

[PDF] Batavia's Graveyard: The True Story Of The Mad Heretic Who Led History's Bloodiest Mutiny

Mike Dash - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: Batavia's Graveyard: The True

Author: Mike Dash

Released: 2002-02-12

Language:

Pages: 382

ISBN: 0609607669

ISBN13: 978-0609607664

ASIN: 0609607669



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Description:

In 1629, the Dutch merchantman *Batavia* grounded on a desolate atoll near Western Australia. Of the 200 survivors, 115 were subsequently murdered, in coldest blood, by a group of the ship's sailors and their psychopathic leader, Jeronimus Corneliszoon. *Batavia's Graveyard* is Mike Dash's unnerving, measured account of the incident. The victims included children, babies, and pregnant women; the crimes took place over a period of several months. Though the killings make a substantial, chilling tale in themselves, Dash adroitly places the shocking spree in larger context

with illuminating discussions of 17th century medical practices, religious heresy, global politics, and shipboard sociology and daily life. Additionally, he draws dozens of portraits of the participants in this ghastly drama, most fascinatingly that of Corneliszoon, who emerges as a grotesquely charismatic predecessor of the likes of Charles Manson and Ted Bundy. *Batavia's Graveyard*, a skillful melding of accessible scholarship and evenhanded narrative and of overview and telling detail, is a welcome achievement. --H. O'Billovitch

From Publishers Weekly Dash's sociology of the paranormal (Borderlands) and of obsession in Holland (Tulipomania) prepared him nicely for this telling of a 17th-century ship loaded with Dutchmen, treasure and fanaticism. In 1629 the Batavia, a 160-foot merchant ship launched by the Dutch East India Company, was carrying silver to East India when it ran upon coral atolls northwest of Australia and coughed up its passengers. In Dash's account, the survivors 300 passengers and about 50 sociopathic crewmen settled on the tiny island, soon to be called Batavia's Graveyard, and quickly became madhouse models of Dutch social classes. Officers set out in life boats to Java for help, leaving Jeronimus Corneliszoon, a failed apothecary and heretic, in charge; he began terrorizing his own crewmen, then the other marooned passengers. Within two months, 115 of the survivors (including 30 women and children) had murdered each other with swords, pikes, daggers and by drowning (Corneliszoon poisoned an infant that kept him awake). In a narrative reminiscent of *Lord of the Flies*, Dash describes the creeping sadism that sprang from Holland's religious conflicts, which were channeled through the Jim Jones-like charisma of Corneliszoon. The book is driven by Dash's research (a quarter of the book is notes and appendices, including material from newly discovered records in Holland), but the same attention to detail (e.g., the narrative lists and the psychobiography of Corneliszoon) interrupts the pace. The story of the Batavia incident is already well recorded, and even though Dash has taken it to a new level of grotesque accuracy, his nautical drama never truly comes to life.

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