



East Indies: The 200 Year Struggle Between the Portuguese Crown, the Dutch East India Company and the English East India Company for Supremacy in the Eastern Seas

Ian Burnet

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In 1497, Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and the Portuguese became the first Europeans to sail the Eastern Seas in search of spices, silks, gold, silver, porcelains, and other oriental goods. Over the next 100 years, the Portuguese spread their trading network from India as far north as China and Japan, and as far east as Timor in the eastern end of the Indonesian Archipelago. In 1595 and 1601 respectively, the first Dutch and English trading expeditions rounded the Cape of Good Hope and soon the trading monopoly of the Portuguese Crown was being challenged by the Dutch East India Company and then the English East India Company, the world's first joint stock and multi-national trading companies. For the next 250 years, the struggle for supremacy between the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English was to range across the Eastern Seas and in the settlements of Goa, Malacca, Ambon, Macao, Canton, Nagasaki, Solor, Batavia, Macassar, Johor, and Singapore. This book follows the trade winds, the trade routes, and the port cities across the East Indies and the Orient. The story is told by the history of these port cities, beginning in Malacca, which was one of the world's largest trading ports in the 16th century, and finishing with the founding of Singapore and Hong Kong, which became some of the world's largest trading ports in the 20th century.

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