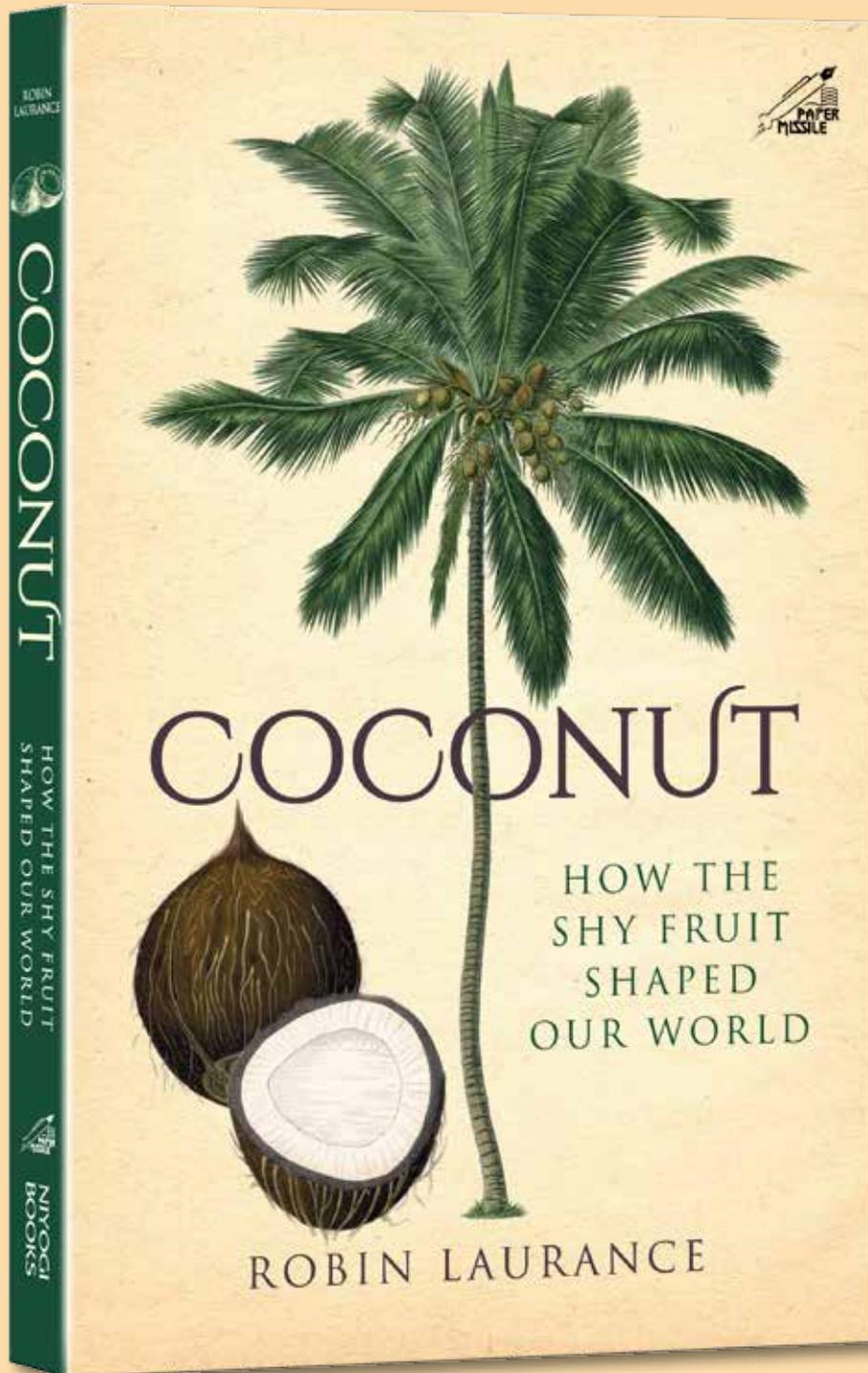


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COCONUT

HOW THE
SHY FRUIT
SHAPED
OUR WORLD

by
ROBIN LAURANCE

HISTORY | CULTURE

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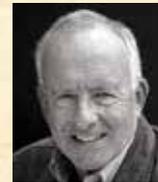
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Coconuts have been around for longer than Homo sapiens; they have been turned into art, taken part in religious rituals and been a sign of wealth and success. They have saved lives, not only by providing nourishment, but also as part of the charcoal filters in First World War gas masks. It was coconuts that triggered the mutiny on the *Bounty*, and coconuts that saved the life of the man who went on to become the 35th President of the United States. The coconut has long been the unseen player in the endeavours of industrialists and bomb makers, physicians and silversmiths, smugglers and snake charmers. To this day, coconuts shape the lives of people around the world.

At a time when coconut products crowd the shelves of supermarkets, health food shops and beauty salons, Robin Laurance looks beyond the oils and health drinks to uncover the unexpected, often surprising, and vital roles played by the coconut palm and its nut in times past and present.



Robin Laurance is a writer and photographer whose work has been widely published in newspapers and magazines, both in the UK and in America.

He began his career with *The Guardian* newspaper in London before turning freelance and contributing to *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Business Week* and *Forbes* magazine. His previous books include *Just What I Always Wanted!* (Quercus), *The Millennium Generation* and *Portrait of Islam* (both Thames & Hudson). Reviewing a previous book, the Times Educational Supplement referred to Laurance as ‘that rare breed of genuine photojournalist with a talent for telling stories in photographs and words’.

Explores the unseen role that the coconut has been playing in our lives in times past and present.

Thoroughly examines the plant's remarkable history from producing gas masks for World War II to making ropes for ships' rigging, as well as coir matting and coconut-based products for supermarkets.

An enlightening and entertaining read, packed with informative tidbits, such as the coconut crab account by Mr Darwin, describing the crab as monstrous and cracking open the coconut with its pincers.

Hollywood star Gwyneth Paltrow swills coconut oil around her mouth every evening to keep her teeth pearly white.

The exotic fruit also helped President John F. Kennedy when he was commanding a patrol torpedo boat in the Pacific.

The former president carved a message on a coconut after a Japanese destroyer smashed into them and broke their boat in two.

—DailyMail.co.uk, 7, Nov, 2019

