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“All Suche matters as passed on this vyage”: Early English Travel Anthologies and the Case of John Sarracoll’s Maritime Journal (1586–87)

Philip S. Palmer

ABSTRACT From 1586 to 1587 the English merchant John Sarracoll wrote an account of the first privateering voyage sponsored by George Clifford, the third Earl of Cumberland (1558–1605). Sarracoll’s journal is best known as part of Richard Hakluyt’s anthology of English voyage narratives, *The Principall Navigations of the English Nation* (first published 1589), and would later supply the micro-historical “anecdote” in a famous essay by Stephen Greenblatt. Philip S. Palmer investigates the multiple surviving versions of the journal to uncover an extensive process of textual refashioning, wherein the narrative, especially its description of a town burned in Sierra Leone, was reshaped for various readerships. **KEYWORDS:** John Sarracoll; Hakluyt’s *Principall Navigations*; anti-Spanish propaganda; early modern travel narratives; textual redaction

☞ ON NOVEMBER 4, 1586, a group of armed English voyagers financed by George Clifford, third Earl of Cumberland, invaded a town in Sierra Leone, scattering its residents and surveying its features before burning it to the ground. The English merchant John Sarracoll was among them, as a member of Clifford’s first privateering voyage (1586–87), and he described the attack in his maritime journal.¹ His relation of the violent encounter abruptly follows a long description of the town’s intricate layout and (to European eyes) remarkable cleanliness, qualities he and his peers regard with “admiration”:

the towne . . . wee found to bee finely built after their fashion, and the streetes of it so intricate, that it was difficult for us to finde the way out,

1. For this voyage, see R. T. Spence, *The Privateering Earl: George Clifford, 3rd Earl of Cumberland* (Stroud, U.K., 1995), 71–72.

that we came in at. Wee founde their houses and streetes so finely and cleanly kept, that it was an admiration to us all, for that neither in the houses nor streetes was so much dust to bee founde, as would fill an egge shell. Wee founde little in their houses, except some matts, goards, and some earthen potts. Our men at their departure set the towne on fire, and it was burnt (for the most part of it) in a quarter of an houre, the houses being covered with reede and strawe.

After this we searched the Country about it, where we found in divers plaines good store of rice in stacks, which our men did beate out, and brought aboard in the huske, to the quantitie of 14. or 15. tunnes in both our ships.

The 17. day of November wee departed from Sierra Leona, directing our course for the Streight of Magellane.²

The passage contains some jarring transitions, most notably the crew's unexplained shift in perspective toward the town, from something to be admired to something to be incinerated. This shift seems to exemplify what Stephen Greenblatt has characterized as a "moral blankness" in the narrative, which, as he argues in one of the seminal New Historicist "thick descriptions" of the early 1980s, signals a telling intersection between language and power, while offering a historical corollary to Christopher Marlowe's rapacious stage characters Tamburlaine, Faustus, and Barabas:

What is most striking in Sarracoll's account, of course, is the casual, unexplained violence. Does the merchant feel that the firing of the town needs no explanation? If asked, would he have had one to give? Why does he take care to tell us why the town burned so quickly, but not why it was burned? Is there an aesthetic element in his admiration of the town, so finely built, so intricate, so cleanly kept? And does this admiration conflict with or somehow fuel the destructiveness? If he feels no uneasiness at all, why does he suddenly shift and write not *we* but *our men* set the town on fire? Was there an order or not? . . . The questions are all met by the moral blankness that rests like thick snow on Sarracoll's sentences: "The 17th. day of November we departed from Sierra Leona, directing our course for the Straits of Magellan."³

2. *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation*, ed. Richard Hakluyt (London, 1589), sig. 4C1v. *The Principall Navigations* tripled in size for its second edition, issued in three volumes from 1598 to 1600. Sarracoll's account appears in both editions without any substantial differences. Subsequent citations will be abbreviated "PN 1589" and "PN 1600" and given in the text. I cite PN 1589 by preference since it appeared only two years after the events of Clifford's first voyage. In citations from early printed books and manuscripts I have retained original spelling and punctuation, while regularizing u/v and i/j and silently expanding contractions. I have inserted bracketed glosses where necessary to clarify idiosyncratically spelled words.

3. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago, 1980), 194. For a summary of critical reactions to Greenblatt's "thick descriptions" (a term borrowed from anthropologist Clifford Geertz),

Greenblatt's questions are good, but since this account seems to include nothing about the group's intentions and motivations, they appear, for the time being, unanswerable: the narrative neglects to represent the English merchant's interiority, and thus the psychological intricacies of cross-cultural contact Greenblatt seeks remain hidden just out of sight. Reading this absence of moral commentary as the presence of an amoral will to power, Greenblatt proceeds to illuminate "the historical matrix of Marlowe's achievement" by associating "the acquisitive energies of English merchants" (like Sarracoll) with "Tamburlaine's restlessness, aesthetic sensitivity, appetite, and violence."⁴

But what if the text Greenblatt analyzed exists in other versions? Might it be important to consider *which* version he analyzed? His approach presupposes the textual integrity and singularity of Sarracoll's report, assuming that the perspective afforded therein offers unmediated access to the author's beliefs and ethical mainstays. While it is not my aim here to rearticulate critiques of early New Historicism, scrutinizing Sarracoll's account as a material text encourages a reading of the passage more firmly rooted in the microhistory Greenblatt sought to reveal. Quite simply, Greenblatt's analysis does not account for the fact that the version he quotes is redacted. The text is best known in its printed form (the source of my opening excerpt), a prose piece entitled "The voyage set out by the right honorable the Earle of Cumberland, in the yeere 1586," and issued in both editions of Richard Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations of the English Nation*. But an early manuscript witness of Sarracoll's journal also exists, surviving today in a contemporary copy as British Library, Lansdowne MS 100, fols. 23–51. Studied by only a handful of historians, the manuscript has never been published in its entirety, and its manifold departures from Hakluyt's text have been mentioned only in passing. An evaluation of these neglected material and textual aspects of Sarracoll's account reveals its transformation through a process of textual refashioning, wherein the travel writer's style, language, and authorial ethos were irrevocably altered, and the "true" events of the voyage were shaped and redacted for various public (print) and coterie (manuscript) readerships. By analyzing the complicated textual archaeology of John Sarracoll's maritime journal, this essay considers heretofore-unmentioned clues about the writing practices and ethical perspectives at play when a merchant described the burning of a Sierra Leonean town in November 1586. Mapping the account's appearance within several print and manuscript travel anthologies from the 1580s to the 1620s not only unearths a trajectory of historical reframing in the decades after the event but also reveals in its deepest textual substrata a rich vein of narrative interiority and ethical ambivalence. Rather than channeling a monolithic discourse of proto-imperial ideology, Sarracoll's journal and the history of its transmission articulate the complex ways in which a text's material form shapes representations and discourses of cross-cultural encounter.

and the technique's place in the history of New Historicism, see Stephen Cohen, "Introduction," in *Shakespeare and Historical Formalism*, ed. Cohen (Burlington, Vt., 2007), 5–6.

4. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 194.

One small, yet crucial detail from Sarracoll's entry on November 4, 1586, for instance, illustrates the travel writer's personal, interior reaction to the violent act of his peers. The text cited here is substantially identical to the passage from Hakluyt cited by Greenblatt, except for a few telling moments:

the towne . . . we fownd [to] be vearie [finely] bilte and ther stretes soo In[tricate] [that it was] vearie dyffycult to fynde the waye owt that we came In/ wee fownde ther howses and stretts soo [finely and] clenlie kepte that it was an admeratione to us all for that nethere in ther howses or strettes was so much duste to be fownde as to fell [an egge shell] we fownd lettell in ther howses except some mattes some gordes and some earthen pottes ther other provizons ytt should seme theie hade carried with them into the montaines, after we hade well vewed the towne att our departing wee sett all the towne one affyer whiche was all brynt [*sic*] for thee moste parte in a quarter of anower for that theie were all coverd with Rede and strawe of Rice *ytt pytyed me muche to se yt for that yt was so fine athinge* after the biornyng of the towne we searched the contrie about ytt wher we fownde In dyveres playnes good store of Rice in stackes.⁵

Wedged between descriptions of the fire and a search for rice stores, “ytt pytyed me muche to se yt for that yt was so fine athinge” clearly registers Sarracoll's moral ambivalence toward the event, lending the passage an ethical dimension Greenblatt found so inexplicably absent in the printed text. Although this “pyty” does not exculpate Sarracoll, who is in many ways guilty by association and therefore complicit in the violence, it does reveal an important ethical divergence between the individual writer and a larger group of travelers (“me” vs. “we”) and reflects a nuanced relationship between communal and personal intent by stressing an individual's reaction to the horrors of proto-imperial violence. To answer one of Greenblatt's questions, moreover, it is clear from the omitted line that Sarracoll's aesthetic admiration for the town “conflicts with” rather than “fuels” the violence, and since the line directly follows his remark about the quickly burning reed and straw, it is not unreasonable to say Sarracoll was shocked by the rapid destruction.⁶ While the paragraph in *The Principall Navigations* (1589) ends with the chillingly objective description of the burning town, signaling to Greenblatt the narrator's “moral blankness” and lack of “uneasiness,” the section in Lansdowne MS 100 concludes with a troubled personal reflection, a reaction that challenges any attempt to read Sarracoll as representative of early modern mercantilist insensitivity.

5. British Library, Lansdowne MS 100, fols. 26v–27r, emphasis mine. Subsequent citations of this manuscript will be abbreviated “Lans. 100” and cited parenthetically. Bracketed words or segments of words indicate supplied text (inferred from the Hakluyt version), corresponding to some dark staining and material losses to Lansdowne MS 100 (losses to fore-edge margin, scattered holes).

6. After quoting a passage about the aggression of voyaging soldiers, Greenblatt qualifies his observation of Sarracoll's seemingly conflicting statements: “[P]erhaps the odd conjunction of admiration and destructiveness in Sarracoll's account may be traced to the difference between the merchant's

Representing George Clifford's First Voyage (1586–87)

Far from indifferent, in fact, John Sarracoll emerges throughout Lansdowne MS 100 as a deeply sensitive and opinionated narrator of the events making up George Clifford's first privateering voyage.⁷ Channeling the frustrations of the voyage's most disaffected participants—Captain Christopher Lister and the crew of his ship, the “Viceadmirall” *Bark Clifford*⁸—Sarracoll's written account is peppered with personal commentary and invective, at times reading more like an impassioned monologue than a descriptive journal. His frustrations centered on Captain Robert Withrington, the voyage's appointed “general” and commander of the flagship *Red Dragon*.⁹ According to Sarracoll, Withrington made dozens of poor decisions about the course and conduct of the voyage “ever sence [their] comenge out of england” (Lans. 100, fol. 34v), his failure to pursue rich prizes off the coast of southern England and vain attempt to sack the well-fortified Brazilian town of Salvador being only the two most egregious. By unfairly distributing food and other resources between the two ships, moreover, Withrington attracted the especial animus of the *Bark Clifford*'s malcontent crew, including the substantial group of laboring mariners for whom Sarracoll served as mouthpiece and advocate.

The voyage was a complete and utter failure. Driven by a love of navigation and mounting gambling debts, Clifford outfitted a small group of ships in 1586 for a privateering voyage in the Pacific Ocean, commanding his men to steal at least £6,000 in merchandise before returning to England.¹⁰ The ships departed from Gravesend on June 26, 1586, and reached Sierra Leone by the end of October; but by early February they had only reached latitude 40° south, a point that, so late in the year, was too distant from the Strait of Magellan for safe passage. After discussing their predicament, the captains turned the ships for the Brazilian coast, where Withrington planned to sack the Portuguese-controlled town of “Baya” and steal its commodities—a plan that proved easier said than done.¹¹ Amid sallies from local Portuguese and Indian inhabitants, the English gained little while incurring significant casualties. By mid-June they had left Brazil, and on July 24 Withrington held the voyage's final convocation, asking the company whether they would rather go home or try their luck attacking ships in

view of the town and the view (and consequent actions) of the soldiers who were with him” (*Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 291).

7. Although Clifford did not sail with his ships on this first voyage, he would personally accompany his crews at sea for the rest of his maritime career.

8. PN 1589, sig. 4B8v. The word “vice-admiral” (*OED*, n. 2) is an obsolete usage meaning “[a] vessel commanded by a vice-admiral”; it is the term used to describe the *Bark Clifford* throughout Sarracoll's journal.

9. At least in terms of the early seventeenth-century mercantile voyages sponsored by the East India Company, the “general” comprised “a complex office of executive and financial authority that demanded in equal measure the skills of seamanship, logistics, marketing, and diplomacy.” See Richmond Barbour, *The Third Voyage Journals: Writing and Performance in the London East India Company, 1607–10* (New York, 2009), 6.

10. For Clifford's life, see Spence, *The Privateering Earl*, and G. C. Williamson, *George, Third Earl of Cumberland* (Cambridge, 1920).

11. “Baya” is São Salvador da Bahia de Todos os Santos, known today as Salvador.

the West Indies. Voting unanimously to give up and head home, the crews arrived in England nearly two months later.

The surviving accounts of this voyage present a complex textual situation. To begin with, Sarracoll's is not the only extant manuscript account: the logbook of the pilot Thomas Hood, who sailed on the flagship *Red Dragon*, survives today as Huntington Library MS HM 1648.¹² Concerned primarily with meteorological and navigational records, the logbook does not present the same level of personal detail and opinion offered by Sarracoll, yet is nonetheless important for its insight into the specific activities of the *Red Dragon*: Hood's book, after all, is the only extant document written by a member of the flagship's crew.¹³ As will be discussed in more detail below, the accounts of Hood and Sarracoll operate in a complex dialogue with one another, both complementary and contradictory. The textual history of Sarracoll's journal, as I have noted, is complicated because Hakluyt's printed exemplar seems to derive from Lansdowne MS 100 (or at least the textual tradition it represents).¹⁴ That manuscript was created when Sarracoll entrusted a "John Frost" to make a copy of the account from his original "boke," a copy he intended "for the use of" William Cecil, first Baron Burghley.¹⁵ A comparison of the manuscript narrative and the account printed in *The Principall Navigations* reveals a process of systematic revision and deletion, through which nearly 65 percent of the source text was omitted.¹⁶ For the most part the

12. Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif. Subsequent citations of this manuscript will be abbreviated "HM 1648" and cited parenthetically.

13. Considering the manuscript's slanted handwriting and rough appearance, it seems likely it is an original document written at sea, not a copy. Corrections appear throughout it in a different hand and ink. Hood's logbook is valuable in part because it records entries for days when Sarracoll did not write down his observations; the two books often present conflicting views of the same events while also demonstrating how the writings of men sailing on estranged sister ships could reflect and magnify social tensions.

14. Quinn and Skelton note that "Hakluyt had probably access to the original signed copy in B.M., Lansdowne MS 100, fols. 30–51 [sic]." See *The Hakluyt Handbook*, ed. D. B. Quinn, 2 vols. (London, 1974), 2:370. Hereafter all citations of *The Hakluyt Handbook* will be abbreviated *HH*.

15. The phrase "compiled by John Sarocould and copied for the use of Burghley" appears in a note describing the contents of Lansdowne MS 100 (information from the online British Library Manuscripts Catalogue). Lansdowne MS 100 is part of the collection of papers (Lansdowne MSS vols. 1–122) once belonging to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, who, in his capacity as Elizabeth I's chief counselor and former secretary of state, compiled dozens of narratives from recently returned English voyagers in the late sixteenth century. In his autograph subscription at the end of the account, Sarracoll names his scribe as "John Frost," whose hand is also responsible for the first two items in Lansdowne MS 100: "A narrative of the unwarrantable doings of Captain Furbisher, from the beginning of his voyage in the Company's service, May 20, 1576," and "Capt. Winter's voyage with Mr. Drake to the Streights of Magellan, June 2, 1579." As H. R. Woudhuysen remarks, "it is impossible to tell whether John Frost was a hired copyist or just a friend of Sarracoll's." See *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558–1640* (Oxford, 1996), 129.

16. I arrived at these percentages by first distinguishing in my transcription between words from the manuscript retained in print and words from the manuscript omitted in print. Using Microsoft Word's word-count tool to tally the number of words not present in the printed version, I compared that number against the total word count in the manuscript.

changes dilute and attenuate Sarracoll's biting criticisms of Captain Withrington and the crew of the *Red Dragon*.¹⁷ It is evident that a variety of social and political pressures—exerted most likely by Sir Francis Walsingham, Lord Burghley, and the noble entourage surrounding George Clifford—probably worked with or independently of Hakluyt to censor the account and minimize any harm to Clifford's reputation from the printing of this embarrassing voyage narrative.¹⁸

The complexity of representing the voyage appears most prominently in the variations that exist between Sarracoll's manuscript journal and its printed counterpart in Richard Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations*. It is impossible to determine what role Hakluyt played (if any) in the extensive process of refashioning Sarracoll's sea journal for print.¹⁹ Over the years it has become a critical commonplace to assume Hakluyt did little to the texts he edited, that his editorial honesty and textual accountability supplied readers of *The Principall Navigations* with fully intact Elizabethan voyage narratives.²⁰ But the past fifteen years of Hakluyt scholarship have questioned many earlier assumptions about *The Principall Navigations*, revealing the anthology to be less a propagandistic apology for proto-imperial English travel and more a deeply fraught representation of Elizabethan voyaging, recounting its successes and failures alike.²¹ Scholars have also begun to scrutinize Hakluyt's editorial practices and the effect of censorship on *The Principall Navigations*.²²

17. The only scholars to mention the editing of Sarracoll's account in Hakluyt are Woudhuysen (see note 15 above) and K. R. Andrews (*HH*, 1:242), who assumes "some significant information was lost in the process."

18. Walsingham (the dedicatee of *PN* 1589) not only sponsored the publication of Hakluyt's work and supervised its censorship but also supplied the editor with a number of unpublished documents, many from collections of state papers. According to Hakluyt, the anthology "passed the sight, and partly also the censure of the learned phisitian M. Doctor James, a man many wayes very notably qualified" (*PN* 1589, sig. *3r). For more on Walsingham and James, see D. B. Quinn and R. A. Skelton, introduction to *The Principall Navigations, Voiages, and Discoveries of the English Nation, Imprinted at London, 1589: A Photo-Lithographic Facsimile* (Cambridge, 1965), xx–xxi. For a useful overview of writing practices on early modern English voyages, as well as the "recuperative rhetoric" writers employed to reframe and understand accounts of failed voyages and colonies, see Mary Fuller, *Voyages in Print: English Travel to America, 1576–1624* (Cambridge, 1995).

19. For more on Hakluyt's textual practices, see Matthew Day, "Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* and the Textuality of English Tudor Nationalism" (DPhil thesis, University of York, 2003), 147–78.

20. For a brief summary of Hakluyt's "reputation as a largely non-interventionist editor," see Colm MacCrossan, "New Journeys through Old Voyages: Literary Approaches to Richard Hakluyt and Early Modern Travel Writing," *Literature Compass* 6, no. 1 (2009): 97–112 at 105. For other remarks to this effect, see Quinn and Skelton, introduction to *The Principall Navigations*, x; Michael Strachan, "India," *HH*, 1:212; D. F. Lach, "The Far East," *HH*, 1:219; and K. R. Andrews, "Latin America," *HH*, 1:243.

21. See David A. Boruchoff, "Piety, Patriotism, and Empire: Lessons for England, Spain, and the New World in the Works of Richard Hakluyt," *Renaissance Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (2009): 809–58; Mary Fuller, "Writing the Long-Distance Voyage: Hakluyt's Circumnavigators," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (2007): 37–60; Julia Schleck, "Plain Broad Narratives of Substantial Facts: Credibility, Narrative, and Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (2006): 768–94; and David Harris Sacks, "Richard Hakluyt's Navigations in Time: History, Epic, and Empire," *Modern Language Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (2006): 31–62.

22. See Colm MacCrossan, "Framing 'the English nation': Reading between Text and Paratext in *The Principal Navigations* (1598–1600)," and Felicity Stout, "'The strange and wonderfull Discoverie of

Even without attributing to Richard Hakluyt the extensive changes wrought on Sarracoll's journal, there can be no doubt the text underwent significant transformations as it progressed from manuscript to print. An important example from early in the voyage centers on Sarracoll's account of a group of richly laden foreign ships Withrington balked at attacking off the English coast in late August 1586. Hakluyt summarizes Sarracoll's record of the event as follows:

Our Admirall being more desirous to follow his course, then to linger by chasing the hulkes, called us from pursuing them with his trumpet, and a piece of Ordinance, or els wee would have seene what they had bene, and wherewith they had bene laden. (*PN* 1589, sig. 4C1r)

The phrase beginning "or els wee would have seene" signals the narrator's disappointment in the outcome of the encounter, but since Hakluyt proceeds directly to the journal's next entry, the account does little to suggest the event was a matter of contention. The original manuscript version, on the other hand, offers a rich critical passage that stresses the importance of the event to the voyage and Clifford's financial interests:

And then our admerall beinge parswaded as I suppos by some that ether would not feight or durst not feight Called us backe again bothe with his trompett and apesse of ordynance not determyning to goo any further after theme [that is, the hulks]; whiche was the greates grefe unto our Companie as ever was too any men for that no dout theie weare the same houlkes laden by the spaynardes and could not gett about yrland for that the windes did hange soo longe atyme by the norweste; This we doute with great losses unto my Lord, discredytt unto the rulers of the vioage and henderans too all the companie; wee suffered with shame [to] us all these 5 [hulkes] to departe whiche I thinke in truth could not be lesse worth then 300 thousand powndes and good pryse but of [that?] good price yett we might have cawsed theme to stricke Consideringe theie shoote ffirste att us; In my Judgment [th]ere was never any thinge donne by 2 suche shipps that was so yll donne the firste daie bade and thee secounde mucche worse. (*Lans.* 100, fol. 24r)

The entirety of the passage following "further after theme" is missing from the printed version of Sarracoll's journal, an absence that effectively silences his severe criticism of Withrington's poor decision making. While Hakluyt may present Withrington as "more desirous to follow his course, then to linger by chasing the hulkes," as a leader devoted to the prescribed route and unfazed by distractions met along the way, Sarra-

Russia': Hakluyt and Censorship," both in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt (Burlington, Vt., 2012).

coll claims the captain was swayed by the cowardly opinions of his subordinate crewmen. According to Sarracoll the ships were both highly valuable (the profit from £300,000 would have been 50 times the amount Clifford hoped to gain from the voyage) and unlikely to reach their destination because of poor weather conditions. Withrington's tentative handling of the situation squandered an opportunity to end the voyage early, which was a probable scenario if the company secured a prize of substantial value. The printed version of the journal—substituting a single vague sentence for Sarracoll's scathing opprobrium—omits these legitimate criticisms of Withrington and leaves behind a distorted picture of the company's reaction to the episode. The throwaway phrase “or else wee would have seene what they had bene, and wherewith they had bene laden” substitutes a vague communal gripe for a frustrated voice of dissent, spoken in response to what Sarracoll perceived as “the greatest greffe unto our Companie as ever was too any men.”

This is only one of dozens of departures from the manuscript in the printed text. For the most part these changes shift blame for poor decisions and botched handling away from individuals to the group as a whole, and so the voyage's failure becomes less the product of personal miscues than the result of bad luck and misdirected communal action. The early version of Sarracoll's maritime journal holds especial importance for understanding the voyage's first cross-cultural encounter, namely the violent events that transpired on the Sierra Leonean coast in November 1586. Turning now to a closer inspection of these events and their representation by both Sarracoll and Hood, the following case study explores the nuanced effect of textual redaction on one of the most notorious tales of early modern English contact with Africa.

☞ “That which they might take freely”: Sierra Leone, 1586

Clifford's company was the fourth group of Englishmen to visit Sierra Leone in the late sixteenth century, and the second since John Hawkins's slaving voyages of the 1560s to make violent contact with the locals.²³ Edward Fenton and his men enjoyed peaceful trade relations there with resident Portuguese and Africans during the autumn of 1582,²⁴ and during a later voyage in 1609, the third sponsored by the London East India Company, William Keeling adopted a similarly well-intended approach.²⁵ But 1586 was a year marked by unprovoked English aggression on the West African coastline. When William Cavendish arrived at Sierra Leone in August 1586 (just a couple months before Withrington and Lister), he and his men “fell at variance” with the inhabitants, “drave them from their towne . . . sacked their houses, and burnt their dwellings” (PN 1589, sig. 4D2v). They renewed the violence on September 1, “burn[ing] here some 150. houses because of their bad dealing with us and al Christians” (ibid.).

23. For more on early modern Sierra Leone, see Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800* (Oxford, 1970).

24. For this voyage, see *The Troublesome Voyage of Captain Edward Fenton, 1582–1583: Narratives and Documents*, ed. E. G. R. Taylor (London, 1959); and *An Elizabethan in 1582: the Diary of Richard Madox, Fellow of All Souls*, ed. Elizabeth Story Donno (London, 1976).

25. Barbour, *The Third Voyage Journals*, 15.

Clifford's men encountered two different towns at Sierra Leone in October and November 1586. On October 23, after landing and "thinking to have fetched awalke" back toward their boats, they "were suddenlie & unwares upon a towne of the negros wher upon a saden up went ther drome gyvenge agreat showt and so went ther arowes as thick as heall" (Lans. 100, fol. 26r-v). On November 4 they came upon "[a]nother great and fine towne of the Negroes" (PN 1589, sig. 4C1v; printed marginal note), which they "fownd too be but lattie byllt partlie by reporte of some men that were here with m^r ffenton who found noe people In that place at ther einge here, as by the newnes of the walls of ther howses" (Lans. 100, fol. 26v). It is also possible that this was the town burned by Cavendish, since it was "lattie byllt" (perhaps rebuilt?) before the arrival of Clifford's men. In another passage missing from the printed version, Sarracoll goes on to describe how the town's defenses had been lately fortified: "at owr aproching unto yt we fownd that the negros hade since our firste comenge newe walled the towne with mightie great trees and stackes soo t[h]icke sett that arat [a rat] could hardlie gett [o]ut" (ibid.). The fortifications were likely prompted by the skirmish with Clifford's men and recent memory of Cavendish's raid.

We are told Cavendish attacked the town because he and the locals "fell at variance" (the details of which remain murky); why, on November 4, 1586, did Clifford's men attack and burn a "greate and fine towne of the Negroes"? A clue may lie in a passage from earlier in the account:

This 23 daye beinge sondaie we cam to an ancar in the baye of freche watter and goinge ashore with our bott we spoke with a portingall who tould us ther was negros Inabytenge not fare of and that in gyvenge unto the kynge a butizia of wine and some lynnnyne clothe he would suffer us to watter and woode att our plesurs// But m^r wetherington and our captane thinckinge yt not good to give more then others whiche were here before us would not consent unto it / but presentlye landed our men whiche when the portingalles and the negros sawe theie Rune all awaie In to the woodes. (Lans. 100, fol. 26r)²⁶

As Burghley's underlining emphasizes, the English could have enjoyed unlimited access to wood and water at Sierra Leone in exchange for a "butizia [an earthen jar] of wine and some lynnnyne clothe"; but "thinckinge yt not good to give more then others whiche were here before," Withrington and Lister refused the offer, landed their men, and began the unnecessary hostilities that would blemish their African sojourn. It is difficult to determine the identity of the "others" who gave the local king fewer goods

26. The underlining in the manuscript probably belongs to Lord Burghley, for whom it was prepared. Underlining in the same hand occurs throughout the early part of the manuscript, as do a few indexical marginal notes definitely in Burghley's hand. Although his chief secretary, Sir Henry Maynard, managed the majority of his foreign affairs papers, it was not uncommon for Burghley to attend personally to such documents. See Alan G. R. Smith, "The Secretariat of the Cecils, circa 1580-1612," *English Historical Review* 83 (1968): 481-504.

than the demanded cloth and jar of wine, but considering it would have been impossible for Clifford's men to know any details of Cavendish's voyage (he was still at sea), it seems reasonable to conclude that "others" refer to Edward Fenton and his men (at Sierra Leone in 1582). According to the printed version of Luke Ward's account of this voyage, on September 13, 1582, Fenton's men "gave them [the Portuguese] a bottle of wine for one of the savage Queenes" (PN 1589, sig. 3N2r). Since we know Clifford's men had heard "report[s]" of Sierra Leone from those who sailed with Fenton in 1582 (Lans. 100, fol. 26v; see above), it is possible they were aware of the earlier payment of tribute and deduced that they had been asked "to give more then others whiche were here before."²⁷

Hakluyt's version of the same passage introduces a different motivation for their failure to pay the local tribute:

The 23. day being Sunday wee came to an ancre in the Bay of fresh water, and going a shoare with our boate, wee spake with a Portingall, who tolde us that not farre off there were Negroes inhabiting, and that in giving to the king a Buttisio of wine, and some linen cloth, hee would suffer us to water and wood at our pleasure. But our Captaines *thinking it not good to give any thing for that which they might take freely*, landed, and certaine of our men with them, whereupon the Portingall and the Negroes ranne all away into the woods. (PN 1589, sig. 4C1r; emphasis mine)

The difference between the two passages is striking. If the manuscript version describes the captain's resistance to a perceived raw deal, the printed version suggests instead their brazen disregard for local customs and the precedents set by Fenton's company in 1582. This is not to say, of course, that the reasoning reflected in the manuscript journal is sound and guiltless, but in print it is clear that Clifford and his men come off as a much more uncompromising and acquisitive lot: they have the power to take what lies before them, so they take without compunction.

In time this initial act of violence led to the burning of a town on November 4—the event with which I began this essay. As I mention above, Sarracoll's report contains a crucial variant that reveals itself when the manuscript and print versions of the journal are compared. But the passages deviate in other, equally meaningful ways, as in Sarracoll's use of "we" as an indicator of agency and intent: to pose the issue as a question, does such pronoun usage imply a strong conjunction or disjunction among Clifford's men during the attack? Greenblatt wonders why Sarracoll would "suddenly shift and write not *we* but *our men* set the town on fire." Perhaps unexpectedly, the switch

27. Yet we know from Richard Madox's manuscript account of Fenton's voyage that on September 27 the English "sent by means of the Portuguese an ell and a half of red cloth to king Fatima and a woman's smock to the queen, together with a mirror, all to the value of four marks." See *An Elizabethan in 1582*, ed. Donno, 198. Although the wine given on September 13 was sent to a different local monarch ("the king of Farma," according to Madox), it is still clear that Fenton's men actually gave *more*, not less, than the Portuguese demanded of Clifford's men in 1586.

from “we” to “our men”—possibly a move intended either to distance the narrator from the burning or to put the narrator in a position of authority over those men responsible for it—mirrors and inverts a shift from “our men” to “we” in the original manuscript’s corresponding passages:

[Manuscript:] The 4 of novembere *our admerall with his men and we with ours* went ashore. . . . att our departinge *wee* sett all the towne one affyer. (Lans. 100, fols. 26v–27r; emphasis mine)

[Print:] The fourth of November *wee* went on shoare. . . . *Our men* at their departure set the towne on fire. (PN 1589, sig. 4C1v; emphasis mine)

What, then, is the narrative effect of this chiasmic inversion of pronoun forms? How does it shift the burden of responsibility for the invasion and firing of the town? If the printed version seems to obscure or downplay the narrator’s role in the fire (“we” to “our men”), the manuscript version acknowledges the group’s accountability by implicating the entire company with “we.” Sarracoll may at first draw a distinction between the two companies and captains as they land on shore (“our admerall with his men and we with ours”), but this divide soon collapses into first person plural as the English voyagers decide to burn the town:²⁸ the social rifts that defined shipboard relations during the voyage appear to give way at Sierra Leone to a corporate act of deliberate violence, with Clifford’s feuding men at least temporarily united against an ethnic other.²⁹ But Sarracoll tempers his position in the community by qualifying the actions of “we” with the ethical considerations of “me,” as reflected in that crucial passage omitted from the printed text: “ytt pytyed me muche to se yt for that yt was so fine athinge.” By posing “we” against “me,” group against individual, communal resolution against personal dissent, Sarracoll’s version now seems to resist a reading of the attack as a group-defining and group-unifying action. It may be that Sarracoll felt simultaneous solidarity and guilt over the actions of his countrymen, and while this ambivalence does not make him innocent, its articulation of the fraught relationship between individuals and larger communities certainly complicates this moment of cross-cultural contact.

Thomas Hood’s logbook, on the other hand, presents a less ambiguous perspective on the burning of the Sierra Leonean town. Offering a more frank and objective account, Hood centers his description of the company’s violence on the aggressive actions of one crew (that of the *Red Dragon*) rather than of the entire company:

The /4/ daye our captayne went Ashor wyth 150 men to the negers toune
And he toocke it And brout ther rys [rice] A bord And burnt ther toune

28. There is also the possibility that the “we” who burns the town refers not to the entire company of voyagers but to “we with ours”—that is, Captain Lister and the crew of the *Bark Clifford*.

29. In a reversal of this logic later in the voyage, Sarracoll uses the words “strange” and “stranger” to characterize increasingly alienated relations between the crews of the *Bark Clifford* and *Red Dragon*.

And the negurs ran into the woods / All saavyng [*sic*] sum that war slayn
 And thankes be to god we had never A man hurt but cam All safe Abord
 Agayne

The /5/ daye of november our men went A shor And set rys Abord and
 burnt the rest of the housys in the negurs toune And brout A bord ropes
 And pullys that war sum tangamangas And our bot went down to the
 outermust poynt of the ryver And burnt A toune And brout Away All the
 rys that was in the toune

The /6/ daye we sarvyd god being sunday. (HM 1648, fol. 21r)

If Hakluyt's "our men" displaces responsibility from the travel writer to his peers, and Sarracoll's "we" suggests all were guilty, Hood's "he" ascribes the violence solely to Withrington ("our captayne"), here depicted as personally accountable for attacking the town. The entry for November 5 extends this culpability to the rest of the *Red Dragon's* crew, "our men" being responsible for burning and plundering yet another town (an event unrecorded in Sarracoll and Hakluyt). Hood's pronoun usage comes full circle in the November 6 entry, where he appears to exculpate the entire crew ("we") because they "sarvyd god" on Sunday.

Along with the additional town-burning on November 5, Hood's logbook reveals other moments of violence left unrecorded in both the print and manuscript versions of Sarracoll's journal, especially during the spans of time (October 25–November 3; November 5–16) when he neglected to write down his observations. We learn, for instance, that the men of the *Red Dragon* burned yet another town on November 14, a day after they again "ressted from woork [*sic*] And sarved god being sundaye" (HM 1648, fol. 22r). Even worse, on an earlier Sunday (October 30), Hood's entry records with disturbing insouciance a kidnapping and likely rape:

The /30/ day being sundaye After dynner our capten went down to the
 lover poynt of the ryver to Atoune And All the men ran Away And we
 toock A woman And brout hur Abord. (HM 1648, fol. 20v)

Considering the casual violence of such passages, it may be that a better candidate for Greenblatt's real-life Tamburlaine is Thomas Hood, who with his starkly indifferent prose record of Anglo–African contact expresses no uneasiness at his peers' actions; it may be more accurate to say a "moral blankness . . . rests like thick snow on" Hood's entries, which exhibit little if any shift in tone as they advance from descriptions of fishing and navigation to rape and pillaging. Moreover, Hood's logbook appears to chronicle the brutal aggression of *one group* of voyagers, not the entire company. Contrasting with Sarracoll's version, in which the act of violence on November 4 is definitively communal ("our men" and "we"), Hood's logbook seems to suggest that

the company of the *Red Dragon* was in some ways more violent than that of the *Bark Clifford*. If everyone came together to burn the town on November 4, signifying the company's momentary unity-in-violence, the seemingly insatiate men of the *Red Dragon* continued with an aggressive solo campaign for another twelve days, burning two more towns before leaving Sierra Leone on November 17.

The print and manuscript versions of Sarracoll's November 4 entry contain one additional variant of major importance to this study. Hakluyt's text ends abruptly after the narrator quantifies the "14. or 15. tunnes" of rice they stole from the burned village. It then skips ahead to the day of their departure on November 17. While Hood's logbook proceeds to record the company's various labors from November 5 to 16 (including town-burning, provision-collecting, and rice-processing), the November 4 entry in Sarracoll's manuscript journal continues with a personal reflection on the day's events:

we searched the contrie about ytt wher we fownde In dyveres playnes good store of Rice in stackes whiche our men dide beate oute and brought aborde in the huske to the quantyie of 14 or 15 tonnes In bothe our shippes whiche beinge brought too perfection of cleane Rice whiche wilbe some thinge harde for us to doe I truste in god itt will make verie nere x tonnes whiche is agreat helpe unto us and came un locked for. I praye god make us thankefull for ytt/ and then I doute not but by his allmightie helpe we shall make our vioage to the great contentatione of my Lord too o[ur pro]fitt and creadittes and comfort to all our frindes whiche god [. . . .] sake grant we maye doe amen. (Lans. 100, fol. 27r)³⁰

To Sarracoll, the "verie nere x tonnes" of rice the company expects to gain from the raid "is agreat helpe unto us and came un locked for," an occasion for offering up a prayer of thanksgiving to God, and for hoping in turn that "god make us thankefull for ytt." Appearing as it does shortly after the account of the town's burning, Sarracoll's divine appeal seems insensitive and ironic, given that the company's windfall of rice came at the expense of the locals' violent displacement. But there is textual evidence—almost all of it excised from Hakluyt's printed version of Sarracoll—that the *Bark Clifford*'s store of provisions had dwindled to dangerously low levels, due primarily to Withrington's unfair apportioning of resources. Without the rice they took from the Sierra Leonean town, it seems, Sarracoll and the crew of the *Bark Clifford* faced a probable food shortage during their long trek to the Magellanic Strait.

According to Hood and Sarracoll (but not Hakluyt), Withrington had captured a ship early in the voyage and purloined from it a store of valuable commodities. Hood writes that the ship was "loden with spys," the stores of which Withrington stole and brought ashore at Dartmouth: "The /24/ of August our general cusstummyd our pepper and cloves And left it in the cosstum hous" (HM 1648, fol. 10r–v). Sarracoll's record

30. Here Burghley supplements his underlining with a marginal note: "15 tons Ryce." Both the ellipsis and bracketed addition in this passage correspond to a hole in the leaf.

of the same process reveals an additional detail about the fate of Withrington's pepper and cloves: "the captaine of the admerall refreshed his bread with sartayne hundrethes of whitt byskett made of newe corne but for us nothings at all; as I doe understand yt was bought with suche provizione as came from the hulke" (Lans. 100, fol. 24v). In other words, Withrington traded the spices taken from the captured ship for vital food staples but hoarded the provisions for himself and the *Red Dragon* rather than sharing with the entire company. Since a few days later Sarracoll writes that the crew of the *Bark Clifford* found its "vittells much decayed" (ibid.), his discontented remark "but for us nothings at all" voices a legitimate criticism of Withrington's unequal food allocation: by the time they reached the coast of Sierra Leone in late October, the crew of the *Bark Clifford* might have been starving, while Withrington and the men of the *Red Dragon* ate their fill.

The exigencies of starvation do not acquit the *Bark Clifford's* crew of their responsibility for the burned town. Yet Sarracoll's prayer of thanksgiving, considered against the context of decayed "vittells" and diminishing resources, lends the manuscript a certain human texture decidedly absent from the blunt narrative presentation of Hakluyt's text. *The Principall Navigations* and Hood's logbook describe the events of November 4, 1586, as a process of destructive, mindless acquisition: Clifford's men came, they saw "that which they might take freely," and they took freely. In the manuscript journal, on the other hand, Sarracoll feels "pyty" for the burned town and recognizes the providential valence of the "un locked for" tons of rice, without which he and his fellow crewmen might have died at sea instead of returning home to England. The end of Sarracoll's prayer expresses a bit of ironic foreshadowing, for his hope that the company will be "thankfull for ytt [the rice]" and thereby attract divine favor seems to have fallen on deaf ears. The voyagers, in Sarracoll's terms, not only failed to achieve Clifford's "great contentation," but their misdirected actions under Withrington compromised any and all hope of personal "[pro]fitt and creadittes."

☞ Framing Sarracoll in the English Voyage Anthology

Considering the failure of Clifford's first voyage, it may come as a surprise to read Hakluyt's brief, celebratory advertisement of Sarracoll's journal in the preface to *The Principall Navigations* (1589):

I could not omit in this parte the two voyages made not long since to the Southwest, whereof I thinke the Spanyard hath had some knowledge, and felt some blows: the one of Master Edward Fenton, and his consort Master Luke Warde: the other of Master Robert Withrington, and his hardie consort Master Christopher Lister as farre as 44. degrees of southerly latitude, set out at the direction and charge of the right honorable the Earle of Cumberland, both which in divers respectes may yelde both profite and pleasure to the reader, being carefully perused. (PN 1589, sig. * 4r-v)

Hakluyt “could not omit” from his anthology the Fenton and Withrington voyages, which regardless of their relative obscurity are singled out as exceptional narratives. This exceptionality, and indeed the source of readerly “profite and pleasure,” seems to stem in part from the texts’ treatment of Anglo–Spanish conflicts—aspects that, compared to the voyages’ more ignominious moments, paint the embattled captains in a misleading but distinctly heroic light. While it is true that both sets of voyagers fought the Spanish (or Portuguese), written representations of those skirmishes (especially in Lansdowne MS 100) avoid unqualified praise by focusing on lives lost and provisions wasted. Even if Hakluyt had no direct role in the heavy editing of Sarracoll’s journal for print, moreover, his preface to *The Principall Navigations* employs a rhetorical sleight of hand to incorporate distinctly failed voyages into the broader tradition of English maritime history. He embeds his brief discussion of Withrington and Lister within a celebratory account of Columbus, Frobisher, Drake, and Thomas Cavendish, the last of whom held especial importance as both the most recent English circumnavigator and the anthology’s culminating voyager. If readers followed the structural logic of Hakluyt’s prefatory summary, they would not simply “peruse” the failed voyages of Fenton and Clifford in isolation but consider them as two points on a trajectory leading to Drake, Cavendish, and the victory over the Spanish Armada.³¹ In print the specific identities of these failed voyage narratives are largely subsumed into a greater historical and structural progression.³²

Sarracoll’s maritime journal takes on a similar function in a privately circulated book of family history written years after Clifford’s death. In a journal entry for December 28, 1617, Clifford’s daughter, the famous diarist Lady Anne Clifford, expresses an interest in compiling an account of her late father’s career at sea: “Now I had a great desire to have all my father’s sea voyages written so I did set Jones etc. to inquire about these matters.”³³ Clifford’s “great desire” resulted in a manuscript book of her father’s “several voyages,” now housed with the Lady Anne Clifford papers in Kendal.³⁴ Although containing a few minor interpolations likely originating from unknown sources available to the family historian, this manuscript’s account of Clifford’s first voyage descends in a direct line from Hakluyt, displaying no evidence that the compiler consulted the text in Lansdowne MS 100.

The collection’s full title—“A Brief Relation of the severall voyages undertaken and performed by the right honorable GEORGE Earle of CUMBERLAND in his owne person, or at his owne charge and by his direction against the King of Spaines fleetes territories & Dominions faithfully collected out of the Relations observations and

31. An account of the Spanish Armada was not ready for print in 1589, but Hakluyt included the relevant documentary materials in his second edition of 1598–1600.

32. My point only holds true for PN 1589, since in PN 1600 Hakluyt ends the anthology with a medley of failed and successful voyages, departing from the clearly nationalist trajectory of the earlier version. See Fuller, “Writing,” 46.

33. Lady Anne Clifford, *The Memoir of 1603 and The Diary of 1616–1619*, ed. Katherine Acheson (Peterborough, Canada, 2007), 153.

34. Cumbria Archive Service, Kendal, U.K., Hothfield MS A988/7. Subsequent citations of this manuscript will be abbreviated “Hothfield” and cited parenthetically.

Journalls of severall credible and worthy persons Actors and Commaunders under the said noble Earle in his severall voyages and Expiditions” (Hothfield, fol. 1r)—reveals much about how the voyage accounts were packaged and framed. Much akin to Hakluyt’s patriotic rhetoric in his preface to *The Principall Navigations* (1589), the title emphasizes Clifford’s military actions against Spain, probably in an attempt to varnish the voyages’ shortcomings with a patina of congratulatory nationalism. To this same end, the collection’s preface situates the earl’s voyages within the Anglo–Spanish conflicts of the 1580s. In response to a “generall conceipt that a speedy warre would ensue betwixt the two Nations English and Spanish,” the preface narrates, “the English Nobilitie and Gentry of the best qualities and spiritts applyed themselves to warlike enterprizes by Sea and Land.” Of these men, “none attempted or performed more brave, and royall exploits to the prejudice of the Enemie, and Honnor of the English Nation then the noble Earle of Cumberland.” The preface concludes with a commendatory, almost mythical portrait of Clifford’s adventures: “Nevertheless such and so many were his brave Acts and Attempts . . . as have not beene heretofore performed by any private Subject within the compass of Memory or readinge” (Hothfield, fol. 2r).

These rhetorical strategies enabled the Hothfield compiler, like Hakluyt, to tether documentary raw material onto a grand narrative of historical development. An individual segment of the anthology, therefore, simply gestures toward the greater glory immanent in the collection as a whole, with the failed first voyage representing only a minor setback on Clifford’s inevitable road to prominence. Yet what happens if one considers the first voyage narrative in Hothfield on its own terms? As yet another witness to John Sarracoll’s maritime journal, how does it reflect a further reworking of the original text, especially the Sierra Leone material? One alteration, in the passage about the captains’ resolution to “take freely” rather than pay a tribute, seems to give the Hothfield text a more aggressive tone:

where goeing a shore they spoke with a Portugiss who told them that not ffarr from thence were Negroes inhabiting, and that for giveing of Wine and some Lynnen Cloath to the King of Botya they would be suffered to wood and water at their pleasure. But the Generall thinking it unnassy [sic] to make purchase of that which was in his power to take, Landed Thirty men with Musquetts and other Armes, whereupon the Portugisse and Negroes fledd into the woodes. (Hothfield, fol. 4r)

Instead of ascribing the decision to both captains, as in Lansdowne MS 100 and *The Principall Navigations*, here the text presents “the Generall” as he who thought “it unnassy [sic] to make purchase of that which was in his power to take.” It is impossible to determine whether the text’s focus on “the Generall” is a willful reshaping or a scribal error, but in either case it is Withrington, not Withrington and Lister together, who emerges as the prime aggressor. Further, by revising the printed text’s “thinking it not good to give any thing for that which they might take freely” and the manuscript’s

“thincking yt not good to give more then others whiche were here before,” the altered lines intensify the forceful character of the company’s mercenary tactics, especially by highlighting the word “power” and describing English firearms.

Hothfield’s entry for November 4, while substantially the same as Hakluyt’s, introduces a few significant variants:

The 4th of November some forces went againe a Share to a nother towne of the Negroes on the backside of the Harborowe not above a Musquett Shott from the Rode, newly built, containeing within about two hundred houses, walled about with great Trees and Stakes, so close that a Ratt could scarce enter in. But by chance happening upon a port not shutt upp the entered soe feircely that the Negroes all fledd out on the other side, within ther was nothing found, but Mattes, gourds and Earthen potts yet were their Houses so finely built and cleane Kept, as was incredible where so barbarous a Nation dwelt, all which were covered with reed and Straw, and being fyred were consumed in one Quarter of an hower. ffrom thence wandering a Little further they found good Store of Rice in Stacks, of which provision the Souldiers brought aboard their Shippes 14. or 15 Tunnes in Husk, for their Supply. (Hothfield, fol. 4r–v)

As in the corresponding passages from Lansdowne MS 100, *The Principall Navigations*, and Hood’s logbook, the Hothfield text assigns responsibility over the invasion and burning of the town to yet another set of pronouns and agents. Here “some forces”—not “we,” “our men,” or “he”—went ashore to attack the town, suggesting an abstraction and depersonalization of the armed raiders. What’s more, the Hothfield text deftly avoids an association of the town’s burning with a specific agent, opting instead for the passive construction “being fyred.” Considered alongside the text’s shift from first person plural (“we”; “our men”) to third person plural (“some forces”; “they”; “the Souldiers”), the account of the conflagration in the passive voice places further distance between the narrator and the original act of violence. If Lansdowne MS 100 is perhaps the text most forthcoming about the company’s actions on November 4, 1586, the Hothfield redaction is the most deceiving. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, a passage that once expressed “admeratione” for the town’s cleanliness now expresses skepticism that “so barbarous a Nation” could maintain pristine living conditions.

As the final seventeenth-century compilation to present an account of the 1586–87 voyage, Samuel Purchas’s monumental travel anthology *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (1625) offers a substantial, yet heavily abridged edition of the Hothfield voyage narratives.³⁵ Purchas evidently had access to a copy of the

35. For a wealth of information about Samuel Purchas’s work as a compiler and editor, see *The Purchas Handbook*, ed. L. E. Pennington (London, 1997). See also Linda McJannet, “Purchas his Pruning: Refashioning the Ottomans in Seventeenth-Century Travel Narratives,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 74, no. 2 (2011): 219–42.

Hothfield collection, since his narratives closely follow those prepared for Lady Anne Clifford. Purchas also knew of Hakluyt's text, as he mentions at the beginning of his account of "the first voyage of this right honourable Earl": "This voyage being published at large in Master Hakluyts printed voyages, I will here but briefly runne over."³⁶ "Briefly" is perhaps an understatement. Purchas squeezes the entire voyage narrative into less than a single folio page, and is clearly more interested in accounts of Clifford's later, marginally more successful voyages. His account of Clifford's men in Sierra Leone is the shortest and least detailed version of these events in existence: "The last of September they resolved for Sierra Leona, from whence they departed the seventh of November."³⁷ In *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, the first voyage of George Clifford receives a passing mention, while the episode in Sierra Leone is left out entirely.

☞ "A trewe And Just note of all Suche matters as passed on this vyage"

Having advanced to the terminus of the maritime journal's early transmission history, it is time to turn to the first steps in its reproduction and circulation—a phase presenting John Sarracoll in his most unmediated form. The last piece of writing in John Frost's copy of the journal comprises the sole surviving example of Sarracoll's handwriting, a holograph subscription that offers an interesting authorial perspective on the purpose of his travel "note":

This note was copyed owt of my boke by John Frost, and ys a trewe And Just note of all Suche matters as passed on this vyage[,] So neare as I John Sarocould could devyse in trowthe to set yt doune by me John Sarocould (Lans. 100, fol. 51r)

The passage alludes to the narrative's *ur*-text ("my boke"), probably the rough notebook Sarracoll kept at sea (no longer extant), from which he had John Frost prepare Lord Burghley's copy.³⁸ He devotes much of the subscription to a truth claim, but supplements that claim by qualifying the very act of travel writing. On one hand, Sarracoll presents his account as "a trewe And Just note," its information poised, perhaps, to gainsay the reports of Withrington, Hood, and crew members of the *Red Dragon*. "Just" in this case could mean both "accurate" and "upright, equitable," and considering the manifold injustices perpetrated during the voyage by Withrington and his cohort, the second valence seems just as appropriate as the first. On the other hand, the account presents real events "So neare as I John Sarocould could devyse in trowthe to set yt doune"—that is, as close to the truth as written language would allow. This process results in a piece of writing only partially reflective of the voyage's historical

36. *Purchas his Pilgrimes, The Fourth Part* (London, 1625), sig. 5B3r.

37. *Ibid.*

38. Although no manuscript survives to validate the claim, it seems reasonable to conclude that Sarracoll made a second copy of the journal for Clifford.

reality; as a mode of representation, travel writing emerges as a distinctly imperfect medium.

Despite and even because of such imperfection, however, Frost's copy of Sarracoll's manuscript journal nonetheless conveys the "nearest" version of Clifford's first voyage. Since the textual witnesses in Hakluyt, Hothfield, and Purchas all derive from this account, it is fair to say Lansdowne MS 100 is the *sine qua non* of understanding not only the narrative's textual origins and transmission history but also the very travel experience it describes. Sarracoll did not necessarily write the *truest* account in his manuscript "boke," but without considering the full implications of its contents, one necessarily obscures the cultures and practices of voyage writing that undergird texts in early modern travel anthologies.

If anything else, the preceding textual anatomy and diachronic analysis of Sarracoll's journal proffers this one point: the "end product" of a travel account, as represented in print, does not always provide a stable source of meaning, especially in attempts to understand travel as a phenomenon, travel writers as producers of culture, and travel writing as a discursive site of cross-cultural contact. In the case of Sarracoll's narrative, the printed version may stand out as the dominant text because of its broad circulation in print and citation in seminal works of New Historicism, but its style and content should not be overprivileged at the expense of Sarracoll's "trew And Just note." The negative potential of such effects are most notably felt in Greenblatt's reading of the burned town in Sierra Leone. If in neglecting to account for the textual multiplicity of Sarracoll's journal, Greenblatt attributed a "morally blank" ethical perspective to a clearly ethical man, it may be that other printed travel texts—especially those existing only in *The Principall Navigations* or *Purchas his Pilgrimes*—unintentionally silence voices obscured by lost or buried transmission histories. Considering the dearth of extant manuscript witnesses to texts printed in Hakluyt and Purchas, most of these lost histories, unless exhumed by serendipitous archival research, are completely unrecoverable. By sheer chance, Sarracoll's voice was fated to survive and stand testament, not only illuminating an early critique of English power relations and pre-colonial aggression but also revealing the inner mechanics through which travel texts were written, shaped, and broadcast to the world.

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