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Consuming Narratives: Food and Cannibalism in Early Modern British Imperialism

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in History

by

Alisa Marie Wankier

Dissertation Committee:
Associate Professor Sharon Block, Chair
Professor Sharon Salinger
Professor Alice Fahs

2016

DEDICATION

To my family and friends
in recognition of their continued support

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Consuming Narratives: Food and Cannibalism in Early Modern British Imperialism

By

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Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Irvine, 2016

Associate Professor Sharon Block, Chair

During the early modern period, a time of global exploration, Europeans often included descriptions of foodways in their exploration narratives. Indeed, one of the most striking features of early modern travel narratives is the amount of space devoted to foodstuff and eating patterns, and “Consuming Narratives” argues that Europeans, and specifically the English, focused on food because they understood foreign people and places, themselves, and their world through a discourse of foodways. If an Englishman noted a foreigner eating a specific dish, he might infer the temperament of the foreigner by means of the humoral theory; deduce the wealth or status of the foreigner by the perceived cost of the food; or conclude the civility of the foreigner by his manner of eating or by the way the meal was prepared. Beyond the descriptions of customary foodways, stories of foreign peoples eating human flesh proved to be a recurring theme in which Europeans presented themselves as superior, while recordings of English cannibalism at Jamestown and Newfoundland reflected English anxiety about their position in the global world. Thus, descriptions of foodways reveal more than mere victuals. Food and eating provided a

language to express, and simultaneously shape, English assumptions and anxieties about otherness, status, sovereignty, and power.

INTRODUCTION

In William Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, Petruchio, the male lead, attempts to tame his unruly wife, Katherina; and as part of his efforts, Petruchio refuses to allow Katherina to eat overcooked meat for fear that the dish will make her "choleric." Petruchio first scolds the servants for serving the burnt meat, and then turns to Katherina and says "I tell thee, Kate, 'twas burnt and dried away. And I expressly am forbid to touch it, For it engenders choler, planteth anger; And better 'twere that both of us did fast" (4.1.106-109). Petruchio's logic – that burnt meat would lead to choler – came from the humoral theory, a popular early-modern European notion in which the human body was composed of four humors (blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm), with each humor associated with a temperament (sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic), and with food having the ability to affect one's humoral balance, and consequently one's disposition and overall health. Following the humoral theory, the overcooked and dry meat could increase one's yellow bile – the "warm and dry" humor associated with choler, anger, aggression, impulsiveness, and ambition. Thus, Petruchio forbade Katherina from consuming a choleric food in an attempt to control her temperament and keep her from being irritable. With the *Taming of the Shrew*, we see that in the sixteenth-century English mind, food held much meaning; food was not simply a commodity or a matter of survival, food could be an indicator one's disposition, temperament, or character, regardless of whether or not the consumer intended that meaning.

During the early modern period, a time of global exploration, Europeans often included descriptions of foodways in their exploration narratives. Indeed, one of the most striking features of early modern travel narratives is the amount of space devoted to

foodstuff and eating patterns, and “Consuming Narratives” argues that Europeans, and specifically the English, focused on food because they understood foreign people and places, themselves, and their world through a discourse of foodways. If an Englishman noted a foreigner eating a specific dish, he might infer the temperament of the foreigner by means of the humoral theory; deduce the wealth or status of the foreigner by the perceived cost of the food; or conclude the civility of the foreigner by his manner of eating or by the way the meal was prepared. Beyond the descriptions of customary foodways, stories of foreign peoples eating human flesh proved to be a recurring theme in which Europeans presented themselves as superior, while recordings of English cannibalism at Jamestown and Newfoundland reflected English anxiety about their position in the global world. Thus, descriptions of foodways reveal more than mere victuals. Food and eating provided a language to express, and simultaneously shape, English assumptions and anxieties about otherness, status, sovereignty, and power. In other words, ideas about foodways influenced English imperialism.

“Consuming Narratives” centers on European explorations narratives available in English in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, and analyzes the ways in which discussions of foodways informed English ideas about America, Africa, Asia, and themselves. In reviewing these sources, I am not concerned with the veracity of the depicted events; instead, I am interested in the circumstances under which food and eating were described in the texts, what the authors may have sought to convey, and what readers may have taken away from these accounts. “Consuming Narratives” is not a sweeping history of all early modern English travel accounts, but instead focuses on several of the earliest, and more popular, texts in which food and eating played a central role.

To appreciate the importance of food in the early-modern English understanding of themselves and others, a focus on humoral theory is essential – a medical understanding of the makeup and workings of the human body that was developed in antiquity and remained popular in Europe through the eighteenth century. The humoral theory hypothesized that the balance of four distinct bodily fluids in a person – known as humors – directly influenced one’s temperament and health. The four humors were identified as blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile, and each humor corresponded with a temperament: blood corresponded with a sanguine temperament (optimistic and social); yellow bile corresponded with a choleric temperament (short-tempered or irritable); black bile corresponded with a melancholic temperament (analytical and quiet); and phlegm corresponded with a phlegmatic temperament (relaxed and peaceful). One’s humoral balance dictated one’s health, physical appearance (including skin tone), and temperament. Each person was thought to have their own unique humoral composition which could be influenced one’s diet and the surrounding climate. As such, people living in any given region might share a similar health, physical appearance, and temperament, since they shared a similar diet and climate. And while the English often recognized the unique differences among themselves, they lost this nuance when confronted with non-Europeans, or those they viewed as “others.”. So while food could obviously indicate on one’s status or class within a society, with the humoral theory, food could also potentially revealed one’s temperament, character, degree of civility, race, or nation.

Previous historians have noted the importance of race, status, gender, and nation in shaping history, and yet few historians have examined how ideas about foodways helped create social distinctions, implicate power, and inform an English worldview. “Consuming

Culture” addresses how ideas about food contributed to constructions of race, status, gender, and nation in the early-modern English mindset.¹ These socio-cultural constructions often overlapped, demarcated inclusion and exclusion, and signaled degrees of power in relationships.² My dissertation shows that during the early modern period, a discourse of foodways was concurrently implicated with these social demarcations in conceptually determining a person’s place in society.

Defining food can be challenging since the term encompasses so much. Part of the problem is the cultural specificity of food; to some degree, each culture determines which

¹ Outside the field of history, several sociological, anthropological, ethnographical, geographical, and gender scholars have noted the close relationship between food and social constructions. See Claude Fischler, “Food, Self and Identity,” *Social Science Information* 27, no. 2 (June 1, 1988): 275–292; Carole M. Counihan and Steven L. Kaplan, eds., *Food and Gender: Identity and Power* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998); Donna R. Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998); Gill Valentine, “Eating in: Home, Consumption and Identity,” *Sociological Review* 47, no. 3 (August 1999): 491–524; Elspeth Probyn, “Indigestion of Identities.” *M/C: A Journal of Media and Culture* 2, no. 6 (October 1999); Sherrie A. Inness, ed., *Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender, and Race* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); Richard Wilk and Persephone Hintlian, “Cooking on Their Own: Cuisines of Manly Men.” *Food and Foodways* 13, no. 1–2 (2005): 159–168; Fabio Parasecoli, *Bite Me: Food in Popular Culture* (New York: Berg, 2008); Rachel Slocum, “Race in the Study of Food,” *Progress in Human Geography* 35, no. 3 (June 2011): 303–327.

² For a study on the ways in which class informed race, see Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975). For an analysis of the ways in which gender informed race, see Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia*. Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1996. In *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), Anne McClintock complicates notions of social power and identity by arguing that the liaisons among race, gender, and class were inseparable. For a powerful look at the ways in which race, class, and gender shaped power within early America, see Sharon Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 2006). Block demonstrates that race and status determined a man’s power to avoid prosecution of rape and a woman’s power to seek protection. Cornelia Hughes Dayton also notes that socialized gender roles and class solidarity combined to excuse, or make invisible, certain abuses and crimes against women in “Taking the Trade: Abortion and Gender Relations in an Eighteenth-Century New England Village,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (January 1, 1991): 19–49.

plants and animals are acceptable for consumption.³ Also problematic is food's constant metamorphosis – from raw to cooked, fresh to rotten, ordinary to sacred, crop to luxury, material to metaphor. My dissertation delineates food as anything denoted as edible; it considers plants and animals to be food when the authors described them as being eaten or as part of a meal, and does not consider plants and animals to be food when portrayed as part of the land's flora and fauna.

Historiography

In the field of history, food is seemingly ubiquitous and yet conspicuously absent. Food frequently appears in various histories, and yet it is seldom the focus of these studies. Social, political, cultural, ethno, environmental, economic, and commodity-chain histories have included food as part of their discussions.⁴ These varied accounts generally interpret food as deriving its meaning from a single discourse or stable set of symbols (nation, status, race, gender, commerce, or gentility); however, food's omnipresence suggests its historical value is multifaceted and mercurial.

Social historians, and especially women's historians and ethno-historians, have studied the daily labor of food production to demonstrate how the work of ordinary people

³ Elspeth Probyn, "Beyond Food/Sex Eating and an Ethics of Existence," *Theory, Culture & Society* 16, no. 2 (April 1, 1999): 215–228.

⁴ Environmental, economic, and commodity-chain histories are not discussed in detail here, but foundational studies in these areas include: Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1985); and Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking, 1985). Also see Richard P. Tucker, *Insatiable Appetite: The United States and the Ecological Degradation of the Tropical World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), Gary Y. Okihiro, *Pineapple Culture: A History of the Tropical and Temperate Zones* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), and John Soluri, *Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption, and Environmental Change in Honduras and the United States* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).

laid the foundation for larger social relationships.⁵ For example, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich argues that women's knowledge of cultivating and preparing food not only supported the family, but also contributed to the progress of her local community.⁶ Mary Beth Norton, Linda Kerber, and Rosemarie Zagarri explore how food provided a means for women to engage in Revolutionary politics.⁷ Whether by food management on the home front, food distribution to soldiers, or boycotts, food connected women to the Revolution. Terri Snyder and John Kolp assert that in the early Republic, women used food to actively participate in politics by providing treats at elections.⁸ Ethno-historians have examined the ways that crop cultivation and food preparation constituted a form of autonomy and

⁵ For a discussion of women's food labor as an important contribution to colonial society, see Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Knopf, 1990), Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), and Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

More broadly, social historians have covered foodways, cooking, and cookbooks in their investigation of the daily lives of ordinary people. See Trudy Eden, *Cooking in America, 1590-1840*, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2006); Katharine E. Harbury, *Colonial Virginia's Cooking Dynasty* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004); Keith W. F. Staveland and Kathleen Fitzgerald, *America's Founding Food: The Story of New England Cooking* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004) and *Northern Hospitality: Cooking by the Book in New England*. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011).

Social historians have also examined the role of alcohol and taverns in shaping early American society. See Sharon V. Salinger, *Taverns and Drinking in Early America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002) and Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch & Revolution: Taverngoing & Public Life in Eighteenth Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999). For the role of alcohol among Native Americans in early America, see Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

⁶ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: Knopf, 1982).

⁷ Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1980), and Rosemarie Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

⁸ John G. Kolp and Terri L. Snyder, "Women and the Political Culture of Eighteenth-Century Virginia: Gender, Property Law, and Voting Rights," *The Many Legalities of Early America*, ed. Christopher L. Tomlins and Bruce H. Mann, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2001) 272-292. (quote p. 277)

resistance.⁹ Judith Carney and Frederick Knight demonstrate that fieldwork was not simply a site of oppression and drudgery for enslaved Africans. They argue that rural labor allowed slaves to express their vast agricultural knowledge and ability, influence the development of crop and food production, and consequently mold society in British North America.¹⁰ These scholars use food to add complexity to our understanding of early American, but they mostly treat the social aspects of food. “Consuming Narratives” differs as it covers the intricate cultural meanings of foodways, and addresses how food’s symbolism informed social constructions.

Cultural and gender historians have investigated the ways in which food influenced intercultural contact.¹¹ Kathleen Brown explains how native corn helped shape Anglo-

⁹ Ira Berlin views slaves’ gardens as a form of economic resistance, rather than cultural autonomy, in *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998). Juliana Barr observes the importance of Caddo women’s agriculture and food surpluses to the Caddo’s welcome feasts for Europeans in *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007). Susan Sleeper-Smith argues that Native women’s successful food cultivation created stable agrarian villages and, consequently, fortified Native resistance against U.S. aggression in “Agrarian Landscapes: Indian Women and the Making of an Indian World in the Great Lakes,” paper presented at the 2011 WMQ-EMSI workshop. Barr and Sleeper-Smith both demonstrate the importance of food to foreign relations and politics.

¹⁰ Judith Ann Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2001); Judith Ann Carney and Richard Nicholas Rosomoff, *In the Shadow of Slavery: Africa’s Botanical Legacy in the Atlantic World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Frederick C. Knight, *Working the Diaspora: The Impact of African Labor on the Anglo-American World, 1650-1850* (New York: New York University Press, 2010). Eugene Genovese uses food to measure cultural coalescence in *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.

¹¹ Outside the field of early America, scholars that have used food to explore notions of race, gender, and class include: Elizabeth S. D. Engelhardt, *A Mess of Greens: Southern Gender and Southern Food* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), Donna R. Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998), Sherrie A. Inness, ed. *Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender, and Race* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), Jessamyn Neuhaus, *Manly Meals and Mom’s Home Cooking: Cookbooks and Gender in Modern America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), Kyla Wazana Tompkins, *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), Wendy A. Woloson, *Refined Tastes: Sugar, Confectionery, and Consumers in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2002).

Algonquian relations.¹² When Algonquians chose to trade their invaluable corn, they viewed the English as feminized dependents. Conversely, when the English received corn, they viewed themselves as masculine conquerors. Thus, food conveyed gender and power, but in different ways to different people. Ann Little notes that descriptions of food and eating are one of the most “consistent features of colonial captivity narratives.”¹³ The portrayal of Indian food reflected and reinforced the English captives’ perceptions of Indians. “Foul” and “filthy” fare confirmed the stereotype of the poor Indian, starvation indicated inadequate patriarchs, and feasts signaled gluttony and mismanagement. Brown and Little inspire my research questions and my dissertation adds to their work by studying other areas where food intersected with race, status, and sovereignty.

Recently, a few early American historians have brought food to the forefront of their studies. James McWilliams argues that inter-coastal trading of foodstuffs help unite the colonies and, after independence, food played a symbolic role in defining America’s national identity. Trudy Eden contends that British Americans’ beliefs about food, and the body, influenced their perception of their status and their place in their local communities. Shifting attention to Spanish America, Rebecca Earle demonstrates that attitudes about food were fundamental to European notions of physical difference, namely race, and their ambiguous colonial endeavor of incorporating the indigenous population into European cultural space while also trying to maintain difference and distance. McWilliams, Eden, and Earle all contribute valuable new interpretations of early America, but their studies generally stay within one framework of demarcation – McWilliams concentrates on

¹² Kathleen Brown, “The Anglo-Algonquian Gender Frontier,” *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women* Nancy Shoemaker, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1995) 26-48

¹³ Ann Little, *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 113.

nationalism, Eden considers status, and Earle focuses race.¹⁴ My dissertation examines how discussion of food simultaneously contributed to and reflected the multiple overlapping cultural constructions.

Some scholars have examined food in European narratives, though they do not focus on both English culture and foreign lands, namely America, Africa, and Asia. Anna Suranyi considers early modern English travel writers and their representations of Irish and Ottoman Turkish foodways; she finds that despite the similarities in their diets, the Irish were regarded as “bestial and unskilled” while the Turks were viewed as “deliberately austere,” similar to the way the English viewed themselves. Robert Launay looks at foodways in Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian travel narratives of Asia and the Americas and argues that a change in tone over the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, from delight to distaste, reflected a shift, and simultaneously, “modified attitudes of Europeans to non-Europeans.”¹⁵ Using missionary accounts of New France, Catherine Briand contends that meals, and table manners, provided a means of communication and identity formation that determined the relationship between missionaries and Indians.¹⁶ Suranyi, Launay, and Briand all note the ways in which writings about foodways revealed much more than mere foodstuff. “Consuming Narratives” adds to this literature by providing an exploration of

¹⁴ Rebecca Earle, *The Body of the Conquistador: Food, Race and the Colonial Experience in Spanish America, 1492-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Trudy Eden, *The Early American Table: Food and Society in the New World* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008), and James E. McWilliams, *A Revolution in Eating: How the Quest for Food Shaped America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

¹⁵ Anna Suranyi, "Seventeenth-Century English Travel Literature and the Significance of Foreign Foodways," *Food & Foodways: History & Culture Of Human Nourishment* 14, no. 3/4 (July 2006): 123-149. The foreign foodways in Suranyi's account are Irish and Turkish. Robert Launay, "Tasting the World: Food in Early European Travel Narratives," *Food & Foodways: History & Culture Of Human Nourishment* 11, no. 1 (January 2003): 27-48. The European narratives in Launay's account are Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian.

¹⁶ Catherine Briand, "The Performance of the Meal in 17th-century French Travel Accounts to New France," *Food, Culture & Society* 11, no. 2 (June 2008): 219-241.

how discussion about food and eating informed and reflected English conceptions of themselves, Americans, Africans, and Asians.

Beyond the field of history, food has attracted the attention of scholars in the fields of ethnic studies, gender studies, cultural studies, literature, anthropology, sociology, nutrition, agriculture, geography, and more. First sparked by the *Annales* School and the social turn, and then intensified by the cultural turn, the interest in food has now cumulated into the field of “food studies.”¹⁷ Universities currently offer degrees in food studies and several journals are dedicated to the study of food.¹⁸ Despite this academic excitement surrounding food, there is little consensus on how food should be studied; no method or theory give these studies a common denominator.¹⁹ Part of the problem is the ubiquity and the unstable nature of food; edibles touch nearly all aspects of life and continually transform. Nonetheless, scholars in this young field are working toward bridging disciplinary gaps and synthesizing the clashing epistemologies among the fields that cover food.²⁰

In arguing that food was one of the most fundamental ways in which the English understood themselves and others, “Consuming Culture” relies on the works of Claude

¹⁷ Kyri W. Clafin and Peter Scholliers, *Writing Food History: A Global Perspective* (New York: Berg, 2012). Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Routledge, 1966) and Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques: The Raw and the Cooked*, translated by John Weightman and Doreen Weightman (New York: Harper Row, 1969) are often cited as the pioneers of food studies.

¹⁸ Universities with food studies programs include New York University, Indiana University, Chatham University, Boston University, UC Davis, New School, and The University of Gastronomic Sciences (Italy), among others. Journals dedicated to food include *Food, Culture and Society*; *Food and Foodways*; *Food & History*; and *Gastronomica*.

¹⁹ Priscilla Ferguson, “Eating Orders: Markets, Menus, and Meals,” *The Journal of Modern History* 77, no. 3 (September 1, 2005): 679–700; John C. Super, “Food and History,” *Journal of Social History* 36, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 165–178

²⁰ Richard Wilk, “The Limits of Discipline: Towards Interdisciplinary Food Studies,” *Physiology & Behavior* 107, no. 4 (November 5, 2012): 471–475.

Levi-Strauss, Mary Douglas, Pierre Bourdieu, and Michel de Certeau.²¹ These scholars have all suggested that social demarcation is perceived and enacted in simple, unconscious, and everyday practices. Food's mundane nature, its subtleties, and its repetition contributed to the strength of a discourse of appetite.²²

Chapter Outline

Chapter one examines sixteenth-century narratives of America and reveals how discussions of foodways held deeper implications for England's colonization of America. From the very first account of America in English, to the numerous exploration reports that followed, food and eating remained a common and recurrent theme in these texts. Whether through discussions of Native American cannibalism, their manner of eating, their consumption of snakes, or their fishing techniques, travel narratives of America used food to depict Indians as primitive and exotic "others," to create a "savage/civilized" opposition, and to justify their desire to conquer this New World. The description of the plentiful food in America helped attract English to the potential benefits of colonization. Occasionally, when narratives included stories of Europeans struggling to find food in America, their purpose was to portray the strength of Europeans and their ability to survive hard times,

²¹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques: The Raw and the Cooked*, Translated by John Weightman and Doreen Weightman, (New York: Harper Row, 1969), Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Routledge, 1966), Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1984), and Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

Some scholars of contemporary society have underestimated food's cultural implications since food is a biological necessity. See Alan Warde, *Consumption, Food and Taste* (London: Sage Publications, 1997). Warde is a professor of sociology at Manchester University.

²² Drawing from Foucault, Elspeth Probyn proposes that food should be added to sex as the sovereign signifiers of identity; both sex and eating are corporeal acts with social, cultural, economic, and political markers. Probyn further parallels sex and food by arguing that formations of identity constantly mix up bodies, appetites, classes, genders and ethnicities. See Probyn, "Beyond Food/Sex Eating and an Ethics of Existence," *Theory, Culture & Society* 16, no. 2 (April 1, 1999): 215–228 and *Carnal Appetites: FoodSexIdentities* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

rather than to argue for the scarcity in America. Discussions of food, or the lack thereof, not only helped show the supposed resolve of Europeans, but these texts about food also provided means for the English to evaluate the behavior of other Europeans in America. A discourse of foodways was fundamental to the ways in which the English understood America, its people, and its future.

Chapter two explores early modern exploration narratives of Africa and finds that, again, a discourse of foodways informed Europeans' cultural discernment and hierarchical formation, though in different ways than writings of America. Unlike the authors of America, those who wrote about Africa did not rely heavily on tales of cannibalism. And perhaps because authors from antiquity had depicted a monstrous Africa with fantastical beings – such as the blemmye, cynocephaly, and anthropophage – early modern authors choose to move away from this fantasy and portrayed Africans as humans, though sometimes humans of a lesser status. Authors such as Johann Boemus and Leo Africanus made some implicit parallels between African and European consumption patterns, namely how the nobility ate differently than the poor, and how Africans used of food in their rituals and ceremonies. But with this humanization of Africa came claims of savagery, a lack of table manners, and an agricultural ineptness. Relying on the humoral theory, which assumes one's diet and climate, Africanus depicted Africans as choleric, ignorant, impulsive, and aggressive. Unlike the travel narratives of America, narratives of Africa seldom mentioned cannibalism and exotic food, and instead used food and eating patterns to humanize Africans, and then argue for inferiority of these humans.

Chapter three surveys early travel accounts across Asia and notes how foodways, and climate, intersected with budding notions of race. Sixteenth-century exploration

narratives of Asia often described the “white” Chinese, especially the gentry, as having fine table manners, plentiful food, and great hospitality, while depicting the “tawnie” Tartars as savages, who practiced cannibalism, and who sustained on a limited diet due to their agricultural ignorance. According to the humoral theory, the popular European understanding of the anatomy of the body, food could affect one’s humoral balance, and consequently one’s physical appearance, including one’s complexion. Thus, the bountiful food in China produced a healthy, generous, “white” people that resembled Europeans, while the scraps of food that the Tartars subsisted upon produced a “tawnie” barbaric people because they could not properly balance their humors with their limited food. Chapter three also highlights how the authors’, or translators’, interests influenced the narratives and shaped English thought. Johann Boemus sought to produce comprehensive reference book, and similar to his volume on Africa, he discussed food in Asia in complicated and contradictory ways, which reflected and supported ambiguous feelings about the foreign people in Asia. Conversely, John Frampton, an English merchant, sought to incite the English to race the Spanish and Portuguese for dominion over the Cathay trade, wrote about food in Asia without much complexity. Frampton relied heavily on Boemus’s and Francisco Thamara of Cadiz’s work to produce his own narrative, but he selectively picked the more sensational stories of cannibalism and savagery in which Asians were clearly portrayed as inferior to Europeans.

Chapter four diverges from the previous chapters by examining exploration narratives that cover cannibalism among Englishmen in Jamestown and Newfoundland, then interrogates the veracity of these accounts, and argues that tales of English cannibalism ultimately served as an expression English anxiety about losing their global

position – and their perceived identity as superior to other nations – as these stories soared in popularity during times when England’s future was uncertain. Chapter four notes the authors’ potential motives – from maintaining one’s colonial position, to discrediting other colonial authorities, to warning the English of their fallibility during a period of expansion. Despite individual interests in publishing stories of English cannibalism, taken together, these narratives manifested as English unease about losing their place in a global world.

CHAPTER ONE

First Impressions: Foodways in Early Modern Narratives of America

The first printed account of America, in English, appeared in a 1511 book about “new lands.”²³ In this fantastical narrative, the anonymous author devotes almost half of the script, approximately one page in length, to discussing Native American foodways.²⁴ Among the gastronomic descriptions, the author writes that Indians “take much fysshe for they can goen under the water and feche so the fysshes out of the water,” that they lived long lives due to their consumption of “spyces and rotes where they them selfe recover with and hele them as they be seke,” and that they engaged in cannibalism as they hanged “the bodyes or persons fleeshe in the smoke as men do with us swynes fleshe.”²⁵ The reports of fishing, medicinal foods, and cannibalism were less steeped in reality and more expressions of exoticism, trepidation, and fascination. Nonetheless, right from the start, food and foodways were central to how Europeans tried to make sense the “New World.”

During the sixteenth and seventeenth century, European nations embarked on global exploration that resulted in a plethora of written and visual texts in which Europeans tried to comprehend and communicate their findings of America to their fellow Europeans. With the rise of the printing press, these exploration narratives circulated widely, not only in the authors’ home countries, but also in other European countries as these writings were often translated to reach a wider audience. With an emphasis on Anglo-American culture, this chapter studies sixteenth-century English travel writings

²³ The word “America” first appeared, in English, in 1509 as a passing reference in the translation of Sebastian Brandt’s *The Ship of Fools* (1494), but there was no specific discussion about America in this satire.

²⁴ By “foodways,” I mean the customs relating to food, eating habits, and culinary practices.

²⁵ *Of the newe lands and of ye people founde by the messengers of the kyngs of portyngale named Emanuel*, printed in Edward Arber, Richard Eden, Pietro Martire d’ Anghiera, and Sebastian Münster, *The First Three English Books on America* (Birmingham: [Printed by Turnbull & Spears, Edinburgh], 1885), xxvii.

about America, regardless of whether they were originally written in another European language, and argues that foodways provide essential clues to the ways in which the English comprehended new people in a new land.

Given the game of telephone that was played by explorers, authors, and translators in the early modern period – in which books were an undifferentiated mixture of what one saw *and* what others reported, and then translated into a foreign language by another contributor – it is important to trace from where these stories came, in what ways they might have been altered, and why these changes may have taken place. The aforementioned 1511 English account of America was likely based on a popular 1505 German broadside that first introduced “New World” Indians to the European masses.²⁶ The broadsheet came from the press of Johann Froschauer in Ausburg and included a woodcut of the Tupinambá Indians with an accompanying caption of unknown origin. The caption, translated from German, reads:

The people are thus naked, handsome, brown, well shaped in body, their heads, necks, arms, private parts, feet of men and women are a little covered with feathers. The men also have many precious stones in their faces and breasts. No one also has anything, but all things are in common. And the men have as wives those who please them, be they mothers, sisters, or friends, therein make they no distinction. They also fight with each other. They also eat each other even those who are slain, and hang the flesh of them in the smoke. They become a hundred and fifty years old. And have no government.²⁷

²⁶ Myra Jehlen and Michael Warner, *The English Literatures of America: 1500-1800* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 43-44, and Stephanie Leitch, *Mapping Ethnography in Early Modern Germany: New Worlds in Print Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 63 and 75. The similarity of the 1505 German caption to the 1511 English text is what Jehlen and Warner base their assertion that the 1511 text was based on the 1505 caption; Leitch notes the popularity of the German broadside.

²⁷ Translated caption found in William Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth : Anthropology and Anthropophagy: Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 27.

With the brevity of the caption, the 1511 author found it necessary to elaborate with hearsay when introducing the English to America and its inhabitants in his page-long description.



Indians preparing for a cannibal feast in the anonymous 1505 German woodcut inspired by Amerigo Vespucci's account of America (via Wikimedia Commons)

In the broadside caption, only one sentence is devoted to eating, specifically cannibalism, and there is no mention of other American food; conversely, the 1511 author notes several gastronomic details. He states that America had wondrous beast, fowls, and fish, and he emphasizes the Indians' ability catch numerous fish with their bare hands. While both the 1505 German caption and 1511 English text claim that the Native Americans live to the age of one hundred and fifty, the English author attributes their longevity to "costely spyces and rotes." Lastly, the 1511 author elaborates on the Indian cannibalism, alleging that "they ete also on a nother, the man etethe hys wyfe his

chylde neas we also have seen and they hange also the bodyes or persons fleeshe in the smoke,” and later states that Indians also eat their slain enemies.²⁸ The 1511 author may have drawn his additions from Amerigo Vespucci’s *Mundus Novus* – a thirteen page letter about Vespucci’s third voyage to America, published in Latin in 1503, and distributed widely. Of all the ways the 1511 author could add decoration to his portrayal of America and its inhabitants, it is telling that he chose to focus about half of his elaborations on food or the act of eating, with the other half of the additions concentrated on Indian warfare. In particular, cannibalism was an essential part of conveying this society to Europeans.

Indian Cannibalism in America

Similar to the 1511 publication, other early English books about America spotlight food and the eating habits of the indigenous population. In particular, the notion that Native Americans practiced cannibalism saturated early European depictions of America. The degree to which various tribes practiced cannibalism, if at all, is subject to debate; however, the colonial discourse of cannibalism helped Europeans imagine Indians as primitive “others,” create a “savage/civilized” opposition, and justify their desire to conquer the “New World.”²⁹

The second English book to contain a description of America – written by a German cartographer and scholar name Sebastian Münster, translated by Richard Eden, and published in London in 1553 – spends one section on “the people called Canibales... which

²⁸ *Of the newe lands and of ye people founde*, xxvii.

²⁹ For works that explore cannibalism in colonial discourse see William Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (New York: Methuen, 1986), Philip P. Boucher, *Cannibal Encounters: Europeans and Island Caribs, 1492-1763* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992), Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen, *Cannibalism and the Colonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

are accustomed to eate mans fleshe.” Münster detailed the “bestly and fearse maner of these Canibales” and likens their appetite for flesh to that of a tiger or lion against a tame beast. He wrote that when the Native Americans “take” any man under the age of thirteen, they geld him, fatten him like Europeans do to hens, and then around his twentieth birthday, they kill him forthwith, pull out his guts, and “eate the same freshe and newe, with other extreme partes of the bodye, poudering the residue with salte, or keping it in a certayne pickle as we do iegottes or sansages.” Women, unlike men, were not eaten, but rather reserved to increase, as “we do hennes to lay egges.” Old women were kept for drudges. Münster concludes his section on the “Canibales” by noting that many people “flye with all spede” when Indians make an incursion because no one can “resyste theyr fearsenes.”³⁰

As only the second English account of America, when measured against a European standard, Münster’s narrative gave readers a firm impression that Native Americans lacked civility and acted barbarically. In his two hundred page book about European exploration, Münster devoted four sections, approximately nine pages total, to America, with two pages concentrating on Native American cannibalism. According to him, Indians treated people like animals. Twice he compared Indians’ treatment of humans to Europeans’ treatment of hens; just as Europeans fattened hens before they ate them, Indians fattened captured men before they consumed them; just as Europeans kept some hens alive to increase the flock and subsequent food stock, Indians kept women around to increase their population and food supply of human flesh. To write that Native Americans treated humans like animals

³⁰ Sebastian Münster, *A Treatyse of the Newe India with Other New Founde Landes and Islandes*, trans. Richard Eden, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 1389:04 (London: S. Mierdman for Edward Sutton, 1553), doc. 64-65.

suggested that Indians were animals themselves; their lack of differential treatment between humans and animals was comparable to the behavior of animals in the wild.

While Münster specifically devoted one section to Indian cannibalism, his discussion of anthropophagy spilled over into his other pages about America, indicating the intensity of Europeans' fascination with man-eating men. In recounting Columbus's second voyage to the "New World," Münster states that the Spaniards came into the Native America's houses and found "young men bound to postes, and kept to be made fatte." And upon further snooping, they discovered earthen vessels in which the Indians stored "mens fleshe with poppingayes, geese, & duckes fleshe, al together in one vessell."³¹ How the Spaniards knew that the men's flesh was actually men's flesh, as opposed to that of another animal, is not clarified; but Münster's point here is not necessarily to transmit vetted facts, but rather to convey the ways in which Indians treated other human beings as animals – fattening them and storing their flesh with other animals' flesh.

Pietro Martire d'Anghiera's exhaustive eight-hundred-page *Decades of the New World* appeared two years after Münster's exploration narrative. Richard Eden translated both Münster's and Martire's books with national and patriotic intentions. In his preface to both of these works, Eden articulated how he hoped his translations would excite a desire among English navigators and merchants to emulate the exploits of foreign voyagers. Eden's translation of Martire, in particular, had great influence on the English's public imagination; this work encouraged the English to imitate and support the effort of Spain in establishing empires in America, and was inspired by the connection between England and

³¹ Münster, *A Treatyse of the Newe India*, doc 68.

Spain through the marriage of Mary and Philip II.³² While it is difficult to measure the exact influence of Eden's works, soon after their publication, English explorers set sail for America, Africa, and India.³³ As the *Cambridge History of English Literature* contends, with the writings of Richard Eden, came the age of English maritime discovery.³⁴ Whether staying in England or traveling abroad, Eden's translations shaped English thought about America and its inhabitants.

Unlike the relatively short depictions of America in Münster's book, and the brief 1511 account, Martire's *Decades of the New World* dedicated several hundred pages to describing America; and not surprisingly, Martire spent a significant portion of his *Decades* on alleged Native American cannibalism. While some of Martire's material repeated what the two earlier accounts conveyed, he also had more space to detail the gruesome particulars of anthropophagy. For example, Martire stated that the "monstrous bludsuckers" of the West Indies were so voracious that they consumed "fyve thousande men."³⁵ He wrote that the Indians delighted in man-hunting, "licke[d] their lippes secreately" as they watched their prey, and then ate them "greedely"; the "intralles and extreme partes" first, and powdering the "moste fleshy partes" for store.³⁶ And that wartime, in particular, brought about grisly anthropophagy. When the 'canibales' captured their enemy, they slit "not their throtes, but open the very brestes of these selye soules and

³² Andrew Hadfield, *Amazons, Savages, and Machiavels: Travel and Colonial Writing in English, 1550-1630: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 16.

³³ James Edward Gillespie, *The Influence of Oversea Expansion on England to 1700* (New York: Columbia university, 1920), 234-5.

³⁴ Myra Jehlen and Michael Warner, *The English Literatures of America: 1500-1800* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 81-83

³⁵ Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, trans. by Richard Eden, *Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 166:01* (London: Guilhelmi Powell for Edward Sutton, 1555), doc. 140.

³⁶ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 27 and doc. 128.

take owte their hartes yet pantynge, with the hotte bludde” dripping down. Then, they ate the “fleshe of the armes, thighes, and legges.” According to Martire, the Europeans found “streame of congeled blud as thoughe it had runne from a bouchery” and saw “innumerable heades, and trunkes of bodies thus manged, besyde many other yet remaining hole.”³⁷ These types of graphic descriptions permeated Martire’s *Decades*.

Martire added to the horrors of anthropophagy by including stories in which the “canibales” captured several enemy men and forced them to watch as their companions were dismembered and eaten by the “canibales.” Early modern exploration narratives often depicted various Indians tribes as vengeful, “requiringe deathe for deathe,” and once they caught their foes, Martire reported that they would mangle some men into pieces and “roste them and eate them even before their [enemies’] eyes.”³⁸ In another instance, Martire claimed that the Spaniards came across a canoe and decided that they wanted to take it, but inside it they found two men hiding – a “canibal” and another Indian tied up. The bound man had tears running down his cheeks and with gestures of his hands, eyes, and head, he signified that six of his fellow men had been “cruelly cutte in pieces and eaten of that myscheuous nation.” He also indicated that he would have been eaten the following day. Having heard this, the Spaniards unbound the man and gave him “the Canyball, to doo with hym what he wolde.” With the “Canibales owne clubbe,” the man bludgeoned him, “grinninge and fretinge” all the while, as if he were a “wylde bore.” In order to “sufficiently revenge the death of his companyons,” the man continued until he had “beaten owte his braynes and guttes.”³⁹

³⁷ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc.178.

³⁸ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 32.

³⁹ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 63.

The frequency and explicit nature of cannibalism in Martire's work helped solidify conceptions about America and its inhabitants. Cannibalism was a metaphor for Indian savagery which served to rationalize European incursions on American land, and with every mention of anthropophagy in *Decades*, readers were reminded that Indians were primitive, perhaps even monstrous, others.

The trope of European men saving Indian women from man-eating Native Americans, which appeared in both Münster's and Martire's narratives, among other early modern exploration accounts, also contributed to the ideas of the "savage/civilized" opposition created by Europeans. Münster relayed an occasion where several women fled from the "Canibales" to the Spaniards, and upon their arrival, the Admiral commanded that the women be "gorgiously decked after the maner of our women."⁴⁰ Why the women felt safe running to strange men, and why the Spaniards had any women's attire with them, to give to the Indian women, is not addressed, which raises doubts about the validity of this incident. However, the accuracy of this story, along with the tales of cannibalism, is less important than analyzing the reasons this story was conveyed. Münster likely included this story in order to portray Europeans as generous saviors, reinforcing the idea that any European aggression in America was justified. Martire followed suit and included similar stories of Europeans as rescuers in his *Decades*. In one case, Martire reported that Spaniards came across an Indian village and saved about thirty "chylidren and women captives which were reserved to be eaten."⁴¹ By adding children to the group in peril, in

⁴⁰ Münster, *A Treatyse of the Newe India*, doc. 68. Very few early modern travel narratives suggest that women were actually eaten by "Canibale"; most narratives report that women, from enemy tribes, were kept as drudges and put to exhaustive work.

⁴¹ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 30.

addition to the women, Martire intensified the argument that Europeans had the right to rule in America.

Just over a decade after Richard Eden translated Sebastian Münster's and Pietro Martire d'Anghiera's accounts of America into English, in 1553 and 1555 respectively, Thomas Hacket translated André Thevet's narrative about the "New World" from French to English in 1568. For over ten years, English audiences relied primarily on Eden's translation of Martire's tome, *Decades of the Newe Worlde*, to gain a sense of America, along with Münster and the brief 1511 account. The popularity of *Decades* may have inspired Hacket to translate and publish Thevet's *New Found World*. Hacket worked as a bookseller in London from 1556 to 1590; he printed a number of his own translations and helped finance other texts. As an active publisher in a burgeoning market of printed texts, Hacket helped further spread European conceptions about the "New World" to English readers.⁴² It would be several years before another new book on America appeared.

Unlike Münster and Martire, who based their works on the travels of others, André Thevet – a French historian and a Franciscan friar – sailed to America, and part of his book, *New Found World*, is based on his own observations. Thevet's book was a few hundred pages long and included some chapters on places other than America, such as Africa and India. His account, and specifically his portrayal of America, was much shorter than the length of Martire's narrative, but with this fourth description of America, in English, there emerged a noticeable pattern in the ways in which food and eating were considered noteworthy in regards to the "New World."

⁴² Kirk Melnikoff, "Thomas Hacket and the Ventures of an Elizabethan Publisher," *The Library* 10, no. 3 (September 1, 2009): 257–71.

In concurrence with the three earlier accounts of America, Thevet devoted significant space to discussing Indian cannibalism; by this point, 1568, Native Americans and cannibals became near synonyms for many English readers. Thevet reported that when he traveled to America, he came into contact with a tribe that he characterized as the “moste cruellest, and inhumayne people that are in *America*.” He warned that if this tribe captured a European whom they considered to be an enemy, it would be nearly impossible to rescue him, because of their ravening blood lust, like lions. In case readers had any doubt, Thevet spelled it out that there was “no beast in the wilderness, neither in the desartes of *Africa* or *Arabia*, that longeth so sore or that is so gredie of humayne flesh, as these wild and brutish people.”⁴³

While Thevet noted that he was describing just one group of particularly hostile Indians in America, this distinction may have slipped by his audience. Thevet, along with the other sixteenth-century authors of America, wrote about different Indian tribes in their narratives, but they very rarely mentioned the tribes by name, leaving it easy for readers to amalgamate the various nations. Furthermore, since most early narrative focused on Native Americans’ alleged cannibalism, with less emphasis on docile Indians, readers gathered the impression that most, if not all, Indians participated in anthropophagy.

⁴³ André Thevet, *The New Found Worlde*, trans. by Thomas Hacket, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 360:01 (London: Henrie Bynneman for Thomas Hacket, 1568), doc. 106-108. Quote on 107.



Engraving of cannibal tribe in America from Andre Thevet's *Les Singularitez de la France antarctique*, 1558
(via Wikimedia Commons)

In two other sections of his book, Thevet discussed the alleged role of cannibalism in Native Americans' manner of fighting, though it is unclear whether he was writing about the same hostile tribe or different Indian nations; regardless, he gave his readers gruesome details of anthropology which contributed to the notion of Indian exoticism. Thevet stated that in wars, if Native American killed their enemies but could not carry them away, they would dismember them on the spot and eat them before they left, occasionally carrying away some small piece.⁴⁴ The body parts were distributed in a certain way, with the men usually eating the flesh and the women taking the "bowels or inner partes." The head was

⁴⁴ Thevet, *The New Found Worlde*, doc. 69.

set “on a poll out of their houses in signe of triumph and victorie.”⁴⁵ Thevet’s details served little purpose other than to shock his audience and build on conceptions of Indian savagery.

The Native Americans’ Manner of Eating and Drinking

In addition to allegations of cannibalism, early modern narratives also described the Indians’ manner of eating and drinking, and similar to anthropophagy, these anecdotes usually served to challenge Indian sovereignty by reinforcing the “savage/civilized” dichotomy. Münster compared the Indians’ eating to that of a “Tyger or the Lyon agaynste tame beastes,” and he characterized their manners as “bestly and fearse.” Later, he stated that “At they meate, they use rude and barberous fashions, lying on the ground without any table clothe.”⁴⁶ Münster only wrote a couple sentences on the eating patterns of Native Americans, but these few words gave the reader a vivid picture of Indian animality and their distance from civilization.

Martire’s commentary on Native American consumption manners appeared slightly less disparaging than Münster, but he ultimately came to the same conclusion – the indigenous people of America lacked civility. Martire noted that Indians lived “a free and happy life withowt tables, table clothes, carpettes, napkyns, and towels.” Only “kynges” furnished their tables with a few golden vessels, while the “common people” used their hands to eat, with a “pyece of their breade in the one hande, and a piece of broylde fyshe or summe kynde of fruite in the other hande.” When their fingers became stained from their food, the Indians would wipe them “on the soules of their feete, or on their thyghes, ye & sumtymes on the skynnes of their priuye members in the steede of a nappekynne.”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Thevet, *The New Found Worlde*, doc. 71.

⁴⁶ Münster, *A Treatyse of the Newe India*, doc. 65 and 91.

⁴⁷ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 124-125.

Martire's representation of Indian's table manners as "free and happy" was not necessarily a point of admiration, but rather an indication that the Indians behaved liked children. His entire description reads as though he could have been writing about a group of present-day toddlers. Martire's characterization of Indian eating habits differed from Münster, given that Münster directly associated Indians with animals while Martire only alluded to a similarity between Indians and children; nonetheless, both children and animals lack the ability to govern themselves, and their lack of discipline, according to Martire and Münster, should help Europeans justify their incursions in the "New World."

Similar to Münster and Martire, Thevet undermined Indian's discipline and organization when he reported that the "wilde men of America have no more civilitie in their eating... they eat of al kinds of meats at al times and houres, without any other discretion." Indians ate according to their hunger, as opposed to a schedule or routine time of day. Thevet remarked that some Indians would eat in the middle of the night; they would lie down to sleep, then rise to eat, and then lay back down to sleep. He noted that some lay down and "eate in their beds." And when they ate, they used a "strange maner" in which they did not "bryng their handes to their mouthes," but rather "caste theyr meate into their mouthes [from] more than a foote off." Then, they "mocke[d] christians" who did not use this manner to eat. With regards to their drinking, Thevet recorded that after a great victory over their enemies, the Native Americans would "sit drinking a whole day without eating." Then after the day of drinking, they would "eate such as they can finde."⁴⁸ Because Native America's everyday eating practices lacked structure, Thevet made an

⁴⁸ Thevet, *The New Found Worlde*, doc. 55-56 and 102.

argument that Indians had no self-restraint; he reinforced Münster's and Martire's idea that Indians could not control themselves.

Münster, Matrie, and Thevet all used Indians' consumption habits as part of their report on indigenous populations to assert that these were disorganized, uncivilized people; however, Thevet's book slightly differed from the two earlier works. While Münster and Matrie sporadically referenced Native Americans' consumption habits throughout their accounts of America, Thevet devoted an entire section of his book to the topic of their eating and drinking. Other areas of Thevet's book discussed Indian diets, cannibalism, and the food available in America, but this specific section detailed the *manner* of their consumption. Given that Thevet published his work over a decade after Münster and Matrie, one might deduce that European interest in this aspect of Native American life grew in importance and played a key role in their understanding of the "New World." Thevet's subtitle, "the manner of their eating and drinking," in particular, helped ensure that readers would pay special heed to this valuable information; understanding the consumption manners of Native Americans could enable Europeans to better comprehend America and its inhabitants.

In addition to the disarray surrounding Indians' consumption habits, Thevet's section on "the manner of their eating and drinking" also addressed their beliefs about food. According to Thevet, the Native Americans refrained from eating heavy or slow-moving fish and beasts because they believed that meat from these animals would "hurte and anoy them" if they "should be assailed by their enemies." In other words, Indians believed that if they ate large slow-moving animals, then they might become large and slow too, unable to move or run swiftly. Instead, Indians preferred venison and other "light

meats” from animals that were fast in “running & flying.” Thevet dismissed these beliefs as “superstitions,” and contributed to the characterization of native peoples as primitive and unlearned.⁴⁹

Fascination with Serpents

Sixteenth-century accounts about America primarily focused on human flesh when covering the diet of Native Americas; however they also included some notes about the other foodstuff Indians consumed. One of the comestibles that attracted the most attention and in-depth coverage was serpents. The ingestion of such a dangerous reptile fascinated Europeans, and Native Americas’ reverence for this dish further contributed to the European interest.

According to the early narratives, within the indigenous population, there was “nothings amonge theyr delicate dysshes, that they esteeme so muche as these serpentes.” Serpent eggs were also highly regarded. In these European reports, serpents and their eggs were such a delicacy that their “common people” were not allowed to eat them.⁵⁰ Just as the Indians believed that eating a slow animal might impede their speed, they believed that if they ate a snake, they would absorbed its characteristics – its swiftness, its boldness, and its cunning nature.

Thevet, who previously rejected the Indians’ “superstitions” about acquiring an animal’s traits by eating it, also criticized the idea of snakes as a power food. Thevet reported that American had a great diversity of snakes, but none of them were venomous, so “their biting is neither mortall, nor any thing dangerous.” Obviously, America did have poisonous snakes, and Thevet was either unaware of this fact or he was trying to downplay

⁴⁹ Thevet, *The New Found Worlde*, doc. 55.

⁵⁰ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 38.

skill required in capturing a dangerous snake and avoiding its bite. Although the Indians' ability to kill and eat snakes astounded several early modern authors, Thevet went against the tide. He flatly pronounced that "these wilde men" ate serpents "without danger," and therefore "it is not to be marveled at."⁵¹ Here, and in other parts of his narrative, Thevet continually minimized Indians' cleverness and understanding of the world around them.

While Thevet, and possibly other Europeans, doubted the Native Americans' ideology about the consumption snakes, some were intrigued by the Indians line of reasoning. Martire told of a Spanish lieutenant "determined to taste... the serpentes." When he finally ate one, he found the snake's flesh to be "delicate to his tonge." He also reported that he instantly felt "without al feare." His companions perceived this new bravery, voraciously ate the remainder of the serpents' flesh, and soon thereafter had "none other talke" except "of the sweetenes of these serpentes."⁵²

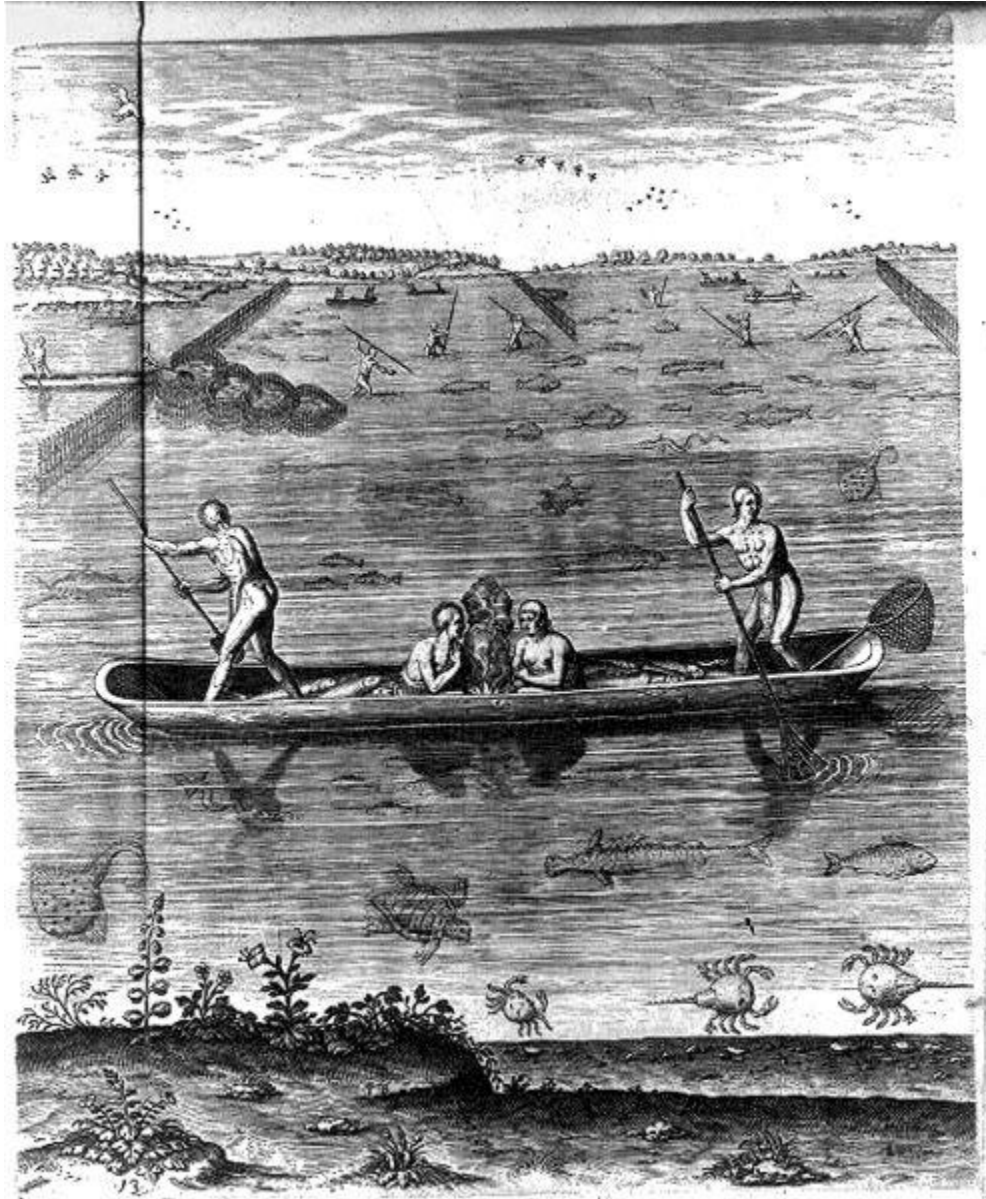
Indian Food Preparation & Fishing Technique

Along with the Native American diet, early modern narratives also addressed some of the techniques Indians used to obtain and prepare their food. Again, the majority of the documents centered on cannibalism; that is, how Indians captured other humans and how they went about eating them. Nonetheless, these early accounts also touched on the preparation of other foodstuff. Some roots were roasted, while others were baked, soaked, or fried. Grains were beat into meal in hollow stones. Duck and goose flesh were cooked over fire. Fish were roasted. Serpents were broiled. Expert archery allowed for the capture of many wild beasts. Wheat was sown in diverse places at sundry times of the year.

⁵¹ Thevet, *The New Found Worlde*, doc. 64.

⁵² Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 50.

Orchards and gardens were nourished with great diligence.⁵³ Much of the banal coverage of Native America's food preparation lacked excitement, except when it came to expounding the Indians' fishing techniques.



An engraving of Native Americans fishing by Theodor de Bry (1590), based on John White's watercolor (1585) (via Wikimedia Commons)

Sixteenth-century accounts of America spent significant attention on Native American's skilled fishing method, which impressed them and which they wrote about with

⁵³ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 27 and 161, 141, 30, 38, 50, 73, and 80.

enthusiasm. Even the very first account of America in English – the 1511 *single* page length description – devoted space to the Indians’ superior fishing abilities, although reports on their technique varied. The 1511 account stated that the Indians could hold their breath for long periods of time and caught fish with their hands.⁵⁴ Martire recorded that the Indians used bait; a small fish was tied to a string and cast on the side of the boat. Once a bigger fish tried to eat the bait, the Native Americans would swiftly stab it with an arrow.⁵⁵ Thevet described how Indians constructed a “counterfet fish of white linnen” that they would spring above the water, similar to a flying fish, and wait for an albacore to bite.⁵⁶ Regardless of the manner in which Indians caught fish, the consensus was that they were “very cunnynge” in this regard.⁵⁷

Europeans were amazed by both Indians’ fishing expertise and the sheer variety of fish available in America. The sea and rivers had an “infinite number of good fish,” so “differynge in shape and forme,” that is was “impossible to speake of all,” but the authors of sixteenth-century exploration narratives often devoted an entire chapter to delineating the marine life.⁵⁸ The Europeans encountered a plethora of strange fish that they had never seen before or heard about prior to contact; thus, the narratives noted that several of the fish had no name in “our language,” whether that was German, Latin, Spanish, French, or English. The authors praised the abundant sea life and one specifically stated that the fish made a “greate commoditie to serve the shippes for vitalles for many dayes.” Indeed, in many ways, the authors of these exploration books highlighted the America’s commodities,

⁵⁴ *Of the newe lands and of ye people founde*, xxvii.

⁵⁵ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 39.

⁵⁶ Thevet, *The New Found Worlde*, doc. 121.

⁵⁷ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 138.

⁵⁸ Thevet, *The New Found Worlde*, doc. 125 and Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 226.

whether that was gold or the edible flora and fauna, consequently piquing the interest of those curious about these new lands.⁵⁹

The Paradox of Plenty and Scarcity in America's Edibles

Allegations of cannibalism not only served to undermine Indian sovereignty in America, but also to make the argument that fertile, and valuable, lands were left unpopulated due to the Native American's violent appetite. If early modern exploration narratives had portrayed Indian cannibalism as a response to famine, an English audience might have been somewhat forgiving; however, these early authors made it clear that Indian cannibalism was war tactic, or a thirst for blood, not a response to starvation. For Thevet it was as if America was wasted on the Indians; it was "fruitfull ynough, better than belongeth to such wicked beasts, for it beareth great quantitie of fruits, hearbes and wholsome rootes."⁶⁰ Thus, warring Indians devoured the flesh of "myriades of men," and left "thousandes of moste fayre and frutfull llandes and regions desolate withowttenne."⁶¹ This convenient claim provided motivation for the English, and other European nations, to visit America and take advantage of the "unpopulated" fruitful land.

Sixteenth-century narratives about the "New World" frequently touted the fertility of America's "virgin" land and the exoticism of the edible flora and fauna, consequently assigning great value to these strange new lands. The "temperatnesse of the Ayre and goodnesse of the ground and of the water" meant that America abounded with an "infinite

⁵⁹ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 226-229. Quote on doc. 226 and 227. Also see Thevet, *The New Found Worlde*, doc. 41-42, 117-8, 121, and 124-125, and Jacques Cartier *A Shorte and Briefe Narration of the Two Navigations and Discoveries to the Northwest Partes*, trans. John Florio, *Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 1198:02* (London: H. Bynneman, 1580), doc. 35-36.

⁶⁰ Thevet, *The New Found Worlde*, doc. 107.

⁶¹ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 140.

number” of beasts, fowls, fish, and vegetation.⁶² The herbs were soft and delicate, and yet grew until they were the height of corn. The trees bore fruits all year long and provided better nourishment than those in Europe. Plants and seeds marvelously increased. The cattle were bigger in stature and exceedingly fat. The hogs and swine were more wholesome and tasted better than those at home. The fish were excellent and tender, some of “the best in the world to the taste.” Martire even went so far as to declare that the fruitful land, plentiful beasts, and abundant fowles in America meant that the Europeans “shall heereafter have noo neede, to have any brought from other places.”⁶³ But despite America’s abundance, Europeans faced near-starvation several times over the course of the sixteenth century because they thought that the food would fall into their plates without any labor.

Paradoxically, “New World” narratives also commonly discussed the lack of food in American and Europeans struggle to survive; the lesson of these stories was not that America was barren, but rather that Europeans had the strength and will to persevere in hard times. In one instance, the Europeans blamed the Indians for their famine. Martire relayed that the Indians wanted to drive the Spaniards from their land, so once the Europeans decided on a dwelling place, the Native Americans destroyed the nearby edible plants by plucking up their roots and leaving nothing to be sowed.⁶⁴ Usually, however, early modern exploration narratives did not hold the Indians specifically responsible for their strife. It was the “rude and baren” land that left “nothinge apte to bee eaten, but wilde rootes and certayne unpleasante frutes of trees.” Nonetheless, the Spaniards “wente

⁶² Thevet, *The New Found Worlde*, doc. 124-125.

⁶³ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 73, 80, 105-106, 228. Quote on doc. 228 and 73, respectively. Also see doc. 28, 38, 50, 211-219, 219-222, 226-229

⁶⁴ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 143.

forwarde laden with golde, but sore afflicted with hunger.”⁶⁵ In another case, the Europeans were “soo feeble by reason of longe hunger” that their strength diminished, and “yet [they] erected a lyttle towre able to resyst the fyrst assaute of the inhabitantes.”⁶⁶ And once again, another story reported that the Europeans’ “owtragious hunger” incentivized them to move forward and “searche the inner partes” of the land until they finally found “suche thynges as they desyred that is, plentie of vytayles.”⁶⁷ Clearly, a lack of food would not deter the Europeans’ resolve; they wanted the promised riches of America.

Early modern exploration narratives about America inconsistently described the availability of food as either everywhere in sight or nowhere to be found, as either abundant or absent, and these contradictory accounts of the “New World” served different rhetorical purposes. Discussions of plenty, fertility, and richness made a convincing argument for America’s inherent value; it was a venture worth considering. Anecdotes about European starvation and their quest for food often imparted the message that Europeans were fighters, able to withstand the hardships that America threw at them. Ultimately, readers, those curious about these new lands, received the message that America was a worthy investment, brimming with commodities, occasionally challenging, but not insurmountable.

Not surprisingly, Thevet – an intense critic of Native Americans – made certain that his readers knew America’s abundance came from the fertile land and temperate weather, not the Indians’ husbandry. Thevet assigned one section of his book, five pages in length, to “how these wilde men exercise husbandry and make gardens.” While Thevet covered many

⁶⁵ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 123-124.

⁶⁶ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 84.

⁶⁷ Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, doc. 91. Also see doc. 146, 160, 171, 184.

aspect of Indians' husbandry, he also undermined much of their work. He wrote that the Indians did not raise any domesticated animals, except for "certain hennes & cocks," which were "very rare and scant."⁶⁸ As such, the men of America toiled the earth, not with oxen, horses, or other domesticated animals that Europeans used, since they had none, "but with the sweat and labour of their bodies." Even so, Thevet clarified, their "laboure is very little" because the land was "frutefull inough of it selfe."⁶⁹

Food as a means to evaluate other Europeans

Discussions of food and eating in early English exploration narratives did more than characterize Native Americans as exotic "others" and assign value to America for its potential commodities; food was also a means to evaluate the behavior of other Europeans nations in the "New World." Münster, a German scholar, used food to highlight the Spaniards' abuse of their relationship with America's inhabitants. Even with all of the attention Münster and other European authors devoted to Native Americans' anthropophagy, there was a general understanding among Europeans that not all Indians were fierce cannibals. Münster used food to demonstrate the Spaniards' "evyll" treatment of docile, not cannibal, Indians. He claimed that the Spaniards consumed nearly all of the roots that the Native Americans used to make their bread and pushed them to the brink of famine. Münster stated that under the pretense of searching for gold, the Spaniards "committed innumerable wronges and mischievous acts," and yet the main details he provided about their "outragiousnes and crueltie" regarded their demands for food. Münster wrote that the Spanish forced the Indians to gather and increase their roots, placing them under "great labor"; meanwhile, the Spaniards gave themselves to play,

⁶⁸ Thevet, *The New Found Worlde*, doc. 78.

⁶⁹ Thevet, *The New Found Worlde*, doc. 101-102

wantonness, and idleness. The Spanish also made the Indians pay a tribute in the form of spices and gossampine cotton, intensifying their agricultural labor.⁷⁰ While some of these incidents may have occurred, and others might have been exaggerated as a part of colonial propaganda, Münster's argument about the Spaniards cruelty and abuse was framed by a discussion of food. He provided no details about direct physical violence or damage to property; instead, he stated that the Spaniards committed innumerable wrongs in their constant their demand for food.

In contrast to Münster, Matire, and Thevet, Bartolomé de las Casas – a Dominican Friar and Spanish historian – used food to portray Indians favorably in his narratives about the “New World.” In 1516, at the age of 32, Spanish officials appointed Las Casas as the “Protector of the Indians.” This administrative position was responsible for attending to the well being of the indigenous populations, including speaking on their behalf in courts and reporting back to the King of Spain on how they were being treated. Las Casa was the first person to hold this new post and spent many years in America. As the “Protector of the Indians,” Las Casas held a sympathetic view toward Indians. His writings did not discuss Indian cannibalism, but rather, when covering food and eating, contrasted Indians' generosity in sharing their food with Europeans and the Spaniards' gluttony.

In 1583, nearly three decades after Matire's influential *Decades*, Las Casas's *The Spanish Colonie* became available for an English audience (originally published in 1551 in Spanish). It took time for Las Casas's kind depiction of Indians to become widely accessible in English. Las Casas published several works between 1516 and 1566, but *The Spanish Colonie* was the only book to be translated into English in the sixteenth century. It was not

⁷⁰ Münster, *A Treatyse of the Newe India*, doc. 72-73.

until 1656 that two more of his books were printed in English, with a few more of his books translated near the end of the seventeenth century. Las Casas's humanizing text stood in stark contrast to the other sixteenth-century "New World" narratives that portrayed Indians as "others" who lacked order and civility.

Las Casas, similar to Münster, also used food to evaluate European behavior in the "New World," and in particular, to highlight Spanish cruelty toward the indigenous populations. Las Casas stated that soon after their arrival, the Spaniards began to forcibly take the Indians' food because they were not content with the amount of food the Indians gave them out of their good will. He noted the Spaniards' gluttony; what might have satisfied three households, with ten people each, "one spaniarde woulde eate and destroy in a day;" because of this, many Indians "hid their victuals."⁷¹ The Spaniards not only took the Indians' food, but also forced the Native Americans to perform agricultural labor; several native "men died with toyle and famine" and some "women died of the same in the fields."⁷² The themes of Spanish gluttony, of them stealing the Native American's food store, of the Indians' hard work in the fields without proper nutrition, and of them literally dying of hunger and thirst, were continual refrains in *The Spanish Colonie*.⁷³

For Las Casas, food became a useful tool to demonstrate Spanish cruelty. He argued that the Spanish exerted their unrighteous power over the indigenous population by controlling the food supply. He did not focus on beatings, physical destruction, or any other

⁷¹ Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Spanish Colonie, or Briefe Chronicle of the Acts and Gestes of the Spaniardes in the West Indies, Called the Newe World*, trans. by M. M. S., Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 878:09, (London: Thomas Dawson for William Brome, 1583), doc 11.

⁷² Las Casas, *The Spanish Colonie*, doc. 15. Las Casas also mentions that some women did not die from famine, but rather fell mad; see doc. 21. In addition to agricultural labor, Las Casas also notes that the Spanish forced some Indians to search for gold; regardless of the type of labor, the Spaniards, according to Las Casas, consistently underfed the Indians.

⁷³ Las Casas, *The Spanish Colonie*, doc. 11, 15, 21, 30, 38, 43, 47, 58-9, and 67-8.

repercussions for Indians who might have refused their slave labor, but rather elucidated the Spaniards' unruly actions by discussing their egregious want of food and limiting Indians consumption of food.

One of the most striking features of Las Casas's *Spanish Colonie* is that rather than address Native America cannibalism, or rumors of Indian anthropophagy, he instead focused on the generosity of Native Americans food sharing. Las Casas noted that the Indians received the Spaniards as their own, and brought them more than sufficient food every day, simply out of the goodness of their hearts. Las Casas claimed that "this is the liberality of all these Indians of the New World, to bestow on the Spaniards of al that they have in great abundance."⁷⁴

Unlike the English narratives of the "New World" that came before *The Spanish Colonie*, Las Casas provided a uniquely humane depiction of Native Americas. His job, as the "Protector of the Indians," was to advocate for Indians and their needs, and this empathetic perspective gave *The Spanish Colonie* a distinct tone. It is difficult to measure the exact impact of Las Casas's book on an English audience, but because his work came decades after Matire's popular *Decades*. Considering that the rest of Las Casas's writings were not translated until seventy years later, long after England had established its own colonial enterprises in the Americas, one could conclude that the idea of a cannibalistic Indian was more widespread than that of a benevolent Indian.

Whether trying to understand a foreign people, a strange land, or other Europeans, foodways played a central role in early modern narratives of America available to English readers. Through a discourse of foodways, early modern narratives of America portrayed

⁷⁴ Las Casas, *The Spanish Colonie*, doc.38.

Indians as exotic and inferior, as disorderly and uncivilized whose behavior hardly entitled them to a land of such abundance. The English, in contrast, were depicted as tough survivors, deserving of bountiful lands that were ripe for exploitation. And the Spanish were described as unfit to govern this “New World.” Underlying discussions of food and eating in American, in travel narratives of American available in English, was an argument for English rightful dominance and superiority.

CHAPTER TWO

Changing Impressions: Foodways in Early Modern Narratives of Africa

Food and foodways, as a means of understanding newly “discovered” the foreign lands and their inhabitants, appeared not only in travel narratives of America, but also in exploration accounts of Africa as a means of cultural discernment and hierarchical formation. However, the English discourse of foodways in African differed from that of America. Authors of Africa did not depend on stories of cannibalism to delineate Europeans from Africans, or to “other,” Africans, and many moved away from antiquity’s portrayal of a monstrous Africa. Instead, early modern narratives of Africa often relied upon implicit comparisons between Africans and Europeans, such as the use of food in rituals, while continuing to maintain notions of European supremacy, for example, by highlighting poor table manners or agricultural incompetence

Johann Boemus’s *The Description of the Contrey of Aphrique*

One of the first popular early modern English texts to offer a description of Africa was *The Manners, Laws and Customs of all Peoples*, written by a German humanist named Johann Boemus in 1520, and translated into English decades later. Literate Europeans wanted detailed knowledge about the inhabitants of distant lands in order to reconcile new and old ideas about mankind, but the initial reports were scattered and difficult to find.⁷⁵ Boemus’s gathered both classical and renaissance material to write *The Manners, Laws and Customs of all Peoples* and provided the public with one of the first encyclopedic texts of the

⁷⁵ Prior to the Age of Discovery, Europeans turned to Herodotus and Pliny to explain the details of cultural diversity (i.e. the manners and customs of mankind), or to other medieval publications that mostly recycled Herodotus’s and Pliny’s ideas.

New and Old world.⁷⁶ Boemus divided his encyclopedia into three volumes – Europe, Asia, and Africa – and gave geographical and ethnographical descriptions of the different countries. From the time Boemus wrote *The Manners, Laws and Customs of all Peoples* in 1520 until 1620, there were at least 47 editions published, available in five languages; thus, it is reasonable to assume that Boemus’s work influenced early modern European perceptions of human cultures on a global scale.⁷⁷

Tracing the origins of the information in Boemus’s encyclopedia is nearly impossible given that Boemus did not say from where his material came, except for a few names in his introduction. The numerous editions and translations also compound the issue of trying to identify the origination of the various reports in *The Manners, Laws and Customs of all Peoples*; however, the popularity of *The Manners, Laws and Customs of all Peoples* is much more significant for acknowledging its impact on the English mindset, rather than identifying its exact origin. And despite not knowing the methodology that Boemus, or the editors of his work, used to decide what material to cover, it is evident that food and eating remained at the heart of the European understanding of new places and their inhabitants, and their own place in the global world.

Boemus’s *The Manners, Laws and Customs of all Peoples*, provided Europeans with an unprecedented range of traits, customs, and institutions from around the world. This was a book unlike any other. However, Boemus’s writing on the cultural diversity of Africa was geographically limited to the northern parts of the continent because he omitted the

⁷⁶ Modern scholars have described Boemus’s work as the first attempt in the early modern history to give the common picture of the human culture in the world, though America was excluded from his text. See Iryna Synkova, "Johann Boemus and his book *Mores, Leges et Ritus Omnium Gentium*," *Belarusian Historical Review* 14, no. 1/2 (December 2007): 187-206.

⁷⁷ Henriette Bugge, *Shifting Cultures: Interaction and Discourse in the Expansion of Europe* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1995), 17-18.

discoveries made by Portuguese mariners during the fifteenth century, probably because he was unaware of them.⁷⁸ Two editions of Boemus's volume on Africa became available to the English public in the 1550's with William Prat's translation, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique* (1554), and William Waterman's translation, *The Fardle of Facions Containing the Anciente Maners, Customes, and Lawes, of the Peoples Enhabiting the two Partes of the Earth, called Affrike and Asia* (1555).⁷⁹ Not much is known about either Prat or Waterman, and given the lack of specific references by Boemus, this chapter refers to the ideas in *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique* and *The Fardle of Facions* as Boemus's ideas, for the sake of simplicity, with the understanding that the editors or translators might have altered the words in some ways, intentionally or not. Also, for the sake of clarity, this chapter refers to Boemus's volume on Africa as *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique* only; omitting the alternate titles of *The Fardle of Facions*, which included his volume on Asia as well as Africa, and *The Manners, Laws and Customes of All People*, which include all three volumes on Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Beginning with the prologue, Boemus framed his discourse of foodways in his general history of mankind, beginning with Adam and Eve. Boemus did not specify where or when his broad prefaced history takes place, but he wrote of a general improvement of humanity in which men's "diete [became] more delicate," and in which they banished all of

⁷⁸ Margaret Hodgen, "Johann Boemus (Fl. 1500): An Early Anthropologist," *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 55, no. 2 (April 1, 1953): 286-7.

⁷⁹ Johann Boemus, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, trans. Wyllyam Prat, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 236:02 (London: Wyllyam Powel, 1554) and Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions Containing the Anciente Maners, Customes, and Lawes, of the Peoples Enhabiting the Two Partes of the Earth, Called Affrike and Asia*, trans. William Waterman, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 281:07 (London: Ihon Kingstone and Henry Sutton, 1555).

their inhumanity by no longer “eat[ing] the fleshe of men.”⁸⁰ He also noted that men made the earth more fruitful by domesticating the land, removing great stones and tree stubs, and irrigating water from springs. These changes to the land “brought forth wyne and other encrease abundantly, the whiche before did yelde them but a lyttle quantitie.” Mankind now had “infinite gardens & arbors” because they knew how to “order the grounde to brynge forth fruite.”⁸¹ Boemus recorded other advancement to mankind – more handsome apparel, more finessed speech, more calm behavior – but discussions of diets, food, and agriculture were central in his argument that humanity had elevated itself.⁸² And given that most Europeans understood the human body through the humoral theory, in which one’s diet and environment affected one’s physical and mental constitution, an underlying argument of Boemus’s work might have been that mankind’s improved diet lead to the other areas of progress; indeed, the agricultural revolution offered all kinds of advancement for various societies.

Unlike the first descriptions of America, and ancient accounts of Africa, Boemus’s *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique* did not depict the indigenous population as cannibals. In fact, other than prologue where Boemus mentioned that mankind advanced by no longer eating men’s flesh, cannibalism is absent. In the decades that followed Boemus’s popular encyclopedia, especially with the expansion of the slave trade, the theme of African cannibalism became widespread in British writings, so it is noteworthy that this early-modern authoritative text on Africa did not call attention to anthropophagy. Instead,

⁸⁰ Boemus, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, doc. 12.

⁸¹ Boemus, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, doc. 13.

⁸² Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 6.

Boemus focused on Africans' diet and their manner of eating in order to comprehend this new group of people and how they compared to Europeans.

In describing the country of Ethiopia, Boemus differentiated between the commoner's and the noble man's diet, and seemingly paralleled the Ethiopian and European foodways. The commoner primarily survived from herbs and roots, with the small quantity of meat and milk. They lacked fruits and grains, except for a scant amount of dates, but what they lacked in food, they made up for in a "good store of gromel and harly, wherof they use to make drincke."⁸³ Noble men, on the other hand, typically had more than one course of food. In banquets of honor, they first ate very finely minced and spiced meat, and followed that with a selection of fruit.⁸⁴ In many ways, the Ethiopian foodways appears similar to that of Europeans. The only exotic food that Boemus noted, in passing, was elephant meat.⁸⁵

With the Egyptians, Boemus emphasized the role of food in sacrifices and other cultural ceremonies, and appeared to parallel Egyptian and European society. According to Boemus, Egyptians would not eat the heads of the sacrificed beasts – oxen, bulls, and steers – because they thought this meat was cursed by the execrations during the time of their sacrifice. Instead, they sold the heads to foreign merchants or tossed them into the river Nile if they could not sell them. Cows were revered as sacred, so they were not eaten nor sacrificed. Conversely to the cow, Egyptians deemed beans unclean, and thus they refrained from eating them; priests would not even look at them. Boemus's *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique* drew attention to the fact that Egyptians refused to eat the heads

⁸³ Boemus, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, doc. 32-33; Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 23 (quote).

⁸⁴ Boemus, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, doc. 37; Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 26.

⁸⁵ Boemus, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, doc. 33; Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 23.

of sacrificial beasts, cows, and beans, but for different religious reasoning. In ceremonies honoring the dead, Egyptians used food to either celebrate life or to assist their mourning, depending on whether the death was of a common person or the king. When an ordinary person died, guests at these funerals were told to “Eate and make good chere” or “drinke and be mery” because after “thou arte deade, thou shalbe like to this picture [of the deceased].”⁸⁶ The food included pancakes made of wheat and rye, drinks made from bran or barley, fish, ducks, quail, and mallards.⁸⁷ Thus, during a commoner’s memorial service, food and drink helped the mourners embrace a celebratory spirit. On the contrary, when a king died, Egyptians grieved and abstained from “from all flesshe of beastes, all meates... all wine and all preparation of service at the table.”⁸⁸ They ate only the most ordinary food and expressed their grief through plain meals. These discussions of the ceremonial meaning of food in Africa portrayed Africans in a refined light on par with Europeans.

When it came to describing the “other people” of Africa, Boemus paid careful attention to Africans’ foodways, particularly their consumption of meat. In one section of his encyclopedia, Boemus highlighted the lack of meat in some tribes’ diets. He recorded that the “Atlantes” did not eat any kind of flesh, while the “Pastoriciens” ate flesh and milk but no beef, and the “Barcees” women refrained from consuming both beef and pork.⁸⁹ In another section, he noted that some Africans did not feed meat to their children until they, specifically the boys, were old enough to learn how to hunt. The adults provided the boys

⁸⁶ Boemus, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, doc. 43; Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 28.

⁸⁷ Boemus, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, doc. 42-43; Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 28.

⁸⁸ Boemus, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, doc. 47; Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 31-32 (quote).

⁸⁹ Boemus, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, doc. 66-67; Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 44.

with darts and instructed to throw them at various beasts; once the boy hit one of his targets, then he was allowed to eat its meat.⁹⁰

This special attention to meat, or the lack thereof, indicates early modern Europeans' attempt to convey and understanding of Africans through the humoral theory, and perhaps question African vitality. According to the humoral theory, the four humors – blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm – needed to be balanced in order for a person to remain physically and mentally healthy; the humoral equilibrium affected one's physicality as well as one's temperament. Each humor was associated with a specific temperament, and blood's temperament was "sanguine." Early modern Europeans strongly associated meat with the humor blood, and meat, in moderation, was considered a healthy part of one's diet. Galen, one of the leading contributors to the humoral theory, argued that too much meat would cause sanguine illnesses like "cachexy" and "dropsies," but Galen did not specify the possible deleterious effects of too little meat in one's diet.⁹¹ Because the environment, climate, and other factors beyond one diet's affected one's humoral equilibrium, it is difficult to deduce what Europeans might have thought about the limited meat consumption among some Africans. Nonetheless, given the association between meat and the humor blood, it is possible the English interpreted this lack of meat in their diet as causing anemia, weakness, fatigue, or other physical ailments that result from an insufficiency of blood. And given the connection between blood and a sanguine temperament, vegetarianism might have suggested possible pessimism, depression, and doubtfulness among some tribes. Thus, Boemus's careful recording of the consumption of

⁹⁰ Boemus, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, doc. 74; Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 49. Boemus does not specify whether or not, or at what age, girls were allowed to eat meat.

⁹¹ Johanna Moyer, "'The Food Police': Sumptuary Prohibitions on Food in the Reformation," in *Food and Faith in Christian Culture*, by Ken Albala, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 67-68.

meat among various African groups may have positioned Europeans in a place where they could question Africans' overall health – their liveliness and their endurance to govern themselves.

In other parts of his volume, Boemus devoted enormous detail to the preparation of some foods in Africa probably in an effort to understand African's health through their foodways in consonance with humoral theory. Boemus wrote that Africans dressed their fish and laid them upon stones midday, in order to cook them with the heat of the sun. Once they flipped the fish and it finished roasting, they plucked out the flesh and put it in a hollow stone to mix it with the grain of a gooseberry tree. Boemus noted that fish and gooseberry “mingled together so well, that it maketh goodly meate to eate.” This meal was a staple in Africa and was served with “great abundance and joy” as they sang and made “good chere one with an other.”⁹² Boemus went on to convey that these Africans seldom fell ill, which he specifically attributed to their “uniforme diete” and eating “but one kynde of meate,” however, he noted, they still had a shorter life span than Europeans.⁹³

Boemus's *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique* also detailed Africans' manner of eating, and similar to the travel narratives of America, these stories generally reinforced a “savage/civilized” dichotomy which undermined the right to African sovereignty. For instance, Boemus stated that African took the bones of the fishes and “gnaweth it like a dogge” and “in so doynge they dyffer nothyng from beastes.” He also noted that the

⁹² Boemus, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, doc. 78-79 (quotes); Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 51-52.

⁹³ Boemus, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, doc. 79 (quote); Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 52 (quote). While a variety of food was an important part of health according to the humoral theory, eating the same variety of foods was also a sign of good health; once one found the right combination of food that kept their humors in balance, then he or she could maintain his or her health by maintaining that same diet.

Africans went together to find a drinking well, supposedly shouting and crying along the way, sounding like a “multytud of wyld bestes” rather than “mens voyces.” Once at the fountains, they drank so much water that their full bellies would not let them return home, and instead, they rested there as if they were “dronken.”⁹⁴ The following day, they went back to “their fysshing: And so passe they their lyfe continually” because they were “contented with such victualle as commeth to hande.”⁹⁵ In many ways, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique* depicted Africans as wild animals or, at best, very simple humans who were content with little and lacked any desire to conquer the wilderness and improve their civilization.

The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique used a discourse of foodways to repeatedly hint that Africans lacked a strong work ethic and, with a touch of exoticism, compared them to animals. According to Boemus’s popular encyclopedia, the “Spermatophagi” lived by the fruit that had fallen from trees in the summer, and the rest of the year lived by herbs that they picked from the ground; there was no mention of Africans cultivating the land in order to eat nature’s fruit and herbs. That Boemus largely ignored African agriculture here might have suggested to the readers that Africans were either lazy or inept for not taking advantage of the land. Furthermore, Boemus recorded that the “Ilophagi” also gathered food from the fields and trees, although he stated that they climbed the trees in order to retrieve its bounty rather than relying on fallen fruit. Boemus noted that the “Ilophagi” had “suche a nimblenes in climbyng” that they leapt from bough to

⁹⁴ Boemus, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, doc. 79 (quotes); Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 52.

⁹⁵ Boemus, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, doc. 79; Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 52-53 (quote).

bough and tree to tree “like Cattes or Squirelles.”⁹⁶ That *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique* continually compared Africans to various animals may have given the readers the impression that Africans were more animal like than civilized humans.

Boemus discussed African foodways to complex and contradictory ends in his effort to detail cultural variety and provide a “fundamental source for reflections on the origin, evolution and diversity of mankind” to early modern Europe.⁹⁷ In some sections of *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, Boemus used food to make parallels with European society, while in other parts of his book food was used as a demarcation of difference. The humoral conception of the body, and the belief that food potentially shaped one’s constitution and character, originated in antiquity; thus, the classical and renaissance authors whom Boemus relied upon for his work had carefully recorded foreigners’ foodways. Boemus essentially reiterated the importance of food in understanding foreign people and places when he selected texts that focused on foodways.

Boemus’s systematic order, unvarnished prose, and the absence of fantastical embellishments differentiated his works from some of his predecessors, as well as his negligence of alleged African cannibalism. Herodotus, Pliny, and other authors from antiquity depicted Africans as monstrous beings and cannibals. Medieval works, such as John Mandeville’s popular *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, followed in this fantastical tradition and painted Africans as a grotesque species. Even though Boemus relied primarily upon classical and renaissance authors, he departed from his predecessors with

⁹⁶ Boemus, *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, doc. 71; Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 48 (quote).

⁹⁷ Bugge, *Shifting Cultures*, 17.

his factual tone and exclusion of fanciful stories; as such, his encyclopedia became a widespread early modern reference book.⁹⁸

Leo Africanus's *Geographical Historie of Africa*

Following Boemus's widespread encyclopedia, one of the next most popular early modern books on Africa, available in English, was Leo Africanus's *A Geographical Historie of Africa*.⁹⁹ Unlike Boemus, Africanus based his book primarily on his own travels and observations, rather than relying on compilation of ancient and renaissance texts. As a Moorish scholar and diplomat, Africanus traveled widely, through Africa and elsewhere. In 1526, Africanus finished his lengthy report on Africa, which became "the most comprehensive accounts of the continent for Europeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries."¹⁰⁰ His text appeared in several languages, including Latin, Italian, French, and English. In 1600, John Pory – a traveler, geographer, and associate of Richard Hakluyt – translated Africanus's *Geographical Historie of Africa* into English while adding his own material text. Pory clearly demarcated his additions, which included a prefaced "generall description of Africa, and also a particular treatise of all the maine lands and isles" and a suffixed "relation of the great Princes and the manifold religions in that part of the world."¹⁰¹ Pory's translation of *A Geographical Historie of Africa* influenced the minds of

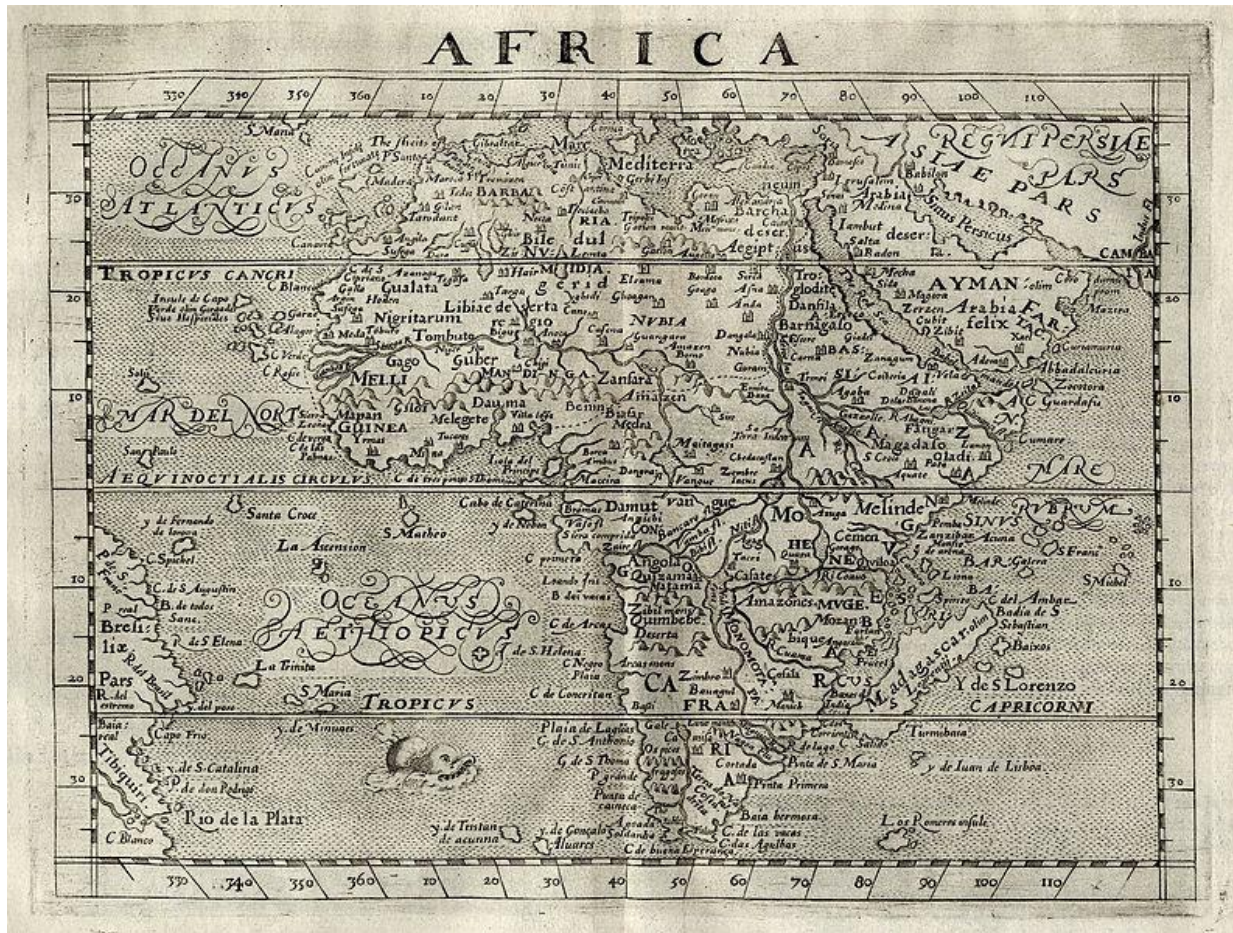
⁹⁸ Bugge, *Shifting Cultures*, 19-20.

⁹⁹ Leo Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, trans. John Pory. Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 262:12 (London: Printed by Eliot's Court Press, 1600). The man known to Europeans as Leo Africanus was born in Granada, in 1494, as al-hassan Ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan; Europeans also knew him as John or Johann Leo (Africanus). His *Geographical Historie of Africa* is often referred to as *The History and Description of Africa*.

¹⁰⁰ Andrew Hadfield, *Amazons, Savages, and Machiavels: Travel and Colonial Writing in English, 1550-1630: An Anthology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 139.

¹⁰¹ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 1.

William Shakespeare, Sir Walter Raleigh, among others, and “remained the most influential source on Africa available on English until the nineteenth century.”¹⁰²



Map of Africa from Leo Africanus's *Geographical Historie of Africa*, 1600 (via Wikimedia Commons)

Both Africanus's *Geographical Historie of Africa* and Pory's additions covered African food and foodways, with the central difference that Pory included cannibalism while Africanus did not. In Pory's prologue, he wrote that some African peoples “have shamblers of mans-flesh as we have of beeves and muttoms.” He also stated that “they eat their enemies which they take in the warres” and “their slaves which they cannot make away for

¹⁰² Peter C. Mancall, ed., *Travel Narratives from the Age of Discovery: An Anthology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 96-97.

a good round price, they sell unto the butchers.”¹⁰³ Thus, before English readers came to Africanus’s central body of text, they were reminded of antiquity’s belief that Africans were cannibals. Then, once readers finished Africanus’s text, Pory’s epilogue again reminded them of antiquity’s monstrous Africa. He wrote that certain African tribes, who dwell upon the left bank of the Nile, were “reputed most brutish, inhabiting in woods and dens, and being devourers of mans flesh.” He went on to nearly repeat what he had mention in his prologue, that the “Anzichi” had “a shambles of mans flesh, as we have of the flesh of oxen” and they “eate their enimies whom they take in war; they sell their slaves to butchers, if they can light on no greater prise.”¹⁰⁴ Pory’s additions to *Geographical Historie of Africa* suggest that his agenda may have differed from Africanus’s.

Pory worked for Richard Hakluyt, one of the most persistent promoters of English expansion overseas, which might be indicative as to why he chose to add his prologue and epilogue with cannibalism.¹⁰⁵ Using documents from overseas exploration by adventurers, merchants, statesmen, and others, Hakluyt set out to prove to the world the preeminence of the English people. In *Principal Navigations*, Hakluyt unabashedly stated that “in searching the most opposite corners and quarters of the world and, to speak plainly, in compassing the vast globe of the earth more then once, have excelled all the nations and people of the earth.”¹⁰⁶ Hakluyt wanted to demonstrate that the English were superior to both other

¹⁰³ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 27.

¹⁰⁴ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 225.

¹⁰⁵ For more information on Hakluyt’s influence on English imperialism, see Emily Bartels, “Imperialist Beginnings: Richard Hakluyt and the Construction of Africa,” *Criticism* 34, no. 4 (October 1, 1992): 517–38.

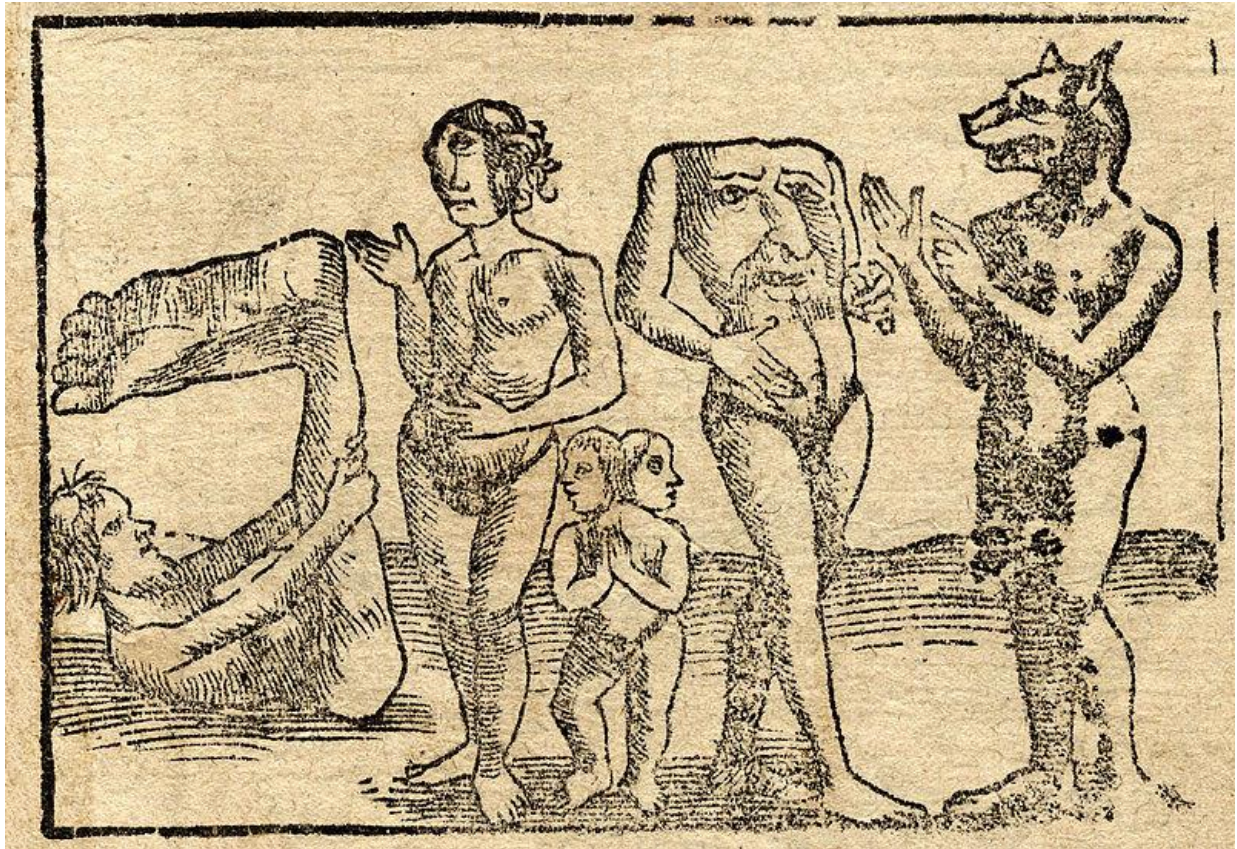
¹⁰⁶ Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 245:04; Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 1575:01, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 216:03 ; Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 286:02, (London: George Bishop and Ralph Newberie, 1589), doc. 2.

Europeans nations and newly “discovered” foreign countries. Thus, by discussing instances of cannibalism in his opening and closing of the *Geographical Historie of Africa*, Pory’s text aligns with Hakluyt’s motives – to praise the English, especially in comparison to foreign “others,” and encourage English imperialism.

Africanus, as a well-traveled multi-lingual scholar, had knowledge of African that far exceed his European contemporaries and his first-hand account of the continent gave Europe a much more accurate depiction of Africans than earlier fantasies furnished by Herodotus, Pliny, oral dramas, and rumors. Africanus populated Africa with actual people and true kingdoms, whereas previously the continent was filled with the Anthropophagi, or cannibals, of *Othello*, and with “one-eyed humans without a nose or face; others with the body of a panther or a lion, or the head of a dog; others with dogs for their kings.”¹⁰⁷ Boemus moved readers one step forward with his matter-of-fact volume on Africa, but Africanus went further by correcting the Plinian notions of a monstrous Africa; nonetheless, his *Geographical Historie of Africa* did not displace the classical western perception of Africans but rather augmented these narratives.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Penpoints, Gunpoints, and Dreams: Towards a Critical Theory of the Arts and the State in Africa*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 85.

¹⁰⁸ Mary Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 140.



An engraving of the Plinian races in Africa - (from left to right) a monopod or sciapod, a female cyclops, conjoined twins, a blemmye, and a cynocephaly – from Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia*, 1544 (via Wikimedia Commons)

Although Africanus helped humanize Africa, and drew parallels between the African and European diet, his *Geographical Historie of Africa* still reinforced a “savage/civilized” dichotomy through a discourse of foodways. When covering the victuals and the manner of eating in city of Fez, Africanus stated that the “common sort” made a “pot with fresh meat” twice a week, while “the gentlemen and richer sort” had this every day.¹⁰⁹ The quantities may have differed by class, but Africanus recorded that the people of Fez had three meals a day, with breakfast consisting of fruit, bread, and frumenty – a popular dish in Western European medieval cuisine made from boiled, cracked wheat – or broth thickened with flesh; dinner consisted meats, cheeses, olives; and supper consisted of bread, melons,

¹⁰⁹ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 107.

grapes, milk, and occasionally couscous in the winter.¹¹⁰ This diet – especially with the class distinctions, and the mention of “fresh” meat and the widely-consumed frumenty – looked very familiar to Europeans.¹¹¹ Aware of the similarity, Africanus stated that if you compared the Fez manner of eating with the gentlemen of Europe, the Africans “may seeme to be miserable and base fellowes; not for any want or scarcitie of victuals, but for want of good manners and cleanlines.” Thus, he made the argument that while the Fez and European diet might have been comparable, the Africans’ poor table manners, of even the Fez gentlemen, distinguished them as less civilized. He elaborated that the Africans sat on the ground, which was “uncovered, and filthie”; they had no knives and instead they tore and “greedily devoure their meate like hungrie dogs”; the couscous and pottage were often put in one dish in which even the gentlemen used their hands rather than a spoon to serve themselves; and their cups were “as big as a milke-bowle.” According to Africanus, doctors were the only group to be “somewhat more orderly at meales.”¹¹² Even as Africanus distinguished himself from his predecessors by humanizing Africa, he still used Africans’ manner of eating as a means to delineate them from Europeans.

Another way in which Africanus’s *Geographical Historie of Africa* differed from classical and medieval accounts of Africa was his characterization of Africans’ innate temperament as choleric, rather than melancholic, which may have undermined African sovereignty. According to the humoral theory, the four main humors – blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm – corresponded with temperaments – sanguine, choleric, melancholic, phlegmatic – and with qualities – warm and moist, warm and dry, cold and

¹¹⁰ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 107-108.

¹¹¹ Frumenty is made from hulled wheat boiled in milk or meat broth and seasoned with spices; this dish was popular in medieval Europe.

¹¹² Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 108.

dry, and cold and moist – respectively. Climate affected the humoral balance and the classical mindset held that the torrid southern climate would burn up the warm and moist humors, leaving Africans temperament cool, dry, and melancholic. This idea was widespread; William Shakespeare’s Desdemona, when referring to Othello, stated that “I think the sun where he was born / Drew all such humours from him.”¹¹³ Thus, Africans were thought to be naturally wise, constant, calculating, and restrained, free from the passionate influence of the hot and moist humors.¹¹⁴ Even Pliny, with his monstrous Africa, subscribed to the notion that Ethiopians were wise and cunning.¹¹⁵

In contrast to the classical northern Africa – who was thoughtful, dispassionate, and melancholic – Africanus depicted the country as uniformed, crude, and choleric. He portrayed Libyans as “not onely ignorant of all good learning and liberall sciences; but... altogether careles and destitute of vertue.”¹¹⁶ Numidians were ignorant of “naturall, domesticall, & commonwealth-matters” and addicted to “treason, trecherie, murther, theft, and robberie.”¹¹⁷ The inhabitants of the region of Duccala were a “rude people, and most ignorant of all civilitie and humanitie.”¹¹⁸ And the town of Gago was filled with such “ignorant and rude” people that you would not “finde one learned man in the space of an hundred miles.”¹¹⁹ The classically wise African played a minor role in *The Geographical Historie of Africa*; instead, Africanus characterized Africans as lacking a general education of any kind.

¹¹³ *Othello* 3.4.28-9

¹¹⁴ Michael Neill and William Shakespeare, *The Oxford Shakespeare: Othello: The Moor of Venice* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2008), 127

¹¹⁵ Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama*, 140-1.

¹¹⁶ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 47.

¹¹⁷ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 58.

¹¹⁸ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 77

¹¹⁹ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 181.

Oftentimes, Africanus used food and agricultural practices, or the lack thereof, to underscore African's ineptness. In describing the region of Hea, he stated that all kinds of fruit were scarce among them, not because the land was infertile, "but because the people are so rude and ignorant in this behalfe, that very few of them are skilfull in planting, graffing, or pruning of trees."¹²⁰ When writing about the town of Subeit, built on the south side of the river of Ommirabih, he recorded that their "unskilfulnes and ignorance" were such "that they have neither gardens nor vineyards."¹²¹ And in the town of Ileusugaghen, according to Africanus, there were "no gardens at all... because the inhabitants are such slothfull and grosse people."¹²² Just as African used poor table manners to call attention to Africans' lack of civility, he used a lack of knowledge about cultivating food to illustrate African's incompetence.

Not only were Africans ignorant, according to Africanus, they were also impulsive, aggressive, and choleric. *The Geographical Historie of Africa* described the inhabitants of Barbary as "abounding exceedingly with choler... [a] vile and base people, being no better accounted of by their governours then if they were dogs." Africanus argued that they were so possessed with vexation and strife, and greedily addicted their "filthie lucre," that they could never attain any kind of civility or good behavior. He concluded that those on the Barbary Coast lived "a beastly kinde of life, being utterly destitute of the use of reason, of dexteritie of wit, and of all artes. Yea they so behave themselves, as if they had continually lived in a forrest among wilde beasts."¹²³ It was not just Barbary, but also other regions of Africa that Africanus portrayed as choleric, unthinking, and barbaric. The town of

¹²⁰ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 59.

¹²¹ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 80.

¹²² Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 62.

¹²³ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 57-58.

“Ileusugaghen” was at “continuall warre with their next neighbours, which is performed with such monstrous bloodshed and manslaughter, that they deserve rather the name of beasts then of men.”¹²⁴ And, the inhabitants of the “mountaine of Seusaua” lead a “brutish and savage life, waging continuall warre with their next neighbours.”¹²⁵ A common theme in Africanus’s *Geographical Historie of Africa* was “continuall warre”; he wrote that Ethiopians were continually at war with Christians while the rest of Africa was continually at war with their neighbors or “among themselves.”¹²⁶

In addition to his brutish depictions of Africa, Africanus also noted several choleric foods in the African diet which, according to the humoral theory, would only intensify their boorish behavior. In a popular health and dietary guideline book, Andrew Boorde, a sixteenth-century physician and writer, insisted that choleric men “must abstayne frome eatynge hote spyces, & to refrayne frome drynkyng of wyne, and eatynge of Colorycke meate.”¹²⁷ Hot spices and dry wine would leave men warm and dry, and thus choleric. Choleric “meat” may have either denoted the flesh of an animal or any other food item that had warm and dry characteristics. For example, in Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew*, Petruchio justifies his refusal to allow Kate, and himself, to eat dinner because the meat was “burnt and dried away” (4.1.106). After dramatically throwing the meat on the ground, he tells Kate:

¹²⁴ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 62.

¹²⁵ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 75

¹²⁶ Africanus uses the phrase “continual war” to describe Ethiopians (doc. 20), “Bugia” or Béjaïa (doc. 38), Numidia (doc. 40), the Banimarini (doc. 41), the people of Hea (doc. 60-63), the people of Morocco (doc. 71-74), the region of Guzzula (doc. 77), the cite of Alemdin (doc. 83), the moutain of Tenueues (doc. 84), the moutain of Tedles (doc. 89), mount “Seusaoen” (doc. 132), mount Merniza (doc. 133), mount Beni Guazeuall (doc. 133-134), the desert of Gareth (doc. 137), mount Gualhasa (doc. 153), the people of Lemta (doc. 177-8), among others.

¹²⁷ Andrew Boorde, *A Compendyous Regyment or a Dyetary of Healthe Made in Mountpyllyer*, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 309:13 (London: Wyllyam Powell, 1547), doc 34.

And I expressly am forbid to touch it,
For it engenders choler, planteth anger;
And better 'twere that both of us did fast,
Since of ourselves, ourselves are choleric,
Than feed it with such over-roasted flesh. (4.1.107-111)

As opposed to choleric meats, wine was a very specific food item and easily identifiable as choleric. And, of all the choleric foods, Africanus primarily highlighted Africans consumption of wine. Speaking of the country generally, he stated that “their chiefe gentlemen and noblemen proove gowtie often times with immoderate drinking of wine.”¹²⁸ Africa’s great stores of both “both browne and white” wine meant that even some valiant inhabitants fell “too much addicted to drunkennes.”¹²⁹ Regionally, Moroccans bought and sold “wine so freely, that no man controules them for it,” while the people of mount Beni Achmed drank “pure wine” and had “continuall and ancient quarrels among themselves,” implying wine’s connection to choleric temperament.¹³⁰ While Africanus did not explicitly argue that wine played a role in Africans’ fiery disposition, many of his readers would have been familiar with the humoral theory and wine’s choleric traits.

In many ways, Africanus’s boorish portrayal of Africans might be viewed as his incorporation of Pliny’s monstrous Africa into his book. In *The Geographical Historie of Africa*, Africans were human, but they were uncivilized and unrefined. Africanus’s characterization of the “black man’s beastliness is aimed explicitly at their classical legacy of wisdom and political acumen.”¹³¹ Thus, while Africanus humanized Africa, he still upheld the notion of European superiority.

¹²⁸ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 56.

¹²⁹ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 128 and doc.131.

¹³⁰ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 102 and doc. 134.

¹³¹ Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama*, 141.

Even with Africanus's portrayal of Africans' table manners and innate temperament, he did not use a discourse of foodways to represent all of Africa in a negative light. For example, Africanus noted that the prince of Libya welcomed him with a feast of roasted and sodden flesh, seasoned with sundry kinds of herbs and spices, and brought to the table in wicker platters. Africanus seemed impressed by the sumptuous reception. He described their bread, made from mill, as having "a most savorie and pleasant taste." At the end of the meal, there were "plentie of dates and great store of milke served." Africanus reported that his two days with the Libyan prince were filled with "woonderfull and magnificent cheere" which "would seeme incredible to report."¹³² Africanus was pleased with the Lybian prince's table manner, which stood in stark contrast to the manners of the gentlemen of Fez.

Besides highlighting the prince's kind manners, Africanus also discussed food as a means to paint a detailed portrait of Africa. In his descriptions of various towns, he very frequently included some information about the available food; even if the description was only a paragraph in length, Africanus would use one sentence to cover the foodways. While Africanus did not enjoy all of Africa's foodstuff, as he occasionally noted the unpleasant taste of some items, he was also delighted by others. He described Africa's wine as "cordiall, delicate, and strong."¹³³ Their grapes were the sweetest that Africanus had ever tasted and all their other fruits were of the "most delicate taste."¹³⁴ He often called their gardens pleasant, beautiful, and fruitful, even if some were "more like unto woods then

¹³² Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 48.

¹³³ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 17.

¹³⁴ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 120 and 116.

gardens.”¹³⁵ John Pory, the English translator and editor of *The Geographical Historie of Africa*, also noted the natural beauty in plots of African land “that without any humane industrie it may compare with the most artificiall gardens of Europe.”¹³⁶ These details about Africa’s edibles and gardens gave Europeans a more comprehensive and positive view of this vast space.

Outside of a discourse of foodways, Africanus had positives things to say about various African groups – the people of Seggheme were “personable, cheerefull, valiant, and warlike”; the inhabitants of Teza had a “valiant and liberall disposition”; Egyptians were “of an honest, cheereful, and liberall disposition”; the inhabitants of the city of Rasid were “courteous to strangers.”¹³⁷ Thus, *The Geographical Historie of Africa*, as a whole, offered a new complexity to Europeans’ understanding of Africa and its people. With Africanus’s *The Geographical Historie of Africa* in 1600, and Boemus’s *The Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique* of 1555, Pliny’s monstrous Africa – of headless men with faces in their chests and human-animal hybrids– largely disappeared by the start of the seventeenth century.¹³⁸

Richard Jobson’s *The Golden Trade*

Richard Jobson’s *The Golden Trade* (1623) followed the monumental works of Boemus (1555) and Africanus (1600). Jobson chronicled his trading along the Gambia River and his voyages to Ethiopia.. Little is known about Jobson, but from *The Golden Trade*, his only publication, one might deduce that he was an educated gentleman associated in some way with the Guinea Company, which financed his trip to Africa; he did not appear to be a merchant or sailor by trade. Jobson’s journey in 1620 was England’s

¹³⁵ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 92.

¹³⁶ Pory, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 25.

¹³⁷ Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, doc. 89, doc. 139, doc. 185, doc. 189.

¹³⁸ While Pliny’s African monsters disappeared, the notion of African cannibalism remained.

third in a series of voyages up the Gambian River. The first two proved disastrous as numerous Englishmen died from disease or from conflict with the Portuguese. Jobson's voyage had a lower mortality rate, though it would not have been considered a financial success because they did not find the gold that they were seeking, and instead had to be content with a trade in hides and wax. Altogether, the three Gambia ventures incurred an accumulated loss of over £5,600 and England abandoned their trading post up the River in 1621. Jobson's book, with his geographical and anthropological notes, was perhaps the only positive outcome, for England, from the Gambian venture.¹³⁹ Jobson's *The Golden Trade* is distinct because as it was one of the first travel narratives of Africa written by an Englishman and based on the author's personal experiences; thus, his book not only had the potential to shape English thought, but also reflected the English mindset.¹⁴⁰

Similar to his contemporaries, Jobson used a discourse of foodways and its implications with humoral theory to understand and explain the foreign people of Africa. He portrayed the "Maudingos" as a thoughtful people when it came to the time and the manner of their eating. He noted that they typically ate one meal a day after the sun went down, sitting around small fires made from reeds. Their meals typically included rice or some other grain which they hand-rolled into balls and "cast into their mouthes"; and, as "great breeders" of poultry, they usually ate "Cockes and Hennes." The Maudingos told Jobson that they seldom ate as a "preservation of their healths," and that sundown was the

¹³⁹ For more information Jobson and the Gambian Venture, see Nicholas Canny, *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume I: The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 251-2 and Stanley Finger and Marco Piccolino, *The Shocking History of Electric Fishes: From Ancient Epochs to the Birth of Modern Neurophysiology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 121-2.

¹⁴⁰ Boemus based his encyclopedic book on other author's works, he never traveled to Africa. Africanus wrote in the first person narrative, but he was English.

“fittest time for nourishment.”¹⁴¹ Jobson agreed with the Maudingos’s logic. He stated that “I hold well with the Blacks, that to feed at noone, is an unwholesome thing.” Jobson supported his view by invoking the humoral theory: the intense heat of the sun left the “interior parts” of the body cold and dry, “unapt for nutriment”; instead, the early morning and evening were the “fittest & convenientst times to receive our sustenance.” Thus, in order for him and his crew to “have able, and working bodies,” they ate in the absence of the sun.¹⁴² Jobson believed so strong in only eating in the sun’s absence that he interpreted the failure of the previous English voyages in the Gambian River, and their excessive illness, as a result of the Englishmen eating during the day. The sun’s severe heat, and then the Englishmen’s improper mealtime, messed with the Englishmen’s humoral balance, leaving them susceptible to disease. Jobson held that it was not due to a lack of self restraint, but rather due to ignorance that the other crews ate at the wrong time.¹⁴³ Thus, Jobson portrayed the Maudingos as more informed than the English, at least in this regard.

Jobson also had many complimentary things to say about African women, and through a discussion of food and food preparation, Jobson illustrated the women’s virtues. He noted that the Englishmen frequently traded with the “Fulbie” women who provided new milk, sour milk, curds, and two types of butter that were “without question... as good as any we have at home.” Jobson stressed the Fulbie women’s cleanliness and their food presentation. He relayed that the women placed their foodstuff in “small gourds like dishes” that were made up “very handsomely” and would “shine with cleanlinesse.” The

¹⁴¹ Richard Jobson, *The Golden Trade*, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 745:04 (London: Printed by Nicholas Okes and to be sold by Nicholas Bourne, 1623), doc. 23-24

¹⁴² Jobson, *The Golden Trade*, doc. 25-26.

¹⁴³ Jobson, *The Golden Trade*, doc. 24-25, and 26.

food itself was also “neate and cleane,” so that one would not be able to spot a “mote” – a small piece of dust or dirt – in the milk or butter. In the rare instance that An Englishman found an impurity in their food and pointed it out to the women, they would “blush” with embarrassment; clearly, the Fulbie women took pride in their immaculate food preparation. In case Jobson’s readers needed further clarification about the Fulbie women, he compared them to Irish women, both of whom the European reader might have expected to be unrefined, and noted a “great difference betweene them” because with regards to cleanliness, “your Irish woman hath no acquaintance.”¹⁴⁴

In addition to the Fulbie women, Jobson praised many African dishes, and consequently, the women who prepared them. He noted that the preparation of rice, grains, and all other “manner of victuall” that they ate were “onely womens worke.” He acknowledged the women’s hard work by conveying that the cultivation of rice could be “very painefull.”¹⁴⁵ One dinner that Jobson enjoyed included chicken and other provisions, “amongst which one sort of sustenance [he] never saw before” – a round cake resembling an “English Jelly,” but made from grain. This cake was one of the Africans’ “principall dainties” and very much esteemed by all.¹⁴⁶ Another dish that impressed Jobson was an “excellent creame drest with corne after their best fashion.”¹⁴⁷ Food, and food preparation, was often a means for Europeans to evaluate others, and Jobson’s assessment of African foodways suggested a high regard for the African people because they matched European expectations of propriety and cleanliness.

¹⁴⁴ Jobson, *The Golden Trade*, doc. 23.

¹⁴⁵ Jobson, *The Golden Trade*, doc. 32.

¹⁴⁶ Jobson, *The Golden Trade*, doc. 37.

¹⁴⁷ Jobson, *The Golden Trade*, doc. 38.

In *The Golden Trade*, similar to early modern travel narratives of America, exotic foods emphasized the foreignness of the country's inhabitants. Jobson wrote that electric eels, while feared, were eaten if captured by Africans; one "black man" explained to Jobson that electric eels were "very good to eate."¹⁴⁸ Seahorses were also considered an "excellent meate" and, according to Jobson, Africans would even eat seahorses that were already dead when captured.¹⁴⁹ It is not clear whether Jobson tried eel or seahorses, but he eventually tried elephant. At first, he reported that his and his men's "daintie stomacks looked asquash at such grosse flesh," but after a few days they changed their minds. At "Ferambas house," Jobson and his men feasted on their best provisions, amongst which was Elephant's flesh. Jobson conveyed that "both my selfe, and consorts... fed very heartily, and found it good and savoury meate."¹⁵⁰ Whereas as some travelers reported disgust with foreign food items, Jobson either remained indifferent or came to enjoy victuals. With his acceptance of exotic food, Jobson implies an acceptance of African culture.

Nonetheless, not all of *The Golden Trade* was positive; Jobson portrayed both an admirable people on one hand, and a barbarous and boorish people on the other hand. Through a discussion foodstuff, Jobson underscored the lawlessness of the Fulbies men, in contrast to his coverage of the Fulbie women. Fulbie youths were allowed a certain licentious liberty in which they could steal other people's hens, or even cattle reserved for banquets, without offence to the law or punishment by the government. Jobson argued that lack of accountability encouraged the youth's wanton behavior and later produced

¹⁴⁸ Jobson, *The Golden Trade*, doc. 16-17

¹⁴⁹ Jobson, *The Golden Trade*, doc. 16.

¹⁵⁰ Jobson, *The Golden Trade*, doc. 75.

men who were “more senslesse, then our Country beasts.”¹⁵¹ However, Jobson considered the Fulbies’ circumstance and concluded that the children mostly stole out of necessity, as a matter of survival and necessary nourishment, though this did not necessarily excuse their behavior.¹⁵² He contended that the “poore Fulbies life” was so inured that “in a manner he is become bestiall.”¹⁵³ Even when Jobson spoke of the Fulbies’ barbarous lifestyle, his tone conveyed more pity than strict judgment.

Jobson took more of a condescending tone when describing the excessive drinking that took place during his welcome ceremony in an unspecified African town. After shaking hands with one another, the king passed around a cup of liquor, from which all of the men drank. Jobson observed that while the cup was make its rounds, the king would call for the cup several times, meaning that the king drank more than his fair share. According to Jobson, the Africans would not leave the ceremony until “the bottle is out,” and there were several bottles. After the first round, Jobson and his men refused to drink any more, shaking their heads when offered the cup. Eventually, Jobson decided to leave the Africans to “their hearts desires,” and proceed to try to find a “more civill... soberer sort of people.”¹⁵⁴ Portraying an African townspeople and king as drunkards supported the stereotype, created by earlier European authors, of an uncivilized Africa.

Jobson also hinted that Africans’ lack of civility might have been the reason for country’s unfavorable agricultural conditions, climate, and seasons, though he did not specify what this depravity might have included. He reminded the reader that God afforded England seasonable times to plant, sow, and reap; sending “gentle showres and

¹⁵¹ Jobson, *The Golden Trade*, doc. 22.

¹⁵² Jobson, *The Golden Trade*, doc. 62.

¹⁵³ Jobson, *The Golden Trade*, doc. 22.

¹⁵⁴ Jobson, *The Golden Trade*, doc. 35.

raines... in a due season.”¹⁵⁵ Africa was not so lucky, not so faithful. Jobson reported for nine months out of the year, Africa received no rain, which turned their ground hard, and in combination with the hot sun, made their land useless. And when it did rain, it came gently in May but by June the storms grew more forceful and violent with strong gusts of wind, “fearefull flashes of lightning, and claps of thunder.” Jobson relayed that the “miserable people” were “driven to worke and labour” in these adverse conditions because this was the only time the land was soft and they could perform agricultural work. Jobson then notes how England has occasionally lost men at sea, and charges their “unholsomnesse” as the “sole cause” for their disappearance; thus, Jobson deduced that the Africans’ uncouthness lead to their hostile climate and agricultural situation, though he did not detail what this debauchery might have entailed.¹⁵⁶

Jobson’s coverage of Africans in *The Golden Trade*, as compared to Boemus’s *Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique* and Africanus’s *Geographical Historie of Africa*, reads in a more neutral or positive tone, even with his coverage of Africans’ “barbarous” behavior. This slight distinction in tone does not necessarily represent a shift in English attitudes toward Africa. Instead, it seems that Jobson recorded positive interactions with Africans because these occurrences contradicted his low expectations of Africans, and thus, these moments prove noteworthy. Rather than using his book to repeat what earlier authors had claimed about the African people, Jobson found it more important to note the ways in which Africans diverged from what might be expected from them.

Taken together, the authors and translators of early modern exploration narratives of Africa employed a discourse of foodways in complex and contradictory ways to inform

¹⁵⁵ Jobson, *The Golden Trade*, doc. 67.

¹⁵⁶ Jobson, *The Golden Trade*, doc. 68.

socio-cultural hierarchies, though differently than the authors of America. Perhaps most noticeably, cannibalism played a rather insignificant role in narratives of Africa when compared to those of America. Instead, the authors and translators of accounts of Africa made implicit parallels to Europe, while also noting Europe's superiority along the way by means of alleged African brutishness, incivility, and agricultural incompetence. So while sixteenth-century narratives of Africa moved away from antiquity's monstrous Africa and humanized the people, these accounts also made an argument for African's inadequacy and English supremacy.

CHAPTER THREE

Complicating Impressions: Foodways in Early Modern Narratives of Asia

With early modern exploration narratives across Asia, a discourse of foodways once again helped the English conceptualize people in foreign lands and their place in this global world; but here, with writings of Asia, the discourse of foodways also clearly intersected with budding notions of race. Sixteenth-century accounts frequently characterized the “white” Chinese as having fine table manners, plentiful food, and great hospitality while often portraying the “tawnie” Tartars as uncivilized man-eaters who lived on an incomplete diet due to their agricultural inadequacy. According to the humoral theory, one’s diet could affect one’s humoral balance, and thus one’s character and complexion. The divergent description of the “white” Chinese and “tawnie” Tartars illustrates the conceptual intersections of food, race, and notions of civility in the English mind. Beyond connections of foodways and race, another factor that differentiates early modern narratives of Asia, from those of America or Africa, is the ways in which various authors and translators used a discourse of foodways to fit their objectives; while the authors of America and Africa may have tailored their work to support their motivations, this tailoring is most obvious in narratives of Asia. The discussions of foodways proved a valuable language for reflecting, and shaping, English feelings about globalization.

Johann Boemus’s *The Fardle of Facions*

Johann Boemus, the German humanist who gave Europeans one of the first popular early modern texts on Africa in 1520, included in his three volume *Manners, Laws and Customs of all Peoples*, a book on Asia. His work satisfied literate Europeans thirst for knowledge about inhabitants, customs, and institutions of near and distant lands. Within

the first hundred years after its publication, *The Manners, Laws and Customs of all Peoples* had at least 47 editions, available in five languages.¹⁵⁷ Given the numerous publications of *The Manners, Laws and Customs of all Peoples*, it is sensible to infer that Boemus's text shaped early modern European perceptions of human cultures across the world.¹⁵⁸

Boemus never traveled Asia or Africa, so in order to produce his three-volume work, he collected and edited scattered travel literature from the classical and medieval period. As such, much of his volume on Asia refers to regions covered by these authors and omits newer discoveries. Boemus's broad coverage and comprehensiveness made his work unique for the time and his volume on Asia became available to the English public in 1555 with William Waterman's translation of both the Africa and Asia volume, entitled *The Fardle of Facions Conteining the Anciente Maners, Customes, and Lawes, of the Peoples Enhabiting the two Partes of the Earth, called Affrike and Asia* (1555).¹⁵⁹ As with his volume on Africa, Boemus's volume on Asia employed a discourse of foodways to evaluate the foreign peoples of Asia.

Boemus's *Fardle of Facions*, similar to his *Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, opened with a preface on the general history of mankind in which foodways underlined the advancement of men over time. Boemus wrote that his preface intended to explain "how men have in these daies amended the rude simplicitie of the first worlde," from Adam and

¹⁵⁷ Henriette Bugge, *Shifting Cultures: Interaction and Discourse in the Expansion of Europe* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1995), 17-18.

¹⁵⁸ The numerous editions and translations, along with Boemus's lack of direct references to his sources, it is nearly impossible to trace the origin of texts, but the popularity of Boemus's work is more significant in exploring the English mindset than its origination. And while the translators and editors may have made some changes to Boemus's work, intentional or not, this chapter refers to the information in *The Fardle of Facions* as Boemus's ideas for the sake of simplicity.

¹⁵⁹ Johann Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions Conteining the Anciente Maners, Customes, and Lawes, of the Peoples Enhabiting the Two Partes of the Earth, Called Affrike and Asia*, trans. William Waterman, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 281:07 (London: Ihon Kingstone and Henry Sutton, 1555).

Eve, to the flood, and many years later.¹⁶⁰ Throughout this general history, Boemus paralleled an advancement of mankind with an improvement in their foodways. Initially, according to Boemus, men contented themselves “with a little,” passed time by wandering in the “wilde field,” and, at times, slayed one another and ate “ech others flesh.” But as time went by, men no longer participated in cannibalism; they began to practice agriculture and reaped its bounty. By “wittie diligence and labour,” men “converted the champeine to tillage, the plaines to pasture, the valley to meadow, the hilles thei shadowed with wooddes and with vines.”¹⁶¹ As men improved their foodways by no longer participating in “savage” cannibalism, their lives improved elsewhere – the advancements in agriculture made it easier to access food and “pure freshe waters.” With this sustenance, men made cities out of towns and built castles upon rocks; they “laboured, beautified, and perfeighted the earthe.”¹⁶² Boemus set the tone for the rest of his volume by underscoring the congruence between refined foodways and the refinement of mankind; between one’s diet and one’s constitution.

Quite like his *Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, Boemus discussed Asian foodways in complicated and contrary ways, reflecting Europeans ambiguous feelings about foreign people in unfamiliar lands. In some parts of *The Fardle of Facions*, Boemus recorded the use of food in Asian rituals and ceremonies, which denoted a sense of civility on par with Europeans. In Scythia, he reported that when anyone “wareth very aged,” his friends, acquaintances, and kinfolk would make a sacrifice for him – slaying “many” sheep,

¹⁶⁰ Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 5.

¹⁶¹ Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 6-7.

¹⁶² Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 7.

then dressing the meat and eating together.¹⁶³ In his chapter on Tartary, Boemus mentioned some Armenians who were “also christians.” According to Boemus, they were “greate fasters” and began their Lent three weeks before Europeans. Impressed by their discipline and ability to fast, he went into great detail about the Armenian Lent – on Monday they abstained from all meat, on Tuesday and Thursday they ate only one meal, on Wednesday and Friday they ate nothing at all, and on Saturday and Sunday they ate flesh and “made lustie chiere.”¹⁶⁴ Boemus also noted that certain groups in Asia ate “none unclean beastes” and others abstained from wine as “a provoker of al sinne and unclennesse.”¹⁶⁵ With these accounts of food and fasting in cultural gatherings, and in everyday life, Boemus noted a sense of discipline and thought behind the Asian diet that paralleled European society; readers may have been struck by some of the similarities between themselves and the people of Asia.

Boemus did not always portray Asians’ cultural use of food as equitable to that of Europeans; in some sections of his *Fardle of Facions*, he suggested ways in which those living in parts of Asia might not be quite up to par. In Persia, Boemus conveyed that during weddings the bridegroom would traditionally eat “an apple of that countrey” or a little “maribone of a Chamel,” and then, “without any farther banquettyng [he] goeth to bedde.”¹⁶⁶ The lack of banqueting at a wedding would have occurred more often among working-class Europeans than those higher in the socio-economic hierarchy; thus, Boemus depicted Persians as belonging to the lower classes of society. In Turkey, Boemus recorded that no man, no matter his “degree or dignitie,” used a chair, stool, or other kind of seat to

¹⁶³ Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 100.

¹⁶⁴ Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 116-117.

¹⁶⁵ Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 101 and 125.

¹⁶⁶ Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 80.

sit upon; instead, the men sat on a mat on the floor, much like “the sitting of our gentlewomen ofte times here in Englande.”¹⁶⁷ By comparing Turkish men to English gentlewomen, Boemus suggested the dominance of European men over the feminized Turks. He also made a comment that the Turks’ table was “not dressed,” associating them with Europe’s lower classes.

In other parts of *The Fardle of Facions*, Boemus used food to demarcate difference. Akin to the authors of early American travel narratives, Boemus addressed Asians consumption of snakes as a means to underscore their “otherness.” In his first chapter on “Asie and the peoples moste famous therin,” Boemus conveyed that some Arabians were so pinched with penury that they ate “snakes... and suche like vermine.” Apparently, Boemus wrote, these people lived “without all regard of body, life, or helth.”¹⁶⁸ While Boemus seemed appalled by the eating of snakes, the authors of America appeared to be fascinated. Boemus viewed the consumption of snakes as an act of destitution. The authors of early America, however, understood that Indians ate snakes by choice, and some authors even understood the symbolic significance, among Native Americans, of eating snakes in order to absorb the snakes’ characteristics – its swiftness, its boldness, and its cunning nature. Regardless of author’s interpretation of consuming snakes, they all highlighted this particular food as a marker of difference.

Beside consuming snakes out of necessity, Boemus noted a lack of food, or limited diet, in parts of Asia as a means of undermining the people’s abilities, and thus, maintaining the European notion of their own advancement. In describing the people of Assyria and Babylonia, Boemus stated that certain groups lived on “none other thyng but fische dried

¹⁶⁷ Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 125.

¹⁶⁸ Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 58.

against the Sonne.”¹⁶⁹ In his section on Tartary, Boemus wrote that the people were “contente with... litle foode”; sometimes, they drank a “goblet full of Milke or twaine” which served as “their whole daies foode.”¹⁷⁰ And, when depicting the people along the Indus River, Boemus conveyed that they “kille no livinge thing, ne plante nor sowe, nor builde house: but live with herbes, and a certeine sede whiche groweth there of the owne accorde.”¹⁷¹ While it may have been the Easterners’ choice to live on herbs or a goblet of milk alone, Boemus’s tone conveyed a sense that they were not up to par with Europeans’ standard of living; that they were idle because they did not hunt, plant food, or build houses. According to the humoral theory, a variety of food was necessary to maintain the balance of one’s humors, and thus, one’s health. As such, living upon herbs or a goblet of milk alone would have signaled, to a European audience, a state of extreme destitute or sloth that could potentially lead to a variety of diseases. Indeed, immediately following his account of their herb-only diet, Boemus observed that if “any of these falle sicke,” he would wander into “some deserte place” and lay down, with no one taking heed to his living of dying.¹⁷² That Boemus wrote of disease directly after discussing the Easterners’ limited diet might be read as a cause and effect – that the insufficient diet caused illness. Regardless of the actual reason for the narrow Eastern diet – which may have been their choice or a misinterpretation of their eating habits by Europeans – Boemus portrayed a group of people who lacked skills, motivation, and an understanding of the importance in a variety of foods.

¹⁶⁹ Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 66.

¹⁷⁰ Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 109.

¹⁷¹ Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 89.

¹⁷² Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 89.

Even when Boemus acknowledged that Easterners' could and did hunt, he undermined their acumen. When discussing Parthia, he stated that the people ate "none other fleshe but suche as thei kyllle at the chace."¹⁷³ The word "chace" could mean "chance" or "chase." To suggest that Persians only ate the animals that they were able to kill by *chance* is an obvious insult to their capabilities. To report that Persians only ate the animals they killed at *chase* conceded their skills of hunting while on horseback, but it also implied a limit to their talents; there was only *one* way – through chase – in which they attained meat. Indeed, when covering the people of Tartary, Boemus stated that they were "greate sparers," but he also stated that they never ate animals as long as they were in sound condition; they only ate animals that were "hurte, sicke, or febled by age."¹⁷⁴ Boemus gave the people of Asia a backhanded compliment regarding their hunting abilities, and thus, maintained the fallacy of European ascendancy.

While Boemus and the authors of early modern exploration narratives of America both discussed limited victuals in foreign places, they used the rhetoric of food scarcity for different purposes. When the authors of American travel narratives wrote about the lack of foodstuff in America, they often sought to portray the resolve of European explorers. The moral of these reports was that America had its challenges, but Europeans could overcome these obstacles. The most desperate account of food scarcity in America was probably the story of cannibalism among Englishmen in Jamestown. Regardless of whether cannibalism actually occurred, the narratives of "starving time" showed the Englishmen surviving this trying time, not giving up, not retreating back to England. Thus, among the authors of America, these tales told their audience about the characteristic of Europeans and the land

¹⁷³ Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 77.

¹⁷⁴ Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 109.

in America; they had little to do with Native Americas. Conversely, when Boemus wrote of limited diets in parts of Asia, he suggested a deficiency among the people; the lack of variety in foodstuff was not due to the land or climate, but instead due to the people's idleness or ignorance.

Another way in which Boemus made an argument for the inferiority, or the "otherness," of the people of Asia was to portray some of the inhabitants as cannibals; in this way, Boemus's *Fardle of Facions* departed from his *Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique*, which avoided sensational stories, and sought a more straightforward and authoritative tone about the European discoveries in Africa. It may be that the slight variation in tone, between the English editions of Boemus's *Fardle of Facions* (1555) and his *Discription of the Contrey of Aphrique* (1554), is the result of different translators. William Prat translated Boemus volume on Africa while William Waterman translated *The Fardle of Facions*; unfortunately, not much is known about either translator. The variation in tone may have also been Boemus's decision, consciously or not; he may have tried to move away from Pliny's monstrous Africa while feeling more indifferent toward Asia. There is only one reference to cannibalism in *The Fardle of Facions*, so overall it is a minor, yet noteworthy, difference in tone between the two volumes. Even without accusations of cannibalism in Africa, Boemus often depicted both Africans and Asians as different, inferior, and less civilized than Europeans through a discourse of food and manners.

Allegations of cannibalism were probably the most common way that Europeans used a discourse of foodways to define people in foreign lands as "others," although Boemus only recorded one instance of cannibalism, outside of his introduction, in his *Fardle of Facions*. He reported that the Tartars would take the bodies of their enemies and

roast them over a great fire, in order to show “their crueltie” and satisfy “their vengeance.” Once a good number of Tartars assembled together, they would tear the bodies of the enemies apart “like Wouolves” with their teeth and “devoure them.” Afterward, they would “drincke up the bloude” that they saved during the dismemberment or “very gredilie” drink wine.¹⁷⁵ Given that Boemus mostly refrained from including sensational stories in his work, this depiction of cannibalism stands out in his relatively balanced account of the peoples of Asia and Africa.



Engraving of a Tartar cannibal feast from Matthew Paris's *Chronica Majora*, 1243 (via Wikimedia Commons)

While Boemus's English-translated two-volume work of Africa and Asia – *The Fardle of Facions* (1555) – included only one description of cannibalism, his original three-volume work on Africa, Asia, and Europe – *Omnium Gentium Mores, Leges et Ritus* (1520) – included a reference to the Anthropophagi, the “eaters of mans flesh,” in Scythia. Even though *The Fardle of Facions* covered the inhabitants Scythia, there was no mention of the Anthropophagi. Since *The Fardle of Facions* was translated into English after Boemus's death, it was likely the translator's, William Waterman's, decision to edit out Boemus's mention of the Anthropophagi, perhaps because Waterman found that the Anthropophagi

¹⁷⁵ Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 109.

did not fit well with the rest of Boemus's writings; this revision reinforces the notion that the tone of Boemus's work emphasized an accurate depiction of the variety of peoples across the world, rather than sensational tales. Still, Waterman chose to include the Tartars' alleged cannibalism, and in that way he found common ground with other early-modern travel writers and editors.¹⁷⁶

Similar to most of the allegations of cannibalism among the Indians in America, *The Fardle of Facions* noted that the Tartars committed cannibalism out of revenge, not out of destitution. Europeans found cannibalism acceptable if done for medical purposes or out of extreme starvation, generally among sailors, but eating humans for the sake of vengeance went against their moral code.¹⁷⁷ The gruesome details about how the Tartars went about consuming their enemies, along with his contemporaries' tales of cannibalism in their travel narratives of Asia, help solidify the "otherness" of the people of Asia in the European mindset.

Richard Willes's *The History of Travayle*

Twenty years after Boemus's popular *Fardle of Facions* came Richard Willes's *The History of Travayle in the West and East Indies and Other Countreys lying Eyther Way* (1577) which contained a compilation of travel narratives from range explorers who visited various foreign lands, including regions in Asia.¹⁷⁸ Willes primarily relied on the first three

¹⁷⁶ It was not until 1611, fifty-six years after the publication of *Fardle of Facions*, that Edward Aston translated *Omnium Gentium Mores, Leges et Ritus* into English, as *The Manners, Lawes and Customs of all Nations*, and include the reference to the Anthropophagi.

¹⁷⁷ See Louise Noble, *Medicinal Cannibalism in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) and Brian Simpson, *Cannibalism and Common Law: The Story of the Tragic Last Voyage of the Mignonette and the Strange Legal Proceedings to Which It Gave Rise* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984).

¹⁷⁸ Richard Willes, ed., *The History of Travayle in the West and East Indies, and Other Countreys Lying Eyther Way*, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 907:10 (London: Richard Iugge, 1577). This collection

decades on Pietro Martire d'Anghiera's *De Orbe Novo (Decades on the New World)*.¹⁷⁹ As a protégé of Richard Eden, Willes also promoted English exploration by collecting, editing, and publicizing exploration accounts. Willes had a dedicated interest in the East, so he took the time to synthesize a range of narratives from Asia, while occasionally adding his own words. Willes never traveled to Asia, so his additions could not always be substantiated, making the veracity of his book questionable; however, his work is a good source for those interested in the early-modern English mindset.¹⁸⁰

Akin to his predecessor's works, Willes's book circulated broadly and had a significant cultural influence in England. According to the *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, Willes's *History of Travayle* served to "alert English readers for the first time to the lucrative potential of Cathay trade," similar to Eden's translation of Pietro Martire d'Anghiera's *Decades of the New World*, which had been the "first English printed text to offer American exploration and colonization as a viable activity" for England.¹⁸¹ The writings of Eden and Willes coincided with the age of English maritime discovery, and their works excited English exploration while simultaneously reflecting and shaping English thought.¹⁸²

included a highly edited version of Eden's translation of Pietro Martire d'Anghiera's *Decades of the New World's* first three volumes along with numerous other sources edited by Eden and Willes.

¹⁷⁹ Even though Willes relied heavily on Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, this chapter considers Willes to be the author, as opposed to Martire, because he chose what to include and exclude in *The History of Travayle*, and Willes added his own, unsubstantiated, information throughout the book.

¹⁸⁰ Peter C. Mancall, ed., *Travel Narratives from the Age of Discovery: An Anthology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 156-158.

¹⁸¹ D. F. McKenzie and John Barnard, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 260.

¹⁸² Myra Jehlen and Michael Warner, *The English Literatures of America: 1500-1800* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 81-83

The History of Travayle followed *The Fardle of Facions* as a popular exploration narrative that covered Asia, however, it departed from Boemus's work in the sense that Willes focused on the wide variety of food available in regions of Asia, unlike Boemus who stressed a limited diet or lack of victuals. In describing the region near Moscovia, Willes reported that they had a "great increase of foules, byrdes, and dyuers kyndes of beastes" as well as a diversity of fish.¹⁸³ In Tartary, they were accustomed to "they consume "one horse or cowe to fourtie men." They also greatly delighted in "Mares mylke," "hearbes very much," and "a great marueyle" of fruit.¹⁸⁴ The people of Damasco ate "horses, Cammelles, Bufles, Gotes, and suche other beastes," and had a "great abundaunce of freshe cheese" and new milk.¹⁸⁵ Arabia had "marueylous[ly] fat" sheep and certain grapes without seeds that were "the sweetest" ever to be tasted, along with all manner of such fruits. In addition to the victuals, Willes noted the "fruitfull" soil and "marueylous temperatenesse" of the land.¹⁸⁶ His portrayal of plentiful victuals in Asia stands in stark contrast to Boemus's focus on a limited diet.

The contrary depictions of available food in *The History of Travayle* and *The Fardle of Facions* likely had to do with the authors'-editors' concerns. Both Boemus and Willes, as scholars rather than explorers, relied on travel narratives of other men to compose their books; with their collection of accounts, Boemus sought to create an comprehensive reference book, while Willes sought to incite British exploration. Boemus emphasized a limited diet in parts of Asia as a means to undermine the foreigners' capabilities, and thus, maintain the European notion of their own superiority. Willes, on the other hand, had a

¹⁸³ Willes, *The History of Travayle*, doc. 317.

¹⁸⁴ Willes, *The History of Travayle*, doc. 322, 325.

¹⁸⁵ Willes, *The History of Travayle*, doc. 369.

¹⁸⁶ Willes, *The History of Travayle*, doc. 386.

keen interest in the East and accentuated the plentiful food in regions of Asia as a mean to encourage British voyaging.

Willes painted an alluring picture of Asia for his European contemporaries by drawing attention to plentiful, inexpensive, and healthy food. He noted that the Chinese were the “greatest eaters in all the world,” and to be a great eater, one must have access to copious food. Willes continued that the Chinese feed upon “all thinges” and mentioned that the food was “cheape” because one could “buye them for the great plentie thereof in this countrey.”¹⁸⁷ With regards to the Japanese, Willes explained that they primarily ate “fyshe, hearbes, and fruites, so healthfully, that they dye very olde.”¹⁸⁸ Not only did Asia have bountiful food, the healthy victuals could also prolong one’s life.

In addition to the desirable provisions, Willes noted that the hospitality of the Chinese and a potential partnership with them through the use of food, again encouraging British voyages to this new land. He described the Chinese to be “very pleasaunt” and “courteous.” According to *The History of Travayle*, the Europeans experienced “good entertaynement” for all of their time spent in the city of Xian, as the locals constantly invited them into their houses, described as “good lodging,” to eat and drink.¹⁸⁹ But despite the ample victuals, the Europeans noticed a conflict among the locals over eating swines’ flesh and drinking wine; the Moors in China pressured their communities to avoid these foods, but not everyone felt so compliant. Thus, Willes concluded that “if this countrey [China] were in league with us,” and England did not forbid pork or wine, “it would be an

¹⁸⁷ Willes, *The History of Travayle*, doc. 249.

¹⁸⁸ Willes, *The History of Travayle*, doc. 262.

¹⁸⁹ Willes, *The History of Travayle*, doc. 260.

easy matter to draw them to our religion, from theyr superstition.”¹⁹⁰ Through the cultural control, or in this case – allowance, of food, Willes argued that the English could cast their influence over many of the Chinese.

Food, as a valuable commodity, could very well incite exploration, trade, and colonization - food was money, food was power. Willes underscored the abundant food in Asia to these ends, but he also showed his readers how food might be used to signal one’s status in society. In one section of the *History of Travayle*, Willes told a story of a fat Tartar taken prisoner by the Moscovites; he explained nothing of the crime committed, the potential punishment, or the ultimate fate of the prisoner. Instead this short story focuses on the weight of the Tartar and available victuals. Willes conveyed that the Moscovites took the prisoner to their prince who was surprised by the prisoner’s weight and asked him “howe art thou so fat?” The Tartar answered “Why should not I have to eate, [since] I possesse so large a lande from the East to the West, whereby I may be abundantly nourished?” He continued, “but thou mayest rather seeme to lacke, syth thou inhabytest so small a portion of the woorlde.”¹⁹¹ Clearly, the prisoner intended to insult the prince; his weight was evidence of his wealth in the form of fruitful land and ample food, and in this way, he was superior to the prince. This story of the Tartar prisoner and the Moscovian prince not only demonstrated the societal value of foodstuff, but also reinforced the notion of plentiful food all over Asia, not just in land owned by royalty.

Besides the copious food, Willes devoted some space in his *History of Travayle* to the table manners of the indigenous population, with general praise for the gentry and disdain for the lower classes, possibly paralleling the readers’ thoughts about the classes in Europe,

¹⁹⁰ Willes, *The History of Travayle*, doc. 259.

¹⁹¹ Willes, *The History of Travayle*, doc. 323.

thereby drawing attention to similarities between Europe and Asia society. In his examination of the peoples of Asia, Willes wrote mostly positive about the Chinese and Japanese table manners, in all likelihood because he centered his attention on their wealthy. He recorded that the *Loutea (or scholar-gentry), as well as other "people of China," ate their meat sitting on stools at high tables "as we do."* They dined "very cleanly" although they did not use table cloths or napkins. He wrote about their use of chopsticks and stated that they refrained from touching their meat with their hands. He noted their civility and recorded that "in conversation, and in courtesie they seeme to exceede all other." However, Willes provided a slight insult along with his compliments. He commented that the ample food turned the *Louteas into an "idle generation" who avoided all manner of "exercises and pastymes, excepte it be eatyng and drynkyng."*¹⁹² Even with his snub, Willes generally praised the Chinese gentry. In addition to the Chinese, Willes also offered many pleasantries about the Japanese. He noted that "the better sorte" used "great diligence" when dining, especially when it came to drinking so as not to "rudely commit some fault therin." The Japanese found it rude to touch meat with their hands, so they "put theyr meat into their mouthes with litle forkes." They dined in their houses, which were "finely made, and cleane." Akin to the Chinese, Willes finished his compliments of the Japanese with a jab. He stated that the "gentlemen" passed the nights in banqueting and other "vayne discourses," and "sleepe the day tyme" away.¹⁹³ Much of what Willes reported about the Chinese and Japanese table manners, the positives and negatives, could have been written about the European gentry, and thus, may have created a sense of familiarity between European and Asian society with readers, possibly stimulating travel to these foreign lands.

¹⁹² Willes, *The History of Travayle*, doc. 251.

¹⁹³ Willes, *The History of Travayle*, doc. 265.

In other parts of *The History of Travayle*, Willes offered his judgment about the table manners of the general populations of Asia. Upon breaking their fast, Willes recorded, the Tartars devoured anything they could get their hands upon, “ingorge[d] them selves beyonde measure, and with that surfect in maner recompence theyr former abstinence.” While the Tartars had the discipline to fast, they could not restrain themselves once they could eat again. But even when the Tartars were not coming off a fast, Willes conveyed that they had poor manners. He reported that once the food was distributed among the Tartars, they devoured it “gredyly.” He detailed that “they sucke and lycke, not only theyr fingers imbrued with fat, but also theyr kniues, & styckes wherwith they scrape the doong from the guttes.”¹⁹⁴ It is hard to imagine more unappealing table behavior than licking the utensils that were used to clean an animal’s dung for its insides. When it came to alcohol, although it was “against theyr relygion to drynke wyne,” Willes contended that, at night, they would drink a “great excesse” of wine and “bee dronken.”¹⁹⁵ Even sacrifices at Mecca, according to *The History of Travayle*, were prone to ill mannered activity. As scraps of food were cast away, the poor would dig them out of the “myre and sande” and eat them; they were “so greedie” with these snippets of food that they would “fyght” whoever gathered the most. Willes concluded that the poor came to the sacrifices “for hunger then for devotion.”¹⁹⁶ While the poor may have suffered from hunger and had good reason to fend for life-sustaining food, Willes’s offered no sympathy. He implied that even with the fruitful land and copious food, many of Asia’s inhabitants could not control themselves around food; they lacked the discipline and refinement of the upper echelons.

¹⁹⁴ Willes, *The History of Travayle*, doc. 322.

¹⁹⁵ Willes, *The History of Travayle*, doc. 337.

¹⁹⁶ Willes, *The History of Travayle*, doc. 378.

Given the lack of civility that Willes portrayed among some groups in Asia, one might expect to find allegations of cannibalism within these groups, but Willes made no such claims here; instead, Willes only wrote of cannibalism committed by an Arabian sultan's son, a man who clearly belonged in the wealthier classes. The sultan of Sana had twelve sons and one, named Mahumet, ate "mans fleeshe" out a "certayne naturall tyrannye and madnesse." Willes contended that Mahumet, who had a large and strong body, "secretly kylleth many to eate them." Again, paralleling Boemus and the authors of early American travel narratives, we see cannibalism committed by foreigners out of want rather than need, even if the choice to eat men's flesh was tainted by tyranny and madness. Just in case there was any doubt behind the motives for cannibalism, in the same paragraph in that Willes discussed Mahumet, he also noted that the city of Sana "was very fruitefull," had "plentie of water," and contained many "gardens."¹⁹⁷ A scarcity of food was not the reason that Mahumet, the sultan's son, turned to anthropophagy; his behavior was committed out of deviance, madness, and tyranny.

That Willes chose to include a story of cannibalism among the elite in Asia, while not discussing allegations of cannibalism among the general population, distinguishes his work from his contemporaries. The majority of European authors and editors of travel narratives typically covered cannibalism as committed by certain "savage" groups. While leaders of these "uncivilized" people may have participated in anthropophagy, it was rare for *only* the leader to eat human flesh, without the participation of the rest of the group. It was even rarer for *wealthy royal* leaders to partake in anthropophagy. The inclusion of this story in *The History of Travayle* may have been Willes's way maintaining a distinction

¹⁹⁷ Willes, *The History of Travayle*, doc. 387.

between Asia's upper echelon and Europe's elite, particularly given their similarities with regards to good housing and fine dining.

Mahumet, Willes's cannibal was not the only social deviant among the nobility in *The History of Travayle*; in Willes's coverage of Asia, he also told a story of the sultan of Cambay, named *Macamut*, who was accustomed to "eat[ing] poyson." *Macamut consumed poison daily, from his infancy onward, and while the poison did no harm to him, Macamut was able to eliminate his enemies through this poison. When he wanted to "put any of his noble men to death," Macamut would have his enemies stand naked before him while he ate certain fruits and herbs, chewed them together, and then "spitteth it upon hym whom he desyreth to kyll."* The poison in Macamut's body was so strong that his venomous spit would kill the men "within the space of halfe an houre."¹⁹⁸ With *Macamut*, Willes again underscored a distinction between the royalty of Asia and Europe. This story, similar to some strange stories of the people in America and Africa, created an exoticism about foreigners and upheld them as "others" in the European mindset.

Bernardino de Escalante's *Discourse of the Navigation*

Following Willes's *The History of Travayle* (1577), the next influential exploration narrative to discuss Asia, in English, was Bernardo de Escalante's *Discourse of the Navigation which the Portugales doe make to the Realmes and Provinces of the East Partes of the Worlde, and of the existing knowledge of the greatness of the Kingdom of China*. Escalante, a Spanish priest and soldier, never visited China, but instead based his information on Gaspar da Cruz, João de Barros, and other informants he met in Portugal

¹⁹⁸ Willes, *The History of Travayle*, doc. 392.

and Spain.¹⁹⁹ As one of the earliest European books primarily dedicated to China, Escalante's *Discourse of the Navigation* was quickly translated from Portuguese into other European languages; John Frampton first published an English translation in 1579.²⁰⁰ Escalante's writings on China became even more widespread when they served as the basis for Juan González de Mendoza's *The Historie of the Great and Mightie Kingdom of China, and the Situation thereof* (1586) – Europe's standard reference on China for several decades.²⁰¹

Akin to Willes's *The History of Travayle*, the purpose of *Discourse of the Navigation* was to incite European discovery and encourage rivalry. With the publication of this book, Escalante hoped to motivate the Spanish to compete with the Portuguese in the Pacific for trade and colonies. Frampton, an English merchant and translator, likely had similar motivations in his translating Escalante's work – to inspire the English to race the Spanish and Portuguese for dominion over the Cathay trade.²⁰²

Since *The History of Travayle* and *Discourse of the Navigation* both sought to rouse Europe's expansion through trade and travel, their content shared some similarities in tone, with many positive things to say about China's bountiful food and the people's hospitality. In his chapter on China's climate and the fertility of the land, Frampton wrote that China was "without all doubt... the greatest and most abundaunt that is knowen in the wide worlde." When comparing the "excellent taste" of China's fruit with that of Europe, he

¹⁹⁹ Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, 742.

²⁰⁰ Bernardino de Escalante, *Discourse of the Navigation Which the Portugales Doe Make to the Realmes and Provinces of the East Partes of the Worlde, and of the Existing Knowledge of the Greatness of the Kingdom of China*, trans. John Frampton, *Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 342:02* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1579).

²⁰¹ Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe, Volume I: The Century of Discovery*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 742-751.

²⁰² Carmine G. Biase, *Travel and Translation in the Early Modern Period* (New York: Rodopi, 2006), 109.

noted that China's was "as sweete and with as good tast as those of Spaine & better." The most common types of meat they ate were cattle, hogs, sheep, and goats, of "which there [was a] great abundance." Escalante also recorded that China had a great quantity of fowl and fish.²⁰³ Escalante's book-length treatment of China went into greater detail about the country than Willes's small chapter on China, and thus, Escalante made an even stronger argument for European expansion; he devoted an entire chapter on China's abundance, and noted that the quality and quantity of the food compared, or even exceeded, that of Europe's.

Escalante recognized the labor that went into producing such an abundance of foodstuff in China, unlike many of his predecessors who focused the food in foreign places and largely ignored or minimized the agricultural work that indigenous populations put into cultivating their food. Escalante conveyed that the reason for China's bountiful food was due to the "naturall people of the countrey" who "live by their owne industrie" and "continuell labour." Escalante added that the Chinese did "not suffer nor permit" any "idle people." Instead, they gave "them selves to labour" so that they could "eate and drinke well," and dress their houses "very gorgeously" so that they might entertain comfortably.²⁰⁴ China's abundance was not simply due to virgin soil, it was due to the Chinese's admirable industry.

Beyond the foodstuff, Escalante also reported the Chinese's hospitality and fine manners, which may have led some European countries – namely, Spain and England – to further consider developing their relations with the Chinese. He wrote that when the "common people" met "strange friends," they would ask them if they had eaten, and if they

²⁰³ Escalante, *Discourse of the Navigation*, doc. 16-17 (quotes), and 29.

²⁰⁴ Escalante, *Discourse of the Navigation*, doc. 16.

had not, they would invite them into the “vittailing houses, and make them great cheare, and doo banquet them at their discretion.” Escalante noted that there were “a great number of vittailing houses” that sold “meate and drinke,” within the cities and outside them, indicating that travelers might never go hungry. If, on the other hand, the “strange friends” had already eaten, Escalante stated that the common folk would bring them into “other houses” where they were served fruit, shellfish, and wine. During special occasions, such as birthdays, the Chinese continued their generosity by helping their kinfolk and friends put on great banquet. They would “send delicates and thinges too helpe them make their feastes” and spend “greate expences” for their special occasions. At these banquets, musicians, dances, and jesters provided entertainment to make all the attendees “merry and joyful.”²⁰⁵ The Chinese’s warmth and hospitality seemed unprecedented; Escalante’s writings painted an alluring picture of China and its people.

Escalante reported that pleasant table manners accompanied the Chinese’s kind reception and generosity, giving readers the opportunity to sense of normalcy with these foreigners. Escalante stated that they ate “very cleanly” as they did not touch their meat with their hands, but instead used “smal stickes gilded that they holde betweene theyr fingers” or “forkes of silver.” The Lords and “the people of estimation” were particularly immaculate because they received “cleane napkins, knyves, forkes, and spoones” with every new course of food. During their meals, everyone used little porcelain cups so that they would “drinke very littel at a tyme” and maintain their “good behaviour” with one another “in their quaffing.”²⁰⁶ Escalante did not portray the general populace as uncivilized savages, which was all too common in European exploration narratives of foreign places,

²⁰⁵ Escalante, *Discourse of the Navigation*, doc. 23-4.

²⁰⁶ Escalante, *Discourse of the Navigation*, doc. 23-4.

but instead noted the Chinese's refinement. By specifically writing about the "common people," as well the higher ranks, Escalante diverged from Willes's *History of Travayle*, which focused primarily on the Loutea and other Chinese gentry. Consequently, Escalante broadened the notion that the Chinese were cultivated from principally the gentry to all classes of people in China.

One reason that Escalante, and perhaps Willes too, may have mostly praised the Chinese was that, according to the humoral theory, the Chinese were more like Europeans than Africans or Native Americans due to the Chinese's surrounding climate and their diet, which ultimately shaped one's skin color and one's constitution. In his *Discourse of the Navigation*, Escalante reported that China had the "same Climate that *Spayne, France, and Italie doe*" and "whereby the fruitfulness of it may be understood." Given the similarities in climate and food between Europe and China, the people of these countries also would have shared similar humoral balances and temperaments, at least in sixteenth-century European thought. In addition to their hospitality and civility, Escalante described the Chinese as "a tall people" who were "wel proporcioned" and "white for the most part, by reason they dwell in a colde Countrey." The Chinese's white skin matched that of many Europeans, and this resemblance went beyond just the physical since skin color was believed to reflect one's humoral balance, and thus, one's character; in other words, white skin reflected the humoral balance of a refined person. The climate and food in China produced a people of at least equitable character compared to Europeans; Escalante concluded, in "all this description of the Countrey," China was, "without doubt... as great or greater than Europe."²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ Escalante, *Discourse of the Navigation*, doc. 15.

Escalante contrasted his admiration of the Chinese with his disdain of the Tartars, whom he described as a people who were “tawnie and not white,” went naked “from the waste upward,” ate “rawe fleshe,” and reeked of a “filthie smel.” These “tawnie” Tartars behaved nothing like the mostly “white” Chinese. And, the Tartars’s tawnie skin and partial nudity suggested that they came from a warmer climate, akin to South America or Africa, which meant that the Tartars would have had a much different humoral balance, and thus character, than the people of Europe. In reality, Tartary bordered China, and thus the two countries probably shared more similarities than differences when it came to the climate, but that did not matter to Escalante; instead, he focused on the Tartars’ skin color and their allegedly “savage” behavior, both of which closely resemble that of Native Americans in other European travel narratives. Escalante also highlighted the Tartars’ unrefined diet. Their consumption of raw meat was likely viewed as both a reflection of their lack of civility and a cause of their “savagery”; an unrefined diet could produce unrefined people.²⁰⁸

John Frampton’s *A Discoverie of the Countries of Tartaria, Scithia, & Cataya*

With his *Discourse of the Navigation*, and his many compliments of China and its people, Escalante hoped to inspire Spain to compete with Portugal for trade and colonies in the East; in translating Escalante’s work to English, John Frampton, an English merchant, likely had similar motivations – to have England compete and reign in the Cathay trade.²⁰⁹ Indeed, following the success of his English translation of Escalante’s book in 1579, Frampton quickly published a book of his own – *A Discoverie of the Countries of Tartaria, Scithia, & Cataya, by the North-East: With the Manners, Fashions, and Orders which are used*

²⁰⁸ Escalante, *Discourse of the Navigation*, doc. 15.

²⁰⁹ Biase, *Travel and Translation in the Early Modern Period*, 109.

in these Countries in 1580.²¹⁰ This timely publication coincided with England's quest for passage to China and India. Frampton dedicated his book, in part, to the "governours of the worshipfull company of the merchaunts adventurers for discoverie of newe trades," whom he wished "all happye successe in all their attempts." His dedication suggested that Frampton produced this book in order to further encourage England's participation in trade to the East.²¹¹

Frampton never traveled to Asia, so for his book he primarily relied on Francisco Thamara of Cadiz's *Il libro de las Costumbres de todas las Gentes del mundo* (1556), which was based on Johann Boemus's *Omnium Gentium Mores*. Boemus's book was already well known to the English public through William Waterman's translation in 1555 – *The Fardle of Facions*. Thus, there was some overlap in what Frampton and Boemus, through Waterman's translation, relayed to the English public; however, a significant difference in tone and interest between Boemus and Frampton ultimately produced very distinct works.

Frampton's forty-page *Discoverie of the Countries* read as much more sensationally than Boemus three-volume work, which can be understood through the authors' divergent motivations for producing their texts. Boemus sought to produce a straightforward, systematically ordered encyclopedic work for Europeans to reference in order to better understand new and foreign places, namely Africa and Asia. Even though Boemus relied on classical and renaissance sources to write his book, which at times included fantastical stories, he departed from his predecessors by utilizing unvarnished prose and excluding

²¹⁰ John Frampton, *A Discoverie of the Countries of Tartaria, Scithia, & Cataya, by the Northeast: With the Maners, Fashions, and Orders which are used in those Countries*, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 2115:12 (London: Thomas Dawson, 1580).

²¹¹ For more information on Frampton and his publications, see Donald Beecher, "The Legacy of John Frampton: Elizabethan Trader and Translator," *Renaissance Studies* 20, no. 3 (June 1, 2006): 320–39.

fanciful stories.²¹² Frampton, on the other hand, wanted to excite “merchaunts adventurers” into traveling to Asia; his *Discoverie of the Countries* reintroduced some of the outlandish tales found in John Mandeville’s popular *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* and Marco Polo’s *The Travels of Marco Polo*, which Boemus had purposefully omitted.

Frampton was not interested in complicating or humanizing the people of Asia; his main concern was to incite his readers’ interests and possibly encourage travel to exotic places. Unlike Boemus, who used a discourse of foodways to evaluate the foreign peoples of Asia, often in complex and contradictory ways, Frampton solely focused on the eating habits of Asians as a means to highlight their “savagery.” The lack of complexity in Frampton’s brief forty-page book meant that he had little praise for the Asians’ manner of eating, nor did he make any parallels with European society. At best, some of his sections read neutrally, for example his recording of the Tartars fasting and specific diet around religious holidays. While Boemus described the Tartars as “greate fasters” who began their Lent three weeks prior to Europeans, Frampton plainly recited the days in which they fasted, or limited their meals to one, or refrained from eating meat; there was nothing special about the Tartars’ fasting in Frampton’s book.²¹³

More often than not, when Frampton discussed the diet and eating habits of the peoples of Asia, he brought up allegations of cannibalism that reinforced a demarcation of difference between Europeans and Asians. Whereas Boemus only accused the Tartars of anthropophagy, Frampton relayed that the people of Tartaria, Scythia, and Cataya (or China) all participated in cannibalism. To be clear, Frampton’s short book only covered

²¹² Henriette Bugge, *Shifting Cultures: Interaction and Discourse in the Expansion of Europe* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1995), 19-20.

²¹³ Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 101 and 125.

Tartaria, Scythia, and Cataya, meaning that in every place that Frampton discussed, he found tales of anthropophagy to convey to his readers.

Frampton depicted the Tartars as “others” when he described their alleged cannibalism and uncivilized foodways. Frampton recorded that the Tartars had offensive table manners because they had no tables to eat upon, “nor table clothes, nor napkins,” and they did not wash “their hands nor bodyes, nor clothes.” He further reported that “in their diet they are very filthy”; they ate no bread or any manner of herbs, “but feede onely with the flesh of al manner of beastes.”²¹⁴ With regards to anthropophagy, Frampton relayed that the Tartars took revenge on their enemies by capturing, killing, and eating them – “teare him in peeces,” drink his blood, and “eate his flesh” like “wolves.” In several ways, Frampton’s description of the Tartars parallels Boemus’s writings – both stated that the Tartars participated in anthropophagy out of vengeance and not starvation, that they roasted their enemies over a fire before eating them, that they torn their enemies apart like wolves, and that they ate their drank their blood in addition to eating their flesh.²¹⁵ These similarities suggest that Frampton chose to emphasize one of the rare sensational stories in Boemus’s otherwise balanced work, or that both Frampton and Boemus relied on the same medieval source, such a Marco Polo or Nicolo de’Conti. Either way, Frampton chose to solely focus on the negative, the savagery, the otherness, whereas Boemus found some positive things to say about the Tartars.

Frampton continued to portray the inhabitants of Asia as exotic “others” when he reported that Scythians killed their elderly and ate them. He wrote that once “any of them” began to “waxe olde,” his “kinsfolkes and friendes” would “meete together and kill him, and

²¹⁴ Frampton, *A Discoverie of the Countries*, doc. 9.

²¹⁵ Boemus, *The Fardle of Facions*, doc. 109 and Frampton, *A Discoverie of the Countries*, doc. 9.

then seethe him,” and then eat his flesh at a banquet. They considered this manner of death to be a “happy kind.” Only if a person died from a disease would the people of Scythia bury him rather than eat him, and then lament that “he was not killed and sacrificed,” but died by illness.²¹⁶ Again, we have an instance of cannibalism committed by choice and not by destitution; the Scythians chose to kill their elderly and consume them as part of a death ritual. And, if the Scythians’ cannibalism of the elderly was not shocking enough for his readers, Frampton also reintroduce the anthropophagi – the mythical race of cannibals described first by Herodotus – as part of the population in Scythia. Frampton described the anthropophagi as the “moste rude and beastly of all others” who ate “mens flesh” and lived “under no maner of lawe.”²¹⁷ The lack of civility in Frampton’s Scythia is astounding.

Frampton’s section on Cataya again used allegations of anthropophagy to reiterate the demarcation of difference between the people of Asia and those of Europe. In Cataya, Frampton depicted the indigenous population as a “faire people, but evil in manners,” and openly departed from his processors who had mostly compliments for the Chinese. Frampton explained that the people of Cataya were idolaters who “kill their enemies, eate their flesh, and drink their blood.”²¹⁸ In stark contrast to Willes and Escalante, Frampton portrayed the Chinese in negative light, even though he translated Escalante’s book which praised the Chinese.

For the authors and translators of early modern exploration narratives of Asia, a discourse of foodways proved a useful means to support their motivations for publishing their texts, whether that was to excite merchants adventurers into traveling to Asia, or to

²¹⁶ Frampton, *A Discoverie of the Countries*, doc. 21.

²¹⁷ Frampton, *A Discoverie of the Countries*, doc. 23.

²¹⁸ Frampton, *A Discoverie of the Countries*, doc. 33.

conceptualize a foreign people and their place in the global world. Within the early modern English mindset, a discourse of foodways continually aided the development of socio-cultural hierarchies, and with narratives of Asia, food not only intersected with status, but also with race. The “white” Chinese, with their abundant food, were covered in a mostly positive light, while the “tawny” Tartars, with their limited diet, were portrayed negatively, regardless of whether the author included the people’s skin color or not. Ultimately, the conceptual intersections of food, status, and race demonstrate the importance of foodways in English notions power.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conflicting Impressions: English Cannibalism in Jamestown & Newfoundland

From tales of medieval witches consuming babies, to cannibal pies in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, to modern day entertainment about the fictitious Hannibal Lecter, stories of cannibalism have long filled the Anglo-American imagination.²¹⁹ William Arnes's influential book, *The Man-Eating Myth*, argues that there is no solid, substantiated evidence for the broad culturally accepted practice of cannibalism anywhere in the world, from any time in history, despite some claims by western authors since the fifteenth century.²²⁰ It is perhaps the universal taboo on cannibalism that makes the subject matter so captivating, horrifying, and titillating to popular audiences and scholars alike. In American history, one of the most infamous incidents of anthropophagy occurred at the start of the Virginia colony.

United States history textbooks often reference cannibalism in Jamestown, during the winter of 1609-10, to exemplify the severity of the Starving Time. The colonists were desperate – “finding themselves running out of food, their behavior turned desperate; so desperate indeed, that some of “the poorer sort” disinterred the corpse of a native and ate

²¹⁹ Heinrich Institoris, Jakob Sprenger, and Christopher S. Mackay, *Malleus Maleficarum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); William Shakespeare, *The Most Lamentable Romaine Tragedie of Titus Andronicus*, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 718:03 (London : Printed by John Danter, 1594); Thomas Harris, *The Silence of the Lambs* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988). For scholarly treatments of these subjects, see Merrall L. Price, *Consuming Passions: The Uses of Cannibalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Louise Christine Noble, “And Make Two Pasties of Your Shameful Heads’: Medicinal Cannibalism and Healing the Body Politic in *Titus Andronicus*,” *ELH* 70, no. 3 (2003): 677–708; Peter Messent, “American Gothic: Liminality in Thomas Harris’s Hannibal Lecter Novels,” *Journal of American & Comparative Cultures* 23, no. 4 (2000): 23–35.

²²⁰ William Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth : Anthropology and Anthropophagy: Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

it.”²²¹ They were famished – “it is difficult to exaggerate the fragility of the early Jamestown settlement... food became so short that one or two famished settlers resorted to eating their recently deceased neighbors.”²²² Beyond textbooks, scholarly monographs also describe the Virginians eating human flesh. In the classic *American Slavery, American Freedom*, Edmund Morgan states that “one provident man chops up his wife and salts down the other pieces. Others dig up graves to eat corpses.”²²³ More recently, in 2005, James Horn stated that the deceased “were taken up and eaten by those who found their bodies... [and] the famished looked hungrily on those alive who still had some meat on their bones.”²²⁴

Despite these assured claims, the details of cannibalism during the winter of 1609-10 are difficult to verify. Some evidence suggests that anthropophagy, or the eating of human flesh, occurred, while other interpretations claim that it did not, or, at least, that the motives and extent of cannibalism were exaggerated.²²⁵ Rather than trying to delineate the exact events of 1609-10, this chapter analyzes the seventeenth-century accounts of Starving Time within the context of English narratives, the Atlantic World, and foodways to argue that stories of cannibalism served two purposes; first, they advanced the personal

²²¹ Susan-Mary Grant, *A Concise History of the United States of America*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 31.

²²² James L. Roark et al., *The American Promise, Volume A: A History of the United States: To 1800* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2012), 65.

²²³ Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975), 73.

²²⁴ James Horn, *A Land As God Made It: Jamestown and the Birth of America* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 176.

²²⁵ Sir Thomas Gates claimed that only one woman was dismembered, and that her husband dismembered her out of hatred, not hunger. See Thomas Gates, *A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia* (London: Councell of Virginia, 1610).

interests of their respective authors, and second, taken together, they expressed a fear that the English colonists were losing their identity.

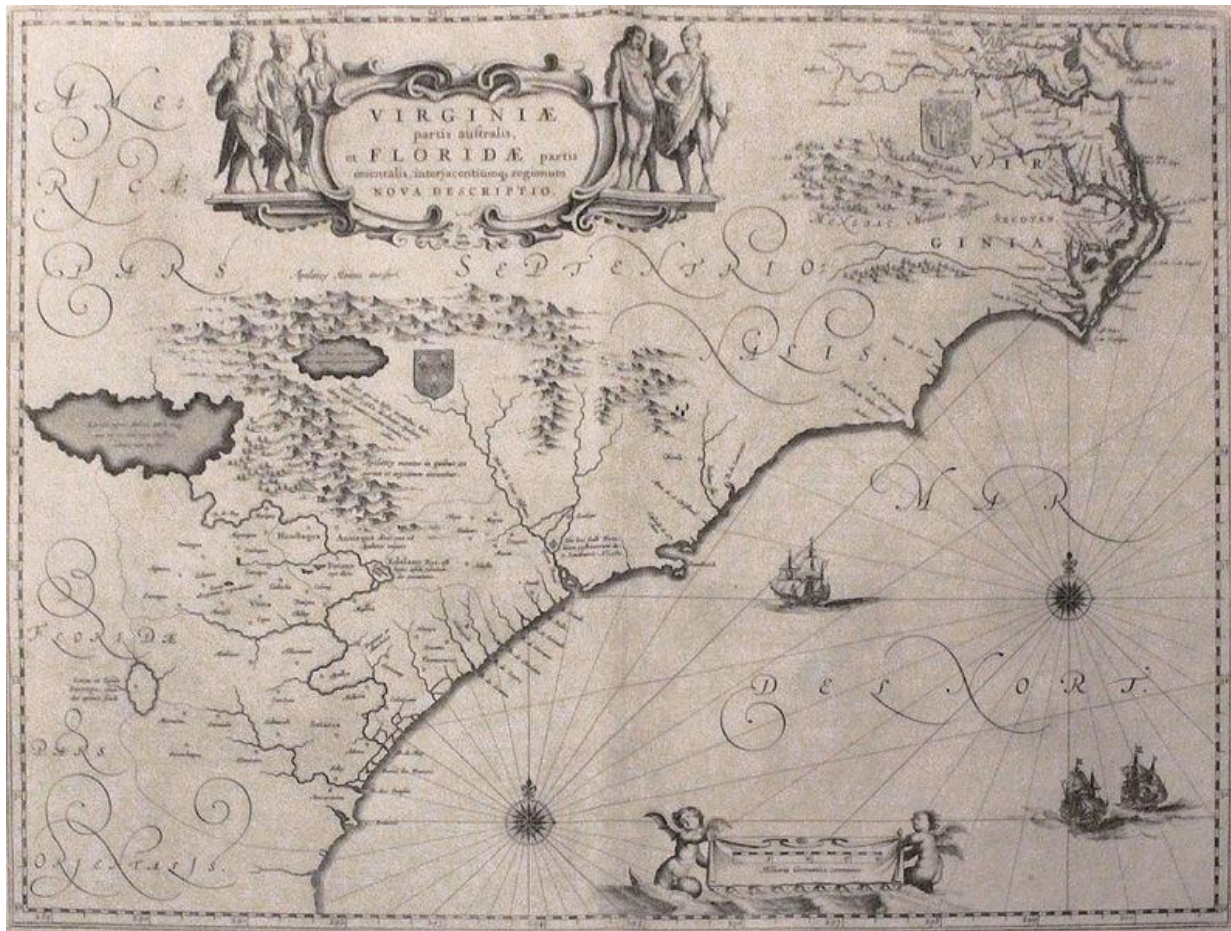
Histories of cannibalism, English exploration narratives, and food seldom intersect, but combining these approaches offers a unique analytical lens with which to study the Starving Time. Until recently, when historians discussed Jamestown during the winter of 1609-10, they either accepted cannibalism as fact or they skipped that part of the story.²²⁶ Those who have treated cannibalism critically have not fully analyzed the broader implications of these man-eating accounts, what they might reveal about seventeenth-century English culture, or why there was a surge of Starving Time publications in 1624-25, fifteen years after the harsh winter.²²⁷ Food historians have generally focused on foodstuff, as opposed to the consumption of human flesh, though a few have mentioned cannibalism within the context of “otherness” and cross-cultural contact.²²⁸ What is largely missing from the historiography is an analysis of anthropophagy by Englishmen and within English culture. Rachel Herrman and Michael Lacombe offer a cultural reading of cannibalism at Jamestown; however, their works focus primarily on food and politics. My analysis departs

²²⁶ For a sample of those that view cannibalism as fact, in addition to Morgan and Horn, see J. Frederick Fausz, “An ‘Abundance of Blood Shed on Both Sides’: England’s First Indian War, 1609-1614,” *Virginia Magazine of History & Biography* 98, no. 1 (January 1990), 26; Virginia Bernhard, “‘Men, Women and Children’ at Jamestown: Population and Gender in Early Virginia, 1607-1610,” *The Journal of Southern History* 58, no. 4 (November 1, 1992), 611.

²²⁷ For those that view cannibalism critically, see Mark Nicholls, “‘Things Which Seame Incredible’: Cannibalism in Early Jamestown,” *Colonial Williamsburg: The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* 29, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 52-58; Dennis Montgomery, “‘Such a Dish as Powdered Wife I Never Heard of,’” *Colonial Williamsburg: The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* 29, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 59-61.

²²⁸ Food historians who also touch on cannibalism include Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking, 1985); Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *Near a Thousand Tables: A History of Food* (New York: The Free Press, 2002); Andrew Warnes, *Savage Barbecue: Race, Culture, and the Invention of America’s First Food* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008).

from Herrman and Lacombe by incorporating the humoral theory and English beliefs about how food shaped one's constitution.²²⁹



Map of the Colony of Virginia, according to the Second Charter, by Willem Blaeu between 1609 and 1638 (via Wikimedia Commons)

Five accounts of Starving Time were published in the first quarter of the seventeenth century: Thomas Gates's *A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia* (1610), John Smith's *Generall Historie of Virginia* (1624), George Percy's *A Trew Relacyon* (1624), the Virginia Assembly's "The Tragical Relation of the Virginia Assembly" (1624), and William Strachey's *A True Reportory* (1625). The authors of these narratives

²²⁹ Rachel B. Herrmann, "The 'tragical Historie': Cannibalism and Abundance in Colonial Jamestown," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 47–74 and Michael LaCombe, *Political Gastronomy: Food and Authority in the English Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

described the severe Virginia winter with varying degrees of horror, regret, and amusement. Popular English beliefs, as well as individual motives, shaped each authors' story. A close examination of these five texts, their consensus and contradictions, raise questions about the events of 1609-10 and, more importantly, the significance of these texts for early modern English colonialism.

Thomas Gates's refutation of cannibalism, written and published for the Virginia Council, came first in 1610, preceding all the other accounts by fourteen years. Appointed by the royal council, Gates served as governor of Virginia in 1610, following George Percy's rule, and then as lieutenant governor from 1611 until 1614. In the summer of 1609, Gates lead a resupply mission and departed for the colony, but a violent storm shipwrecked his vessel, the *Sea Venture*, in Bermuda. Gates did not reach Virginia until May of 1610, just after Starving Time. Encountering a colony on the brink of extinction, Gates decided that the surviving colonists needed to return to England, but as they made their way down the James River they ran into Thomas West's fleet, which had abundant supplies and new men. The colony was saved, West assumed the governorship of Virginia, and Gates returned to England, where he published *A True Declaration*.²³⁰ Given that scholars have long recognized *A True Declaration's* influence on William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, first performed in 1611 and published in 1623, it is likely that Gate's narrative received wide circulation soon after it was published.²³¹

²³⁰ For more information about Gates, see Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 246-51.

²³¹ For Gates's influence on the *Tempest*, see Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project*, 249; Robert Ralston Cawley, "Shakespeare's Use of the Voyagers in *The Tempest*," *PMLA* 41, no. 3 (September 1, 1926): 688-726; David Scott Wilson-Okamura, "Virgilian Models of Colonization in Shakespeare's *Tempest*," *ELH* 70, no. 3 (October 1, 2003): 709-37.

Gates acknowledged rumors of a man eating his dead wife in Virginia; however, he claimed cannibalism was an excuse to cover-up a ghastly murder. According to Gates, there was a man who “mortally hated his wife,” and he “secretly killed her, then cut her in pieces and hid her in divers parts of his house.” When suspicion arose around the wife’s absences, authorities suspected the husband, searched his house, and found “parts of her mangled body.” To excuse himself, the husband said that his wife died, and that he dismembered and hid her body to satisfy his hunger; however, the authorities reported finding a “good quantitie” of food in his house. The authorities arraigned the husband who later confessed to the murder. Gates blamed a few “scum of men” and their “venemous tongues” for spreading the cannibalism rumors.²³²

It took fourteen years for the other narratives on Starving Time to appear in print. In 1624, John Smith, George Percy, and the Virginia Assembly all published their versions of the 1609-10 winter, and all three portray various acts of cannibalism taking place in the colony. The final Starving Time account, from the first quarter of the seventeenth century, came in 1625 with William Strachey’s *A True Reportory*, and in which Strachey included a transcription of Gates’s initial report. Thus, in 1624-25, all five narratives were circulating in England and, to a smaller degree, America.

Unlike the other five authors, Strachey neither confirmed nor denied acts of cannibalism. Strachey detailed the dwindling food stores and the colonists’ starvation, but he omitted any references to cannibalism, save his inclusion of Gates’s report. Strachey had accompanied Gates on the *Sea Venture*, both men were shipwrecked in Bermuda, and both

²³² Thomas Gates, *A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia* (London: Printed [by Eliot’s Court Press and William Stansby] for William Barret, and are to be sold [by Edward Blount] at the blacke Beare in Pauls Church-yard, 1610), 37-9.

men arrived at Jamestown in the spring of 1610; thus, Strachey's narrative largely mirrors Gate's. Strachey's omission of any new or divergent information regarding anthropophagy suggests that he concurred with Gates's report.²³³

As early investors of the Virginia Company, both Gates's explicit refutation and Strachey's implicit denial of cannibalism served to assure their readers that the colony was not an utter failure, and ultimately, to save their investments. Their accounts indicated that Jamestown was struggling, in need of more support and tighter regulation to prevent further deterioration. As such, when Gates returned to England he advocated for the Virginia Company at a critical time and persuaded the other investors to fund two more expeditions to Jamestown. Gates also believed in a strict military-like regime and shortly after his arrival in the colony he imposed a set of draconian rules to manage the colony and regulate the conduct of its members. Strachey published these regulations in *Lawes Divine, Morall and Martiall* in 1612, when he returned to England.²³⁴ Though the severe laws were met with much disdain, Gates and Strachey defended them as the best means to restore order and discipline in Virginia.²³⁵

²³³ William Strachey, "A True Reportory," in *Captain John Smith: Writings with Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America*, edited by James Horn (New York: Library of America, 2007) 979–1092.

²³⁴ William Strachey, *For the Colony in Virginea Britannia. Lawes Divine, Morall and Martiall, &c.* (Printed at London : [By William Stansby] for Walter Burre, 1612). Governor Thomas Gates, Sir Thomas Smith, and Sir Thomas Dale worked together to develop these regulations. The laws ordered corporal punishment for many offenses, including cursing, speaking disrespectfully of the company officials, gambling, failing to attend church, fornication, adultery, unnecessarily killing livestock, or stealing agricultural implements or other people's crops. Crime punishable by death included blasphemy, sodomy, robbery, swearing false oaths, bearing false witness, trading with Indians or sailors without permission, sending goods out of the colony without permission, and cheating the company.

²³⁵ For more information on Gates, Strachey, and the *Lawes Divine, Morall and Martiall*, see Martha McCartney, "Sir Thomas Gates (d. 1622)," in *Encyclopedia Virginia: a Publication of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities*, 24 May 2014; Natalie Zacek, "William Strachey (1572–1621)," in *Encyclopedia Virginia*, 30 May 2014; Brent Tarter, "Lawes Divine, Morall and Martiall," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, 20 Jan. 2012. <http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org>

John Smith, like Gates and Strachey, was absent from the colony during Starving Time, but his text emphasized his absence during the brutal winter in order to elude any responsibility for the colony's alleged cannibalism and to demonstrate his indispensability to the colony's success. Smith served as the colony's leader from its founding in 1607 until his departure in 1609, when a bag of gun powder exploded on Smith's lap and severe burns led him to sail for England. While in England, Smith wrote *A Map of Virginia with a Description of the Country* (1612), but this work contained no mention of cannibalism. It was not until his *General Historie of Virginia* (1624) that Smith described the colonists consuming human flesh. Smith began by writing that even his greatest maligners cursed his absence because a mere few months after he departed the colony was barely surviving on "roots, herbes, acornes, walnuts, berries, now and then a little fish." The famine was so great that, according to Smith, the colonists dug up a recently deceased Indian from his grave and ate him. Smith also relayed the story of the husband who murdered and cannibalized his wife, though he suggested that the husband's motive was hunger, not hatred. The events of Starving Time were "too vile to say, and scarce to be beleueed" and Smith flatly blamed a lack of industry, providence, and government for the colony's failings, rather than the bareness or any defect of the country. As such, Smith portrayed George Percy, the president of the colony, as ineffective and unfit for his leadership position.²³⁶

Percy responded to Smith's negative depiction by writing *A Trewe Relacyon* in which he told of cannibalism at Jamestown but also played up the desperate circumstances and his many efforts to preserve the colony, demonstrating that the deteriorating conditions were beyond his control. According to Percy, upon the first sharp prickle of hunger, a few

²³⁶ John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia*, (London: Printed by I[ohn] D[awson] and I[ohn] H[aviland] for Michael Sparkes, 1624), 105-6.

men stole from the colony's food stores, for which Percy had them promptly executed. Undoubtedly, Percy wanted to establish himself as a proactive president. Having consumed their horses and other wild beasts, the hungry colonists then turned to dogs, cats, and rats; then to their boots or any other leather they found; then to serpents and snakes; then to unknown wild roots found deep in the forest where Indians laid in wait and killed several Englishmen. Once Percy made it clear that all their food options were exhausted and death felt imminent, he then told of anthropophagy.²³⁷

Percy's and Smith's narratives overlap on several points, but their stories also contain important differences in both the details of Starving Time and the rhetoric used to express the events of that fateful winter. A side by side comparison of their texts underscores these similarities and disparities. Smith wrote that the Jamestown famine was so great

that a Salvage we slew, and buried, the poorer sort tooke him up againe and eat him, and so did divers one another boyled and stewed with roots and herbs: And one amongst the rest did kill his wife, powdered her, and had eaten part of her before it was knowne, for which hee was executed, as hee well deserved; now whether shee was better roasted, boyled or carbonado'd, I know not, but of such a dish as powdered wife I never heard of²³⁸

Percy wrote that at the peak of the colony's starvation

notheinge was Spared to mainteyne Lyfe and to doe those things w[hi]ch seame incredible, as to digge upp deade corpes outt of graves and to eate them. And some have Licked upp the Bloode w[hi]ch hathe fallen from their weake fellowes. And amongste the reste this was moste lamentable. Thatt one of our Colline murdered his wyfe Ripped the Childe outt of her woambe and threwe itt into the River and after Chopped the Mother in pieces and

²³⁷ George Percy, *A Trew Relacyon*, in *Captain John Smith: Writings with Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America*, edited by James Horn, (New York: Library of America, 2007), 1099-1100.

²³⁸ Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia*, 105-6. To "powder" means to salt or to season.

sallted her for his foode, The same not beinge discovered before he had eaten p[ar]te thereof.²³⁹

Both Smith and Percy wanted to justify the colonists' actions, and so both emphasized that life-threatening hunger drove the Englishmen to cannibalism. Both men also mentioned corpses being exhumed and the murderous husband who dismembered his wife, but after these similarities, their accounts diverge.

The differences in Percy's and Smith's details, rhetoric, and tone ultimately reflect their personal investments in the history and success of the Virginia colony. Smith wanted to establish himself as fundamental to the Jamestown's advancement, and thus he delighted in telling of the colony's struggles in his absence. Smith's dark humor regarding the best way to prepare dead wife signifies his amusement at the colony's and Percy's failings. Conversely, Percy wanted to illustrate the dire conditions beyond his control; with his graphic description Starving Time, it is a wonder that the colony survived at all. Whereas Smith stated that one Indian was exhumed from his grave, Percy stated that his men dug up "deade corpes"; thus, the body count in Percy's story increases from Smith's two bodies – Indian and wife – to an unknown number. Additionally, Percy provided more horrific elements about Starving Time than Smith. The colonists were so hungry that they licked the blood off the weak and wounded. The homicidal husband killed his *pregnant* wife, ripped the child from her womb, discarded it, then butchered his wife's body and consumed it. Given Percy's gruesome narrative, it seems miraculous that the colony still existed in 1624, the year Percy wrote *A Trewe Relacyon*.

Smith's and Percy's personal motivations for constructing their stories of Starving Time call into question the veracity of both narratives. Even beyond *The Generall Historie*

²³⁹ Percy, *A Trewe Relacyon*, 1100.

of Virginia, historians have long recognized that Smith used his publications for self-promotion. Smith often embellished his stories, added self-aggrandizing statements, and referred to himself in the third person which suggested that the praise came from an outside source. Smith's hubris is evident in his conclusion of Starving Time, where he stated that if the colony "had the government as Captaine *Smith* appointed, but that they could not maintaine it, would surely have kept us from those extremities of miseries."²⁴⁰ Apparently, Smith was the only man capable of preventing that winter's sufferings.²⁴¹ Where, and to what degree, Smith might have inflated the 1609-10 events is uncertain.

When compared to the other Starving Time narratives, Percy's description of that winter was the most tragic, desperate, and fantastical. Exhuming dead corpses for food, licking blood off the weak, ripping a baby from the womb and discarding it – Percy's account reads like a horror novel. Indeed, Percy's prose, his use of literary devices, the drama, and his desire to redeem his reputation all cast doubt on his story.²⁴²

The fifth portrayal of Starving Time came from the Virginia Assembly (1624) in their report, or complaint, about the state of the colony under Sir Thomas Smith's government. Smith served as the Virginia Company's treasurer from 1609 to 1619, and he helped Gates develop and set forth the strict *Lawes Divine, Morall and Martiall*, though Smith was absent from the colony. The Assembly lamented that under Smith's government "the Colony for the most parte remayned in great want and misery under the most severe and Crewell

²⁴⁰ Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia*, 106.

²⁴¹ For more on Smith self-aggrandizement, see Horn, *A Land As God Made It*, 95-97; Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Captain John Smith: A Select Edition of His Writings* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 2-4.

²⁴² For an in-depth analysis of Percy's narrative, see Mark Nicholls, "George Percy's 'Trewelacyon': A Primary Source for the Jamestown Settlement," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 113, no. 3 (January 1, 2005): 212-75.

lawes.”²⁴³ Upon discussing Starving Time, they recycled parts of Percy’s and John Smith’s story. When listing all the items that came before cannibalism, Percy recorded “doggs Catts Ratts... Bootes shoes or any other leather... serpents and snakes” and the Assembly itemized “Doggs, Catts, rattts, Snakes, Toadstooless, horse hides.”²⁴⁴ When addressing the murderous husband, Smith stated “one amongst the rest did kill his wife, powdered her, and had eaten part of her before it was knowne, for which hee was executed,” while the Assembly noted that a man “killinge his wiefe powdered her upp to eate her, for w^{ch} he was burned.”²⁴⁵ Beyond blending Smith’s and Percy’s narratives, the Assembly added a new piece to the story – a voracious cannibal. The Assembly wrote, “Many besides fedd on the Corps of dead men, and one who had gotten unsatiabie, out of custome to that foode could not be restrayned, until such tyme as he was executed for it.”²⁴⁶

The intent of the Assembly’s 1624 report about the colony was to discredit Sir Thomas Smith and his government, and thus, their chaotic depiction of Starving Time contributed to their argument of Smith’s incompetence. The Assembly stated that they could not blame their commanders in Jamestown for the lamentable winter (i.e. Percy) because their sustenance was to come from England; instead, they held Smith, and his scarce allowances for the colony, responsible. They concluded their account of Starving Time by sarcastically suggesting that the colony was so miserable that when they witnessed Indians killing a mare, they wished “whilst she was a boylinge that S^r Tho: Smith were uppon her backe in the kettle.” The Assembly’s acerbic joke illustrates just how little they thought of

²⁴³ “The Tragical Relation of the Virginia Assembly” in *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia*, edited by H.R. McIlwaine (Richmond: Library Board, Virginia State Library, 1915), 21.

²⁴⁴ Percy, *A Trewe Relacyon*, 1099; “The Tragical Relation of the Virginia Assembly,” 21.

²⁴⁵ Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia*, 106; “The Tragical Relation of the Virginia Assembly,” 21.

²⁴⁶ “The Tragical Relation of the Virginia Assembly,” 21.

Smith; he would have been more useful dead, as food, than alive as one of the colony's leaders. And, the tone of contempt throughout the report makes it difficult to discern where the facts end and the exaggerations begin.

Taken together, all five accounts of Starving Time paint a bleak picture of Jamestown during the winter of 1609-10, but the divergences in details and tone, the delay in reporting, and use of hearsay for many of the accounts raises questions about the actual events of Starving Time, and larger questions about the significance of these narratives. Firstly, cannibalism may not have occurred in Jamestown. Smith, Gates, and Strachey were not present in the colony and nor did they claim to witness the events they described; their accounts were based on what others had to say. Gates, the only author to publish his account immediately after Starving Time in 1610, claimed that cannibalism had not occurred, and that any references to anthropophagy were based on rumors and misunderstandings. Besides Gates, the other four accounts came in either 1624 or 1625, leaving over a decade for memories to morph. Percy and the Virginia Assembly, while present in Jamestown during Starving Time, had motives for embellishing the horrors of Starving Time. Conversely, cannibalism may have occurred. Gates, Smith, Percy, and the Virginia Assembly overlap in their mention of the dead wife. Furthermore, in 2013, archeologists from Preservation Virginia discovered bones at the historic site that indicate that a young woman was dismembered and cannibalized. Douglas Owsley, the Smithsonian forensic anthropologist who analyzed the bones after they were found, states that "there were four strikes to the back of the head, one of which was the strongest and split the skull in half. A penetrating wound was then made to the left temple, probably by a single-sided knife, which was used to pry open the head and remove the brain." Owsley believes the

body was dismembered for consumption because the bones were found in a trash pit “all cut and chopped up.”²⁴⁷ While the archeologists estimate that the young woman was fourteen years old at the time of her death, which may have been too young for marriage, it is difficult not to think that she may have been the murdered wife mentioned repeatedly in the Starving Time accounts. Whether or not the colonists resorted to eating human flesh is inconclusive, and thus, a more productive line of inquiry centers on how these stories of cannibalism may have started, why these narratives boomed in popularity during the 1620s, and what the English thought about them.

If cannibalism did not occur in Jamestown, as Gates claimed, then from where did these tales originate? Gates argued that pirates – former colonists who abandoned the colony in favor of piracy – started rumors of cannibalism to explain why they left Jamestown and to mitigate their unlawful behavior. According to Gates, approximately thirty Englishmen were appointed to a ship, the *Swallow*, in order to trade with the Indians. Once they obtained a great quantity by trading, the “most seditious of them, conspired together, persuaded some, and enforced others” to steal away the *Swallow* and make a “league amongst themselves to be professed pirates.”²⁴⁸ Despite their dreams of “mountains of gold” and “happy robberies,” the men failed in their piracy. Before they disbanded, they bound themselves by mutual oath “to discredit the land, to deplore the famyne, and to protest that this their coming awaie, proceeded from desperate necessitie.” Gates wrote that these men were the ones “that roared out the tragicall historie of the man

²⁴⁷ Joseph Stromberg, “Starving Settlers in Jamestown Colony Resorted to Cannibalism,” *Smithsonian* (April 30, 2013) <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/starving-settlers-in-jamestown-colony-resorted-to-cannibalism-46000815/>. To date, this is the only archeological evidence that has been found to indicate anthropophagy at colonial Jamestown.

²⁴⁸ Gates, *A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia*, 37.

eating of his dead wife in *Virginia*.”²⁴⁹ Any references to anthropophagy, Gates maintained, were shrewd fabrications promoted by “unhallowed” men to justify their abandoning the colony and explain away their illegal activities.

As evidence that these men invented their stories of cannibalism, Gates noted that the former pirates lacked cohesion and consistency in their tales. He wrote that “sometimes they reported that they saw this horrible action, sometimes that *Captaine Davies* said so, sometimes that one *Beadle* the Lieutenant of *Captaine Davies* did relate it, varying this report into diversitie of false colours, which hold no likenesse and proportion.”²⁵⁰ There was no single consistent eyewitness account of Starving Time. Beyond these false rumors, Gates maintained that no evidence existed to show that cannibalism occurred. He acknowledged that one man killed and dismembered his wife, but he asserted that this murder was committed from hatred, not hunger; cannibalism was a red herring.

Whether based on fictitious rumors or grounded in reality, the narratives of cannibalism during Starving Time soared in popularity fifteen years after the harsh Jamestown winter, indicating that these stories might have reflected broader anxieties about the colonial project in America, beyond anthropophagy, at a specific historical moment. When considering English preconceived notions about cannibalism and Indians, the humoral theory, and events during the 1620s, it appears that the Starving Times narratives represented a fear that the colonists might be losing their English identity.

Decades before the English colonized America, descriptions of cannibals filled visual and written depictions of the New World, and explorers coming to America expected

²⁴⁹ Gates, *A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia*, 38

²⁵⁰ Gates, *A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia*, 38

Indians to practice cannibalism. In 1553, Richard Eden translated Sebastian Münster's *A Treatyse of the Newe India* into English and presented Amerigo Vespucci's voyage to English readers for the first time. Vespucci wrote about Native Americans eating habits; he stated that "at theyr meate, they use rude and barberous fashions, lying on the ground without any table clothe, or coverlet," and furthermore, that the Indians "eate no kynd of fleshe except mans fleshe."²⁵¹ In addition to Vespucci's letters, accounts of Christopher Columbus's voyages, Richard Hakluyt's writings, engravings by Theodor de Bry, and New World maps all portrayed Indians as "man-eating savages."²⁵² Within European culture, cannibalism was the ultimate hallmark of barbarianism, and colonial propaganda often used representations of cannibalism, and "uncivilized" eating, to demonstrate the "primitive" nature of indigenous societies and reinforce ideas of English superiority.²⁵³

In order to fully appreciate the meaning of cannibalism in early-modern English culture, one must understand what it means to eat in that society; eating is a necessity, a cultural act, and a metaphorical category, and to "eat" anything will not mean the same thing in all cultures. According to popular early-modern English beliefs, what an individual

²⁵¹ Sebastian Münster, *A Treatyse of the Newe India with Other New Founde Landes... Translated out of Latin into Englishe by Rycharde Eden*, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 1389:04 (London: Imprinted by S. Mierdman for Edward Sutton, 1553).

²⁵² Amerigo Vespucci, Christopher Columbus, Luciano Formisano, and Bartolomé de las Casas, *Letters from a New World: Amerigo Vespucci's Discovery of America* (New York: Marsilio, 1992); Julius E. Olson and Edward Gaylord Bourne, eds., *Original Narratives of Early American History: The Northmen Columbus and Cabot, 985-1503* (New York: Scriber, 1906), 87, 261-62; Richard Hakluyt, Richard Hakluyt, and E. G. R. Taylor, ed., *The Original Writings & Correspondence of the Two Richard Hakluyts* (London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1935); Theodor de Bry and Thomas Harriot, *Picturing the New World the Hand-Colored De Bry Engravings of 1590* [Chapel Hill, N.C.]: University Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006. <http://www.lib.unc.edu/dc/debry/index.html>; for maps, see for example Abraham Ortelius, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum Abrahami Ortelii Antuerp: Geographi Regii, or The Theatre of the Whole World: Set Forth by that Excellent Geographer Abraham Ortelius* (London, 1606).

²⁵³ Prior to colonizing in America, the English used accusations of cannibalism against the Irish; see Nicholas P. Canny, "The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (October 1, 1973): 575-98.

ate had profound impacts on one's constitution. Borrowed from ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, the English relied on the humoral theory to explain the composition and the workings of the human body. The humoral theory stipulated that the human body was filled with four basic substances, called humors, and the ratio of the four humors shaped an individual's constitution, both physically and mentally. The four humors - phlegm, black bile, yellow bile, and blood - constantly fluctuated depending on one's diet, activity, and environment, and the goal of good health was to maintain the proper balance of humors in one's body; but different bodies had different humoral ratios to maintain. The diversity of humans - in health, temperament, and physicality - was explained by different humoral compositions. Race and gender were malleable concepts and partially understood in terms of humoral makeup; Englishmen had a different humoral makeup than Native American men, and Englishmen had a different humoral makeup from Englishwomen.²⁵⁴ If one's humoral balance became skewed, then one risked not only poor health, but possibly a change in their physical and mental constitution. Since the English believed that food affected the humoral composition, one's diet had profound implications for one's identity.²⁵⁵

By the close of the sixteenth century, prior to the founding of the Virginia colony, both the humoral theory and the trope of the cannibal Indian were well established in English culture. English explorers and colonists understood bodily difference in terms of

²⁵⁴ For further reading on the malleability of gender and race in early modern European culture, see Rebecca Earle, "If You Eat Their Food . . .": Diets and Bodies in Early Colonial Spanish America," *American Historical Review* 115, no. 3 (June 2010): 688-713 and Kathleen Brown, "Changed... into the Fashion of Man': The Politics of Sexual Difference in a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Settlement," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 6, no. 2 (October 1, 1995): 171-93.

²⁵⁵ For more information on the humoral theory, see William F. Bynum and Roy Porter, *Companion Encyclopedia of the History of Medicine* (London: Routledge, 1997), 286-90, and Mary Lindemann, *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 13-25.

the humors, and thus, they believed that the Indians looked and acted as they did because of their distinct humoral makeup. The American diet, which the English believed included cannibalism, along with the American environment, shaped the bodies and the temperaments of the indigenous societies.

In order to preserve their English identity, the Jamestown colonists sought to maintain their English diet and minimize their ingestion of American foods. They expected their victuals to come from England; they did not think that they would be living off the American land. Virginia Assembly's account of Starving Time very clearly stated that "wee cannott for this our scarsitie blame our commanders heere, in respect that our sustenance was to come from England."²⁵⁶ After the first few months of settlement, when food was running low, Smith ordered the colonist to forage in the forest, but several replied that they would not eat "savage trash."²⁵⁷ Smith, a practical man, knew his men had to eat to survive and he told them that if they could get it past their mouths, their stomach would digest it. Incidentally, this may have been what the English men feared. At this early point of colonization, these men attempted to uphold their English integrity by choosing hunger over American food. When the colonists did eat local meat, fish, and produce, they appeared to limit their selection, as best they could, to familiar foods: turkey, venison, oysters, sturgeon, and seasonal fruits and vegetables.²⁵⁸

The colonists preferred English food to such an extent that when the opportunity arose, they would purchase biscuits from the sailors of visiting vessels in exchange for

²⁵⁶ "The Tragical Relation of the Virginia Assembly," 21.

²⁵⁷ Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia*, 86-87.

²⁵⁸ Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia*, 10-94.

“money, Saxefras, fures, or love.”²⁵⁹ The Englishmen obviously valued their daily proportion of biscuit. When the ships departed, and the colonists had to rely more heavily on native food, they reported that an extreme weakness and sickness oppressed them. They believed that their bodies were not designed to ingest American victuals. The foreign food upset their humoral balance, leading to sickness and poor health.²⁶⁰

While the Englishmen quickly became dependent upon the Indians to ensure that they would have enough provisions, they still held on to their reservations about American food. Maize, as a staple of the Amerindian diet and a frequently traded commodity, drew particular attention from English botanists. John Gerard’s popular *Herball*, first published in 1597, stated that, to date, there was “no certaine prooffe or experience concerning the vertues of this kinde of Corne.” Nonetheless, Gerard continued by writing that although the Indians, who “know no better,” made a virtue out of necessity, corn was of “hard and evill digestion, a more convenient food for swine than for man.”²⁶¹ A few decades later, John Parkinson’s *Theatrum Botanicum* stated that maize could provide nourishment to both Indians and “Christians of all Nations,” but he also noted that, for those who were not used to eating the crop, “feeding too much thereon it engenders grosse blood.” Furthermore, Parkinson included the popular belief that maize “breedeth thicke blood and humours.”²⁶² Consuming Amerindian corn was not simply a matter of nourishment, it also affect one’s

²⁵⁹ Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia*, 44.

²⁶⁰ For more information on the colonists’ aversion to American food, especially maize, see Trudy Eden, *The Early American Table: Food and Society in the New World* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008), 73-77.

²⁶¹ John Gerard, *Gerard’s Herball: The Essence Thereof*, edited by Thomas Johnson (1636, Reprint. London: Printed by R. & R. Clark for Gerald Howe, 1927), 26. Gerard’s *Herball* was the most widely circulated botany book in English in the 17th century.

²⁶² John Parkinson, *Theatrum Botanicum: The Theater of Plantae. Or, an Universall and Compleate Herball*, Early English Tract Supplement / E4:1[226] (London: Printed by Tho. Cotes, 1640), 1139.

blood and other humors; maize could change one's constitution. When the Jamestown colonists ate maize, especially in the early years, they did so reluctantly and out of necessity.

Of all the comestibles available in America, nothing was more quintessentially Indian, in the English mindset, than human flesh. The stereotype of the cannibal Indian saturated early modern English documents about America. And while technically not considered food, the ingestion of human flesh, like food, was thought to affect the humoral balance, and thus, one's identity.

When the narratives of Starving Time reported that colonists engaged in cannibalism, an underlying argument may have been that the colonists were losing their English identity, slowly changing into "savage Indians." The anxiety surrounding the loss of the colonists' identity went beyond the assumption that they were "acting like Indians." That is, the English did not suddenly lose their identity by participating in anthropophagy, a behavior strongly associated with Indians; the English were losing their identity by ingesting flesh that changed their humoral balance, which could alter their physical and mental constitution. The English, quite literally, risked transforming into Indians by practicing cannibalism. Just as the Starving Time accounts delineated a slow descent of comestibles – from dogs, to snakes, to leather goods – to demonstrate the deterioration of the colony, the descriptions of cannibalism indicated the corrosion of the colonists' Englishness. Given that the English accused "others" of cannibalism as a means to designate inferiority, their supposed participation in this act meant that they could no longer argue for the "natural superiority" of the Jamestown colonists; the English and Indians were becoming equals.

Yet, even as the Starving Time narratives expressed an anxiety about the colonists losing their Englishness, the authors made small distinctions between Indian and English cannibalism. The English believed, incorrectly, that the Chesapeake Indians lacked discipline, and thus, they either feasted or fasted according to the availability of food, unable restrain themselves during times of plenty to save enough food for times of want.²⁶³ Englishmen, on the other hand, tried to prepare for harsh times by consuming only moderate amounts of food when they thought hard times might soon approach. Following these presumptions, both Smith and Percy conveyed that the colonists ate only part of the corpses at once, salting and preserving what was left of the bodies. Consequently, Smith and Percy implied an adherence to English foodways even during time of desperate starvation. Furthermore, Smith stated that the colonists prepared the “powdered wife” dish with roots and herbs; another indication that the Englishmen practiced cannibalism in a more “refined” manner than the “barbaric” Indians.²⁶⁴ The Starving Time narratives suggested that colonists were losing their identity slowly; even as they practice culturally unacceptable behavior, they clung to their English mannerisms.

Even with Percy’s and Smith’s distinctions between Indian and English cannibalism, the idea of the Jamestown colonists eating human flesh remained horrifying among English readers.²⁶⁵ The Virginia Assembly’s and Percy’s narratives, in particular, included details

²⁶³ William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 40-41.

²⁶⁴ Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia*, 105-6, and Percy, *A Trew Relacyon*, 1100.

²⁶⁵ In early modern English culture, cannibalism was only acceptable under very specific circumstances. The first of which was in the medical realm; the English pharmaceutical arsenal included the consumption embalmed bodies, the bodies of the recently dead, as well as other bodily matter such as organs, fat, bone, blood, urine, and faeces. See Louise Noble, *Medicinal Cannibalism in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). The second scenario in which cannibalism was tolerable

that readers would have found grotesque – colonists lick blood of the weak and dying, a man ripping a baby from the mother’s womb and then throwing the baby into the river, insatiable cannibal who could not be restrained from seeking out more corpses to consume.²⁶⁶ The narratives, even with the cultural peculiarities, argued that the Jamestown men were descending into an almost unrecognizable depraved savagery.

In addition to ideas about cannibalism and the humoral theory, and the authors’ personal motivations, the timing of the Starving Times narratives is important to consider in order to fully understand the meaning of these stories in early modern English culture. All five accounts of Starving Time were published, or republished in the case of Gates, during 1624-1625. At that time, the Virginia colonists were struggling as they tried to recover from devastating diseases and the lethal blows from the second Anglo-Powhatan war.

A few years before the publication of the narratives, in 1622, the vulnerable Jamestown colony was still susceptible to failure. The high rate of disease suppressed the population’s growth. According to Samuel Wrote, an investor in the Virginia Company of London, the colony's 1619 population of 700 had been supplemented by at least 3,570 new arrivals over three years, and yet the total population had grown to only 1,240 people; the rest had died.²⁶⁷

was among shipwrecked crews; under the custom of the sea, survivors of a wrecked or distressed vessel could partake in cannibalism in order to survive. See Eden, *The Early American Table*, 9-10.

²⁶⁶ Percy, *A Trewe Relacyon*, 1100 and “The Tragical Relation of the Virginia Assembly,” 21.

²⁶⁷ Virginia Company of London, “A Declaration of the State of the Colony and Affaires in Virginia,” 1622, Tracy W. McGregor Library of American History, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va., <http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/>.



A woodcut depicting the Powhatan Indian attack on Jamestown by Matthaeus Merian, 1628
(via Wikimedia Commons)

Even with the limited population, the colonists pressed up the James River and encroached on Powhatan territory, and Indian leaders devised a plan to push them back and assert their supremacy. On March 22, 1622, Opechancanough – tribal chief of the Powhatan Confederacy – led a surprise attack on the settlements upriver from Jamestown and succeeded in killing nearly a third of the English population. Opechancanough, perhaps assuming that the English were sufficiently humiliated and would abandon their settlement, did not pursue the absolute destruction of the colony. The English, however, did not retreat and a ten year war ensued.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁸ For more on the second Anglo-Powhatan war, see Spencer Tucker, James R. Arnold, and Roberta Wiener, *The Encyclopedia of North American Indian Wars, 1607–1890: A Political, Social, and Military History*

In the year following the 1622 massacre, the English lost another quarter of their population due to small scale Indian raids, starvation, and disease; thus, when the Starving Time narratives approached publication, the Jamestown colony's future was uncertain. The English felt the situation was so dire that, immediately following the initial assault, they discussed moving the entire colony to the Eastern Shore.²⁶⁹ From the founding of the Virginia colony in 1607, the English tried to portray the Indians as inferior, undisciplined, and uncivilized. Now, the English were teetering on the verge of a complete catastrophe due to the Powhatans cunning strategy and effective war tactics. The English, who still claimed their superiority, had to explain how they were losing to the native "savages." Perhaps the colonists, after living in a foreign environment and eating unfamiliar foods, were losing their Englishness. The Starving Time narratives, taken together, express this anxiety that the English were losing their identity, at a historical moment when the colony verged on collapse. The unease of the years from 1622-1623 prompted the surge and popularity of the Starving Time narratives.

Cannibalism in Newfoundland

Jamestown was not the only instance where stories about English cannibalism circulated during a time when England's future was uncertain. In 1589, Richard Hakluyt published his notable collection of English travel writings, *The Principall Navigations, Voiages, and Discoveries of the English Nation*, which included a narrative of English-on-

(ABC-CLIO, 2011), 17-18 and J. D. Rice, "Second Anglo-Powhatan War (1622-1632)" in *Encyclopedia Virginia*, 26 June 2014. <http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org>

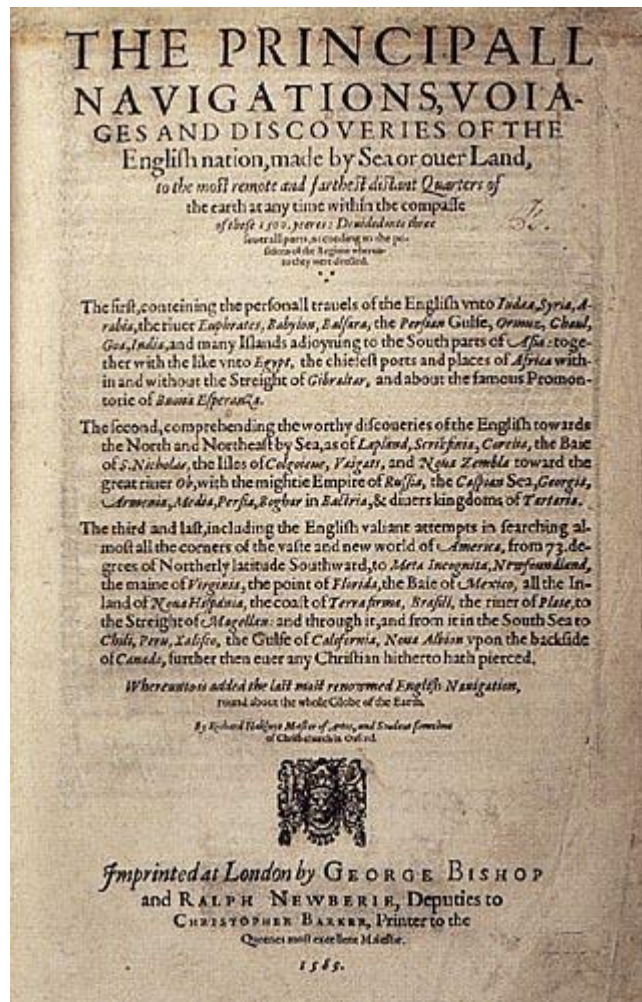
²⁶⁹ Rice, "Second Anglo-Powhatan War (1622-1632)" in *Encyclopedia Virginia*.

English cannibalism in Newfoundland in 1536.²⁷⁰ Hakluyt revised and expanded *Principall Navigations* in 1599-1600, which indicates that his contemporaries held a significant level of interest in his anthology. During the last decade of the sixteenth century, when Hakluyt's book circulated widely, England experienced tumult on various fronts. The English were in the midst of the undeclared Anglo-Spanish War (1585-1604), and while they experienced victories in 1587 at Cádiz and in 1588 over the Spanish Armada, the tides soon turned. In 1589, the English Armada was defeated by Spain; in 1595, England lost the Battle of San Juan which dulled English hopes for a presence in the Caribbean; in 1597, the Essex-Raleigh Expedition resulted in failure as England could not overcome the Spanish fleets. Outside the troubles of the Anglo-Spanish War, in 1590 England also discovered that their first colony in America, Roanoke, was lost. This cascade of setbacks coincided with the popularity of *Principall Navigations* and the spread of one of the earliest, if not the first, report of English-on-English cannibalism in an exploration narrative.

The incident of cannibalism appeared in Hakluyt's recounting of Richard Hore's trans-Atlantic voyage from England to Newfoundland. According to Hakluyt, in the spring of 1536, Hore, a London merchant and navigator, gathered a crew of professional sailors and adventurous English gentlemen for a trip to the "Northwest parts of America" with the dual purpose of catching cod fish and giving the gents a chance to explore a foreign land. Hore chartered two ships – the *Trinity* and the *William*. The *William* anchored at Penguin Island, off the south coast of Newfoundland, and completed a successful fishing trip. Meanwhile, after two months at sea, the *Trinity* arrived at Newfoundland's north coast

²⁷⁰ Richard Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 245:04; Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 1575:01, (London: George Bishop, Ralph Newberie, and Robert Barker, 1599).

where things quickly unraveled. The crew failed to establish good relations with the local Indians, making trade impossible, and as they depleted the *Trinity's* victuals, they could not catch or find sufficient food to meet their needs. Soon thereafter, the men began to turn on each other and at least one man allegedly resorted to cannibalism.²⁷¹



Title page of Richard Hakluyt's *The Principall Navigations, Voiages, and Discoveries of the English Nation*, 1598 (via Wikimedia Commons).

Hakluyt's account is the only surviving narrative of Hore's trip, and it is based on the testimony of two survivors decades after actual events. As such, the documentation surrounding the events of Hore's expedition is sparse and full of silences. Thus, in order to

²⁷¹ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, doc 662.

make sense of the *Trinity's* troubles and Hakluyt's narrative, this section begins with informed speculation, what we know about Hore's voyage. Then it examines Hakluyt's writing, and his sources, in a manner that highlights the lacunae, especially with regards to the anthropophagic encounter in his story.

Hore's *Trinity* held a unique crew that included English gentry along with hard-working sailors, and some scholars, either implicitly or explicitly, have blamed the gentlemen for the expedition's failings. They question why the crew could not sustain themselves from the rich sea-fowl and fish that surrounded them.²⁷² Indeed, it is unclear why the *Trinity's* men could not hunt and fish for their victuals, as the *William's* crew did – eating the island's cod, auk, and even bears.²⁷³ When the *William* returned to England, it arrived carrying a surplus of codfish.²⁷⁴ Given the *William's* success, which also housed gentlemen adventurers, it is unlikely the *Trinity's* gentry explain the voyage's shortcomings.

According to Hakluyt, the *Trinity* spent a “very long [time] at sea... above two moneths,” which might have been especially hard on the English gentlemen who were not used to the challenging life at sea, and caused tensions within the crew.²⁷⁵ The average time to sail from England to Newfoundland, in the sixteenth century, varied from as short as just over twenty days to around fifty days, in very stormy weather.²⁷⁶ There is no mention of particularly troublesome weather, so it is likely that the *Trinity* lost its way at some point, before making landfall. While two months might have been longer than

²⁷² Myra Jehlen and Michael Warner, *The English Literatures of America: 1500-1800* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 90 and Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Great Explorers: The European Discovery of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 103-105.

²⁷³ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, doc 662.

²⁷⁴ Morison, *The Great Explorers*, 105.

²⁷⁵ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, doc 662.

²⁷⁶ Morison, *The Great Explorers*, 50 (John Cabot), 100 (John Rut).

expected, this duration probably produced two very different experiences for the men aboard the “first tourist cruise in American history.”²⁷⁷ The experienced sailors might have felt inconvenienced by their time at sea, but they must have been less fazed than the gentry who were unaccustomed to the harsh realities of ocean travel. Hakluyt does not indicate whether the gentlemen actively participated in sailing the ship or if they simply expected the sailors to do all the work. Even if the gentlemen did help out, their inexperience might have proved to be a bigger hindrance than their inactivity. Thus, the awkward assembly of men on the *Trinity* probably disrupted typical life aboard a ship and led to unexpected conflicts, one of which was alleged cannibalism in Newfoundland.



Map of New Netherland and New England by Willem Blaeu, 1635. Note: North is to the right (via Wikimedia Commons).

²⁷⁷ Without too much exaggeration, Samuel Eliot Morrison called Hore’s expedition “first tourist cruise in American history” in *The Great Explorers*, 103.

It is not clear where exactly the *Trinity* finally anchored in Newfoundland, but once they landed, the men quickly “grew into great want of victuals.” Hakluyt’s account vaguely describes the area as having plenty of fir and pine trees, with “fieldes and deserts here and there.” From this general description, historians generally assume that the *Trinity*’s crew disembarked in northern Newfoundland or the Labrador coast.²⁷⁸ The local Indians fled the coast upon seeing the *Trinity*; the Englishmen “pursued them,” but the Indians escaped. The crew had difficulty gathering food of any substance, and being unable to trade with the absent Native Americans, a famine “increased amongst them from day to day.” They searched for raw herbs and roots to eat, but these did little to satisfy their insatiable hunger. Then, the Englishmen, or at least one English man, allegedly resorted to killing and eating one of his crewmates.²⁷⁹

Scholars today often take for granted that the events portrayed in *Principall Navigations* regarding Hore’s expedition actually occurred, similar to historians of Jamestown, but there is ample reason to doubt Hakluyt’s narrative.²⁸⁰ Hakluyt based his account on two survivors: Master William Dawbeny and Thomas Buts. Hakluyt’s cousin, Richard Hakluyt the Elder, interviewed Dawbeny in London, decades after the voyage, and presumably gave his notes to Richard Hakluyt the Younger – the author of *Principall Navigations*. Sometime after receiving his cousin’s information on Hore, Hakluyt traveled 200 miles to consult with another survivor, Buts, in order to “learne the whole trueth of

²⁷⁸ Morison, *The Great Explorers*, 103-105, Peter T. Bradley, *British Maritime Enterprise in the New World: From the Late Fifteenth to the Mid-Eighteenth Century* (Lewiston, N.Y.: 1999), 250, and George A. Rose, *Cod: The Ecological History of the North Atlantic Fisheries*, (St. John’s, NL: Breakwater Books, 2007), 184.

²⁷⁹ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, doc 662.

²⁸⁰ Morison, *The Great Explorers*, 103-105, Bradley, *British Maritime Enterprise in the New World*, 250, and Rose, *Cod: The Ecological History of the North Atlantic Fisheries*, 184.

this voyage.” At the time Hakluyt conducted this interview, Buts was the only surviving member of Hore’s expedition.²⁸¹

Hakluyt introduces Dawbeny as a London merchant, and Buts as the son of Sir William Buts, a Knight of Norfolk and the physician to Henry VIII. As a merchant, Dawbeny did not hold the same level of status as most of the other gentry, whom Hakluyt describes as “gentlemen of the Innes of Court, and of the Chancerie, and divers others of good worship.” Buts, on the other hand, came from a prestigious family and shared a similar social position with the other tourists. The divergent backgrounds of Dawbeny and Buts may have influenced their experience and their recounting of Hore’s ill-fated cruise.²⁸²

Unfortunately, Hakluyt did not always clarify from which source his information came, Dawbeny or Buts, so it is difficult to trace the exact origin of various parts of his narrative. At the start of his account, Hakluyt states that it was Buts “from whose mouth I wrote most of this relation.” However, Hakluyt does not mention Buts again until the very end of his report, when he discusses the men’s eventual return to England. Buts told Hakluyt that he “was so changed in the voyage with hunger and miserie” that his father and mother did not recognize him as their son “untill they found a secret marke which was a wart upon one of his knees.” On the other hand, Hakluyt references Dawbeny several times throughout his narrative, when covering the *Trinity*’s landfall and discussing the crew’s trials in Newfoundland. The explicit referencing of Dawbeny, at least three times, seems to contradict Hakluyt’s initial statement that his account is mostly based on Buts; however, it is probable that Buts confirmed what Dawbeny had reported to Hakluyt the Elder. So, the only other details that Buts evidently added to Dawbeny’s already existing testimony

²⁸¹ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, doc 662.

²⁸² Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, doc 662.

regarded his own noble lineage and his own physical condition upon the crew's return. Buts, coming from a wealthy family and comfortable living, focused on his experience and seemed to be justifiably complaining when he recounted his emaciated state after the voyage, while Dawbeny, coming from a much more modest lifestyle, focused on the experiences of the entire crew and gave no particulars about his condition upon their homecoming.²⁸³

Despite his generally vague references, Hakluyt did note that the details about the anthropographic activity in Newfoundland came from Dawbeny. Hakluyt relays that with the growing starvation, a "fellowe killed his mate while he stooped to take up a roote for his reliefe, and cutting out pieces of his bodie whom he had murthered, royled the same on the coles and greedily devoured them." Even with these grisly details, much remains unknown. Did anyone witness this murder? Did any of the crewmen try to stop this violence or protect the victim? Since there is no discussion of an attempted intervention, one might assume that this homicide was committed secretly, with no witnesses. So, how did the men come to learn about this murder? Hakluyt continues,

it fortun'd that one of the company driven with hunger to seeke abroad for reliefe found out in the fieldes the savour of broiled flesh, and fell out with one for that he would suffer him and his fellows to sterve, enjoying plenty as he thought: and this matter growing to cruell speeches he that had the broiled meate, burst out into these words: if thou wouldest know, the broiled meate that I had was a piece of such a mans buttocke²⁸⁴

Apparently, while one of the *Trinity's* crew members foraged for food, he came across another crew member broiling a piece of meat. The former was startled and outraged by the latter's apparent greed – that he would allow the former, and their crew mates, to

²⁸³ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, doc 662.

²⁸⁴ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, doc 662.

starve, while he enjoyed “plenty.” The men began arguing, and then the latter shouted that, if the former had to know, the meat he was eating came from a man’s buttock.²⁸⁵

Much about this confrontation is confusing. If an Englishman was truly eating one of his fellow mates, why would he confess to murder and cannibalism? Was there any other evidence supporting his confession, such as the remainder of a body or a missing person? Dawbeny, or Buts, do not give Hakulyt a name for the perpetrator or the victim, which seems a little odd. The *Trinity’s* men, approximately sixty in total, spent over two months a sea together and some time on the Labrador before this incident. One might expect these men to remember the name, or some identifying features, of the man who committed such a horrific crime and the man who died so tragically.

One reason that Dawbeny may not have provided any names for this incident is that he might not have been a direct witness. Hore’s expedition included two ships, and Hakluyt places Dawbeny in the *William*, not the *Trinity*. It should be noted that Hakluyt misnames the *William* as the *Minion* throughout his text. Scholars have noted this error and assume that either Hakluyt misheard his informant or that the aging informant misremembered the name of the second ship. As such, Hakluyt states that Dawbeny “was in this voyage, and in the *Minion*.”²⁸⁶ Due to a lawsuit filed by William Dolphyn, the owner of the two ships, against Hore, we know that the *William* was the second ship and it returned to England with plenty of cod; Dolphyn was suing Hore for defrauding him on his share of the fish.²⁸⁷ The *Trinity*, on the other hand, was abandoned in Newfoundland with the survivors seizing a French fishing vessel and returning to England in that. Placing Dawbeny on the *William*

²⁸⁵ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, doc 662.

²⁸⁶ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, doc 662.

²⁸⁷ David B. Quinn, *England and the Discovery of America, 1481-1620* (New York: Knopf, 1974), 188; Morison, *The Great Explorers*, 105; Rose, *Cod*, 184.

means that he may have been an indirect witness, perhaps just repeating rumors that he heard. Though, it is also possible that Dawbeny switched ships at some point.²⁸⁸

Given the tension surrounding the confrontation between the forager and the broiler, it is conceivable that one of the men lied as a means to end or win the argument. The broiler had no reason to confess to murder and cannibalism; the forager did not see a human body nor have any other reason to suspect anthropophagy. Thus, the broiler's "confession" might have been intended to shut down the argument, and if this was his intention, he succeeded. After hearing that the broiled meat was a "piece of such a mans buttocke," the dispute came to an end as the forager returned to the ship. Some historians have interpreted the broiler's confession as a targeted threat by an angry and overworked sailor, the broiler, against an English gentleman, the forager; however, the social status of these two men is not clarified in Hakluyt's writings.²⁸⁹ Alternatively, the forager might have lied about the broiler's confession. Maybe the broiler never said anything about cannibalism and the sailor, infuriated by the broiler's greed, concocted the confession to ensure the broiler was severely censured by the rest of the crew.

Once the forager heard the broiler's confession, or invented the confession, he reported this information to the ship, whereupon the captain made a "notable oration" to rally the *Trinity's* men. According to Hakluyt's narrative, the captain told the struggling crew that acts of cannibalism offended the Almighty; he reminded them that it would be better to "perished in body, and to have lived everlastingly" than to live "a poore time their mortal bodyes, and to bee condemned everlastingly both body and soule to the

²⁸⁸ Quinn, *England and the Discovery of America*, 185.

²⁸⁹ Philip Levy "Man-Eating and Menace on Richard Hore's Expedition to America," *Atlantic Studies* 2, no. 2 (October 2005): 129–51.

unquenchable fire of hell.” The captain urged repentance and “besought all the company to pray, that it might please God to looke upon their miserable present state, and for his owne mercie to relieve the same.” Then, Hakluyt concludes, “such was the mercie of God, that the same night there arrived a French ship in that port, well furnished with vittaile” in which the Englishmen “became masters of” and set sail for England.²⁹⁰

A peculiar aspect of Hakluyt’s narrative is how readily the *Trinity’s* captain believed the allegations of cannibalism. Prior to the forager’s ghastly news, the captain and other officers thought that any man who went missing had fallen victim to either the local Indians or bears – both plausible explanations. The Englishmen had seen Indians upon their arrival, and chased after them, but failed to establish a connection with them. Thus, if an Englishman went foraging and encroached upon Indian terrain, and the Indians viewed him as a threat, they might have held him captive or killed him. In an equally conceivable scenario, a bear, common in northern Newfoundland, could have attacked a man out wandering for food. However, once the forager brought his story to the ship, “the Captaine found what became of those that were missing, & was perswaded that some of them were neither devoured with wilde beastes, nor yet destroyed with Savages.” Not only did the captain trust the forager’s news, that one man – the broiler – murdered and ate a fellow crew member, but the captain then quickly came to the conclusion that cannibalism was widespread; Hakluyt reported that “by this meane [cannibalism] the company decreased.” The adversaries now came from within the *Trinity’s* men.²⁹¹

One reason that the captain may have eagerly believed the forager’s news is that this information allowed him to make his “notable oration,” rally the men, and potentially

²⁹⁰ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, doc 662.

²⁹¹ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, doc 662.

restore order to the disorderly crew. Shipwrecks, or other incidents that left crews stranded in foreign lands, often coincided with the collapse of maritime hierarchies. When the *Sea Venture* set sail for Jamestown in 1609 and then shipwrecked in Bermuda, a mutinous crew challenged the authority of Thomas Gates, Virginia's Governor-elect, and his fellow officers. Similar to the *Trinity*, the *Sea Venture* carried an unusual mix of gentry and commoners. According to William Strachey, who was on the *Sea Venture*, a "major part of the common sort" wanted to stay in Bermuda and decided to stop doing any labor, such as building the pinnace, that would expedite the men's voyage to Virginia.²⁹² Tensions eventually subsided and the mariners agreed to provide services that would help the company as a whole. Then, months later, Stephen Hopkins – a pious nonconformist assigned to read the psalms on Sundays – began forming a mutiny akin to the earlier group of malcontents. Many of the *Sea Venture*'s castaways respected Hopkins as a "fellow who had much knowledge in the Scriptures and could reason well therein," and thus, Hopkins words held considerable influence.²⁹³ Gates preached that "it was no breach of honesty, conscience, nor Religion, to decline from the obedience of the Governour" since his "authority ceased when the wracke was committed," and consequently, all the men were "freed from the government of any man."²⁹⁴ Hopkins encouraged any man who wanted to

²⁹² William Strachey, "A True Reportory," in *Captain John Smith: Writings with Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America*, edited by James Horn (New York: Library of America, 2007) 979–1092; quote 1000.

²⁹³ Strachey, "A True Reportory," 1002.

²⁹⁴ Strachey, "A True Reportory," 1002.

stay in Bermuda to follow his desire because “in Virginia nothing but wretchedness and labor must be expected.”²⁹⁵

While there is no direct evidence that a crew member on the *Trinity* tried to foment mutiny, the traditional lines of authority might have been blurred by the calamity experienced by then men stranded on the Labrador coast. The *Trinity*'s men were starving with no foreseeable end to their suffering; they had little reason to respect the customary hierarchies, nor were they in a social setting that demanded their obedience. After months of hardship, an “every man for himself” mindset would be expected. This survivalist mentality also probably helped the crew to find the report of cannibalism plausible.

With the forager's story of cannibalism, the *Trinity*'s captain suddenly had a means to evoke God and connect his leadership to God's authority. For both the *Sea Venture*'s and the *Trinity*'s crews, biblical references helped the men decide who held the right to lead. Whereas Hopkins used God's word to argue for mutiny in Bermuda, the *Trinity*'s captain used scripture to restore traditional, and maritime, order. The captain stood up and preached “howe much these dealings offended the Almightye,” seemingly condemning not only cannibalism but also any other unruly behavior. It is unlikely that many crew members, if any at all, participated in cannibalism, so in order for the captain's speech to be effective, he must have focused on denouncing all sorts of disruptive activities. He reminded the men that if they continued disobeying God's wishes they would be “condemned everlastingly both body and soule to the unquenchable fire of hell.” The crew came together to pray, and thus, these fearsome words appeared to have stopped any

²⁹⁵ Strachey, “A True Reportory,” 1000. For more information on the *Sea Venture*'s castaways in Bermuda, see Virginia Bernhard, *A Tale of Two Colonies: What Really Happened in Virginia and Bermuda?* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011).

disorderly conduct, at least for the night, until they pirated a French ship the following day.²⁹⁶

That the *Trinity's* crew was saved by “the mercie of God” one day after they prayed together leads one to question the authenticity of Hakluyt’s sequence of events. His account is reminiscent of early modern English captivity narratives in which God’s providence reigns supreme.²⁹⁷ These narratives included factual events, but their retelling was shaped to emphasize divine intervention, somewhat similar to Hakluyt’s story. While God is not highlighted throughout Hakluyt’s piece, God is unquestionably the men’s savior; He is the reason the men came upon the French ship in which they used to sail back to England. Placing the men’s rescue immediately after their communal prayer may have been Hakluyt’s artistic choice or it might have been the way Dawbeny or Buts remembered their plight’s end, decades after the 1536 voyage. Either way, there is a hint that Hakluyt’s narrative was not simply a history or record of facts; it was a story that was fashioned in a manner to appeal to English audiences.

An indication of the popularity of Hakluyt’s *Principall Navigations* (1589) is that he re-published the book ten years later and greatly expanded upon it, turning a singular book into a three volumes, with some slight revisions to Hore’s expedition. While most of the changes that Hakluyt made to the anthropophagic tale were minor, he did make one noteworthy addition. After the *Trinity's* men communal prayer and before their rescue, Hakluyt added the line: “The famine increasing, and the inconvenience of the men that were missing being found, they agreed amongst themselves rather then all should perish,

²⁹⁶ Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations*, doc 662.

²⁹⁷ For more information on captivity narratives, see Ann M. Little, *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 91-126.

to cast lots who should be killed.”²⁹⁸ But since the “mercie of God” saved them the following day, the men luckily did not have to votes on who should be killed and eaten.

The addition of this line seemingly imposes civility on an uncivilized act and is indicative of the historical moment that Hakluyt published *Principall Navigations*. The sixteenth century witnessed a flourishing of cannibal literature, but the majority of these stories involved “savage” Indians eating other Indians. It was not until the following century that the idea of survival cannibalism among the English, usually in the form of sailors who found themselves shipwrecked in the New World, began appearing regularly. By the nineteenth century, the trope of the cannibal sailor was widespread, with appearances in fiction and ballads.²⁹⁹ But, at the time of Hakluyt published *Principall Navigations*, maritime man-eaters were new and not yet contextualized within the genre of sea adventures. Thus, the cannibalistic tale in *Principall Navigations* illuminates a time when early modern Europeans confronted cannibalism of all kinds in the New World, whether real or imagined, while they began the process of distinguishing themselves from America’s inhabitants.

By adding a sentence about setting parameters around cannibalism, Hakluyt differentiated English cannibalism from Indian cannibalism. One man, the broiler, may have acted wildly, but after his cannibalism, the rest of the crew would participate in anthropophagy in an orderly fashion. It is unclear whether the *Trinity’s* men actually

²⁹⁸ Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations*, doc 662. For the first edition, with this line missing, see Richard Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation*, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 216:03 ; Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 286:02 (London: By George Bishop and Ralph Newberie, 15890, doc. 276.

²⁹⁹ Brian Simpson, *Cannibalism and Common Law: The Story of the Tragical Last Voyage of the Mignonette and the Strange Legal Proceedings to Which It Gave Rise* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), 227; 99-101.

agreed to vote on who should cannibalized next and Hakluyt missed this detail the first time around, or whether Hakluyt decided to add this line on his own accord. Either way, after his first edition of *Principall Navigations* circulated widely, Hakluyt obviously wanted his audience to perceive a difference between English cannibalism and Indian cannibalism, whether fact or fiction.

Both editions of *Principall Navigations* end the same way, with the *Trinity's* men returning to Cornwall in October, after six months of hardship. Their journey home seemed to go more smoothly than their voyage to the New World, with the men enjoying the sights of “mighty Islands” along with hawks, storks, and other fowl. Hakluyt relates that Thomas Buts and other “Gentlemen of the voyage” were “very friendly entertained” upon arrival, traveling to “Bathe, and thence to Bristoll, so to London.” Considering that these gentlemen “very willingly entered into the action” because they sought to “see the strange things of the world,” the gentry’s social circle must have been quite interested in hearing about the gentlemen’s misadventures abroad. In contrast, the sailors, as experienced seamen, likely did not receive the same homecoming.³⁰⁰

Since Hakluyt explicitly states that Buts – one of his sources – returned to England on the French vessel with the rest of the tattered crew, we can deduce that he was on the *Trinity* and experienced the tribulations of Newfoundland first hand, unlike Dawbeny, who may or may not have been on the *Trinity* and suffered through the New World’s adversities. Hakluyt notes that Dawbeny provided the information about the alleged cannibalism on the Labrador coast; however, Buts presumably confirmed Dawbeny’s testimony. Even with Buts verification, many details are left unsaid, such as how Buts came to hear about a fellow

³⁰⁰ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, doc 662.

crew member eating one of the *Trinity's* men or if there was any evidence to verify this claim besides one man's allegations.

As Buts and the other gentlemen shared their misadventures with the gentry's social circle, their story had a notable impact on England. Upon hearing about the *Trinity's* misfortune, Henry VIII refused all pleas for further North Atlantic exploration until the end of reign.³⁰¹ And, according to esteemed maritime historian Samuel Eliot Morison, "Hore's voyage put an end to the tourist business, as far as the New World was concerned, for at least two centuries."³⁰² While Hore's expedition might have eventually faded from English memory since the crew made no new discoveries and they failed to make contact with the Native Americas, the efforts of Hakluyt ensured that this tale would become a lasting lesson. The English public remained captivated and startled by the notion that English gentlemen might have been reduced to savage cannibalism.

By allegedly participating in anthropophagy, the *Trinity's* men threatened to make the unfamiliar familiar; they undermined emerging notions of difference, otherness, and race. According to the early modern European humoral theory, in which the English used to explain the workings of the human body, the body was malleable greatly affected by one's surroundings. The climate and one's diet shaped one's physical constitution with a change in either potentially resulting in change of one's physicality and one's character.³⁰³ The Indians looked and acted the way they did because they lived in America with an American diet, which the English believed included cannibalism; the English looked and

³⁰¹ Bradley, *British Maritime Enterprise in the New World*, 250.

³⁰² Morison, *The Great Explorers*, 105.

³⁰³ Martha L. Finch, *Dissenting Bodies: Corporealities in Early New England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 63-98; Lawrence I. Conrad, *The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 230.hore

acted the way they did because they lived in England with an English diet. Thus, the story of the *Trinity's* crew becoming stranded in the New World and supposedly turning to cannibalism represented an uneasiness that the English could lose their "civilized" English identity and regress to "uncivilized savages."

That Hakluyt's report of Hore's expedition soared in popularity during a period when England experienced several failures is indicative that audiences may have been drawn to this tale as a means to understand England's setbacks. The *Trinity's* men may have briefly lost their English identity, but it was restored upon their return. Thus, England's defeats in the Anglo-Spanish War and the lost colony of Roanoke were to be understood as temporary losses, perhaps as a result of some Englishmen losing their constitution, but the country would rebound.

Similar to the anthropophagic events at Jamestown, there is ample room to doubt whether cannibalism actually occurred in Newfoundland; instead, these anthropophagic narratives appear to reflect anxiety about England's future. Hakluyt's first travel anthology, *Divers Voyages Touching the Discoverie of America*, published in 1582, seven years prior to *The Principall Navigations*, made no mention of Hore and the alleged anthropophagy in the New World.³⁰⁴ It is possible that Hakluyt did not know about Hore's expedition in 1582, but it is equally conceivable that he did know and that he chose not to publish that story initially.³⁰⁵ Hakluyt, as an influential proponent of English colonial activity, wrote about

³⁰⁴ Richard Hakluyt, *Divers Voyages Touching the Discoverie of America*, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 1205:16, (London: By Thomas Dawson for Thomas Woodcocke, 1582).

³⁰⁵ Levy estimates that Richard Hakluyt the Elder conducted his interview with Oliver Dawbeny approximately thirty years after Hore's expedition, meaning that Hakluyt the Elder had this information for a few decades before Hakluyt the Younger interviewed Thomas Butts, but it is unclear exactly when the Elder shared this information with the Younger. See Levy "Man-Eating and Menace on Richard Hore's Expedition to America," 130.

English travel as part of a continued argument for England's expansion. As British intellectual historian David Armitage noted, Hakluyt wanted to provide England with a documented record of the New World that would spotlight maritime history and provide seamen with their own historical "lodestar."³⁰⁶ Thus, the omission of Hore's dreadful voyage, which resulted in alleged cannibalism, might have been a purposeful lacuna on Hakluyt's part. It was not until the tides turned against the English in the Anglo-Spanish War that Hakluyt's report of Hore's expedition circulated, perhaps intended as a cautionary tale with cannibalism serving as the language of English failures.

³⁰⁶ David Armitage, "The New World and British Historical Thought: From Richard Hakluyt to William Robertson," in *America in European Consciousness, 1493-1750*, edited by Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 1995), 52-78.

CONCLUSION

During the late-sixteenth and seventeenth century, when the English and other Europeans encountered an increasingly interconnected world, they sought a means to understand foreign people and places, and themselves in this new world; a discourse of foodways provided that means. Discussion of food, eating, and cannibalism saturated early modern travel narratives, and this discourse of foodways offered as a language to simultaneously articulate and form English ideas, and unease, about otherness, status, sovereignty, and power. Food overflowed with meaning. When it came to eating, an observer – whether the writer or reader – might deduce the wealth, civility, or temperament of the eater; the observer might also make presumptions about the entirety of a foreign peoples or place based on the reports of foodstuff. Stories of foreigners eating human flesh proved to be a common, and useful, trope for the English to depict themselves more civilized than the foreigners, while the popularity of texts regarding English cannibalism Jamestown and Newfoundland reflected English anxiety about losing their global position. Descriptions of foodways were not simply an accounting of foreign foods and diets; they were a means for the English to construct socio-cultural hierarchies and an attempt to maintain their perceived dominance. Just as notions about race, gender, class, and nation demarcated inclusion and exclusion, and signaled degrees of power in relationships, a discourse of foodways was another way to conceptually determine a person's place in society.

From the very *first* narrative of America, available in English in 1509, foodways and cannibalism were recurring themes in exploration texts of the New World, and these discussions of foodways informed England's colonization of America. Whether through

discussions of Native American cannibalism, their manner of eating, their consumption of snakes, or their fishing techniques, travel narratives of America used food to depict Indians as exotic and primitive “others,” to create a “savage/civilized” opposition, and to justify their desire to conquer this “New World.” Moreover, discussions of the plentiful food meant American was ripe for colonization, while discussions of any lack of food demonstrated Europeans reliance and persistent to survive. A discourse of foodways proved central to England’s decision to colonize America.

With narratives of Africa, early modern authors turned away from the antiquity’s depictions of a monstrous Africa and *changed* England’s notions of Africa by portraying its people as humans, and not fantastical beings. Through discussion of foodways, these texts occasionally made parallels between African and European societies, but they also included claims of savagery, poor table manners, and an agricultural incompetence. One particularly influential author, Leo Africanus, invoked the humoral theory, which considers one’s diet, and described Africans as choleric, ignorant, impulsive, and aggressive. Unlike the travel narratives of America, accounts of Africa rarely mentioned cannibalism and exotic cuisine, and instead used a discourse of foodways to humanize Africans, and then argue for inferiority of these humans.

Sixteenth-century narratives of Asia reveal the ways in which a discourse of foodways intersected with budding notions of race, thereby *complicating* English ideas about foreigners based on their skin color. Early modern travel accounts of Asia often portrayed the “white” Chinese as having refined table manners, ample food, and admirable hospitality, while depicting the “tawnie” Tartars as uncivilized, practitioners of cannibalism, and surviving on a limited diet due to their agriculturally ineptitude.

According to the humoral theory, food had the ability to alter one's humoral balance, and consequently, one's physical appeared, including skin tone. Thus, the plentiful food in China formed a healthy, generous, "white" people that resembled Europeans, while the scraps of food that the Tartars subsisted on formed a "tawny" barbaric people because they could not properly balance their humors with their limited food. By including the skin color of the Chinese and the Tartars, these texts began to make associations between one's skin color and one's disposition.

Narratives of English cannibalism at Jamestown and Newfoundland reflected England's *conflicting* thoughts about their position in an increasingly connected world. Stories of English cannibalism challenged England's perception of itself as a civilized and advanced nation that had the right to practice global dominance. While every author had his own personal motivations for publishing his account of English cannibalism – from maintaining one's colonial position, to discrediting other colonial authorities, to warning the English of their fallibility during a period of expansion – these narratives soared in popularity during times when England's future was uncertain and manifested as English unease about losing their place in a global world.

"Consuming Narratives" demonstrates that a discourse of foodways informed England's cultural discernment and hierarchical formation, which ultimately influenced English imperialism. Discussions of food and eating were never simply discussions about food and eating – they conveyed messages about English superiority and autonomy; Native American exoticism and incivility; African humanity and inferiority; and Asian difference and complexity. Foodways helped the English stratify foreigner people and places, while

also helping them make an argument for their dominion in an increasingly connected world.

Within the early modern period, “Consuming Narratives” focused on several of the earliest, and more popular, travel narratives in which food and eating played a central role; thus, it is not a sweeping history of all the available exploration accounts. As such, future studies might take a more expansive examination of foodways in early modern travel writings. Historians might also look at other texts beyond exploration narratives, particularly those in which a writer encountered foreign people, and examine the role that foodways played in those texts.

While a discourse of foodways has its place in historical analysis, it is also relevant today, and varies from culture to culture. Today, in the United States, we often attribute meaning to food beyond nutritional necessity – veganism might indicate political liberalism while red meat and potatoes might indicate conservatism; a cosmopolitan cocktail might denote femininity while a straight whiskey might denote masculinity; lobster and veal might imply wealth while rice and beans might imply scarcity. These modern-day food connotations are what sparked my curiosity about the cultural meaning of foodways in the early modern period, when people from different nations were coming into contact each other and attempting to understand one another. My hope is that “Consuming Narratives” contributes not only to early modern history, but also to the budding field of food studies, by arguing for the importance of foodways as a vital analytical lens. Food is brimming with meaning.

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