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Command of His Majesty the King of Bavaria: Volume 1*

Johann Baptist von Spix C.F.P. von Martius Translated by H.E. Lloyd

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Travels in Brazil, in the Years 1817–1820

First published in 1824, this is a two-volume English translation of part of the account by German naturalists Johann Baptist von Spix (1781–1826) and Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius (1794–1868) of their Brazilian expedition, one of the nineteenth century's great scientific enterprises. Despite debilitating conditions (which would contribute to Spix's premature death), they accumulated a spectacular collection of specimens, including dozens of live animals and over 10,000 other examples of flora and fauna. Although no further volumes appeared, this wide-ranging work formed part of the library aboard the *Beagle* during Darwin's famous voyage. Volume 1 recounts the early stages of the expedition, covering the voyage from Trieste to Rio de Janeiro. It contains studies of the flora and fauna of Malta, Gibraltar and Madeira. The volume concludes with the arrival at São Paulo on 31 December 1817.

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*Undertaken by Command
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VOLUME 1

JOHANN BAPTIST VON SPIX
C.F.P. VON MARTIUS
TRANSLATED BY H.E. LLOYD



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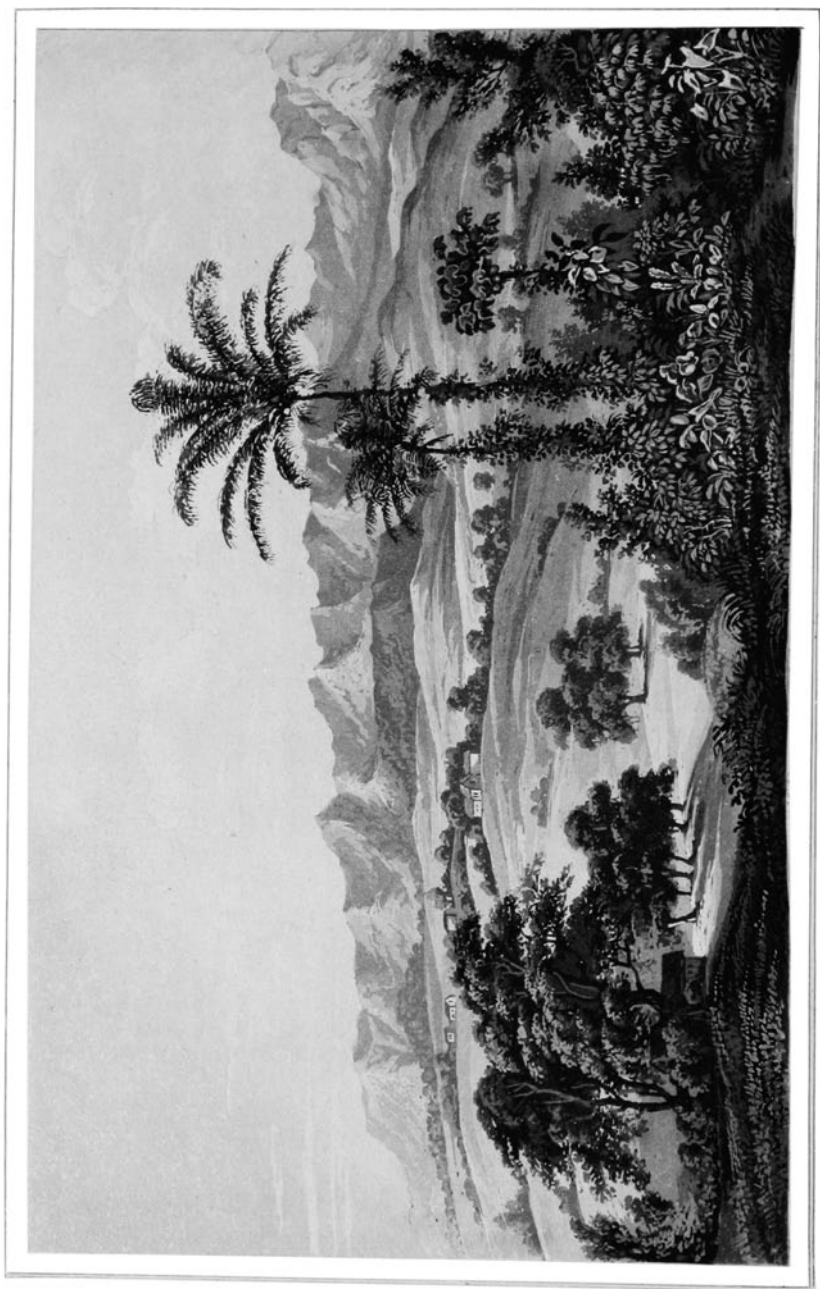
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TRAVELS
IN
BRAZIL,
IN THE YEARS
1817—1820.
UNDERTAKEN BY COMMAND OF
HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF BAVARIA.
BY
DR. JOH. BAPT. VON SPIX,
AND DR. C. F. PHIL. VON MARTIUS,
KNIGHTS OF THE ROYAL BAVARIAN ORDER OF CIVIL MERIT,
AND MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF
SCIENCES AT MUNICH, &c. &c.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

LONDON:
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TO

HIS MAJESTY

MAXIMILIAN JOSEPH THE FIRST,

KING OF BAVARIA.

SIRE,

WHEN Your Majesty had decided on sending a literary expedition to Brazil, you were pleased to confide to us the execution of this royal resolution.

Attachment to Your Majesty and to the sciences was the guardian Genius that guided us amidst the dangers and fatigues of so extensive a journey, through a part of the world so imperfectly known, and brought

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DEDICATION.

us back in safety, from that remote hemisphere, to our native land.

This undertaking, therefore, which is, perhaps, not without importance in the history of the Bavarian nation, owes its origin and its success to Your Majesty; and whatever advantages the sciences may derive from it, must be solely ascribed to the magnanimity and favour of a monarch, who, considering science as the highest ornament of humanity, founds upon it, by means of the wisest institutions, the happiness of his people.

Penetrated with feelings of the most profound gratitude, we, therefore, venture to approach Your Majesty's throne, and most respectfully to offer to the best of kings the first fruits of our mission.

Encouraged by Your Majesty's most gracious assurance, that, in the performance of our undertaking, we have fulfilled Your

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DEDICATION.

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Majesty's intentions, we are now animated by the wish that the literary description of its results may likewise be found worthy of the approbation of our beloved Sovereign.

With the most profound respect we are,

SIRE,

Your Majesty's

Most devoted and

Most faithful subjects,

DR. J. B. VON SPIX.

DR. C. F. P. VON MARTIUS.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

At a period when the peculiar situation of the immense countries in America, formerly belonging to the crowns of Spain and Portugal, so powerfully claims the attention of the politician, the statesman, and the merchant, no more can be required to recommend a work like that here offered to the public, than the assurance that it is not a mere compilation, got up to meet the exigencies of the moment, but a real and authentic narrative, of a journey through a great extent of a most interesting country, hitherto but imperfectly, or not at all explored, and performed by persons every way qualified to gather ample materials for both instruction and entertainment. That such a feeling is very general may be inferred from the numerous works that have been published of late years relating to different parts of South America. In exploring this vast continent, peculiar merit belongs to the Germans, to whom the illustrious name of Von Humboldt alone, secures, without dispute, the palm of superiority. The removal of the Court of Portugal from Lisbon to Rio de

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PREFACE.

Janeiro, opened an extensive field of research, of which the Germans amply availed themselves. Many men, well-versed in different branches of science, especially mineralogy, entered into the service of the Court of Rio de Janeiro, and very interesting communications, sent by them, have been published in the German literary journals, though it is to be regretted that few of them have become known in this country. The marriage of an Austrian Princess with the Crown Prince of Brazil, gave, however, the most powerful stimulus to the German literati, and the fairest opportunity for visiting Brazil with all the advantages that the protection of the government could afford. Accordingly the Emperor of Austria sent several learned men, well skilled in the various departments of natural history and natural philosophy, in the suite of the Archduchess his daughter, and His Majesty the King of Bavaria embraced this favourable opportunity to send two members of the Academy of Sciences at Munich, who would thus be under the protection of the Austrian embassy, and enjoy the best recommendation to the Court of Rio de Janeiro. The particulars being detailed in the first chapter of this work, it is unnecessary to dwell on them here; but it may be observed that this is the first account yet published by any of the German literati who went to Brazil with the Austrian legion, excepting some essays on subjects of natural history, as well by the authors of this work, as by

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some of the Austrian naturalists which have appeared in different German journals. Professor Natterer, one of the most distinguished of the latter, has not yet returned to Europe, but may be expected in the course of this year. With regard to Messrs. Spix and Martius, they have adopted, in a great measure, the plan of Baron Von Humboldt, having published, besides this personal narrative, three or four separate works, each exclusively dedicated to some one branch of natural history.

As the volumes now offered to the public contain only the first half of the personal narrative, (the remaining part being in the press) it may not be irrelevant to acquaint the reader, that notwithstanding the interest which it is hoped will be excited by these volumes, it may be justly expected that the remaining part will be found to possess still greater novelty, and to afford more ample information, and more striking incidents. In confirmation of this assurance, I add the following outline of the latter part of their travels in Brazil. The fatigues that they had to endure in the sequel of their expedition having brought on severe illness, they rested for a time in the capitania of Maranham, whence, as soon as they were sufficiently recovered, they proceeded to the island of St. Louis, and after a six days' voyage by sea, from that place, landed at Para. Having at length reached the banks of the majestic and immense river of the Amazons, bounded by a lofty and

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evergreen forest, they had attained the chief object of their wishes; and setting out on the 21st of August, 1819, proceeded along the bank of the stream (amidst a chaos of floating islands, falling masses of the banks, immense trunks of trees carried down by the current, the cries and screams of countless multitudes of monkeys and birds, shoals of turtles, crocodiles, and fish, gloomy forests full of parasite plants and palms, with tribes of wandering Indians on the banks, marked and disfigured in various manners, according to their fancies,) till they reached the settlement of Panxis, where, at the distance of 500 miles up the country, the tide of the sea is still visible, and the river, confined to the breadth of a quarter of a league, of unfathomable depth. They then journeyed to the mouth of the Rio Negro. From this place every thing becomes more wild, and the river of the Amazons resumes its ancient name of Solimoës, which it had from a nation now extinct. The travellers had chosen the most favourable season of the year, when the numerous sandy islands, which are at other times covered, rising above the now low water, invited the inhabitants of the surrounding tracts, who piled up in heaps the new-laid turtles' eggs, out of which, by the aid of water and rum, they prepared the finest oil.

At the town of Ega on the Rio Teffe the two travellers separated. Dr. Martius proceeded up the collateral stream, the Japura, overcame, by

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the most painful exertions, the cataracts and the rocks on the river, and at length arrived at the foot of the mountain Arascoara, in the middle of the southern continent, separated from Quito only by the Cordilleras. Dr. Spix proceeded up the main stream, crossed the broad rivers Jurua and Jurahy, and the Spanish river Iça, and penetrated at length, through clouds of poisoned arrows discharged by the Indians, and of venomous insects, through contagious diseases, and threatening mountain torrents, to the mouth of the river Jupary, at the last Portuguese settlement of Tabatiaga, on the frontiers of Peru, where he heard the language of the Incas. Had the two travellers prosecuted their enterprise, a few weeks longer, they would have reached the opposite shores of the South American continent. But to effect this they needed the permission of the viceroy of Peru, and the time allowed them for their journey, would not permit them to extend it further. They again turned to the east, and the stream carried them down so rapidly that they arrived in five days at the place, from which it had cost a full month's exertion to work their way up the river. After several lateral excursions, which amply repaid their labour, they again reached Para on the 16th of April 1820. The object of their mission was completed: the continent had been traversed from 24° south latitude to the Equator, and under the line, from Para to the eastern frontier of Peru; an in-

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credible store of natural treasures, and of curious information had been acquired. It is a most gratifying circumstance that all their collections, without a single exception, have arrived safe, and in perfect preservation at Munich, where His Majesty the King of Bavaria has had them all scientifically arranged, according to the several divisions of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, in a noble building fitted up expressly for their reception, under the appropriate name of the Brazilian Museum, of which the indefatigable travellers, to whom it owes its existence are most deservedly appointed conservators.

With respect to the translation, I do not feel it necessary to say more, than that it has been executed with all the care that I could bestow upon it, and that in the whole of the mineralogical part, especially the notes, I have had the assistance of one of the ablest mineralogists in the kingdom, to whom, though I do not feel myself authorised to mention his name in this place, I cannot refrain from returning my acknowledgments for the additional value which the work has derived from his liberal assistance.

H. E. LLOYD.

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