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Charting English Global Presence and its Violent Effects in Early Modernity Reading Strategies for an Ambivalent Archive

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Abstract

The maps tasked with charting English new-found seafaring prowess in the latter half of the sixteenth century constitute an ambivalent archive. They participated in the imaginative work of conceptualising the world as whole and singular, held within a unified cosmos. At the same time, they were distinctly partisan, helping to advance English adventurism and construct an elevated vantage point where, the would-be English colonialist, might imagine traversing oceans to subdue far-flung lands and their peoples. By reading and re-reading Baptista Boazio's beautiful hand-painted map, 'The Famouse Weste Indian Voyage', a visual account of the voyage Francis Drake undertook in 1585 endorsed by Elizabeth I to make the case for English primacy in the Americas, the essay reflects on the interpretative tool kit that might be helpful in laying bare the racial violence that infused the early period of English expansionism. Reading, as presented here, becomes a matter of excavation. Maps such as Boazio's were tasked with cosmographical import: they participated in the world-making that established a singular world, imagined as a totality, I argue, while simultaneously advancing rival national interests and the forms of dominance that underpinned racial slavery. The interrelated texts that chart the emergence of English aggression on the high seas offer an opportunity, albeit obliquely, to reckon with the history of English enslavement and to consider the ways that early modern knowledge practices are implicated in this history.

Keywords: Atlantic Slave Trade, Baptista Boazio, Early Modern Cartography, English Adventurism, Francis Drake

1. Introduction

As imaginative and rhetorically inflected works, early modern maps offer glimpses into the contested nature of the imperialist ambition that impelled European 'adventuring' across the seas

and the violence that it generated.¹ Even as they signal their adherence to conventions in representing known landmasses according to the cartographic grid, as though it were a matter of knowledge-building rather than argument, the maps tasked with charting new-found English seafaring prowess, in the latter half of the sixteenth century, are not all they seem. Beneath the beautiful artistry, the reassuring projection of the world as a unitary whole, the demonstration of empirical knowledge practices and the show of triumph, a sceptical reader may decipher an unacknowledged complicity in the violence of colonial dispossession in the race to establish economic and political ascendancy.

What kinds of interpretative tools might be necessary to recognise the changing orientation towards the earth and its peoples in the archive of materials emerging from the period when it becomes possible for the English to imagine participation in the emerging economy of racial slavery? This essay considers some approaches to an archive that conceals as much as it reveals of the racial violence that accompanied what became a lucrative economic system. A range of critical tools are needed to excavate the disturbingly violent history reflected, albeit artfully and indirectly, in the beautiful materials that seek to manifest English presence and participation in a global inhabitation. By reading and re-reading Baptista Boazio's map, 'The Famous Weste Indian Voyage', a visual account of the voyage Francis Drake undertook in 1585, I consider the interpretative tool kit that might be helpful in laying bare the racial violence that infused the early period of English expansionism. Appearing as a kind of watermark in these cartographic testimonies to seafaring exploits, as I aim to show, is the haunting presence of slavery, barely legible in the period's map-making practices, though more visible when the maps are read in conjunction with their intertextual accomplices and when the cosmographical impetus to conceptualise the world as a totality is read in conjunction with the emergence of nationalist rivalries in sixteenth-century Europe.

The cartography that attested to the exploits of the early modern expansionist period in Europe performed some of the imaginative work needed to project stability in a time of great flux. It enabled an avid European readership to conceive of a complete and settled world as well as their elevated place within it, at a time of accelerating rivalry in the race to colonise new territories. Ayesha Ramachandran has argued persuasively that the 'idea of "the world" becomes a foundational but fluid and fiercely contested category' in early modern Europe, an idea born of a compelling need to establish an 'intelligible conceptual framework' with which to imagine the world as a coherent totality in the face of the disconcerting pluralities and uncertainties about inherited knowledge systems that accompanied what Europeans thought of as the discovery of the Americas and the proliferating 'fragments' of new knowledge and material objects from previously unknown territories it yielded (2015, 6). The task of creating a sense of synthesis was imaginative, as well as epistemological and conceptual, in nature. Ramachandran calls this imaginative work 'world-making', that is to say, 'a ubiquitous cultural practice in the early modern period' which 'informed the commerce of sailors and merchants, the battles fought across continents for global imperial dominion, the crafting of precision instruments and the printing of books in the workshops of European capitals' (7). By the end of the sixteenth century, however, the emergence of nationalist rivalries in Europe complicated this task. The interplay between the sense of the world as a totality in early modernity and the increasingly nationalist lens through which early modern Europeans conceptualised their place in that world, can be traced in the encyclopaedic compilations of

¹ I am grateful to the two anonymous peer reviewers, to the editors of the issue, Sophie Chiari Lasserre and Janet Clare, and to Elleke Boehmer, for a wealth of helpful feedback to an earlier version of this essay.

geographical and navigational accounts in the period, as I have explored at length elsewhere.² This current essay calls attention to the interrelation of these two impulses, that is to say, the projection of the world as a singular, coherent whole and the accelerating nationalism that emerged during a period of rivalrous globalisation in Europe. Imagined as an all-encompassing totality, the ‘whole world’ provided a seemingly worthy object of attention and a legitimising discourse that shielded from view more partisan and less noble impulses. For a figure like Francis Drake, already a celebrated circumnavigator of the world at the time of his 1585 voyage, there was much to be gained in reinforcing his hard-won association with the idea of the world envisaged in the singular, as a globe. In a discussion of the tremendous significance attached to successful circumnavigation of the earth as an accomplishment that provided ‘evidence of humanity’s direct, tangible connection to something usually perceived in the abstract, the whole Earth’, Joyce Chaplin points out the extraordinary cultural capital Drake was able to secure from the feat of circumnavigation: ‘Drake himself inaugurated a tradition of being portrayed with a globe, a remarkable claim to the whole world in an era when orbs and globes were the distinctive possession of monarchs and of Jesus Christ, savior of the world’ (2013, 3 and 9). Early modern book history bears this out: the image of Drake, his arm proprietorially resting on a globe, appeared as a frontispiece as early as 1589, in a Latin edition of an account of the expedition by Drake and John Norris to Portugal, *Ephemeris expeditionis Norreysij & Draki in Lusitaniam*. This image was re-used repeatedly. For example, the same portrait of Drake, his arm resting on a globe, appears as the frontispiece of Drake’s account of his circumnavigation, as compiled by Francis Fletcher, *The World Encompassed by Francis Drake* (1628), as seen in figure 1, below. The full title of this compilation points to the partisan, nationalistic impulse infusing this display of cosmographical accomplishment, in a work that is acknowledged as being ‘offered now ... for the stirring vp of heroic spirits, to benefit their countrie’: *The VWorld Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake ... Offered now at last to publique view, both for the honour of the actor, but especially for the stirring vp of heroick spirits, to benefit their Countrie, and eternize their names by like noble attempts*.

The early materials testifying to England’s participation in the advancement of cosmographical knowledge have a rhetorical force. Despite the seemingly disinterested representation of the world as a totality and the confident depiction of land masses known to Europe and navigable oceans, the partisanship infusing early English maps is legible to a discerning reader. In order to recognise the jingoism and the war-mongering quietly legitimated by these works of representation, the work of reading becomes a matter of excavation.

² I have argued elsewhere that during the second half of the sixteenth century, the shift from the idea of England as a feudal ‘realm’ to the more modern sense of England as a ‘nation’ was facilitated by the circulation of ‘voyages’, particularly in the multi-volume, encyclopaedic compilations published by Richard Hakluyt and others after him, which projected ‘a vision of England as politically coherent within its borders and as ascendant beyond them’ (Young 2018, 1058).

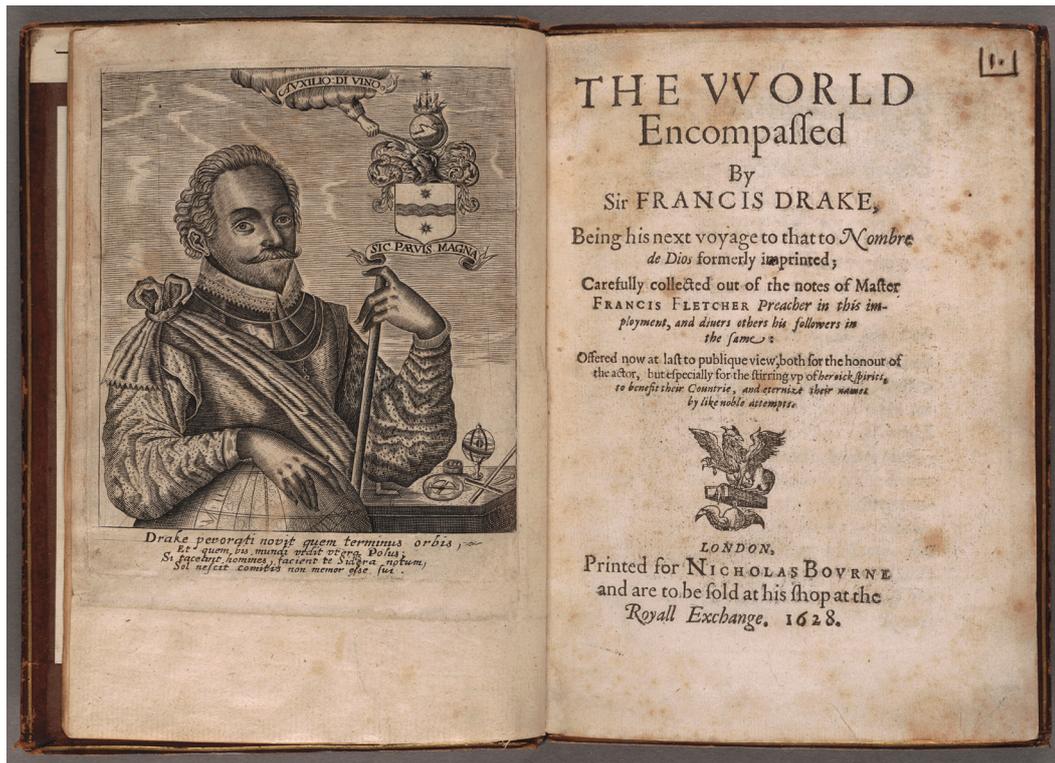


Figure 1 – The image of Drake, his arm proprietorially resting on a globe, appeared as a frontispiece in Drake's account of his circumnavigation, as compiled by Francis Fletcher, *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake*, London, Nicholas Bourne, 1628. Courtesy of the Huntington Library

2. Reading as Excavation: Recognising Racial Violence in Early Modern Archives

For what is not immediately visible in Boazio's celebratory, beautifully painted map, are the captives, some of whom Drake and his fleet captured in a raid on the town of Cidade Velha on the island of Santiago in the Cape Verde archipelago, others of whom were captured in Cartagena.³ One might ask how the presence of the captives might be legible in the map

³ The precise number of captives is not known, and their fate remains a matter of speculation. David Quinn quotes a Spanish source, that is, the 'summary of a deposition made at Havana, 26 June 1586, by Pedro Sanchez', suggesting that Drake 'carried off the Moors from the galleys at Cartagena and at Santo Domingo, about 200, whom he promised to send to their own country ... [and] he carried off 150 negroes and negroes from Santo Domingo and Cape Verde – more from Santo Domingo' (Sanchez in Wright 2010, 212). This practice of capturing (sometimes characterised as liberating) captives continued once across the Atlantic: as Quinn reports, 'a Spanish prisoner, released by the English in Cuba' (98), stated that Drake 'took 300 Indians from Cartagena, mostly women, [as well as] 200 negroes, Turks and Moors, who do menial service, and he carries them along, though they are not useful to his country' (Alonso Suarez de Toledo to the Crown, Havana, 27 June 1586, in Wright 2010, 173) (Sanchez and De Toledo are quoted in Quinn 1982, 98). The captives carried off by Drake's fleet included a range of people and circumstances, including Africans from a variety of origins (variously described as 'Turks', 'Moors', and 'Negroes'), along with some indigenous Americans who were 'rescued' from the Spanish, if this source is to be believed: as Quinn puts it, 'a very mixed bag of rescued persons' (*ibid.*). The ideological spin to which reports at the time were

itself. How might a scholar concerned with historical injustice read such a calamity in a text such as this one? Saidiya Hartman reflects on the challenge of working with archives that offer a (limited) record of slavery, in which enslaved people figure as banal numbers or, what is worse, in hateful prose, what Rosanne Kennedy has called '*perverse* archives' in her scholarly reflections on contemporary activist artists' engagement with the colonial archive that recorded transactions involving Australia's stolen generations.⁴ For Hartman the 'difficult task is to exhume the lives buried under this prose' and to 'liberate them from the obscene descriptions that first introduced them to us' (2008, 6). A similar challenge confronts scholars faced with an archive that would seem on first glance to have little to say about the historical violence of enslavement. It is a challenge that has been made all the more urgent at a time when social justice movements around the world are calling for a proper reckoning with this history. The schema of intelligibility fostered by early modern cosmography and knowledge practices helped to establish the habits of thought and the systems of domination that persist as racial injustice to this day.

To fathom the conditions – discursive, political, material and epistemic – that sanctioned the violence of slavery requires more careful excavation of these texts and a willingness to see beyond the gloss of triumphalism that infuses early modern knowledge practices. The maps tasked with charting English success on the high seas participated in a conceptual re-orientation that helped to establish a proprietorial relationship to the earth and its peoples and a secure vantage point for the would-be colonist. Baptista Boazio's series of maps, which marked the occasion of Francis Drake's successful 1585 voyage to the West Indies, forms the basis of this inquiry into the cosmographical implications of England's use of cartography to bolster its global interests in the late sixteenth century. Under particular focus is the primary map of the voyage, 'The Famouse West Indian Voyadge', an English-language map, hand-painted, and endorsed by Elizabeth I to make the case for English primacy in the Americas. The map participates in the projection of seafaring mastery, made manifest on the page on behalf of the emergent nation. It alerts us to the role of early modern cartography as a mode of knowledge production through which expansionist England was able to project mastery and legitimacy, despite its involvement in war-mongering. The work of cartography in the period went beyond tracking and asserting English global incursions. It enabled a shift in cosmographical consciousness, as I argue below, allowing the English not only to reimagine their place in the order of nations, but also to establish a proprietorial relationship to the earth itself and to its oceans.

Cartography helped to shape the message, but there were conflicting obligations for mapmakers to attend to, as well as implicit pressures that would not necessarily register as clearly legible strokes of the brush. The ocean figures as a space of unbounded and unforeseeable peril and, at the same time, enticing possibility, once mastered, in offering passage to lands hitherto unknown to Europeans and, with that, opportunities for trade and conquest.

subject (was it 'rescue' from the Spanish or 'capture?') and the uncertainty surrounding the treatment of the captives and their eventual fate, necessarily hampers any discussion of these events, but it does not remove the obligation to examine the record and reflect on its legacy.

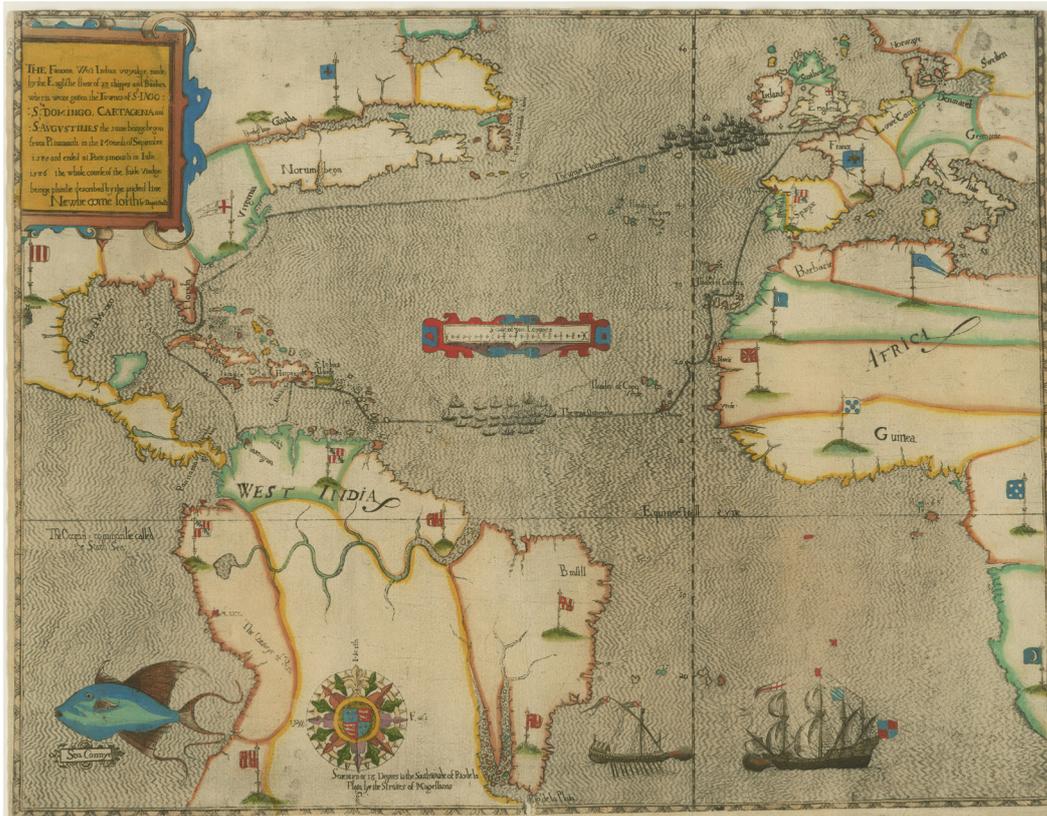
⁴ Acknowledging that 'Often, the only records of an individual's removal and fate are those preserved by government bureaucrats who perpetuated elimination', Kennedy argues that the 'challenge is to use such records – what I am calling *perverse* archives – to create an Indigenous cultural memory of dehumanization and survival' (2011, 90).

3. *Charting Aggression on the High Seas: Drake's Voyage and the Map that Sought to Settle Things*

Reliant on a careful visual lexicon, the English marked their passage towards successful 'adventuring', 'planting' and 'trafficking', albeit belatedly and obliquely, in maps that appeared to celebrate English seafaring victories in the sixteenth century. By comparison, they were latecomers to this game: European expansionism was already well underway in this period, given the long-established seafaring of the Portuguese, driven by the agenda of Prince Henry 'the Navigator', and the Spanish, authorised and enabled by Ferdinand and Isabella. However, the English adventurers who moved into this sphere learned quickly from their Iberian rivals and by the second half of the sixteenth century their seafaring ambitions were unambiguous. They were also well supported by the emerging knowledge practices evolving with colonialist modernity, practices that obscured aggression on the high seas beneath cartographic interest or treated it as the legitimate advance of national interest. It was within this context of rivalrous 'adventuring' that the English enslavement practices began to take hold: not as purchase but as plunder, celebrated as a matter of advancing English colonial ambitions in the cartographic and historiographic texts of the late sixteenth century.

The cartography that celebrates the occasion of Drake's westward exploits hints at unnamed incursions, evident upon closer examination of Baptista Boazio's map, 'The Famosse Weste Indian Voyage' (figure 2). Tasked with commemorating the voyages of Francis Drake to Cartagena in the West Indies (off the coast of modern-day Colombia) and the English victory over Spanish territories, Boazio's map hints at the dangers not so much of seafaring itself but of colonial aggression. The map seeks to represent the full voyage, at least as initially planned, and therefore tracks the fleet's voyage from Plymouth, southwards, around the coast of Spain and Portugal, down the west coast of Africa through the adjacent archipelagos of the Canary Islands and, further south, Cape Verde, as far as the town named Santiago, which we learn was the site of a raid, before heading due west across the Atlantic (see figure 2). In Boazio's map, the only named promontories along the coast of Africa are 'Cape Verde', the primary site of the Portuguese trade in enslaved people for much of the sixteenth century (as seen in the Emory University database of slave voyages), and 'Cape Blanck', north of Senegambia, an occasional point of departure in the Spanish slave trade in the period, according to the Emory database, and the site of the Portuguese Prince Henry's 1441 landfall and initial enslavement of 'Moores', as described in Antonio Galvano's chronicle, *The Discoveries of the World from their first originall vnto the yeere of our Lord*.⁵ In an ominous fashion, Galvano deploys the word 'coast' as a verb to describe the predatory work of Portuguese fleets in the previous century, when 'certaine ships, which went coasting til they came to the Islands of *Garze*, where they tooke two hundred slaues: which were the first that were brought from thence to *Portugall*' (1601, 25). The line that traces the passage of Drake's fleet along the coast of Africa points to a similar modus operandi, but one has to search more widely for clues of the violent effects of his voyage and draw on a number of reading strategies, as I seek to demonstrate below.

⁵ Galvano's account gives prominence to the 'Moores which they brought from hence' as a source of both legitimacy and of bartering power, as in 1443, 'Don *Henry* commanded *Antonie Gonsales* to carrie backe the slaues which he had brought, and to ransome them in their countrey: Which he did' (1601, 24).



Original in the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University

Figure 2 – Baptista Boazio’s main map (1589), ‘The Famouse West Indian Voyage Made by the Englishe Fleete of 23 Shippes and Barkes Wherin Weare Gotten the Townes of St. Iago, Sto. Domingo, Cartagena and St. Augustines’, London. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University

The map itself attests to the passage of the fleet around the west coast of Africa, showing its incursions into the islands in the Cape Verde archipelago that offer opportunity of plunder, across the Atlantic to the ‘West Indies’, including the island of Hispaniola, and down to Cartagena (modern-day Colombia), before charting a course northwards to Cuba, Florida and Virginia, and from there back across the Atlantic (‘the way homewarde’, as it appears on the map) to England. The points of combat are marked on the map in red paint, and national flags signal territorial possession. The map’s full title offers only an oblique acknowledgement of the expedition’s violent objective: ‘The Famouse West Indian Voyage Made by the Englishe Fleete of 23 Shippes and Barkes Wherin Weare Gotten the Townes of St. Iago: Sto. Domingo, Cartagena and St. Augustines ... Newlie Come Forth by Baptista B’. The passive voice and rather bland verb choice, referring to the voyage ‘wherin weare gotten’ four Spanish settlements in the West Indies, mutes the aggression and the political offence involved in these acts of plunder and conquest.

In truth the voyage was an outrageous act of war-mongering:

Twenty-five vessels made up Drake's fleet, each carrying about one hundred men, including twelve companies of soldiers. After stopping in northwest Spain and burning the town of Vigo, the expedition proceeded to [the island of] Santiago in the Cape Verde Islands and took this outpost in November 1585. Although Santiago was very poor, yielding little plunder, the English troops burned it to the ground. (Nebenzahl 1990, 140)

These incursions on foreign territories continued once the fleet had crossed the Atlantic Ocean, and after capturing the town of Santo Domingo in Hispaniola (the island shared by modern-day Haiti and the Dominican Republic, then a Spanish settlement), they raided Cartagena, leaving two months later 'with 100,000 ducats and 200 slaves' (*ibid.*). The main map that tracks the full voyage as it is described in the written account would seem to register the passage of time through its representation of the fleet's passage as clear strokes of the pen, as discussed below. The map also marks (in red) the sites where the fleet made landfall, that is to say, the sites of the raids on foreign territories. These include the sites of Drake's raids on Portuguese settlements along the west coast of Africa, the town of Cidade Velha on the island of Santiago in the Cape Verde archipelago, which had been a significant site of the Portuguese slave trade in the region.

A tracing of the map's intertextual linkages points to the self-serving hermeneutics of these representational endeavours, as English political machinations become transformed into 'knowledge', their partisan beginnings no longer legible as such, as the following discussion of reading strategies seeks to demonstrate.

4. *Reading Intertextually: Walter Bigges' Summarie and the Reveal of the Map's Text Boxes*

The documents attesting to the voyage were not an afterthought; their conditions of production appear to have been intertwined with the event of the voyage itself. In all likelihood the Boazio maps were the product of eye-witness observation: Mary Frear Keeler, editor of the Hakluyt Society anthology of *Accounts of Sir Francis Drake's West Indian Voyage, 1585-1586*, finds evidence to conclude that Baptista Boazio was aboard the vessel, most likely serving as 'page' to the Lieutenant General, or commander, Christopher Carleill, and that 'the maps were made from his first-hand observation' (1978, 77). Keeler argues that Boazio had a hand in completing the account of the 1585 voyage begun by Walter Bigges, captain of one of the fleet's vessels who perished on the return journey.⁶ Excerpts from this account, published in 1589 as *A Summarie and True Discourse of Sir Frances Drakes VWest Indian Voyage. Wherein were taken, the Townes of Saint Jago, Sancto Domingo, Cartagena & Saint Augustine*, were published as broadsides to accompany each of the five Boazio maps, in the form of explanatory and illustrative text boxes in three languages.⁷ The foregrounding of the narrative provided by the maps' text boxes points to the need for an interpretative strategy that can attend to the intertextual elements associated with the maps.

⁶ In his Dedication 'To the Right Honorable Robert d'Evrevx', Thomas Cates ascribes authorship of the narrative to 'Captaine Bigges, vwho ended his life in the said voyage after our departure from Cartagena' (Bigges 1589, n.p.).

⁷ Mary Frear Keeler edited the Hakluyt Society's publication of the *Summarie*, along with commentary on the maps' text boxes, in *Accounts of Sir Francis Drake's West Indian Voyage, 1585-1586* (1981, 241-270). Keeler argues that the 'engraved maps, printed with texts in three languages to correspond with the editions of the *Summarie*, are clearly associated with the publication of that narrative, and are referred to on the title page of the 'Ward edition' of the *Summarie*, published in 1589 (71). Keeler compares the text that accompanied the map and the full version of the *Summarie* and reflects on drawing attention to the ideological commitments legible within the editorial process, but her attention is almost exclusively on the texts' representation of the events in the Americas, largely ignoring the events off the west coast of Africa. In this sense it participates in a silence surrounding English aggression in Africa, and the impact of Drake's skirmishes off Cape Verde.

The extended narrative of the Bigges *Summarie* offers very little in the way of tracking the voyage itself: almost all the detail is focused on what transpires on land. Though the map would seem to be focused on the oceanic voyage, it nonetheless highlights key sections of the Bigges narrative, affirming the inter-relationship of the two documents and establishing an interpretative lens that forestalls any critique of the English incursions. The map illustrates and reinforces the Bigges narrative, though the events as they appear on the maps register as settled history, attested to after the fact: by contrast, in the narrative's unfolding the reader is privy to the strategies of war-making that in the map are transformed into a 'triumph'. These two acts of representation (narrative and visual) mutually reinscribe and reinforce each other, alerting us to the texts' rhetorical import. The map is in step with the Bigges narrative and its persuasive objective, on behalf of the Drake expedition.

The conflictual nature of the expedition is not entirely invisible on the map: points of combat are marked on the map in red paint, and national flags signal territorial possession, but the explanatory text boxes beneath the maps remove from view the skirmishes and position the invaded territories as natural-historical objects. The selection of extracts for the narrative boxes points to their rhetorical function: adopting the style of natural history, the text places an emphasis on the 'very pleasant fructs' and the fertility of the soil which yields delicious commodities and supports the 'infinite numbers' of livestock. The valley of St. Iago, we are told, 'is wholie conuerted into gardens and orchards well replenished with diuers sorts of fructs, herbes and trees' (Bigges 1589, 14). In relation to the West Indies, for example, map readers are told of the large (and edible) tortoises: 'The 20. of Aprill ve fell with two Ilands called Caimanes, where we refreshed our selues with many Allagartas and greate Turtoises, being very vgly and fearefull beasts to behold, but were made good meate to eate' (Keeler 1981, 68). The narrative here adopts the register of natural history, and the unfolding of contestation, reported as event, recedes from view. The distinct modes of reportage can be traced in the use of verbs: the verb tense positions the 'natural' condition of the island in the unchanging present.⁸ This is the discursive mode of the text boxes that accompany the maps. But it is instructive to compare the excerpted text in the map's text box to its position within the Bigges narrative: in the longer narrative, this section appears after an account of the newly arrived English troops setting off to conquer the island, muskets in hand; when they find no 'enemie' to resist them, they nonetheless discharge their weapons in honour of the Queen's coronation day and to mark her dominion in that place.⁹ The present-tense natural historical mode gives way to a tale, recounted in the past tense, of their encounter with a Portuguese man in a narrative that would seem to demonstrate peaceful surrender and the conclusion of their conquest, on behalf of 'our Noble and merciful Gouvernor Sir Frances Drake' (1589, 15). Readers are also told of the events that 'chanced' to occur, when 'the Generall sent on his message to the Spaniardes a negro boy with a flagge of white', signalling 'truce', was 'vnhappily' killed with a stave by Spanish officers (24).¹⁰ The

⁸ This section of the narrative is replete with verbs in the simple present tense: 'In the midst of the valley cometh downe a riuert, rill, or brooke of fresh water, which hard by the sea side maketh a pond or poole' and the 'valley is wholie conuerted into gardens and orchards well replenished with diuers sorts of fructs, herbes & trees' (Bigges 1589, 13 and 15).

⁹ 'Order was giuen that all the ordinance throughtout the towne and vpon all the platformes, which was aboute fifty peeces all ready charged, should be shot of in honor of the Queenes Maiesties coronation day, being the seuententh of Nouember, after the yearly custome of England' (9).

¹⁰ The narrative recounts how 'amongest other things it chaunced that the Generall sent on his message to the Spaniardes a negro boy with a flagge of white, signifying truce as is the Spaniards ordinarie maner to do there, when they approch to speake with vs, which boy vnappily was first met withal, by some of those who had bene

child's presence is treated as a matter of happenstance, and his murder a matter of misfortune and Spanish cruelty, without any explanation for how Drake's army has come to have a Black child in its service. A closer reading of the map offers something of an explanation.

5. *Reading the Visual Rhetoric: Historical Time and the Strokes of the Pen*

Boazio's map traces the passage of Drake's fleet in a series of assertive, legible brush strokes, showing that the voyage passes right through the Cape Verde archipelago and makes landfall at St. Domingo, which had been the centre of the Portuguese slave trade off the west coast of Africa since the fifteenth century. The map registers the historical event of the raid that takes place here: the site is marked in colour, with a visible red spot, the surface area of the red paint disproportionately large enough to suggest that it marks not so much the circumference of the settlement but the historical event of the conflict. To access a (partisan) account of the raid on St. Domingo, one has to turn to the accompanying Bigges narrative, discussed above, a narrative that presents the events in terms of legitimate warfare with an identifiable 'enemie' (as Bigges puts it frequently in his narrative).

The visual rhetoric of the map recasts the oceans themselves as available to be harnessed in service of English expansionist ambitions: the progress of the expedition is marked clearly by a trail of short, decisive pen strokes and by the rhetorically powerful presence of the large English fleet, both on the outward journey as well as on the journey 'homewarde'. Territorial sovereignties are signalled with identifiable national flags and colourful outlines. The map itself is visually beautiful, combining cartographic rigour with the painterly sensibilities of a work of art: images of imagined sea life populate the ocean spaces, most strikingly the exquisite image of a large fish that appears in the bottom left-hand corner, drawing the eye with its beautiful blues and extended, tendril-like fins. The fish is a replica of a watercolour by the renowned artist, John White, whose paintings of the English colony in Virginia were later reproduced as engravings in Theodor de Bry's celebratory volume, *America*, a beautiful (and expensive) folio edition of Thomas Hariot's *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia*. In that volume, De Bry's impressive framing turns Hariot's modest narrative into an encyclopedia of sorts, with the inclusion of indices and tables. In the De Bry volume, the visually arresting engravings of John White's watercolours help to celebrate the English colonial enterprise as a manifest destiny and render the indigenous Americans ethnographic objects, removed from the contestations that were playing out in real time.¹¹ The effect here works similarly: Boazio's map is as splendid as it is rhetorically effective. The vast Atlantic is rendered eminently traversable, its land masses appear as available to be vanquished by proud, victorious English fleets. The Africans captured in acts of aggression are not visible at all.

Though the narrative makes it clear that the English exploits constitute incursions on foreign settlements, the capture of a significant number of Africans is not acknowledged. As an act of plunder (rather than 'purchase') Drake's raid on St. Domingo does not appear in

belonging as officers for the king in the Spanish ... who without all order or reason, & contrary to that good vsage wherewith we had entertained their messengers, furiouslie stroke the poore boy through the body with one of their horsemens staues' (24-25).

¹¹ I have analysed the effects of textual form on the degree to which the violence of the colonial encounter is visible in these two distinct editions of Hariot's narrative in detail elsewhere, arguing that Hariot's disquiet about the catastrophic effects of the colonial encounter is muted in the pages of De Bry's beautiful compilation, *America*, whereas it appears in sharp relief in the earlier edition of Hariot's narrative, *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia*, which was reproduced in quarto as a simple pamphlet without the distracting aesthetic effects of the magnificent folio volume (see Young 2010).

the detailed Emory University database of enslavement history, which marks the ‘principal place of purchase’, the ‘principal date of purchase’ and the ‘principal place of landing’, along with the ‘ship’s name’. John Hawkins’ 1562-1563 voyage is there, however, predating Drake’s raids. When enslaved people are captured as the so-called spoils of war, there is no question of ‘purchase’, and there can be no historical accounting.¹² The practice of slavery thus remains all but invisible on these maps, in the face of triumphalist projection of seafaring dominance on behalf of the nation. However, the map’s mechanism of highlighting the sites of the fleet’s violent incursions at sites, associated with the slave trade, registers something of the effects of Drake’s expedition and its involvement in the practice of slavery.

6. *Reading Biography and Historical Context: Bringing the Backstory into Play*

This 1585 expedition was not the first of its kind, in Drake’s experience. Historian Kris Lane places the young Francis Drake as a crew member of the second voyage (in 1564-1565) of the renowned English seafaring merchant and notorious slave trader, Drake’s cousin, John Hawkins; a few years later (in 1567) Drake was commander of one of the vessels of Hawkins’ ‘third slaving and contraband mission’ to the West Indies (Lane 2015, xxii). Drake thus witnessed first-hand the bounty yielded by the Hawkins version of ‘trade’, and its methods. In his first voyage (in 1562-1563), Hawkins lay siege to Portuguese slave ships off the coast of Sierra Leone and transported the enslaved Africans to Hispaniola in the West Indies.¹³ The second voyage in 1564 was more purposeful: Hawkins sailed to the coast of Africa and ransacked an African village, taking captives who were ‘sold in Spanish ports of the mainland Caribbean shore’ (Sauer 1971, 235). The English Crown was not only implicated in these acts of plunder, but it also actively supported and financed them: when Hawkins next ventured forth to the coast of Africa with a fleet of ships in 1567, two of the six vessels were provided by Queen Elizabeth. Carl Ortwin Sauer describes the Hawkins *modus operandi* in this way:

Again an African town was taken and burned, Portuguese ships were plundered, and the black cargo was disposed of on the Spanish Main. As he had done before, he claimed duress of storm when he entered Spanish ports and did so when he came to Vera Cruz (September 16, 1568) ... In the fight that followed the English ships were taken, except the two smallest. Hawkins escaped in one, Drake in the other. (*Ibid.*)

Such is the early training in the slave trade and plunder that Drake received at the hands of his infamous elder cousin, activities that, in helping England to break into a world long dominated by the Portuguese and Spanish, were fully supported by his Queen. Barely a decade later, in 1581, Drake received his knighthood in acknowledgement of his success in advancing English interests on the high seas, that is to say, well before his role in helping to thwart the Spanish Armada in 1588. But the mission recounted in Boazio’s map was little short of piracy: Drake and his band operated as ‘crown-sanctioned mercenaries’ as Kris Lane puts it (2015, 5). The seafaring prowess and commercial success that led to Drake’s knighthood were enabled by the basest forms of violence, aggression and greed, violence with which the English Crown colluded.

¹² See Brychan Carey’s ‘Slavery Timeline’, which marks Drake’s subsequent raids on St. Domingo and Cartagena as significant events, following the introduction of enslavement by Hawkins in 1562: ‘John Hawkins of Plymouth becomes the first English sailor that we know about to have obtained African slaves – approximately 300 of them in Sierra Leone – for sale in the West Indies’ (1996-on going).

¹³ The island shared by present-day Haiti and the Dominican Republic. For an account of Hawkins’ exploits, see Sauer 1971, 235. Ruth Worthy Miles estimates the number of captives as ‘more than 300’ (1946, 187).

Drake thus ranks as one of the early English slave traders, along with Hawkins, whose methods depended on plunder, in the manner of the early Portuguese traders. The Portuguese had been actively capturing and enslaving Africans since the mid-fifteenth century, under Prince Henry the Navigator, whose personal interest in the slave trade points to the chilling connection between navigation and enslavement in early modernity, all of it legitimated as advancing the interests of Christendom.¹⁴ In 1444 the Lagos Company held the first slave market in Europe, dividing into five lots the 235 captives that had been captured in the Bight of Arguin (a bay along the coast of modern day Mauritania). When these captives were brought to the first 'African' market in the southern Portuguese port city of Lagos, Prince Henry himself showed up to witness it, 'mounted upon a powerful horse and accompanied by his retinue, distributing his favours like a man who sought only to gain a small profit from his share', as his chronicler Gomes Eanes de Zurara put it (in Newitt 2010, 151).¹⁵ In describing the scene of this market, Zurara's generally hagiographic account of the Prince and his dealings famously gives way to a moment of moral anxiety, as he recognises the agonies and the undeniable 'humanity' of the captives, which 'makes me to weep in pity for their sufferings' (149). Zurara's moral wrestling in relation to the 'brute animals' (*ibid.*) is shot through with the discourse of supposed African 'beastliness'¹⁶ though it leaves him all the more burdened to act with humanity, from his position of supposed elevation: addressing his divine creator he asks, 'if the brute animals, with their bestial feelings, understand the sufferings of their own kind through natural instinct, what wouldst Thou have my human nature to do when I see before my eyes that miserable company and remember that they too are of the generation of the sons of Adam?' (149-150). However, Zurara then finds reason to imagine the captives' 'consolation' in the opportunity to 'turn Christian' and his master's 'great pleasure at the salvation of those souls that otherwise would have been lost' (150-151), rehearsing a line of argument that would be used to give a semblance of mitigating the violence of slavery for centuries.

The Catholic Church provided the legitimising rationale for any violence involved in the conquest and transport of African captives, explicitly: 'When the first captives arrived in Portugal, the pope, who had been informed of the good news, gave the Portuguese Order of Christ the right to make war against these Moors and other enemies of the faith' (Da Costa 1985, 45). But in 1448, a few short years later, Henry forbade the violent 'raiding approach to capturing slaves' in favour of an approach based on the identification of mutual interest and ideas of diplomacy, in which African leaders were to be treated as sovereigns and trading partners, and violent battles were to be avoided (French 2021, 72). This shift in strategy did not lead to the slowing down of the trade in enslaved people for the Portuguese, as the statistics attest;¹⁷ rather, it depended upon more subtle methods and the manipulation of discourses of so-called civility in which enslaved Africans became subject to racist and classist discourses that distinguished between categories of persons.

¹⁴ See Beazley for an account of the entanglement between the Portuguese commercial interests along the coast of Africa and the task of containing the spread of Islam: Portuguese supremacy along the coast of Africa was thought of as a 'victory for Christendom' (1910, 13 and 15-16).

¹⁵ Despite Zurara's account of Henry's apparent disinterest and largesse, for historian Peter Russell the spectacle of Henry's presence was a deliberate exercise in marketing on behalf of the slave trade itself (2000, 241).

¹⁶ I discuss elsewhere the early modern association of Africa and Africans with the quality of beastliness (see Young 2015, 181).

¹⁷ For a remarkably detailed set of statistics reflecting the astonishing acceleration of the slave trade (by Portugal and other nations) from the fifteenth century to its peak in the early nineteenth century, see the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, Emory University.

7. Reading Racial Slavery Alongside Emergent National Consciousness and Xenophobia

Any reckoning with English ‘adventuring’ thus needs to recognise the larger historical and discursive context within which these activities were taking place. To the extent that early English capture of enslaved people resulted from the work of plunder in private commercial ventures such as the early Hawkins and Drake expeditions, the English Crown could maintain the fiction of uninvolvedness, without needing to establish an official position on the practice of enslavement. In truth, the acts of aggression and plunder against Spanish and Portuguese ships were committed by fleets that were financed in part by the Crown, during voyages that were later represented on maps commissioned by the Crown and marked by Elizabeth’s insignia.¹⁸ Elizabeth issued ‘letters of reprisal’ to English seamen who had suffered losses in skirmishes with Spanish vessels, sanctioning acts of retaliation, but in practice there was not much to distinguish these acts of retaliation from the basest form of piracy (Meyer 2017, 3). The entanglement of private and public actions had ramifications for the English body politic, at a time of emerging ‘national’ consciousness and growing conflict with Spain, in the years leading up to the Spanish Armada. This state-sanctioned conflict between ostensibly private vessels was a form of unofficial warfare, as Kenneth Andrews has argued (1975, 206; Meyer 2017, 3). More significant for the purposes of this essay is the impact of these skirmishes on incipient English enslavement practices: the arrival of the first enslaved Africans for sale in Virginia in 1619 was the result of precisely this kind of privateering, sanctioned by a letter of reprisal.¹⁹ In bolstering English seafaring and commercial successes in the Atlantic, these conflicts strengthened the English economy and steered the English into the slave trade, albeit unofficially: the seizing of Spanish goods included human beings, thought of as cargo, gotten from the long-established relations between the Europeans and African traders along the west coast of Africa. The successful capture of slaves was a key aspect of the recognition Hawkins received: the coat of arms he was granted in 1565 prominently features a bound African slave, placed at the top and centre. As Urvashi Chakravarty insists, ‘this “badge of slavery”, far from condemning these connections, instead secured Hawkins’ entry to an upper echelon of English aristocratic status by celebrating them, once again signalling the foundations of racialized slavery ... [and] situating slavery at the heart of “Englishness” ’ (2022, 67).

So, although the English trade in enslaved peoples was not yet fully established in the latter half of the sixteenth century, it was already part of public culture at the time and of an imagined future economy. There had been several other attempts by English ‘adventurers’ to initiate a trade in African captives: Brycchan Carey reports that in July 1555 ‘a small group of Africans from Shama (modern Ghana) described as slaves [were] brought to London by John Lok, a London merchant hoping to break into the African trade’ (1996-on going). But this was not yet established practice, and the English could maintain the fiction that there was no English slave trade: as Imtiaz Habib has shown, English court rulings of 1569 and 1587

¹⁸ Drake’s West Indian voyage, under focus in this essay, was a case in point: the voyage itself was jointly ‘sponsored by the Queen, members of her court, and London merchants’ and the ‘Queen’s patronage is indicated on the [Boazio] map by her coat-of-arms in the compass rose’ (Nebenzahl 1990, 140).

¹⁹ This early history of enslavement in what became the United States of America has recently been recounted and analysed in ‘The 1619 Project’, which proposes 1619, the date of the arrival of the *White Lion* and its human cargo, as the ‘true birth date’ of the United States, ‘the moment that its defining contradictions first came into the world’. As envisioned by Nikole Hannah-Jones, then a staff writer at *The New York Times* and recipient of a 2017 MacArthur Award, now a professor at Howard University, ‘The 1619 Project’ is a work of public historiography that seeks to ‘place the consequences of slavery and the contributions of black Americans at the very center of the story we tell ourselves about who we are as a country’. See the inaugural issue in *The New York Times Magazine* (2019, 4 and 5).

disavowed slavery entirely. Even as late as 1616, a few short years before the arrival of enslaved people in Virginia in 1619, Sir Thomas Roe was able to claim that ‘in England we had no slaues’ and again, in 1617, ‘I could not buy men as Slaues, as others did, and so had profit for their money’, when turning down an offer (as cited in Habib 2016, 4). And yet, as Habib’s scrupulous research has shown, there were already significant numbers of African people living and working in London in this period, though they did not constitute a category that could be tallied in official records ‘since a reformist English Protestantism disavows slavery publicly even as it advocates its expedient usage’ (Habib 2016, 5). Within a few short decades all this had changed, as Howard French reports: ‘by 1660 England emerged as the largest shipper of slaves across the Atlantic, and by 1700 would by itself account for nearly half of the entire Atlantic traffic slaves’ (2021, 149).

English ambivalence about their reliance on African labour creates a strange invisibility, as Habib has argued: Black Londoners did not constitute an acknowledged demographic that could ‘appear in contemporary accounts of the land and its peoples as a distinct, considerable population’, that is to say, as citizens. It was a question of ‘exclusion from civic sight’ (Habib 2016, 5 and 7). It is precisely this exclusion of African people from the European body politic that Olivette Otele addresses when insisting on what she calls the ‘provocation’ of the term ‘African Europeans’ in her study of African life in Europe (2021, 8): in her scholarship she seeks to move ‘beyond a mapping of black *presence* in Europe’ in order to recognise Africans as political *subjects* of Europe (*ibid.*, my emphasis). It is thus not a contradiction for Habib to argue that, even as Black Londoners were ignored as subjects, they were made *hypervisible* at a time of increased English awareness of the complicating presence of those who were considered to be foreigners: Sukhdev Sandhu argues that by ‘the 1570s black people were being brought to England fairly regularly’, largely for the purposes of domestic work, and that their ‘visibility far exceeded their numerical presence’ (2004, xiv), so much so that Elizabeth is said to have declared ‘the great annoyance’ of her people at the ‘great numbers’ of ‘Blackamoors’ within ‘this realm’ in her notorious proclamations of 1596 and 1601 (as quoted in Sandhu 2004, xv).²⁰ The 1596 document (an ‘open warrant’ to the Lord Mayor of London) aims to encourage the voluntary relinquishing of ‘Blackamoor’ servants, who should be sent to Spain or Portugal without compensation given to Masters: the document intimates that English masters, who as ‘Christians’ would prefer ‘to be served by their owne contrymen then with those kynde of people’, will therefore ‘yilde those in their possession to him’.²¹ The language betrays two glaring assumptions. First, it is assumed that the distinction between ‘Christians’ and ‘those kynde of people’ would be self-evident to employers because their alterity is clearly legible and, second, the document recognises that it would require an act of *manumission* on the part of the employers, even although there is no reference to enslavement in the document: to bring an end to this form of servitude employers will need to ‘yilde those in their *possession*’ (my emphasis). A few years later in her proclamation of 1601, the Queen casts xenophobic aspersions on the

²⁰ The proclamations were made in Queen Elizabeth’s name but were issued by her Privy Council and it ‘is unclear whether Queen Elizabeth ever authorized the 1601 draft’, as historian Miranda Kaufmann has cautioned (2008, 369). See also Emily Weissbourd (2015) for a carefully argued explanation about the provenance of what Weissbourd calls Queen Elizabeth’s ‘Edicts of Expulsion’. For an explanation about the workings of the Privy Council in the sixteenth century and its relationship to the monarchy and its system of governance, see Crankshaw 2009.

²¹ These documents are archived as manuscripts: the ‘open warrant’ of 1596 is preserved in the scribal record of the Privy Council and the ‘proclamation’ of 1601 is in the British Library’s manuscript archive. The 1596 ‘open warrant’ is included in volume 26 of the *Acts of the Privy Council* (Dasent 1902, 16-17. *British History Online*, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/acts-privy-council/vol26/pp1-25>> accessed 1 February 2023).

‘infidels’ who ‘are crept into this realm since the troubles between Her Highness and the King of Spain’, with no acknowledgement of the nature of these ‘troubles’ or how they resulted in an influx of North African workers into England in this period (*ibid.*). There is a link to be drawn between English seafaring incursions (including Drake’s aggressions against Spanish and Portuguese vessels in the Atlantic and his raids on Spanish and Portuguese settlements in the West Indies and along the North African coast) and the seemingly unsettling presence of Africans in England at this time.

8. *Reading Through the Lens of Cosmography: Imaginative Tools for Projecting Mastery*

The maps which legitimised the seafaring ‘adventures’ of figures such as Hawkins and Drake participated in the early modern construction of the earth and its people as conquerable, if only for those who were able to identify with the vantage point of detachment and mastery. Maps were tasked with cosmographical import: they helped to establish a new conception of the world, as a singular entity that was available to be known and traversed with the help of the new ‘artes’ that gave representational shape to the world, imagined as a whole and as eminently knowable and navigable. To that extent, early modern cartography was an *imaginative* exercise, carried out on behalf of expansionist European nations. As a work of cosmography, it had disastrous implications for the southern parts of the world, which were racialised and positioned outside of modernity, as I have argued at length elsewhere (Young 2015). The knowledge practices and representational systems used to map the world in the age of European expansionism created a racial hierarchy on a global scale, where geographical terms were invoked to establish the supposed superiority of the ‘northern peoples’, in what Mary Floyd-Wilson terms the ‘geohumoralism’ of the period (2003, 2).²² Supported by cartography’s unchanging coordinates, early modern epistemologies had devastating implications for the global south which seemed to almost ‘invite’ exploitation under the guise of commercial and epistemological progress.

A crucial component of this strategy of dominance emerges from the vantage point set up in cosmographical texts: the ability imaginatively to grasp the whole world as a single, integrated entity through the visual effects of the globe, as represented on the page, helped to establish an orientation of mastery, through the imagined ‘bird’s eye’ view of the Creator.²³ What Denis Cosgrove calls the ‘Apollonian eye, the viewpoint above the earth’ provided the model for the imagined view aboard ship, at least as reproduced in the charts that attested after the fact to the navigational feats on which European expansionism relied (2001, x). Boazio’s map, with its oversized images of Drake’s fleet, sailing forth and returning across the Atlantic, and its regularized short strokes of the pen as if in the form of a log, place the ships themselves in an elevated position, projecting mastery over the unpredictable surges of the ocean itself. For the reader of the map the vantage point is at an even greater remove. The ability to view the earth in its entirety was to adopt the eyes of the Creator, and with it an unimpeachable authority

²² For example, the seventeenth-century English cartographer Richard Blome sets up a distinction between the ‘Southern Nations’ of the world and the ‘Northern People’ in ‘The Preface to the Reader’ for his 1682 edition of Bernhardus Varenius’ *Geographia*, titled *Cosmography and Geography*. Blome invokes the familiar conviction that body and mind are shaped by climate in terms that establish a geographical divide to affirm the unquestionable superiority of the ‘Northern People’ of the globe: ‘The *Septentrional* or *Northern People* being remote from the *Sun*, and by consequence inhabiting in cold Countries; are *Sanguine*, *Robust*, full of *Valour* and *Animosity*; hence they have alwaies been Victorious and predominant over the *Meridional* or *Southern Nations*’ (1682, a2r).

²³ I have developed this argument more fully in Young 2019.

and imagined omniscience. However, the detachment wrought by these scopic technologies proved invidious because it engendered the fiction of uninhabited lands that were available to be claimed, and extended the proprietorial relationship to the earth, as set up in the Genesis myth.²⁴

The new methodologies for describing and measuring the earth in the period went some way towards producing a world that could be seen in one glance, as it were, and grasped as a totality. But early modern maps were not uniform or fixed; to the extent that they were imagined as reflecting the navigational accomplishments of European nations in real time, they reflect a world that was undergoing profound conceptual and political change in the face of accelerating national rivalries and adventurism. The maps themselves provided a site for the development of the tools needed to navigate these shifts cognitively. They reflect a shift in orientation towards a cosmographical practice that was demonstrably grounded in experience rather than ideas about the world that were inherited from the ancients. However, as a result, the outline of shorelines they sketch, replete with identifiable ports and illustrations that signal the presence of European ships as well as named coastal regions, disclose something of the violent encounters that are scripted into the maps' reproduction of cartographic knowledge. Furthermore, they establish for English public culture an orientation of mastery in which the earth itself, its moving oceans and rugged shorelines, might be traversed and conquered, along with its more vulnerable inhabitants who disappear from view, at least as embodied human subjects, in the detachment of the bird's eye view. Early modern knowledge production, with its assured lexicon, bold representational truth claims, and (partisan) archival impulses, is implicated in habits of thought that made it possible to conceive of subjugation as prowess.

The moral scruples that break through the smooth surface of Zurara's narrative when he describes witnessing the captives' unutterable misery at being treated like chattels and denied human connection, as I discussed above, point to the difficulty associated with a narrated encounter, a difficulty that the detachment of the map's vantage-point manages to avoid. A representational form that privileges the totalising view from above is able to envision lands hitherto unknown to Europeans as uninhabited, and it offers the European adventurer, as well as a wider public of readers, a position of mastery with which to view the world. The vantage point established in the form itself makes it difficult for readers to recognise the humanity of the targets of racial violence in early modernity.

9. In Conclusion: Excavating the Effects of Early Modern Worldmaking

The maps that chart early modern expansionism constitute an ambivalent archive. As works of cosmographical import, they helped to facilitate the re-imagining of planetary habitation by establishing an elevated position where the would-be colonialists (and those who identified with them) might imagine traversing oceans to subjugate far-flung lands and their peoples. Boazio's map trades in the period's reassuringly settled cartographic language, with its clear axes demarcating north and south, east and west, and the carefully traced outlines of continents already familiar to his readership.

The visual lexicon that celebrated seafaring adventurousness was evolving in the period, spurred on by the race to colonise the southern parts of the world. While the disciplinary practices of an emergent geography seemed to settle the period's contestations into something that could

²⁴ See, for example, Gen. 2:15, in which God confers the land to the man's keeping, and Gen. 2:19, in which God brings the creatures to the man and invites him to name them as he sees fit, authorising a relationship of dominance over the earth and its living creatures.

be received as ‘knowledge’, traces of the murderous aggression of the commercial and political agents advancing partisan causes, and of the associated anxieties, are legible in the maps tasked with charting this dominance. But these traces are only barely discernible, and only when viewed askance. As archives of a shameful history these works are evasive, misleading and incomplete. And yet they offer an opportunity, however obliquely, to confront the history of English involvement in the slave trade. While there can be no chance to ‘exhume the lives’ of those lost in its wake, as Hartman has lamented (2008, 6), the interrelated texts that chart the emergence of English aggression on the high seas allow the critical reader to recognise some of the ways that early modern knowledge practices are implicated in this history and in the shaping of the record.

At a time when social justice movements demand a more thorough reckoning with histories of racial violence, it has become more possible, and necessary, to attend to the violent effects of a cosmography that bestowed the sense of mastery that undergirded European expansionism. The world-making accomplished in the maps charting early modern seafaring prowess has had a persistent and disturbing afterlife. It requires a range of interpretative tools to uncover the history of racial violence and to expose the fallacies and discursive strategies that enabled its perpetuation.

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