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FORUM:
Travelers and Traveler's Accounts in World History, Part 1

Cook's Passage: An English Spy in the Yucatan

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James Cook was a spy, a secret agent working for the British Government. Like his namesakes—the other James Cook, destined for lasting fame as Captain Cook, and the fictional James Bond—his cover was that of an officer in the Royal Navy. But this Cook never became famous, despite the fact that his report on one of his spying missions was published and survives to this day (and is included below). Indeed, were it not for the survival of this particular report, its author would probably have disappeared into the deep vaults of history (along with all the other James Cooks unknown to us).

Yet this lesser-known Cook and his spy report are worth a moment of our time—despite the facts that we know little about his life and his report is brief and lacking in drama or great revelations. I suggest that the report's very simplicity, its seemingly routine nature, afford us rare insight into daily life in the Atlantic world of the eighteenth century. Cook's account is not a war story or a tale of a world in the throes of transformation. It is a description of a journey between two empires—empires that most of the time managed to coexist, and whose inhabitants likewise mostly coexisted despite the complex inequities of colonialism.

Cook's journey took him from England to Jamaica, where in the early 1760s he was stationed as a young navy lieutenant. In February of 1765, under orders from the admiral in Jamaica, Sir William Burnaby, he sailed from Kingston to the Central American settlement of Belize (see Figure 1). At the time, Belize contained only a few hundred British settlers, known as Baymen, outnumbered perhaps as much as ten-to-one by their African slaves. They were scattered in logging camps up the region's three main rivers, with a more-or-less permanent base at Belize Town, at the mouth of the Belize River, and on St. George's Cay, just off the coast (see Figure 2). The formal classification of the settlement as the colony of British Honduras was still a century away.[1]

Figure 1: British ships off the coast of Belize, from a map drawn in 1755. Note the boat being rowed into the river's mouth. Map in British National Archives, Kew, MPI 1/387.

Cook's open mission was to travel from Belize Town up the coast and into the Spanish colony of Yucatan. His destination was the colonial capital of Merida, where he was to deliver "Dispatches" (diplomatic correspondence) to the Spanish governor from Admiral Burnaby. He was also to report to the admiral on all that he observed along the way; his covert mission was thus to evaluate the Spanish colony's defenses.

His journey was completed in March and his report submitted shortly afterwards. Four years later, in 1769, it was published in London as a thirty-four-page pamphlet titled *Remarks on a Passage from the River Balise, in the Bay of Honduras, to Merida*. It is today a rare book, although not hard to find.[2] Yet in terms of scholarly attention, Cook's *Remarks* has fallen between the cracks. As a report by an Englishman, journeying "from the River Balise, in the Bay of Honduras," it has failed to draw the attention of historians of Yucatan or of other Spanish American provinces, while students of the British Empire have found its focus on a Spanish colony of marginal or no interest.[3]

Figure 2: Map of Yucatan, Belize, and the Peten, drawn by Juan José de León in 1798. Copied from Michel Antochiw, *Historia Cartográfica de la Península de Yucatán*. Campeche: Gobierno del Estado de Campeche, 1994, plate 32 on pp. 208-09 inter.

Ironically, it is only the coincidence of Cook's name that has brought his report any mention at all. The other James Cook was also a lieutenant in the British Navy in the 1760s. He later became a captain and entered the pantheon of British historical figures, due to his circumnavigations of the globe, his role in the founding of British Australia, and his eventually fatal interactions with the Hawaiian islanders. But not all authorities on *the* Cook have been aware of the existence of his namesake, and have tended to attribute to that captain the occasional deed or document of our lieutenant's. In fact, in February 1765, when Lieutenant Cook began his journey out of Belize, the other James Cook was in England, and while the lieutenant was in Merida, in March, the future captain was sailing to Newfoundland.[4] Furthermore, Captain Cook's three famous voyages around the world took place between 1768 and 1780 and came nowhere near the Caribbean. One wonders whether Lieutenant Cook, who appeared on the Navy lists as late as July 1800 and thus lived long enough to witness Captain Cook's fame and famous demise (in 1779), would have been surprised or irritated by the later subsuming of his expedition into those of his namesake. The wry humor that comes through in his 1765 *Remarks* suggests that he may have been able to find some amusement in that particular twist of fate; one certainly hopes so.

The second half of my essay here reproduces Cook's *Remarks*, with light notes; the remainder of the first half seeks to place his spy report very briefly in three contexts. The first is the historical context of British-Spanish relations in the Caribbean, specifically those relating to the Yucatec-Belize frontier. The second is the context of the Spanish colony of Yucatan and the ways in which Cook's observations reflect our

knowledge of it or seem to run counter to it. The third context is that of genre; what kind of report was Cook's, what literary traditions did it draw upon, and why was it published?

A Colonial Frontier

The historical context to Cook's expedition goes back to 1655. In that year English pirates reputedly discovered that the firewood they had been cutting on the southwest and southeast coasts of the Yucatan peninsula had market value in the form of logwood for construction and a source of black dye.[5] The buccaneers thus became unofficial settlers. For decades, they numbered in the hundreds during the logging season, some years disappearing completely in the off-season or when driven off by Spanish war parties. As early as 1670 Governor Modyford of Jamaica argued that these "new sucking [sic] colonies" be recognized and assisted, but formal recognition was not forthcoming, not even in 1713 when the British imposed the Treaty of Utrecht on Spain. Meanwhile, Spanish control over the base of the peninsula remained weak, with independent Maya kingdoms persisting unconquered. The original site of Bacalar was abandoned between about 1648 and 1729, while the Yucatec government in Merida was distracted by Maya revolt in the southwest in the 1660s, by the war against the Itza Maya kingdom in the 1690s, and by subsequent attempts to establish a colony in the Petén.[6]

Table 1: Spanish attacks on British Belize

Date	Outcome	Global context
1718	Spanish land attack from Petén drives loggers downriver to the coast, but no clear evidence of complete expulsion	War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-20)
1722 & 1726	Possible attacks and expulsion of loggers	
1730	Sea and land pincer attack takes 50 prisoners, rest flee to Mosquito Coast	Anglo-Spanish tensions (lead to 1739 War of Jenkins's Ear)
1733 & 1737	Possible sacking and burning of logging camps	
1747	Complete expulsion of loggers, who flee to Roatan	War of Austrian Succession (1740-48)
1754	Complete expulsion of loggers by Spanish force of 1,500 from Petén; 500 flee to Mosquito Coast	French and Indian War (1754-63)
1779	Spanish fleet of 19 vessels takes St. George's Cay by surprise; 140 Britons and 250 Afro-Belizean slaves captured and marched to Merida; rest flee to Mosquito Coast; Belize abandoned until 1783	Anglo-Spanish war (1779-83) as part of the American Revolutionary War
1798	Spanish attack repulsed in The Battle of St. George's Cay	French Revolutionary Wars

Sources: see note 7.

However, starting with a Spanish attack on Belize in 1718, the Baymen endured eight decades of violent and diplomatic attempts to destroy the small but spreading settlement (see Table 1). Although Belize remained unrecognized by either imperial government as a British colony, the British periodically threatened to use Belize as a launch board into Spanish territory. Combinations of Baymen, their African slaves, handfuls of British soldiers, and indigenous Mosquito warriors periodically attacked Maya settlements, occasionally including those within the Spanish colony. In 1727, British "pirates" from Belize attacked Maya villages as far as Chunhuhub, and then beyond, threatening Tihosuco (probably one of the villages through which Cook was later to pass en route to Merida). The Spanish crown demanded a full British evacuation from Belize, backing up threats with a series of assaults on the Baymen during the next three decades—launched more or less whenever the two empires went to war elsewhere in the world. But even when a complete evacuation was forced upon the Baymen, they tended to take refuge in British settlements

on the Mosquito coast of Honduras and later return to Belize. By 1757, Belize had become central to the defense problem that reports on Yucatan stressed was its most pressing issue.[7]

A turning point in this tale of sporadic warfare, one that led to the immediate context for Cook's journey, was Spain's disastrous entry into the Seven Years War in 1761. In August 1762, the British occupied Havana, effectively taking from Spain's its plum colony of Cuba. The British only relinquished Cuba the next year in return for Florida.[8] In the wake of the 1763 Treaty of Paris, a formal local government for the Baymen in Belize was finally established—organized by Sir William Burnaby, the Commander in Chief of naval forces in Jamaica. A set of administrative rules was established, soon dubbed "Burnaby's Code," which gave an official veneer to local rule by the most prominent and prosperous Baymen, who elected themselves as "magistrates" (one of the most influential of whom was Joseph Maud, the "Mr. Maud" who accompanied Cook on the first stage of his passage out of Belize). Although the treaty had technically given Spain sovereignty over Belize, it also conceded to the British settlers the right to cut logs and live there.[9] Meanwhile, in Yucatan itself, the attention of the Spanish colonists was hardly on Belize; in 1761 a misfit *mestizo*, naming himself Canek after the last Itza Maya king, started a petty uprising of discontented Mayas that through Spanish overreaction became the largest revolt in colonial Yucatec history. The uprising was soon crushed, but the ripples of repression and Spanish paranoia persisted through the 1760s.[10] Thus by the time of the Treaty of Paris, British loggers had become accustomed to relative peace on the frontier, having developed a flourishing contraband trade with Spanish colonists in southeast Yucatan and having expanded their logging settlements as far north as the Hondo River.

This is not to say that the authorities in Merida had been rendered entirely passive by the events of the early 1760s. On December 29, 1763, Governor Estenoz ordered the loggers to retreat from the Hondo River back to the Belize River, dispatching militia forces south to back up the demand. But no hostilities ensued; some five hundred loggers and slaves relocated further south and the magistrates initiated diplomatic proceedings against the Spanish, which resulted by September 1764 in Madrid commanding Governor Estenoz to rescind his order and permit the loggers to move back up to the Hondo River. As Cook states, part of his mission in Yucatan was to deliver "a duplicate of [the king's] order" to Estenoz. Admiral Burnaby was ordered to send monthly ships to Belize to ensure the safety of the loggers, and while Cook was in Merida in March 1765, Burnaby himself was off the Belizean coast. But by this time Estenoz had died, his successor had received Cook with assurances of peace, and the loggers had resettled northern Belize without incident.[11]

When Cook returned to Belize, he may have imagined that a corner had been turned for good (his journey was not recorded in his report, leaving us to imagine his trip back to the British settlement, where Admiral Burnaby was probably awaiting him, still composing his "code"). But the Treaty of Paris had denied the Baymen the right to build a fort or other defenses, and thus, when Spain and Britain again went to war in 1779, Belize was defenseless. In a surprise attack the Spanish not only destroyed the settlement, they captured hundreds of settlers and their slaves, marching them north on the same path taken by Cook in 1765. The British captives were ransomed and their slaves were sold in a series of auctions in Merida that stretched into 1780.[12]

Not until 1784 did Baymen return to Belize, and under a pair of Anglo-Spanish treaties signed that decade they resumed logging along the rivers, rapidly expanding their activities northward towards Bacalar. The final Spanish attempt to oust the British from the region ended in a dismal failure in 1798. A Spanish navy was obliged to retreat from St. George's Cay (off the northern Belizean coast), and a supporting force waiting in Bacalar had to march back to Merida. A legendary telling of the battle as an heroic defense of British Belize by black slaves voluntarily fighting alongside the Baymen slowly developed (today it is elemental to Belize's foundational nationalist narrative). In reality, the invading force was defeated by Yellow Fever, but no matter; a major Spanish attack on Belize never again took place. In light of the successful Spanish attack of 1779, Cook's optimistic view of Spanish capabilities seems short sighted. On the other hand, in light of the longer term developments on the frontier following Cook's visit—perhaps

even extending that perspective to the fact that Belize remained a British possession into the 1980s—the lieutenant's derogatory remarks on Spanish military strength in Yucatan would seem rather prescient.

Yucatan in the 1760s

Geographically speaking, Cook described four Yucatans, reflecting the four stages of his journey: the frontier outpost of Bacalar, his entry point into Spanish Yucatan; the "wilderness" through which he had to travel to reach the colony proper; the colonial countryside settled with Maya villages, through which he then passed; and the Spanish city of Merida. I suspect Spanish Yucatecans would have recognized a similar categorization.

Figure 3: Detail of a British map showing the logging territory of the Baymen and the waterways giving access to Bacalar (labeled as "Salamanca"). Drawn in 1800, the British presence is greater here than it was in 1765. Map in British National Archives, Kew, MPK 1/116.

Cook's principal concern is with Spanish Yucatan's accessibility and its defenses, or lack thereof. This is reflected in the fact that the first forty percent of his report is devoted to his journey's first stage—mostly the navigational challenge of getting by boat from Belize to the fort-town of Bacalar (see Figure 3). Cook implies that an invasion force would need local guides and knowledge of the waterways. As for the fort of San Felipe, its guns seem to demand serious comment, perhaps in part because Cook could not observe them closely. But the human line of defense is worthy of nothing more than derisive humor, from the easily bribed lookout sergeant and guards, to the ill-kempt militiamen who are "scarcely" up to the comic standards of Shakespeare's fat, cowardly Falstaff.

If the natural environment, not the human one, is the main defensive obstacle as far as Bacalar, that is also true of the second stage of the journey—Cook's three days through what Spaniards called the *monte* (probably the term Cook glosses as "wilderness") and the *despoblado* ("uninhabited" zone). In fact, the zone was inhabited but unconquered, a region of small, independent Maya polities. The path through this region to Bacalar had been carved out in the 1540s but then abandoned in the 1640s and not restored until the 1720s. Like the modern Merida-Cancun highway, the path bypassed Maya settlements, giving the impression to the traveler that such villages did not exist. In Cook's time, some of these villages would have been hidden through the trees adjacent to the path (see the later map that is included above as Figure 1). Cook describes buildings along the path, but as structures intended to shelter travelers; he mentions neither settlements nor inhabitants.

After three days, Cook reached Chunhuhub, the colony's frontier village. Here began the third stage of his journey, passing through fourteen Maya settlements before reaching Merida. He detailed them in a single description, painting a picture of colonial tranquility and orderliness. Every village was blessed with a deep well, a church, a "polite" but "superlatively ignorant" Spanish priest, and a "chief of the Indians" keen to offer an impressive hospitality. The impression is almost a pastoral one of rural simplicity and abundance.

As a superficial European glimpse into life in Maya villages in the 1760s, it complements and contrasts interestingly with a very different source from the same decade—a surviving book of wills written in Maya in a village in northern Yucatan. Thus while James Cook had his feet washed by Maya women in one village, not far away a dying corn farmer named Pedro Couoh told his village notary that his house and two plots of land should go to his children, his two chests should go to his three daughters, and his only axe and set of clothes should be his son's.[13] The image presented is more one of poverty than pastoralism, suggesting another dimension to an indigenous world that, for Cook, is defined largely by a façade of hospitality and order.

Missing from Cook's account is any hint of the racial stereotypes of surliness or simmering rebellion that a one might expect a local Spaniard to have expressed, let alone any reference to the above-mentioned uprising that had shaken the colony just four years earlier. Likewise, orderliness also prevails in Merida, as seen through Cook's lens, both in terms of its urban plan and architecture, and the city's inhabitants. In Merida, and in the rural villages, people are dressed according to their station. As Cook moves between descriptions of clothing and fortifications (see Figure 4), outward appearances seem to be everything; society in Spanish Yucatan is well ordered, but not well defended.

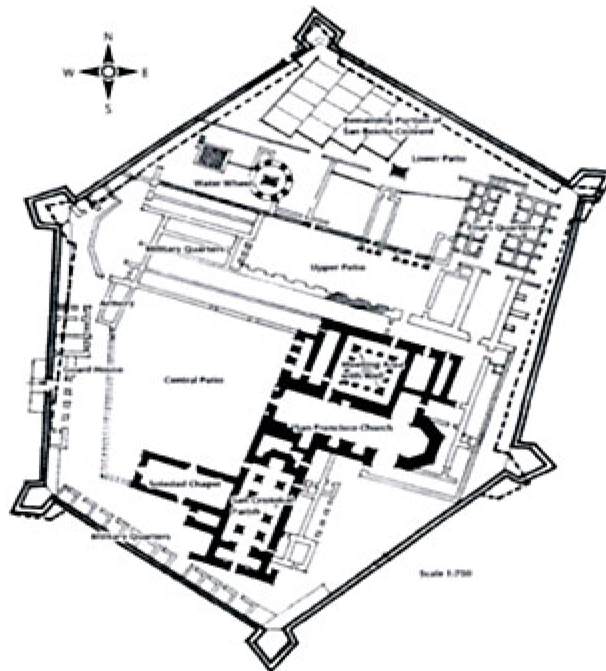

Figure 4: The citadel of San Benito, in Merida, as Cook would have seen it in 1765. Taken from Rhianna C. Rogers, *From Ichcanzihoo to Mérida: Documenting Cultural Transition through Contact Archaeology in Tíhoo, Mérida, Yucatán* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, International Series 2277, 2011), p. 70, where it is captioned as "*Ciudadela* Complex: Spanish/Mexican Military Occupation, 1751-1788."

The Genre of the Report

I have been referring here to Cook's *Remarks* as a spy report. Although in later centuries, the spy report was to become a specific genre in text and other media, in the eighteenth century it was still little more than a letter written by an explorer, merchant, priest, or military officer to a senior administrator—as Cook's report illustrates. As Europe's empires expanded across the globe, in increasing competition with each other and reaching deeper into territories previously unknown to Europeans, intelligence reports of all kinds played a crucial role in policy and decision-making. Such accounts typically made their way through the chain of command, hopefully reaching the highest officials in vice-regal and imperial capitals (there was always the danger of reports being intercepted and falling into enemy hands, such as a 1757 anonymous Spanish report on Yucatan's defenses that was captured at sea and went to London instead of Madrid; it ended up in the British Library).[14]

In addition to classifying Cook's account loosely as a "spy report," we can also be more specific and place it within a loosely defined Venn diagram of genres. First, most obviously, we might categorize it more narrowly as an eighteenth-century naval report. As the era was one of constant war between global empires, such documents were inevitably spy reports of some kind or another. Naval spy reports were written in other centuries too, but they took on a particular character in the eighteenth century. Initially hand-written at sea or in port, and submitted to superior officers in manuscript, most were not published. In some cases, the officer who wrote the report is not identified by name, except in a cover note that may be lost. The reports tended to be brief and to the point, describing local customs and cultures and making observations on natural history, but always concerned ultimately with matters of military and naval strategy and interest. Whereas similar

reports in previous centuries were called "relations" (like the Spanish *relación*) or "notes," this genre in the eighteenth-century is almost always titled "remarks."

Let me mention one other example, by way of comparison. In 1741 an anonymous British naval officer penned a manuscript that he titled *Some Remarks in our Passage to Jamaica: to which is added a Particular Account of the Siege of Carthagena in 1740: Delenda est Carthago*. This 69-page document on very small paper (about 2" by 4") was never published (it is archived in Providence). The author was an officer of the fleet that left England in October 1740 for Jamaica. Most of the account describes the British siege of Cartagena in the spring of the following year, and includes tables listing all British and Spanish ships and their guns in the Caribbean by the summer of 1741. It ends with the author's translation of an intelligence report taken from a Spanish officer during the siege, which details the defensive capabilities of the Cuban port-city of Santiago.[15] This anonymous *Some Remarks* thus ends with more of a bang than Cook's *Remarks*, an unintentionally and ironically prophetic one, as the author predicts it will take the Spanish twenty years to recover from the damage to their navy; twenty-one years later the British seized Cuba. But the insertion of personal observations and above all a personal style of writing into an otherwise formal and official report marks the document as within the same genre as Cook's.[16]

Aside from being a naval spy report, Cook's account arguably touches on a number of other genres. One is a genre that flourished in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and to a lesser extent in the eighteenth—that of the chronicle or account of the New World. In Spanish, such accounts tended to focus on the military or spiritual conquest of native peoples, depending on the identity and experiences of the author. Bernal Díaz, for example, the famous conquistador who fought in the Cortés campaigns and wrote of them in the late sixteenth century, structured his *True History of the Conquest of New Spain* around his own travels and participation in conquest battles, whereas Fray Diego López de Cogolludo, as a seventeenth-century Franciscan who spent time in Yucatan (mostly in the convent in Merida), wrote largely of the church and drew on other writings more than his own experiences.[17]

English examples that represent well the two types within this genre are Thomas Gage's *The English-American*, an account of life in Central America built around his own travels there in the early seventeenth century, and John Ogilby's *America*, based on the 167 written sources he lists at the start of this 676-page tome, published in 1670.[18] Cook's account is far too short to fit fully into this genre, but it does combine its elements of a travel narrative and personal observation of local culture and natural history. Ogilby summarized Spanish and English discoveries and conquests in the Americas, but devoted more pages to descriptions of the natural and built environment in a way that is comparable to Cook's report.

The *Remarks* was written at a time when the great chronicle or account was giving way to a related genre that first appeared in recognizable form in the mid-seventeenth century but which flourished most notably in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—the travel account.[19] Because of Britain's location and growing seaborne empire, travel accounts often took the form of sea voyage narratives or maritime books. This type of work originated in the late-fifteenth to early-seventeenth centuries, with publications like Richard Hakluyt's *Divers Voyages* (1582), but the genre became notably popular and more common in the eighteenth century. Accounts by travelers such as William Dampier and Admiral Anson reached wide audiences, inspiring fictional parodies by novelists such as Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift.[20] By the time of the wreck of the *Antelope* off the Pelew Islands (Micronesia) in 1783, there was a ready market for a full-length book that was both an engaging narrative of the voyage and shipwreck, including maritime details of use to sailors, and an ethnographic account of the Palauan people; George Keate's *Account of the Pelew Islands* was published in 1788, was in its third edition within a year, and its fifth by 1803.[21]

Keate's recent editors call his account, "like many travel books, a double-sided work. It emerges from both a scene of writing and a scene written about; it speaks both from Britain and from Palau; it is an expression both of eighteenth-century European interests in Oceania, and of eighteenth-century Micronesian realities." The same might be said of Cook's small book (with a substitution of geographical terms). Certainly the two decades between the publication of Keate's and Cook's books do make a difference.

Hawkesworth's 1773 account of the first voyage of Cook's namesake, the Captain, caused considerable controversy in bringing to the fore the dangers of travel at sea and of cross-cultural encounters; just as Keate's book "was situated 'after Cook'" (meaning the Captain), so is Lieutenant Cook's account—tame, without violence, and rather innocent by comparison—situated "in a significant sense" before Captain Cook. Yet the double-sidedness is still very much present in the Lieutenant's *Remarks*. His social and cultural commentary on the various "classes" of Yucatecans makes his tiny book both a naval spy's report and an accidental ethnography.[22]

Although Dampier had visited and written briefly about the Yucatec port of Campeche, Yucatan did not feature in British travel accounts until the nineteenth century—with the notable exception of Cook. Thus the two best examples of the travel genre that include voyages into Yucatan come from early in that century. These are the diary of two British agents sent in 1840 to explore and detail the ruins of Palenque, but who also wrote of their travels northwest through Campeche to Merida, and the better-known, illustrated account of John Lloyd Stephens' *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, first published in 1841.[23]

There is no mystery as to why Stephen's *Incidents* was published, and to great success; it resonated with readers as an original, compelling, and beautifully illustrated narrative. Cook's *Some Remarks* is clearly not in the same league. So why was it published (especially when similar reports, like Scott's *Remarks*, were not)? I suspect that publication of spy reports of this kind was rare, restricted to circumstances where it was deemed politically or diplomatically efficacious within the context of a specific policy goal; in this case, that goal may have been to underscore the weakness of Spanish control over the region that bordered the Hondo River, and thus lend support to British claims to Belize by right of settlement.[24] It is also possible that the sudden fame of the other James Cook inspired the London printer, Charles Parker, to publish a document that would sell by association. Whatever the printer's motives, he made available for posterity the sole surviving report of an English spy in late-colonial Yucatan.

Cook's Book: An Annotated Transcription of the 1769 Publication[25]

[title page]

REMARKS
ON A
PASSAGE
FROM
The River BALISE, in the BAY of
HONDURAS, to MERIDA;
THE
Capital of the Province of JUCATAN,
In the Spanish West Indies.

By Lieutenant COOK,
Ordered by Sir WILLIAM BURNABY,
Rear Admiral of the Red, in Jamaica;
With Dispatches to the Governor of the Province;
Relative to the
Logwood Cutters in the Bay of HONDURAS,
In February and March 1765.

LONDON:
Printed for C. Parker, the Upper part of New Bond
Street. MDCCLXIX.

[pages 1-34]

Remarks, &c.

THE first part of this passage from the road of Baleise to Baccalar, is entirely by water; first coastways to the entrance of the Rio Hondo, from thence through an arm of that river, that leads to three small Lagoons, till you arrive at the lake of Baccalar, on whose banks the town and castle of St. Philips is situated.[26] The distance from Baleise to the entrance of the Rio Hondo, is near thirty leagues, and in sailing has much the appearance of a straight or broad river, from the number of small island or quays, (as they are there called) that lay at about five or six leagues distance from the main, and parallel with it; both the islands and main are very flat, the former of which are for the most part covered with the Mangrove and palmeta trees; 'tis rare to see a beach, on either the main or the quays, for the Mangrove; the course up is about the N.N.W. and in general very shoaly, so much so at many places, that the *Flatts* which (the baymen use to carry their logwood) of about four or five feet draught of water often ground, and in some places, raise the mud for a mile togther[sic]. In short, the navigation on this part of the coast, from Baleise to the Rio Hondo, is as much a pilot's water for those boats, as the Thames is for ships from London to the Nore; the quays abound with Goannas, of which we shot several, going ashore for that purpose, and many Allegators lurk in the shoal water under the Mangrove bushes; we were accompanied by a master of the merchant ship (a lieutenant in the navy) in his long boat, partly out of curiosity, to see the country and Baccalar; myself going into the Rio Hondo, with one Maud, one of the most considerable bay merchants,[27] which boats have a tolerable good cabbin, and are schooner rigg'd. The entrance of the Rio Hondo is narrow, not more than a hundred yards over, or a half cables length, and is very deep, as from its name Hondo, signifying the same in Spanish. About a quarter of a mile from the river's mouth, and open to the sea, on the north shore, is a look out, which is generally kept by a sergeant's, but sometimes a corporal's guard, which is weekly relieved from the garrison at Baccalar, from which, thro' the woods, it is distant only about five Spanish leagues, and from hence notice is given of whatever comes into the river to the commandant; this is called the lower look out. I must not here omit observing, how much it is the interest of the baymen (and which indeed they never fail to avail themselves of) to be on good terms with the guards of these outposts; this my friend the merchant did, by making the serjeant and his guard very drunk, that he not only told him where they had discovered a good spot of logwood, but am persuaded, had he discovered a mine as rich as Potosi, he would have made no scruple of informing him of it; the officer of these commands, which is generally a serjeant, is besides this scene of jollitry, often complimented with a piece of strip'd cotton, or some such light stuff, to make him a shirt, waistcoat or trowsers, or perhaps a pair of European shoes for his wife. These little presents the commandant of Baccalar is not totally insensible of, and is often mean enough to be very jealous of, as it in a manner affects him, who is both commander and clothier; this Mr. Maud told me was one of the principal reasons of the late disturbances in the bay; the commandant of Baccalar being offended at this generosity of the English, hurting his priviledge so much, as to make him persuade the late governor of the province, that it had never been customary for the English to cut wood in the Rio Hondo, and in doing which they had gone beyond the limits of the treaty of Paris.

Tho' the baymen consider their right by that treaty, from Cape Catouch to Cape Honduras; this was redressed by virtue of an order from the court of Spain, in favour of the cutters, in consequence of a remonstrance of our ministry in 1764, the duplicate of which order, together with Sir William's letter, I was encharged with.

In sailing from this to the next look out, you open a fine Lagoon on the south side of the river, about a league and a half from the lower look out; its called by the baymen the four mile Lagoon, but by the Spaniards the Zaho Mal; its of an oval form, about half a league in its shortest breadth, and pretty deep; in this Lagoon our companion, the master of the merchantman, lost his long boat, oversetting in a squall, in turning out of the Lagoon, to get into the river, where we had, to avoid the insects, musquetoes, &c. anchored for the night; the river here abouts is so narrow, as scarce to afford room for the boom of the mainsail to gibe; they have a custom when they stop in the river on any occasion, to bush the Flatt, as they term it, which is no more than to luff round and drive her bowsprit and entangle it in the bush, which sides the Flatt, the stream being very weak.

The upper look out is from the river's mouth, about four Spanish leagues, and is situated at the entrance of a small creek (almost hid by the Mangroves) on the north shore of the river that opens to the passage to Baccalar; the course up the river to this place is about N.S.W. here also is a sergeant's guard; it was at this place the commandant of Baccalar came in his Parriagua, to carry me up, having advice from the lower look out of my arrival in the river. — Here, on my coming on shore, I was saluted with four patteraroes, brought seemingly on purpose, the guard in every respect like the lower look-out. — We were prevented the pleasure of returning this salute, by the loss of our long-boat, which the master had equipped with swivels for the purpose, as we were apprized of these compliments. This Creek is called the Cheeque, where, after the ceremony of signing vouchers for the commandants having admitted us into the river, &c. and a repast of chocolate, we all imbark'd on board his Parriagua for Baccalar.[28] The passage now becomes very intricate, through a very narrow channel, and rapid stream, that often throws the boat into the bushes. At the extremity of this narrow rivulet is a corporal's guard, open to the first of the three beforementioned Lagoons; the passages between which are so very difficult, that none but a well acquainted person could navigate one of those kind of boats of five or six inches draught to Baccalar; but I observed that the general course was about N.N.E. and the distance six or seven leagues. We arrived at Baccalar after seven or eight hours passage, about ten at night, during which nothing material happen'd, unless our being disturb'd by an Allegator, which our boat in its passage had awaked, as it lay on the water: our boat was frequently trackt by hand, thro' many of the channels, being very narrow and shoally.

Baccalar is a small, poor, a small, poor, straggling village, of ill-built huts, of stakes of the Palmeta-tree drove in the ground, plaistered with earth, and thatched with the leaves; in number not more than a hundred Spaniards and Indians, of the former they are most of the soldiers militia of the province. It has nothing to recommend it but its situation, which is extreamly pleasant; being on the summit of a rising ground; on the north side the lake is bounded by a pleasing prospect of woods, at an agreeable distance on the opposite shore.

The fort of castle of St. Phillips is also situated on the summit of this little hill, not more than a hundred yards from the shore of the Lake, is in the form of a square, with salient angles: it faces to the four Cardinal Points; has four pieces of ordnance on each side, about twelve pounders, and one from each angle to cover the ditch, which is dry, and palisadoed, but no out-work: they have swivels mounted on the Marlons; not being invited to see it, cannot be very particular in my description of it: It is garrisoned by a company of foot, and some few militia of the town, but so very undisciplined, and ill cloathed, they have scarce the appearance of Falstaff's company of soldiers.[29]

From hence a traveller must furnish himself with every necessary for a journey of three days, having a wilderness, as they call it, a wood of about thirty-four Spanish leagues to the first Indian town, call'd Chumhubut[Chunhuhub]:[30] it is also best to take your own liquor with you for the whole journey, as there is not any to be had in this country except Aquadent[aguardiente], which is very bad, scarce, and dear. As to the acquiring my necessaries, provisions, mules, indians[sic], &c. I had no trouble with that, the commandant with whom I lived, during my residence in this town of three days, took all that on himself, for which I had no other trouble but to pay him.

Being equipped with every necessary, as mules, indians, interpreters, and hammocks of that country, to be carried in case of wearying, or to sleep in the night, you enter the wood, whose path in general is from fifteen to twenty feet wide; often interrupted by the fall of large trees; through which, however, a path is generally burnt by the first traveller, to admit a horse to pass, and is in general as well screen'd from the sun (by the meeting branches over head) as the Mall in St. James's Park. Here you see at every four or five leagues distance, a shed like what our common smith's, or farriers use to shoe their horses in, and is what the natives call a Rings-house: Being built by order of the governor, for the convenience of travelling; as there is not, as in Europe, houses of entertainment, or lodging, they answer the purpose very well in this climate, where you have your own provisions, and sleeping convenience with you; as they shelter from the sun and rain, and are always built near the water, either a Lagoon or a branch of one, or what may be left from the rains. The woods consist chiefly of mahogany, cedar gopal, (of which they make a kind of gum elemy) the small and wild cotton, palmeta, and cocoa nuts, and many aloes, not much incommoded with under brush: it

is the swampy ground that abounds with the logwood, which the Spaniards call Palo Tinto. In travelling thro' the swamps it is very troublesome, the mules being knee deep, in the dry season, in a stiff blueish mud, often times nearly sticking fast, and the boughs of the logwood trees so low, as to oblige you to lay flat on the mules shoulders, whilst the animal is all the time plunging in endeavouring to extricate himself from the mire. Of game there is the quarm and curasoe birds, nearly as big as turkeys, and very fine food. Of beasts, wild deer and the warree*, or musk hog. There are some wild beasts, or tygers, and some others, whose names I dont remember, but 'tis rare they are troublesome; travellers make no account of them. Parrots and Monkeys are also very numerous in the woods, as is common with those climates.

*The Warree is the Tajacu, or Musk Hog of Mexico; the Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences gives an account of this animal; it is very good food.[31]

After passing the wilderness, the journey becomes more pleasant, always dining and sleeping in an Indian town; and in rather better houses than the former, they being staked closer, and plaistered with earth: these are also built by the governor's order, for the same purpose as those in the woods. Here a chief of the Indians always resides, being obliged to do so, to be ready to furnish travellers with every thing necessary they may want; prepare their victuals; get them fresh mules and Indians, who travel at the order of this chief, who is a kind of alderman in the village; you pay only for the mules, and that very cheap.[32] This Pazique, or Chief, always assembles about half a dozen natives of the town, of both sexes.[33] As soon as he discovers you coming into the town, by a particular shout, they prepare your victuals, wash your feet with warm water, and make every thing ready for your setting off again; the diet is generally fowls, eggs, or young pork; chocolate and maize bread, all very cheap.

From Chunhuhub to Merida is about fifty-seven Spanish leagues, and may be said to be entirely thro' the woods, tho' not so thick and lofty as the wilderness; and frequently as you approach the capital, opens to plantations; the path very serpentine, scarce ever seeing two hundred yards before you; the soil a reddish clay; very rocky; and the country low, level, and badly water'd, not crossing one river in a journey of ninety-one leagues from Baccalar to Merida. There is in every town a publick well sunk with much difficulty, thro' a strata of hard rock, some of these are very deep; the water is in general hard, tho' not unpalatable. The people are healthy, and, as they say, remarkable for their longevity. From the wood to Merida you pass fourteen Indian towns; in every one of which is a kind of church, or place of worship; tho' one priest often officiates for three of these villages; riding from one to the other, having half way houses, or sheds, built for them by the poor Indians to secure them from rain; they appear to be superlatively ignorant, by what I could discover, thro' the inconvenience of an interpreter; of course can but ill impart with their small stock of knowledge to their flock, who they keep in the most obscure ignorance, and abject servility, shewing both by their adoration of such divines. They, however, behaved very polite and civil towards me, always waiting at the king's house to receive me;[34] even when I have come in late at night, have invited me to come to sup with them, offer'd me lodging in their houses, complimented me with their best mule to proceed on my journey, and often a nosegay from the bosom of our virgin mother, not without hinting for a little present to the church; and some English rum for their poor congregation.

Merida is a handsome well built town, in form a square; the streets are spacious, parallel to each other, and cross at right angles, but have only the foot paths pav'd; it is built on a sandy soil; has a handsome arch'd gate way at the end of every street, next the country, but no gates hung:[35] the houses are low built of stone, and white wash'd; the out side of which, in this country, has bad effect on the eyes; it contains, as I was told, about twenty-four churches, a good cathedral, a convent of nuns, and a monastery of fryars, of the order of St. Francis; two or three good squares; in the principal of which, and on the north side, resides the governor; and has the cathedral and bishop's palace on the east; the grand council house on the west; and houses of the principal inhabitants form the south side: there is but little appearance of commerce, or any mechanic art; very few public shops, but all appearing like people living on their own private fortune; and many are such; who live on the acquired wealth of their ancestors; while the indolence of many others prompts them to no industry or commerce; contented to live on the small profits of a plantation, and that cultivated by the Indians: but there is a small trade coast-ways to Campeachy,[36] from the port of Sisal (which is distant only

twelve leagues) in bees wax, leather, gopal, ebony, and logwood; but this a stranger cannot immediately discover. The revenues of the province to the crown of Spain are very considerable, arising mostly from the article of cotton, with which the woods abound.[37]

The citadel, or castle, stands on a level spot of ground (as the country is in general); as you enter the town, from the eastward, it is of no consequence, being originally built to protect the Friars from the insolence of the natives: it at present incloses a monastery of the Franciscans beforementioned;[38] it is in form a hexagon, with salient angles; with light pieces about four and six pounders mounted, some brass, some iron. The wall about ten yards high, has no ditch, or out-work. The governor's nephew is the commandant, who shew'd it me; 'tis by no means in a condition to defend itself against any foreign enemy that have artillery: a company of foot do duty here, and at the governor's house, but a troop of horse, which are part here, and the rest at Campeachy, escort the governor when he goes out. I was credibly inform'd, there was not five hundred troops in the whole province.[39]

The dress of the Spaniards in this country is very light; the men wear a light linen waistcoat and trowsers, and drawers; the better sort, a sattin one (scarce ever wearing a coat) with a white linnen cap, and a broad brim straw hat. The women, of the lower class,[40] a single petticoat only, no stays, or any other cloathing, except their shift; their bosoms no way concealed, but bare to the nipples of their breast; indeed, when they go out on a visit, even those who keep their calash, have no more than a silk scarf loosely flung over their shoulders; this is crimson sattin, generally embroidered: they are for the most part pretty; some of them of very fair complexions; they wear their hair braided behind, and tied in two different bows, with pink ribbons, and are very free and unreserved. I would be understood here, with respect to the provincials only; the old Castilians (as they call themselves) they being such as hold offices under the crown, or those who come for the sake of trade; they dress as in Old Spain, and hold the other inhabitants in very little esteem.

The Jucatan Indians are a most willing, obliging, meek temper'd people; very laborious; of midling stature, and well featur'd: their hair strait and black, but cut short, except a lock on each side their temple, which they are constrained to wear as a badge of subjection to the Spanish monarchy.[41] Their dress is a kind of short frock, reaching to the waist, and trowsers; a straw hat, and sandals: but when they travel, they proceed quite naked, except a cloth to hide their privities. They are very active and dexterous in the woods with their muschalls, [using] an instrument something between a knife and a cleaver, with which they clear away the bush in the woods, dress their meat, and use it as an instrument of offence on occasion.[42]

The women are, in general, short and thick set, with agreeable countenances; their hair black, which they generally wear club'd behind; and those near Merida, with a pink ribband: they go bare leg'd, with a short cotton petticoat, which they adorn about the bottom, with flowers of various colours, in needlework: as also their frocks, in the same manner, round the bosoms. These are always made of cotton, of their own spinning and weaving: the frock reaches only to the upper part of the petticoat, but this they throw off when employ'd on any domestick business, going naked to the waist.[43]

The police of each of these towns, is managed by the following officers, whose titles I am better acquainted with than their office: they are always of the best repute, and fair character; elderly men of the town, and have great respect shewn them by the Indians: they stand in rank as I here name them, the Cazique, Teniente, Alcaldi, and Fiscal; who reside at what is called the king's house,[44] and adjust all civil causes: they are distinguished by several badges; the Alcaldi wearing a square blue cloth embroidered at the corners, hung to his left shoulder. The Teniente, a wand, with a cross at the top of it. The Fiscal wears a key, and a kind of cat with three tails, being by office both the prison-keeper, and executor of punishment. These badges of his offices he always wears to his waist, hung to a sash round his body. They have in each of these houses, a serivan, or clerk, who minutes the arrival and departure of expresses going to or from Merida, or from any of the towns in the province.

Their towns are poor, mean huts, built with stakes of Palmeta, (which they chuse for their straitness) and thatched, with the leaves to the ground, resembling a large beehive. They have no upper room, no more than

the provincial Spaniards, and like them, sleep all in their grass hammocks, as they are called, though they are made of the thready fibres of the leaves from the aloe-tree, in the same manner as hemp is got from the stalk; they just throw a cotton cloth over them; and when travelling, if night overtakes them, they sleep in these hammocks, hung between two trees; never neglecting however, to make a good wood fire close to their hammocks. Their diet is very simple, being no more than a maize cake, and a little pasoli to drink;[45] a liquor made of the meal of the maize, left in water till it ferments, and grows sour: this generally they sweeten with honey, of which they find great plenty in the woods.[46]

Their principal employment is the cultivation of the plantations;[47] they train their children to the practice of the bow and arrow; and with which they kill their game, not being permitted to use fire arms.[48]

FINIS

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Notes

[1] My source material on Belize is taken from a book project in progress on the history of the settlement through the 1830s, drawn from archival documents in the British National Archives (BNA, Kew), the Belize Archives and Records Service (BARS, Belmopan), and the Archivo General de la Indias (AGI, Seville). In terms of secondary sources, until very recently the only scholarly monograph published in English on this period in Belizean history was O. Nigel Bolland's still ground-breaking and insightful *The Formation of a Colonial Society: Belize, from Conquest to Crown Colony* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); it is now joined by Mavis C. Campbell's *Becoming Belize: A History of an Outpost of Empire Searching for Identity, 1528-1823* (Kingston: University of West Indies Press, 2011).

[2] The MCAT database located nine in the U.S., but this did not include the copy in the John Carter Brown Library, Providence (hereafter JCBL), catalogued as rare book A24b and the copy from which I made my transcription (see below for the full title). My guess is that there are about a dozen originals in the US and a dozen more in the UK. In 2002 a copy was for sale online for $150; in 2012, one was for sale at $250; but by then a UK publisher was offering print-on-demand reprints for less than $10. In 1935, a not-for-sale facsimile edition of fifty copies was published in New Orleans, at least thirty-five copies of which survive in university and other public libraries in North America; Lieutenant Cook, *Remarks on a Passage from the River Balise, in the Bay of Honduras, to Merida: The Capital of the Province of Jucatan in the Spanish West Indies; A Facsimile of the Original with Perspective by Muriel Haas* (New Orleans: Midameres Press, 1935). The Haas edition can now be accessed online through Google books. A Spanish-language edition with a similar print-run was published in Merida, Yucatan in 1936 as *Notas sobre una travesía desde el Río Balise, en la Bahía de Honduras, hasta Mérida, capital de la Provincia de Yucatán, en ls Indias*

Occidentales Españoles, por el Teniente Cook; the text was translated and introduced, but not analyzed, by Carlos R. Menéndez.

3 I have only found one study in the historical literature on Yucatan that makes even passing reference to Cook's report: several one-line mentions of the Yucatec edition in Jorge Victoria Ojeda, *Mérida de Yucatán de Las Indias: Piratería y estrategia defensiva* (Merida, Yucatan: Ayuntamiento de Mérida, 1995), pp. 28, 54, 91. Richard D. Perry includes Cook's description of Merida in *Exploring Yucatan: A traveler's anthology* (Santa Barbara: Espadaña Press, 2001), pp. 87-90, but Perry's purpose is not to analyze the excerpt in any way. References in works from other fields are few; none are as long as Haas' sixteen-page "perspective" in her 1935 facsimile edition of the report or even as long as the five-page summary of the report in William Mayer, *Early Travellers in Mexico, 1534-1816* (Mexico City, 1961), pp. 135-40. I made minor use of Cook's report in my *The Black Middle: Africans, Mayas, and Spaniards in Colonial Yucatan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), pp. 2, 16, 23, 160, 169.

4 Haas, *Perspective*, pp. 4-5. The other Cook sailed to Newfoundland in 1763 as a surveyor; he became a lieutenant in 1768 and a captain in the 1770s. Some of the biographical errors regarding the two James Cooks were pointed out by Haas, *Perspective*, and also by Cook biographer Arthur Kitson (his *Captain James Cook, the Circumnavigator* has gone through various editions since 1907).

5 This was *Haemotoxylon campecheanum*, called *eek'* ("black") by the Mayas, logwood or "Campeachy logwood" by the English, and (as Cook himself remarks) *palo de tinte* by the Spaniards. The wood was heavily exploited in the late-colonial period by English loggers, mostly using African slave labor, and Spaniards, mostly using Maya labor; in the early eighteenth century English slave-traders sold Africans to Spaniards in Campeche in exchange for logwood (Colin A. Palmer, *Human Cargoes: The British Slave Trade to Spanish America, 1700-1739*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981, p. 127; Alicia Contreras Sánchez, *Historia de una tintorea olvidada: el proceso de explotación y circulación del palo de tinte, 1750-1807*. Mérida: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 1990; Restall, *Black Middle*, pp. 21-24, 39, 128, 150, 170, 182).

6 Haas, *Perspective*, pp. 5, 7; Grant D. Jones, *Maya Resistance to Spanish Rule: Time and History on a Colonial Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), pp. 230, 272-73; *The Conquest of the Last Maya Kingdom* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Laura Caso Barrera, *Caminos en la selva: Migración, comercio y resistencia. Mayas yucatecos e itzaes, siglos XVII-XIX* (Mexico City: FCE, 2002). On the later Yucatan-Peten-Belize frontier, see Mark W. Lentz, "Belizean Blacks and Fugitive Mayas: Interracial Encounters on the Edge of Empire, 1750-1803," in *The Americas* (forthcoming).

7 For example, see the 1757 *Informe Anonimo*, British Library (BL), Add MS 17569, ff. 64-71. Also see Bolland, *Formation*, 18-27, 30, 32, 49-50; Sir John Alder Burdon, *Archives of British Honduras. Volume I: From the earliest date to A.D. 1800* (London: Sifton Praed & Co., 1931), pp. 61-126 (annotated selections and summaries of items in the BNA, Colonial Office); Narda Dobson, *A History of Belize* (Trinidad and Jamaica: Longman Caribbean, 1973), 69-78; Haas, *Perspective*, p. 8, 10; Restall, *Black Middle*, pp. 9, 22-24, 162, 169-70, 176; Jorge Victoria Ojeda, *Mérida de Yucatán de las Indias: Piratería y Estrategía Defensiva* (Merida: Ayuntamiento de Mérida, 1995), p. 194.

8 There are numerous sources on these events; one notable example discusses the settlement patterns of the *floridanos* who fled to Cuba in 1763: Sherry Johnson, "Casualties of Peace: Tracing the Historic Roots of the Florida-Cuba Diaspora, 1763-1800," in *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 10:1 (Winter 2001), pp. 91-125.

9 Bolland, *Formation*, 27-36.

10 The original records of the investigation into the 1761 Revolt are in AGI, *México*, 3050; see also Robert W. Patch, *Maya Revolt and Revolution in the Eighteenth Century* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), pp.

126-82.

[11] Haas, *Perspective*, pp. 13-14.

[12] Archivo Notarial del Estado de Yucatan, Merida (ANEY), Argaiz, 1778-81 (mf roll 21); Argaiz, 1782-84 (mf roll 22); Archivo General del Arzobispado de Yucatán, Merida (AGAY), Jesús María, *Libros de Bautismos* Vol. 5: ff. 144r-236r; Restall, *Black Middle*, 229-32, 245.

[13] Matthew Restall, *Life and Death in a Maya Community: the Ixil Testaments of the 1760s* (Lancaster: Labyrinthos, 1995), pp. 33-35; see *The Maya World: Yucatec Culture and Society, 1550-1850* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) for fuller analysis of the Ixil corpus.

[14] Labelled *Informe Anonimo*, in BL, Add MS 17569, ff. 64-71.

[15] The British relinquished Cuba in 1763 by the above-mentioned Treaty of Paris, in exchange for Florida. The 1741 manuscript is catalogued in the John Carter Brown Library (JCBL, Providence, RI) as Codex Eng 21. The Latin phrase, more properly written as *delenda Cartago est,* "Carthage is destroyed" or "Carthage is no more," is a reference to the Roman destruction of the North African city of Carthage; an interesting association of British and Roman empires. Interestingly, a separate account of the siege of Cartagena was published in Edinburgh in 1743 and in London the following year, both, I suspect, reprints of a 1741 first edition that I have not yet found; this account, also anonymous, is titled *An Account of the Expedition to Carthagena, with Explanatory Notes and Observations* and offers a more positive spin on events, describing "this famous Expedition" as "the greatest and most expensive that ever entred the *American* Seas, and which *Europe* gazed on with Admiration and Attention" (p.23, note (k)).

[16] A later example of another report in this genre is the *Remarks on a Passage to Botany Bay*, written on small sheets by a British naval officer, James Scott, as a journal of the First Fleet's expedition to Australia in 1787-92. It remained unpublished until 1963 (Sydney: Public Library of New South Wales, 1963).

[17] Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *True History of the Conquest of New Spain* (New York: Penguin, 1963); Diego López de Cogolludo, *Historia de Yucatán* [1654] (Mexico City: Editorial Academia Literaria, 1957).

[18] Thomas Gage, *The English-American* (London, 1648; copy in the JCBL, but there are numerous later editions, some currently in print); John Ogilby, *America: Being An Accurate Description of the New World* (London, 1670; copy in the JCBL).

[19] Michael G. Brennan, in "English Civil War Travellers and the Origins of the Western European Grand Tour" (London: The Hakluyt Society [pamphlet], 2002), traces the origins of the travel account genre to the 1640s and '50s. For the parallel development in the Spanish world, see Fabio López Lázaro, *The Misfortunes of Alonso Ramírez: The True Adventures of a Spanish American With 17th-Century Pirates* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011); and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, "Postcolonialism *avante la lettre*? Travelers and Clerics in Eighteenth-Century Colonial Spanish America," in Mark Thurner and Andrés Guerrero, *After Spanish Rule: Postcolonial Predicaments of the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 89-110.

[20] John B. Hattendorf, "The Englishmen Abroad," in *Antiquarian Book Review* (April 2003), pp. 24-28.

[21] The tale continued to be popular in various forms, from Keate's own account to a musical play of 1833. The latest edition (a reprint of the fifth, with introductory essays, notes, and so forth) is George Keate, *An Account of the Pelew Islands*, Karen L. Nero and Nicholas Thomas, eds. (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2002).

[22] Quotes about Keate by Nero and Thomas in Keate, *Account*, p. 2, and Thomas in *Ibid*, p. 27.

[23] David M. Pendergast, *Palenque: The Walker-Caddy Expedition to Ancient Maya City, 1839-1840* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967); John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*[1842] (Mexico City: Panorama Editorial, 1988); *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* [1840], Karl Ackerman, ed. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian, 1993). On Dampier in Campeche, see n. 28 below.

[24] The question of genre and market may also be relevant; in 1766-69, between Cook's voyage and the publication of his *Remarks*, Louis-Antoine de Bougainville circumnavigated the world, but while his narrative *Voyage autour du monde* was published in French and English in the 1770s, his more detailed and drier diary did not see print in French until 1977 and in English until 2002 (John Dumore, ed., *The Pacific Journal of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, 1767-68* [London: The Hakluyt Society]).

[25] I have followed the original in all respects, including punctuation and paragraph breaks, leaving such idiosyncrasies as inconsistencies of spelling.

[26] That is, the Spanish colonial town of San Felipe de Bacalar, described further by Cook below. See Figure 1: Map of Yucatan, Belize, and the Peten in the Late 18th Century.

[27] This was the Bayman magistrate, Joseph Maud, mentioned above; see Burdon, *Archives*, p. 111, for evidence of Maud seeking the return of two of his black slaves who had fled north into Yucatan in 1766, in the Spring following Cook's journey (also mentioned and cited in Lentz, "Belizean Blacks and Fugitive Mayas").

[28] The drinking of chocolate here represents an interesting continuity of ritual chocolate consumption at diplomatic meetings in Yucatan. Of course, by this time both the English and Spanish had become avid chocolate consumers, but the circumstances of Cook's drinking of it in 1765 would seem nevertheless to have some local roots. Cook was hardly the first Englishman to be offered chocolate by Spaniards in Yucatan. William Dampier, who traveled the peninsula's coast in 1675, recounted a tale of captured English pirates that places both the use of chocolate and Cook's reception in general in a larger context: "A small *Jamaica* Privateer once Landed 6 or 7 Men at this *Look-out* of Sisal; who not suspecting any danger, ordered the Canoa with 3 or 4 Men to row along by the shore, to take them in upon their giving a sign or firing a Gun: But within half an hour they were attack'd by about 40 Spanish Soldiers, who had cut them off from the shore, to whom they surrendered themselves Prisoners. The Spaniards carried them in triumph to the Fort, and then demanded which was the Captain. Upon this they all stood mute, for the Captain was not among them; and they were afraid to tell the Spaniards so, for fear of being hanged for Straglers; Neither did any one of them dare to assume that Title, because they had no Commission with them, nor the Copy of it; for the Captains don't usually go ashore without a Copy, at least, of their Commission, which is wont to secure both themselves and their Men. ——— At last one *John Hullock* cock'd up his little cropt Hat, and told them that he was the Captain; and the Spaniards demanding his Commission, he said it was aboard; for that he came ashore only to hunt, not thinking to have met any Enemy. The Spaniards were well satisfied with this Answer, and afterwards respected him as the Captain, and served him with better Provision and Lodging than the rest; and the next day when they were sent to the City of *Merida*, about 12 or 13 Leagues from thence, Captain *Hullock* had a Horse to ride on, while the rest went on Foot: And though they were all kept in close Prison, yet *Hullock* had the honour to be often sent for to be examined at the Governours House, and was frequently Regal'd with Chocolate, &c. From thence they were carried to *Campeachy* Town, where still Captain *Hullock* was better served than his Comrades: At last, I know not how, they all got their Liberties, and *Hullock* was ever after call'd *Captain Jack*" (William Dampier, *Voyages and Descriptions*, Vol. II, Part 2: *Two Voyages to Campeachy* [London: James Knapton, 1699; copy in the JCBL as D699 D166n], pp. 15-16).

29 Bacalar's situation had not much improved by 1801, when a Spanish report on the state of the town and its presidio complained that it was grossly undermanned, with many of the Spanish soldiers permanently sick and the Maya militiamen out of town working in the *milpas* (corn fields) all day; a prior request for reinforcements from Merida had produced "no more than one mulatto" (Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Mérida [AGEY], Colonial, Militar, 1, 16, f. 2).

30 Colonial Chunhuhub was destroyed in the 1840s, a victim of the Caste War, and not refounded until the 1940s; a fascinating recent ethnography of the modern town is E. N. Anderson and Felix Medina Tzuc, *Animals and the Maya in Southeast Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005).

31 This is the only note in the original text; it appears at the foot of page 17, beneath a solid line after the sentence that ends "with those climates," as transcribed above.

32 Cook seems to be referring here to the *mesón*, the guest house which Maya villages were obliged under colonial law to maintain as lodging for visiting Spaniards (or, in this case, the occasional non-Spanish European). Although later on he discusses Maya political offices with some accuracy and detail, at this point Cook does not distinguish between offices, assigning a broad role to the "chief," although in fact there was a separate officer, the *alcalde mesón*, responsible for the guest house.

33 The Spanish term that Cook means to refer to by "Pazique" is *Cacique*, an Arawak (native Caribbean) term for chief that the Spaniards borrowed and applied to all native American chiefs. The Mayas called these town chiefs in Yucatan *batabob* (*batab* in the singular). "Pazique" may be a printer's error, as Cook uses "Cazique" towards the end of his report.

34 As Spaniards tended to refer to colonial administrative buildings and institutions with the adjective *real*, "royal," this reference to "the king's house" is either to the town hall or to the *mesón* (mentioned above).

35 There were arches not at the end of "every street" but at Merida's entrances, where the four main roads into the city reached its edge. Some of these arches still stand, modified only a little since Cook's day.

36 As the English consistently called the port of Campeche, itself a reading of the original Maya toponym, Cenpech.

37 Cook's impression of Merida is similar to that of the two British agents who traveled there in 1840, remarking that "beyond a few villages, we did not expect to fall in with any greater progress in civilization and were much surprised at finding Campeachy so fine a Town; however, we were much more surprised at the extent and general appearance of Merida, [which had] every necessary thing to form an opulent and well populated city" (Pendergast, *Palenque*, pp. 154, 184).

38 See Figure 4 above. The citadel of San Benito was on the site of a large and ancient pyramidal platform. At the time of Merida's founding in 1542, there was a Maya temple on top of the pyramid, which faced one of the two large plazas of the Maya city of Tiho. Over the succeeding centuries, the pyramid and adjacent structures were turned into colonial buildings, with two Franciscan convents covering part of the platform and much of it rebuilt in the 1660s as the citadel described here by Cook. Although Cook states that the fort was on "a level spot of ground," and he seems to have been unaware of any Maya architectural precedents or remnants on the site, the structure he saw was actually built on the lower level of the Maya platform, which survived into the late-twentieth century (Rogers, *Ichcanzihoo to Mérida*; Raúl Alcalá Erosa, *Historía y Vestigios de la Ciudadela de San Benito* [Merida: Ayuntamiento de Mérida, 1998]).

39 As this citadel was Merida's only significant defensive structure, its ineffectiveness and the paucity of troops available for the city's defense suggest its vulnerability to an invading army. The number of militiamen in Yucatan in 1765 was more than double the five hundred that Cook claimed, but nonetheless

inadequate to the colony's defense; a report of 1766, commissioned by the governor, pointed this out in no uncertain terms, and the decades that followed, militia numbers rose to almost 3,700 in the 1790s (Restall, *Black Middle*, pp. 155-77).

40 By "lower class" and "the provincials" (the qualifier he adds later in the paragraph), Cook refers to the *castas*, the mixed-race population of Spanish-Maya *mestizos* and Spanish-Maya-African *mulatos* (the preferred term for free people of partial African descent in 1760s Merida; Restall, *Black Middle*, p. 107) that loosely lay in socioeconomic terms between the Spanish élite ("the old Castilians") and the Mayas. As mentioned above, Merida's enslaved and free black population were part of this broad urban "class"; as Cook observed the group, classifying primarily by dress, poorer Spaniards and urban elite Mayas may have been included.

41 An intriguing claim, but one that I have not seen mentioned in any Maya or Spanish source of the colonial period. It is possible that such a hair style and its meaning was seldom mentioned by contemporaries and has been overlooked by historians; but it is also possible that Cook is applying some interpretive imagination.

42 It is not clear if, by "muschalls," Cook means "machete", or if he means "muscles," with "using" or a similar verb missing from the printed text.

43 This description is reminiscent of that by the Franciscan friar Diego de Landa, written two centuries earlier: "The Indian women of Yucatan are in general better looking than Spanish women, larger and well formed, lacking the large haunches of black women. Those who are beautiful are quite vain about it, and indeed they are not ugly. They are not white, but of a brown color caused more by the sun and by constant bathing, than from their nature . . . They tattooed their bodies from the waste up, leaving their breasts for nursing, with patterns more delicate and beautiful than those of the men. They bathed constantly, like the men, in cold water, but they did not do it with much modesty, for they were used to going stripped naked into the well where they go for water . . . They wore their hair very long, which they used to and still do arrange in very fine headdress, parted into two parts, which they used to build another coiffure. When the young girls are ready to be married, their mothers devote so much attention to carefully arranging their hair that I have seen many Indian women with hair as well cared for as well-cared Spanish women. The little girls, up until they are somewhat grown up, dress their hair in four plaits and in two, which become them very well. The Indian women of the coast and of the province of Bacalar and Campeche are very modest in their costume, for besides the covering which they wore from the waist down, they covered their breasts by tying under their armpits a double-folded *manta* [cotton cloth]. The others wore no clothing other than a long wide sack, open on the sides, drawn up to the hips and there fastened by its own ends . . ."; Matthew Restall, John F. Chuchiak, and Amara Solari, *The Friar and the Maya: Diego de Landa's Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán* (unpublished manuscript), from Chapter XXXI of the translated text. Landa may have been the source for this comment by Gil González Davila, in his *Teatro Eclesiastico de la primera iglesia de las Indias Occidentales,* published in Madrid in 1649: "Of one account, the [Yucatec Maya] women are well formed, and not ugly, but the color of clay" (quoted in Roberto L. Mayer, *Poblaciones Mexicanas, planos y panoramas, siglos XVI al XIX* [Mexico City: Smurfit, 1998], p. 216).

44 This again is probably a reference to the town hall; there is no evidence in Spanish or Maya sources that the officers of the town council actually resided in the building itself. The *teniente* ("lieutenant") was a position held in some (but not all) Maya villages, immediately subordinate to the *cacique*; Cook's "Alcaldi" was the *alcalde*, today a mayor, but in the colonial period a senior town council position, the number of which varied widely in Maya villages; some, not all, Maya municipal councils included a *fiscal*, "treasurer." I have not seen corroboration of Cook's descriptions of office holder's dress in Maya or Spanish sources; he does not claim to have seen these himself, suggesting that they may have been an ideal, described to him by a Spanish host, not often reflected in actual village practice.

45 This is the corn-based stew, *pozole* (from the Nahuatl, *pozolli*).

[46] In fact, Mayas did more than just "find" honey "in the woods"; they were great bee keepers, and had been for many centuries, relying on honey and especially wax as important bases of livelihood as export products (through Spanish merchants and tax collectors).

[47] The eighteenth-century English applied "plantation" in a broad sense to agricultural enterprises (and even human settlements); Maya farming should not be equated in any way with the sugar plantations of the European colonies in the Americas.

[48] Indeed colonial law did not allow Mayas to own firearms, but Maya testaments reveal that native men did sometimes own—and leave to their sons—shotguns, which they kept for hunting deer and other game.

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