



Narrative of an Expedition to Explore the River Zaire, Usually Called the Congo, in South Africa, in 1816 (Cambridge Library Collection - African Studies)

James Hingston Tuckey, Christen Smith

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In 1816, an expedition to Africa, commanded by Captain James Tuckey (1776-1816), set out on HMS Congo, accompanied by the storeship Dorothy. The aim was to discover more about African geography - of which relatively little was then known - and in particular the connection between the River Congo, also known as the Zaire, and the Niger Basin. The mission failed when eighteen crew members, including Tuckey, died from virulent fevers and attacks by hostile natives. However, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty gave permission for publication of Tuckey's notes, and those of his Norwegian botanist Christen Smith (1785-1816), who also died during the voyage. First published in 1818, the work comprises their narratives of the doomed expedition. At the time it aroused Western interest in Africa, encouraging further research, and it remains of interest to geographers, botanists and scholars of African studies today.

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