to some friends, who spoke highly of their merit, he has, with some reluctance, complied with their request, of presenting them in the shape of a publication.

Should the least possible advantage to Navigation in general (to this Country and the Honourable East India Company in particular) be derived from them, he will consider himself amply rewarded. He could wish, however, that this task had been undertaken by some person more capable of performing it in the manner which the subject deserves. And, to confess the truth, it was chiefly to prevent these Remarks, Instructions, and Observations from being lost, that he has, unwillingly, ventured to undertake the publication of them, under an impression that the experience of sixteen years actual service would be sufficient to stamp their correctness and authenticity.

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The Author has to observe, that he has no apprehension of incurring blame from any one for preserving these valuable Instructions. They will discover to every navigator the Author's own experience on such subjects: and there can be very few to whom they will not impart many important facts, which they would not, perhaps, have been able to derive from another source.

There is one circumstance attending publications of this nature, which is, that the sale of the work can never sufficiently reimburse the Author for his labour. But this he does not regret, as he looks for remuneration from the services he is capable to render in the line of his profession. It is favourable to society that commercial advantage generally attends discovery, which encourages mankind to persevere; and it is by this means that so many useful voyages and travels are given almost gratuitously to the public.

The following work is so general and extensive, and the execution of it required so much information, assiduity, and attention, that those who may be the most inclined to encourage the undertaking will very naturally inquire, Whether the man, who thus boldly promises, be sufficiently qualified to perform? To this the Author can only answer, that he had written and prepared this work during his residence in India, and had long made the subjects of it his peculiar study. Without, therefore, arrogating any superiority of talents, he thinks it would be unworthy of the Patronage he is honoured with, and that
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kindness expected from a generous Public, as well as deficient in duty to himself and to his Country, was he to permit a timid supposition of incapacity to deter him from doing what he deems so beneficial to society in general, and to the speculative British inhabitants of India in particular.

Under the foregoing reflections, the Author begs leave to observe, that the politics and commerce of Asia in general, and of Hindoostan in particular, interesting in all ages to the enlightened nations of Europe, have, in the course of the last century, attained a degree of importance infinitely greater than even the most sanguine could possibly have expected. This country in particular, by the wisdom of its legislators, the enterprising spirit of its merchants, and the knowledge and intrepidity of some distinguished characters, has acquired a vast dominion in the fairest provinces of Asia, and in the most fertile region of the earth. Besides her late acquisitions of the Myfore country, her valuable possessions on the peninsula of India, and the island of Ceylon, she now holds the sole and undivided sovereignty of Bengal and Bahar; a tract of country considerably larger than France, and inhabited by thirty millions of civilized people.

From all these circumstances, and particularly at the present crisis, independently of the work as a Directory to facilitate the navigation in the Indian Seas, the Observations, to which some of the Instructions as a guide to trade refer, are expected to be of use to the Commanders, Officers, and Purfers, of the Honourable

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Company's ships in general, but more particularly to the British Merchants, Commanders, and Officers, of the trading country ships.

The Author esteems himself extremely fortunate in being honoured with the patronage of the first commercial body in the world; and he trusts that it will give to his work additional value, when he acquaints navigators, that a part of it was submitted by the Court of Directors to their Committee of Shipping, accompanied by the following Address to the Court, and which received their perfect approbation.

TO

To the Honourable the Chairman and Court of
Directors of the East India Company.

Honourable Sir and Sirs,

AT the conclusion of the war in the year 1783, I quitted his Majesty's navy, and went to Calcutta, Fourth Mate of your Honourable Court's hired packet *The Surprise*, where, the being discharged from your service, I went into the country trade, and continued until the year 1796. At this period I was appointed to the command of your Honourable Court's freighted ship *Varuna*; and having delivered the Company's cargo in this country, and returned to Calcutta, I there resigned the command of that ship.

During my continuance in India I was actively employed in my profession; and observed, with much concern, the deficiency in the printed Instructions for sailing from port to port in that country.

I applied, with much care, to make remarks, write directions, fix accurately the latitudes and longitudes of such places as I had opportunities of doing; and at much trouble to collect such remarks,

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directions,

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directions, and instructions, from the best authorities, as would enable me to improve the then extant Directory.

I have now, with much care and application, collected a number of remarks and instructions, which I conceive will be highly beneficial to the more ready and safe navigating in the Indian and China Seas, particularly the West Coast of Sumatra, Straits of Macassar, Malacca, Banca, Durian, and the China Sea; as well for the use of the Honourable Company's as for the Country Ships.

I beg your Honourable Court will permit me to have the honour of dedicating my Remarks to you, under whose influence they will be protected, and meet the encouragement, I trust, they will be found to deserve.

The Latitudes and Longitudes, determining the exact situations of places in India, were so well known to be correct, that I was told your hydrographer, Mr. A. Dalrymple, wrote to India for them, in the year 1797; but the application was never made to me, or I would readily have complied with the request, and trusted to the known liberality of your Honourable Court for a remuneration of my labours.

I beg leave to observe, that my Instructions for navigating the Indian and China Seas are allowed to be, by those who have used them, extremely correct, and of great use in navigating those seas; and I have by my own experience proved them.

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Any number of copies of my intended publication your Honourable Court thinks proper to order, shall be delivered to your Secretary, from the first impressions.

I have the honour to be, Honourable Sir and Sirs, with the greatest respect,

Your most dutiful,

faithful, and obedient,

humble servant,

H. M. ELMORE,

Late Commander of the Honourable Company's
freighted ship Varuna.

*No. 2, Gloucester Place,
New Road, Mary-le bone, London,
December 15, 1800.*

MEMORANDUM

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MEMORANDUM accompanying the MS. sent in with the above Address, and referred to the Committee of Shipping by the Court of Directors.

“ By comparing the few plain Rules, I have the honour to transmit as a specimen of my intended Work, with these already published, for entering the river Hoogly; or by taking the opinion of any of the Commanders of the Honourable Company's ships who have used Bengal; or that of any of the Company's pilots for the river Hoogly; I stake the merit of my Publication.”

RESOLUTION OF THE COURT.

At a Court of Directors, held on Wednesday the
1st of April 1801,

RESOLVED,—That this Court subscribe for Forty Sets of Captain
H. M. Elmore's Directions for Navigating in the
Indian Seas.

P R E F A C E.

AS nations have advanced in civilization, so has discovery and nautical knowledge been encouraged and rewarded. The Spaniards and Portuguese laid the foundation of our acquaintance with the Indian Ocean and the China Seas.— The French, too, have done much in adding and correcting our Navigation Charts; but the commercial world in this respect stands more indebted to the British mariner than to any other class of that valuable description of mankind.

In proportion as improvements have been made in navigation, in the like manner has enterprize been promoted, and new sources of commerce have been discovered.— Great pains have in general been taken to point out the advantages which may be naturally expected to flow from such discoveries. But in that range which it has been the good fortune of the Author to explore, very few accounts, that are in any shape digested, have been presented to the Public.

The nautical part has been hitherto given in a loose unconnected way, unsatisfactory, and in many places erroneous. In regard to the trade, nothing has been yet said to give the Merchants of this country any adequate idea of
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its importance or value. Free Merchants or individual traders, proceeding to India from Great Britain, have every thing to learn; and information can only be obtained by the experience of many voyages.

The Author has it in view, in the following Work, to correct the errors of former navigators; to fix new positions; to point out dangers hitherto unknown; and to instruct the unexperienced in what manner, and at what seasons, to perform his voyages in those seas on which he treats.

Neither are these the only benefits to be derived from this Publication. The East India Company have, with becoming liberality, given considerable encouragement to the country trade of India, or that which is carried on between the principal ports of British India and surrounding nations to the eastward of the Cape of Good Hope. These speculations have been hitherto confined to the eastern hemisphere, and to the capital of merchants settled in that quarter of the globe. The reason of this must appear obvious to the most indifferent observer, viz. the restrictive clause in the Company's charter, in regard to their trade, which permits of no intercourse, independently of that Company, between this country and those to the eastward of the Cape. The expediency of this measure, debarring *in toto* the use of British capital, when the scarcity of specie in India is considered, is a subject which the Author leaves to
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abler hands. But it has never been denied, that the most solid advantages to British India, and even to the prosperity of the Company itself, more especially since the year 1780, the period when Hyder Ally's invasion of the Carnatic threatened the existence of their possessions on the Coast of Coromandel, have been derived from the exertions of the Free Merchants residing in India, under the protection of the East India Company.

The capital and shipping of the Free Merchants have been uniformly employed, during the most momentous epochs, in supplying the armies of the Company with provisions in times of scarcity, and in transporting troops and military stores from one settlement to another. From their exertions additional energy has been given to operations the most distant from the resources of government, the most successful termination has crowned the general effort of all ranks and degrees; and British pre-eminence in India stands now unrivalled.

To multiply and encourage the Free Traders of that country becomes, therefore, a principle of political economy, consolidating the power of the East India Company. Their success abroad depends on the Company, and which can only be promoted by a thorough knowledge of the nature and advantage to be derived from the trade which it is meant they should embrace and cherish.

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The following remarks and observations will point out clearly and concisely all the facilities and vigor which can be given to the commerce in question. By this means it may be expected that shoots or branches of British mercantile houses may in time be established in the Company's settlements, and by their knowledge, application, and capital, unite more firmly the reciprocal interests of both countries*.

In contemplating certain minutiae which have fallen under the Author's particular observation, he begs to remark, that, in the Instructions for Navigating the West Coast of Sumatra, particular attention has been paid, and much application bestowed, to find out, if possible, every danger with which that coast abounds. Where so many shoals of coral rocks exist, it cannot possibly be supposed to have no other dangers than what are described in this Publication; for there is scarcely any part of India which requires a particular survey more than the West Coast of Sumatra.

The Honourable Company's ships, from Bengal to Bencoolen, are in continual danger if they make free with that coast. The consequence is, they are under the necessity of

* The Author understands that it has been recommended to the banking-house of Messrs. Hammersleys, Pall-Mall, whose correspondence is already so generally established over our own continent, to fix a branch of this concern in Calcutta, for supplying passengers to Europe with their circular exchange notes; and for the remittance of money by bills at short dates, and without risk.

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keeping a good offing until they are to the southward of the islands, and then haul in to make a landfall. The loss of the Honourable Company's ship Foulis, Captain Blatchford, has been an additional spur to the Author's attention, and for using every method to gain information of any newly-discovered danger which may appear to the Commanders who are constantly trading in that quarter.

The Table of Latitudes and Longitudes, the Author believes to be as accurate as any which have been laid down; and many, which have never hitherto been noticed, are principally from his own observations. It may be observed in this place, that, though in the same ship, and with the same instrument, few men can be found to agree, even in the meridian altitude of the sun; some setting the limb closer, some wider than others; it therefore cannot be supposed but in lunar observations, (where every mile of error upon the instrument, in taking the distance of the sun and moon's, or moon and stars' limbs, makes, when the distance is cleared of the effect of parallax and refraction, a difference of fifteen miles or upwards in longitude,) that every observer, in future, will agree exactly with those already laid down, though at the same time they cannot differ very widely. It was well known while the Author was in India, that he was extremely choice, and went to great expence, in chronometers, instruments, &c. And he will venture to affirm, that his ship was allowed, at all times, to be a pattern for the others in the country trade of India.

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After all that has been done, conscious there is much more to do, he seeks his apology and consolation in the line of the Poet,

“ To err is human, to forgive divine.”

INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION.

NO period of our history is better calculated to elucidate the powerful effects of commerce than the present.

The vast efforts made by this country in the preservation of the liberties of Europe, have flowed from the wisdom of our financial regulations, the rigid application of public money, and the great and still growing resources of our commercial arrangements.

To preserve that commerce, which has exalted the reputation and increased the riches of the country to a pitch unexampled, should be the steady aim of our legislators. But, as present possession is not a pledge of future enjoyment, it never should be forgotten, that great and unparalleled success, in any country, excites jealousy and envy in every other.

The powers of Europe, relieved from the calamities of a long disastrous war, will now return to the habits of industry, and they will regard India as the most ample range for general commerce. The inexhaustible resources of that country have in all ages awakened the avidity of mercantile nations; and we behold, in India and China, productions, natural and artificial, sufficient to supply the wants of all the world. To retain, therefore, our share of the lucrative branch of commerce, or as much of it as our capital and situation entitle

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title us to do, is the object we have in view. But, in order to do this, we must examine, not only into the interests and probable designs of surrounding nations, but into the moral principles of mankind, so far as it may regard a commercial system; since a new order of things have been established, and that the French revolution has laid a foundation for political intrigue, on a new and unheard-of basis.

It is a fact well known, that, to establish a new French East India Company, with territorial revenue, was the favourite object of the old French monarchy. To give efficacy to this measure Anquetil du Peron, a man not unknown to the literati of Europe, was dispatched by the Academy of Sciences at Paris, in order to ascertain on the spot certain facts relative to Hindoostan. The report of this writer strongly recommends an alliance between the Merhattas and the Republican government; and by this means does he propose to sap British influence and commerce in India. His details are of a complexion to disseminate revolutionary principles in trade as well as in politics, in order to allure the other nations of Europe, and to compel them, as it were, to see their own interests, in a manner best suited to the interests of France. Those principles having extended themselves over a great part of Europe, and even, in some instances, found their way into the cabinet of princes, will yet be the means of exciting great uneasiness and disorder. We have seen, under their influence, negotiations carried on in a manner entirely unknown to former diplomacy; divisions of territory, of commerce and property, insisted on, under the specious pretence of the rights of nature;

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states and kingdoms extended or reduced according to their situation and the limits or boundaries which are marked on the surface of the globe; and combinations entered into to deprive one country of a beneficial branch of commerce, in order to enrich other less fortunate nations. To render these pretensions more plausible, political writers of every description were employed, under the influence of the governments of Europe, to promulgate what they term the natural prerogatives of the human race.

Commercial rivalry has, from the earliest ages, been the grand source of contention, and what will most probably again become the origin of fresh differences among the preponderating powers of Europe. "Let us (say the subtle politicians of the present day, as observed by a late writer*), examine in what manner the nations of Europe are to enjoy their natural share of the commerce of the world, and particularly of India, so great and lucrative as it has now become. Permit us to cast our eyes over the map of the globe, and trace, on its surface, those lines and boundaries which nature seems to have prescribed to all countries, in regard to commercial arrangements. The coasts of Europe, from Cape St. Vincent to the extremity of the Gulfs of Bothnia and Finland, appear one great division for mercantile enterprise and adventure; a range sufficient for competition among those nations whose dominions stretch towards the Western Ocean. There is abundance of scope for activity and speculation in the limits of that trade, which is naturally connected with the western and northern shores of Europe, the

* Lieut. Col. TAYLOR, in his "Letters on India."

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West India islands, the coast of America, the whale and other fisheries, and in the carriage of bulky and weighty articles to and from India. Let all this be enjoyed by the inhabitants of the western coasts of Spain and France, by Portugal, by the Low Countries, Hamburgh, Denmark, Sweden, and Russia, and by Great Britain. But let us enquire into the situation, and what will be termed, by those to whom it relates, the natural right of another great division of the civilized world. In this they will comprehend the whole of the coast within the Straits of Gibraltar, including part of France and Spain, the States of Italy, Austria, Turkey, and Russia; an extent, and population, far exceeding the northern division already mentioned. It will be argued that the Levant trade, or that between the east and the west by the medium of Egypt and Syria, is the natural right of those countries connected with the Mediterranean and Black Seas; that the wants of so large a portion of mankind are to be attended to, and that seventy millions of inhabitants should not depend solely on the exertions of other people, while they possess within themselves the means of commerce."—These ideas are certainly alluring; and the publicity of such opinions, industriously propagated, has, it may be supposed, considerably influenced the minds of men.

The opinions of mankind are to be combated only by opinions, and are not to be overcome by brutal force. On topics of a general nature, which are daily brought under consideration, and in which the rights of nations may be involved, or in regard to questions which may be agitated by foreign writers, we must compare,
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and weigh one assertion against another, and repel invidious attacks by an exposition of the fallacy of our opponents. We must oppose one position to another, sentiment to sentiment, volume to volume. The poison contained in publications, which are carefully circulated all over the continent, by the medium of Paris, Hamburgh, Leipzig, Frankfort, Berlin, and Amsterdam, should be extracted by counter exhibitions, translated into the different languages of Europe. This is a subject deserving the attention of Government, and daily becoming of greater consequence in the political system of nations. By these means the bad effects of insidious representation would frequently be obviated, the seeds of jealousy be destroyed, and the evil disposition of designing men be completely overthrown.

But as we cannot look forward with every care and attention, on our part, to a continual series of successes, it is proper to examine into facts and circumstances, as they may appear either applicable to this country, to those nations with whom we are immediately connected, or to others who may have views inimical to our own. Truth is to be obtained by comparison: The experience of past ages throws a light on similar occurrences, which are constantly passing before our eyes, and fairly may be presumed to indicate what may hereafter happen from a similitude of existing circumstances with those which have already taken place.

In this commercial age, the accumulation of money has entirely changed the system of affairs. It is, in fact, become not more essential to the comfort and enjoyment of individuals, than it is to the political powers and independence of nations. In periods more
d remote,

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remote, the speculations of mankind gave way to a more animated passion. Empires, in the early ages, reared by the alliances of tribes, were upheld by martial virtue and the energies of the human race. The Assyrian, the Grecian, and the Roman empires, were not commercial, but military and agricultural: neither were the vast establishment of the Caliphs, of Jenghis Caun, Tamerlane, or that of the Turks, founded on any other than the law of arms, supported by conquest and the spoils of their neighbours. Intercourse with commercial people, then confined to small states only, softened the manners of mankind, and in the course of time drew them aside from military enterprizes. Luxury, the concomitant of riches and of trade, at length crept in, and dismembered the greatest empires of antiquity.

The Romans, a military republic, annihilated the commercial city of Carthage, because they desired a participation of that commerce, which at last ended in their own destruction. The island of Sicily, the granary of the Mediterranean, in the possession of the Carthagenians, attracted the avarice of the Romans, the first nation in the world; they succeeded in expelling the Carthagenians, and in ruining their trade: but, when imperial Rome became commercial, the Romans were themselves assailed by the more vigorous hordes from the Euxine and the Danube*, whose reiterated attacks they were unable to oppose. The introduction of refinement and luxury, acting on the morals of the Roman people, proved fatal, and brought on by slow degrees the ruin of the empire. These, and

* The invasion of the Cimbri, a northern people inhabiting Scandinavia, first shook the foundation of the Roman empire, by proving their legions not invincible: they swept off five consular armies, till in the end they were themselves almost totally destroyed by the army of Marius.

similar