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“Making feast of the prisoner”: Roger Barlow, Hans Staden and ideas of New World cannibalism

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In 1541 Roger Barlow, an English merchant, presented Henry VIII with a manuscript he had created: a cosmography known as “A Brief Somme of Geographia.”¹ It contains a description of the Tupí-Guaraní communities Barlow encountered during his exploration of the Rio de la Plata river system in South America from February 1527 to July 1528. The most detailed episode concerns the killing, butchering and eating of a prisoner by a group Barlow labels “Guaranys” – the word for warrior in the Tupí-Guaraní dialect.² This description bears a close resemblance to Hans Staden’s account of such practices. Hans Staden was a gunner at the Portuguese fort on the island of Santo Amaro when he was captured in 1552 and held at Ubatuba – a Tupí-Guaraní speaking Tupinambá settlement on the coast between Santos and Rio de Janeiro. In the sixteenth century the Tupinambá occupied most of Brazil while the Guaraní resided along the Paraná, Uruguay and Paraguay rivers and their tributaries.³ Staden learned the language of his captors and claimed to have witnessed many of their customs, including the execution and eating of prisoners of war. Although Barlow delivered his manuscript to the English king at least eight years before Staden encountered the Tupinambá, Staden’s account - the *Warhaftige Historia*, - was published in Marburg in 1557. while Barlow’s was not published until 1932.⁴

¹ Roger Barlow, “A Brief Somme of Geographia”, Royal 18 B xxviii, British Library, UK. The term ‘cosmography’ is employed here in its widest sense – the study of the visible universe: a description of the heavens and the earth, which includes both astronomy and geography.

² Barbara Ganson, *The Guaraní under Spanish Rule in the Rio de la Plata* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 18. This label, initially used by Europeans, appears to have been acceptable to the Guaraní themselves.

³ Ganson, *The Guaraní under Spanish Rule*, 17-18. The Guaraní also occupied other areas of southern Brazil. Both groups were central Amazonian in origin although they have evolved independently over the past 1,500 to 2,000 years. Santo Amaro is also referred to as São Amaro.

⁴ Hans Staden, *Warhaftige Historia und Beschreibung eyner Landtschafft der wilden, nacketen grimmigen Menschfresser Leuthen in der Newenwelt America gelegen* (Marburg: Andreas Kolbe Verlag, 1557); Roger Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, edited and introduced by E. G. R. Taylor

However, as Barlow's description is the first detailed report of such an event by a European, it seems curious that subsequent discussions concerning the authenticity of such descriptions of Tupí-Guaraní communities rarely acknowledge it. This is especially puzzling in the light of the fact that debates regarding New World cannibalism gained momentum after 1979 when William Arens published *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy*.⁵

In *The Man-Eating Myth*, Arens concluded that cannibalism cannot be proved to have occurred as a customary practice and that reports of it, from the fifteenth century until the twentieth, have generally been slanderous attempts to discredit enemies or justify conquests. Arens does not allude to Barlow's account of cannibalism, although his first chapter begins by highlighting the unreliability of Hans Staden's account of his nine-month captivity by the Tupinambá.⁶ Although the initial controversy that flared up as a result of Arens' debunking of Staden's text may have lapsed, Staden remains a figure of interest to anthropologists and historians alike. His work, translated by Neil Whitehead as "The true history and description of a land belonging to the wild, naked, savage, man-munching people, situated in the New World", continues to be subject to scrutiny.¹⁰ Gananath Obeyesekere, for example, considers Staden's text to be the paranoid fantasy of a sexually repressed European, encouraged in his tales by his shipboard companions.¹¹ Eve Duffy and Alida Metcalf pick up on this in their 2012 study of Staden, suggesting that he, like others, used storytelling to "share experiences and emotions" and smooth his reintegration into his community. They do not approach his account as being either true or the result of a disturbed mind, but as "one man's attempt to survive in the early modern world on both sides of the Atlantic."¹² Their study is timely for in 2008 a new English translation of Staden's account was published, titled *Hans Staden's True History: An*

(London: Hakluyt Society, 1932). References to Barlow's text are to this edition, rather than the manuscript.

⁵ William E. Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

⁶ Ibid., 22-35.

¹⁰ Neil L. Whitehead, "Hans Staden and the Cultural Politics of Cannibalism," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 80.4 (Special Issue: Colonial Brazil: Foundations, Crises and Legacies, 2000): 721-51, see 749. Other works key to the debate include: Donald W. Forsyth, "Three Cheers for Hans Staden: The Case for Brazilian Cannibalism," *Ethnohistory* 32.1 (1985): 17-36; Frank Lestringant, *Cannibals: The Discovery and Representation of the Cannibal from Columbus to Jules Verne*, trans. Rosemary Morris (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

¹¹ Gananath Obeyesekere, *Cannibal Talk: The Man-Eating Myth and Human Sacrifice in the South Seas* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2005), 237, 251-60.

¹² Eve M. Duffy and Alida C. Metcalf, *The Return of Hans Staden: A Go-between in the Atlantic World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 1-11.

Account of Cannibal Captivity in Brazil.¹³ Edited and translated by Neil Whitehead and Michael Harbsmeier, it features the woodcuts from the first 1557 edition.¹⁴ It is these woodcuts and the descriptions of cannibalism that have received the most attention over the past four and a half centuries. In the preface to the 2008 edition, the joint editors introduce Staden's account as "a fundamental text in the history of the discovery of Brazil, being one of the earliest accounts we have of the Tupi Indians from an eyewitness who was captive among them for nine months." However, the claims on the back cover are less cautious, referring to it as: "the earliest European account of the Tupi Indians, and a touchstone in the debates on cannibalism"; and "the earliest eyewitness narrative of the Tupi peoples written by a European."¹⁵

Roger Barlow's description is the earliest known detailed first-hand account of a Tupí-Guaraní cannibalistic ritual by a European and it has been in the public forum since 1932. Despite this, debates regarding the validity and cultural politics of reports of cannibalism by Europeans in the New World have overlooked this important work. Moreover, ethno-historians and anthropologists who have defended the integrity of Staden's descriptions, such as Neil Whitehead and Donald Forsyth, have not mustered Barlow to their cause.¹⁶ In their article taking issue with "Whitehead's claims for the veracity of Staden's account", Michaela Schmölz-Häberlein and Mark Häberlein refer to Annerose Menninger's disclosure that a group of Jesuit missionaries, led by Manoel da Nóbrega, wrote an eyewitness account of the Tupí that was printed in 1551.¹⁷ However, they do not mention Barlow's earlier account. Nor do they mention Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca's account, included in his experiences as Governor of

¹³ *Hans Staden's True History: An Account of Cannibal Captivity in Brazil*, ed. and trans. Neil L. Whitehead and Michael Harbsmeier (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008).

¹⁴ On the woodcuts see Neil L. Whitehead, "Early Modern Eyes – The Ethnographic lens in the New World," in *Early Modern Eyes*, ed. Walter S. Melion and Lee Palmer Wandel (Brill: Leiden, 2010), 81-104.

¹⁵ Cover text provided by publisher and testimonial by Irene Silverblatt. Staden's account is central to the *antropofagia* movement which heralds Brazil's history of 'cannibalizing' other cultures as its greatest strength. In the "Manifesto Antropófago," *Revista de antropofagia* 1 (São Paulo, May 1928), the Brazilian poet and polemicist Oswald de Andrade argues that Brazil's history of 'cannibalizing' other cultures is its greatest strength, while playing on the modernists' primitivist interest in cannibalism as an alleged tribal rite.

¹⁶ For example: Forsyth, "Three Cheers for Hans Staden."

¹⁷ Michaela Schmölz-Häberlein and Mark Häberlein, "Hans Staden, Neil L. Whitehead and the Cultural Politics of Scholarly Publishing," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 81.3-4 (2001): 745-51; Annerose Menninger, *Die Macht der Augenzeugen. Neue Welt und Kannibalen-Mythos, 1492-1600* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1995), 518.

the Rio de la Plata from 1541 to 1544, published in Valladolid in 1555.¹⁸ Indeed, discussion regarding European reports of cannibalism continues, based on the assumption that all the purportedly detailed first hand accounts of this practice in Tupí-Guaraní communities are to be found in the writings of Hans Staden, closely followed by those of Jean de Léry and André Thevet.¹⁹ The aim of this chapter is to redress this omission, demonstrating how debates concerning the authenticity of early European descriptions of Tupí-Guaraní communities could be enriched by considering Roger Barlow's account. The chapter is in three parts: firstly, introducing Barlow and providing an overview of his exploration of the Rio de La Plata; secondly, focusing on his descriptions of the Guaraní in the textual context of his presentation to Henry VIII; and finally, discussing the veracity and significance of Barlow's unique window on a world that had only recently been encountered by Europeans.

Roger Barlow and the voyage up the Rio de la Plata

Roger Barlow was an English merchant who belonged to a Seville-based international trading network that spanned the Atlantic, dealing in cloth, sugar, wine, soap and slaves. He was born near Colchester between 1480 and 1496, into a family with connections to the woollen cloth trade, and he died in Pembrokeshire in 1553. In the mid-1520s, Barlow joined a group of Genoese and English investors in planning and financing the voyage to the Moluccas of Sebastian Cabot, Seville's Pilot Major. Barlow was instrumental in supplying the fleet and when Cabot's fleet of four ships left San Lucar at the mouth of Seville's river on 3 April 1526, he accompanied him on the flagship as the fleet's *contador* or accountant.²⁰

¹⁸ *La relación y comentarios del Governador Alvar Núñez Cabeça de Vaca, de lo acaescido en las dos jornadas que hizo a las Indias* (Valladolid: Francisco Fernández de Córdova, 1555). De Vaca's short description is linked to his command that the "native subjects of the king" should give up eating human flesh if they wanted to "come to the knowledge of God." An English translation of the episode is available in *The Conquest of the River Plate (1535-1555)*, ed. Luis L. Dominguez (London: Hakluyt Society, 1891), 129-30.

¹⁹ André Thevet, *Les Singularitez de la France Antarctique, autrement nommee Amerique: et isles decouvertes de nostre temps* (Paris: Maurice de la Porte, 1557/8); Jean de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Bresil* (Geneva: Antoine Chappin, 1578).

²⁰ Heather Dalton, "Negotiating Fortune: English merchants in Early Sixteenth Century Seville," in *Bridging Early Modern Atlantic Worlds: People, Products and Practices on the Move*, ed. Caroline Williams (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 57-73; Heather Dalton, "'Into Speyne to selle for Slavys': Slave trading in English and Genoese merchant networks prior to 1530" in *Brokers Of Change: Atlantic Commerce and Cultures In Pre-Colonial Western Africa*, ed. Toby Green, British Academy Proceedings Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 91-123; Heather Dalton, *Merchants and Explorers: Roger Barlow, Sebastian Cabot and Networks of Atlantic Exchange and Discovery, 1500-1560* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2014), chapters 1-5.

From the start, Cabot's voyage was hampered by three agendas that did not mesh. The Genoese and English merchants who had initiated the voyage, aimed to find a shorter route to the Moluccas, with the leeway to explore unknown landmasses along the way. With the involvement of the Crown and investors, this original plan still held, but the emphasis moved to collecting valuables along the way rather than exploring 'Terra Firma'.²¹ Finally, when Charles V issued Cabot with last minute instructions to look for and support any survivors of previous voyages, it became a rescue mission as well. Cabot had been directed to sail to the Moluccas via the Strait of Magellan, but instead he sailed down the coast of Brazil only as far as Cape Maria. This change of plan, and the fact that Cabot returned with a depleted fleet and little to show for it, were to lead to a series of court cases lasting several years.²² As a result, many witness statements relating to the voyage survive. As these documents refer to incidents that occurred prior to embarkation, during the voyage, and post disembarkation, they provide a valuable record of the entire expedition.²³ It is these, supplemented by Roger Barlow's "A Brief Somme of Geographia" and a letter written from the Rio de la Plata by Cabot's page, Louis Ramírez, to his father, that enable us to follow the route taken by Barlow.²⁴ The fleet made landfall on 'Terra Firma' at Pernambuco. Although the Portuguese had yet to establish a fortified settlement there, Barlow described it as the place

where the king of portugale hath a house of factorie for his brasyl, wch brasill the indies do cutte downe and bring to the portugales that reside there for bedestones, glasse and other trifles, and so thei pile it up by the waters side as

²¹ While 'Terra Firma' could be considered to mean mainland America as a whole, another investor in the voyage, Robert Thorne, prepared a map in 1527 in which he labelled the landmass south of 'Darian', and east of Panama ('Hispana Nova') as 'Terra Firma'. Thorne's map has been lost. The earliest copy is in Richard Hakluyt, *Diverse Voyages Touching the Discovery of America and the Islands Adjacent* (London: Thomas Woodcocke, 1582).

²² Dalton, *Merchants and Explorers*, chapters 3-4. Cabot was found guilty of substantial fiscal losses, causing several deaths and disobeying a direct instruction from the Crown. In February 1532 he was sentenced to two years exile in Oran in Morocco. Despite this, Charles V pardoned Cabot and he was reinstated as pilot major that year.

²³ Jose Toribio Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Cabot al Servicio de Espana*, 2 vols (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta y Encuadernacion Universitaria, 1908) contains the legal documents relating to the voyage, including witness statements held in the *Archivo de Indias*.

²⁴ "Carta de Luis Ramírez á su padre" in Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Cabot*, vol. 1, 442-57. Ramírez was Spanish, although he is often described as French. This is because his letter was first published as a French translation. See Henri Ternaux-Compans, *Nouvelles Annales de Voyages*, vol. 3 (Paris: A. Bertrand, 1843). English translations from the Spanish letter are included in John Horace Parry, *The Discovery of South America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 246-49 and inform descriptions of the voyage in Henry Harrisse, *John Cabot, The Discoverer of North America and Sebastian his Son. A chapter of the maritime history of England under the Tudors*, 1896 (reprinted New York: Argosy Antiquarian Ltd, 1968).

thei do in kent pile ther billet, and every ij or iij yere the king of portugale sendeth certin shippes and carveles for it.²⁵

Members of the crew reported that two Portuguese factors at Pernambuco told Cabot of the gold and silver to be found in the region of the river then known as the Rio de Solis. They also informed him that two survivors of the expedition of Juan Diaz de Solis were living on an island in the bay of Santa Catarina. Solis had sailed down the coast of Brazil and led a party up the Rio de la Plata in 1516. He did not return and it was reported by survivors that he had been killed and eaten. Although contemporary chroniclers never specified which group slaughtered Solis, they speculated that it could have been the Charrúa. However, as it was Guaraní-speaking interpreters brought from Santa Catarina who provided this information, it may have been Guaranís who ambushed Solis and then deflected the blame.²⁶

After leaving Pernambuco, Cabot's fleet had stopped for almost a month to recover from severe weather on an island near to the place where the Portuguese established the fortified settlement of São Vicente in 1532. Staden's ship would stop here twenty years later on its way to the Rio de la Plata, and it was in this vicinity that the German gunner was captured.²⁷ At the end of October 1526, Cabot's fleet came to grief on a sand bank off the island of Santa Catarina where the flagship sunk.²⁸ They remained on the island for three and a half months and here they encountered seventeen Europeans: two survivors of the Solis expedition and fifteen Spaniards who had been put ashore by one of the seven ships of the Garcia Jofre de Loaisa-led 1525 expedition which was bound for the Spanish garrison at Tidore in the Moluccas.²⁹

Henrique Montez, one of the survivors of the Solis expedition, had lived among the indigenous people for over a decade. He told Cabot that tributaries of the

²⁵ Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 164.

²⁶ Some sources suggest that Díaz de Solís could have been killed in a mutiny and that his crew forged the story involving cannibalization. See, for example: Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Cabot*, vol. 1, 122-26, 230-237; HARRISSE, *John Cabot*, 204, 205, 242-44; TARDUCCI, *John and Sebastian Cabot*, 172-6 in Ruth Pike, *Enterprise and Adventure: The Genoese in Seville and the Opening of the New World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966) 109, 198-9, n. 36, 37; Gonzáles and Rodríguez Varese (1990, 10) and Rodolfo Schuller (1904, lxxxiii) in Gustavo Verdesio, *Forgotten Conquests* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 25, 35.

²⁷ HARRISSE, *John Cabot*, 208-15; Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 150; Staden, *Warhaftige Historia*, 42-49.

²⁸ Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 150, 155.

²⁹ Harry Kelsey, "Finding the Way Home: Spanish Exploration of the Round-Trip Route across the Pacific Ocean," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 17.2 (1986): 149-51; Parry, *The Discovery of South America*, 243. The aim of this voyage was to aid the beleaguered remnants of Magellan's expedition, held in the Portuguese garrison at Ternate, and to reinforce the Spanish garrison at Tidore in the Moluccas in order to safeguard the spice route.

Rio de Solis rose up in the Sierra, an area rich in ore and that Cabot would be able to fill his ships with gold and silver.³⁰ Cabot also learned that Loaisa's ships had scattered along the coast of South America and none were likely to have reached the Moluccas. This news, in addition to the fact that most of his men were sick, many had died and four had simply disappeared, led Cabot to make a momentous decision. He abandoned the plan to sail for the Moluccas. On 23 February 1527, the fleet entered the muddy estuary of the Rio de la Solis, which Cabot renamed the Rio de la Plata.³¹ Barlow reported that the river was "daungerous for grete shippes for in it be many bankes and shoulde that hath not passing ij or iij fadome of water."³² On 6 April 1527 the fleet arrived at a harbour where a stream joined the Rio de la Plata, naming it San Lázaro. They spent a month there and on 8 May, the party divided and Barlow left with the main group accompanying Cabot upriver. They stopped and constructed a fort where the Rio San Salvador flowed into the Rio de la Plata system on the eastern bank of the Uruguay. Cabot told Richard Eden later in London that the good soil and weather there had produced marvellous wheat.³³

Sometime in late September or early October 1527 Cabot left the fort with a party of between sixty and a hundred men, including his page Ramirez and Barlow. According to Barlow, they sailed the Paraná "above 300 leges wt a galion, a bricandyn and a carvel." Barlow hailed the Paraná as "a marvelous goodlie rever" and a "grete river of length and bredthe."³⁴ Not only was there fresh water, there was a plentiful supply of fish and game and a good climate. The men took advantage of this region of plenty to recover from their arduous voyage. About sixty leagues upriver from San Salvador, they built another fort of clay and straw called Sancti Spiritus on a tributary of the Paraná called the Río Carcarañá, in what is now Argentina. The region between the forts of San Salvador and Sancti Spiritus had impressed Barlow. The indigenous people in this region were Tupí-Guaraní. At the time Barlow arrived, there were around seventy Tupí-Guaraní languages, grouped into nine branches, centered in

³⁰ Witness statement of Henry Montez in Bois Penrose, *Travel and Discovery in the Renaissance, 1420-1620* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), 121.

³¹ Ramirez in HARRISSE, *John Cabot*, 208, 209; Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Cabot*, vol. 1, 133, 14, 229, 305; vol. 2, 323, 352, 521; Pike, *Enterprise and Adventure*, 109, 199, n. 38-42; Parry, *The Discovery of South America*, 245. Cabot was later to learn that just one of Loaisa's ships had reached the Moluccas; Harris, 211-12; Penrose, *Travel and Discovery e*, 121.

³² Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 155-156.

³³ Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 154-56. Cabot may have been referring to the maize grown by local communities, referred to by Barlow as "certaine seeds that thei call abati wherof thei make bothe bred and drynke", or the company may have sown their own crops.

³⁴ Ibid., 156, 160.

southern Amazonia. Numerous Tupí speakers lived along the Brazilian coast and inland as far as the Paraná, while Guaraní was spoken in coastal regions south of Tupí territory, and inland as far as modern Paraguay and Bolivia.³⁵ Barlow recorded that the local people from the coast, upriver to the fort at San Salvador “liveth by fishing and hunting, and these do not ete one another”, however, those who lived along the Paraná, called “guaranies”, “contynuallie make warre upon ther bordres and one ete another.”³⁶

On 23 December 1527, Cabot and Barlow sailed from this fort with an even smaller party. They left the caravel behind because their guide, Francisco del Puerto, warned that big ships could not get up the Paraná due to the frequent shallows. Puerto was the sole survivor of the party Solís had taken upriver. He had come to meet Cabot on an island in the delta where the Solís and Paraná rivers met, explaining that, as a 14-year old cabin boy, he had been spared slaughter by the locals because they had a policy of not killing old men, women or children. Puerto had lived with the local Tupí community, thought to be Guaranís, for over ten years and was to prove a useful translator and intermediary in communicating with local communities. He told Cabot that nobody from the Solís expedition had ventured further upriver but confirmed that there were riches to be had inland.³⁷

As Barlow’s party went further upriver from Sancti Spiritus, they encountered areas where food could only be found by “ruthless foraging.”³⁸ Cabot lost men to disease, starvation, desertion and increasingly violent clashes with local communities. In May 1528, Cabot encountered Diego Garcia, a Spanish captain who had sailed up the Rio de la Plata in a fleet of three ships.³⁹ Aware that Garcia had the means to press on further upriver, Cabot sent Barlow, and his treasurer Hernando Calderon, back to

³⁵ “South American Languages: mapping a forest of cultures,” *Athena Review: Quarterly Journal of Archeology, History and Exploration* 1.3 (1997), available from <http://www.athenapub.com>. For a study of Tupi-Guarani speaking communities see Alfred Métraux, “The Tupinamba,” in *Handbook of South American Indians* vol. 3, ed. Julian Stewart (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1959), 95-133.

³⁶ Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 156-57.

³⁷ Ramírez in Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Cabot*, vol. 1, 448-449, vol. 2 165-66; HARRISSE, *John Cabot*, 213-18. Puerto’s case is discussed in Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Cabot*, vol. 1, 159-70, 280-82; Vicente Guillermo Arnaud, *Los Interpretes en el Descubrimiento, Conquista y Colonización del Rio de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Cráficos Didot, 1950) and Walter Rela, *España en el Río de la Plata: Descubrimiento y Poblamientos, 1516-1588* (Montevideo: Club Español. 2001).

³⁸ Parry, *The Discovery of South America*, 242.

³⁹ Report from Diego Garcia addressed to Charles V in HARRISSE, *John Cabot*, 218; Ramírez in Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Cabot*, vol. 1, 455-456.

Spain to inform Charles “of the journey undertaken and the great riches of the land.”⁴⁰ On 8 July 1528, Barlow left San Salvador in the *Trinidad*, carrying the letter from Ramirez to his father and one from Cabot, requesting supplies and more men. Cabot also sent objects, including metals and animal skins, to present to Charles V.⁴¹ When Barlow arrived in Seville in early November 1528, he and his pilot, Rodrigo Alvarez, communicated the very latest information from their voyage to Diogo Ribeiro, the cartographer acting in the role of pilot major while Cabot was away. As a result of talking to Barlow and Alvarez, the map Ribeiro produced in 1529 was very different from the map he had produced two years earlier. The cartographer placed an inscription near the Rio de la Plata, stating that “Sebastian Gaboto is still there in a fort he has built.” He also indicated that the area was suited to growing crops for producing both bread and wine, and that there was also hope of finding gold and silver. Although there are no images of cannibals, on this map, Ribeiro noted that “the people of Brazil ate the flesh of their enemies.”⁴² Although Barlow succeeded in mustering funds for Cabot, his captain arrived in Seville July 1530, before relief could be sent.⁴³

Roger Barlow’s Text

Barlow returned to England and married the daughter of a wealthy Bristol merchant before moving to Pembrokeshire and working with his clerical brothers to further the Crown’s policy for Wales. He benefited from the patronage of Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII’s Chief Minister, Thomas Cromwell, and built up a large estate at Slebech. He retained his links with trading networks in London and Bristol and

⁴⁰ Ramirez in Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Cabotot*, vol. 1, 455-56. Ramirez refers to Calderon as “tesorero de S.M. y teniente del señor Capitán General”, Barlow as “contador de S.M.” and their task “para informar á S.M. del viaje que habíamos hecho y de la gran riqueza de la tierra.”

⁴¹ Deposition of Casimir Nuremberger. Seville 28 July 1530, AI, file 1-2 1/8, piece 2a, fol. 64 in Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Cabotot*, vol. 2, 152-55; Ramirez in Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Cabotot*, vol. 1, 450.

⁴² Maps referred to here include the 1527 “Mundus Novus” in the Weimar Grand Ducal Library and the 1529 “Propaganda” or “Second Borgian” in the Vatican Library in Rome. There is a version of the 1529 map in the Weimar, which has many more inscriptions than the “Propaganda,” including those cited. Images of the Propaganda Map are available on *Cartographic Images*; http://cartographic-images.net/346_Ribero.html; accessed 19 September 2012. See Surekha Davies, “Depictions of Brazilians on French Maps, 1542-1555,” *The Historical Journal* 55.2 (2012): 317-48 and Surekha Davies, “The Navigational Iconography of Diogo Ribeiro’s 1529 Planisphere,” *Imago Mundi* 55 (2003), 103-12; L. A. Vigneras, “The Cartographer Diogo Ribeiro,” *Imago Mundi* 16 (1961): 76-83.

⁴³ Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Cabotot*, vol. 1, 182. Barlow arrived at Seville’s ocean port of San Lucar on 1 November. Although Charles V was sympathetic to Cabot’s request for further funding, prevarication from the original investors, the signing the Treaty of Zaragoza on 22 April 1529, and the fact that Francisco Pizarro completed his reconnaissance of the coast of Peru, meant that Cabot arrived back in Spain before relief could be sent.

continued to promote the exploration of potential trade routes.⁴⁴ After the fall of Cromwell, Barlow presented Henry VIII with his cosmography, the core of which was his translation of the Castilian 1519 edition of *Suma de Geographia Que Trata de Todas las Partidas del Mundo* by Martin Fernandez de Enciso.⁴⁵ Barlow combined this with a navigation manual and a proposal he had developed with a colleague over a decade previously. His intention was to gain the king's support for exploratory voyages to establish a trade route to the East via the Northwest Passage.⁴⁶ Although the exact date Barlow presented his "Brief Somme of Geographia" to the Crown cannot be established, his reference on folio fifty-one to the capture of Tunis by Charles V five to six years earlier, in the summer of 1535, suggests that he put the finishing touches to it in the winter of 1540/41.⁴⁷

Barlow did not name Enciso, or anybody else, as a source, simply stating that when he had not experienced something himself, he relied on the descriptions of "credible persones as have labored that contries and also have written of the same."⁴⁸ In his dedication to Henry, he reminded the king that, being of noble heart, he must surely desire to know more about "straunge" contries, especially those "farre aparted from us" with "comoditees, behaviour and customes wch are very straunge to owres."⁴⁹ In keeping with this, Barlow included reports based on his experiences at the Portuguese settlements at the fort of Santo Cruz do Cabo de Gué, now the port of Agadir in Morocco, and São Tomé in the Gulf of Guinea, which he had visited previously as a sugar trader. He was keen to alert Henry to those "countries latelie discovered by your majestie" and by "the kynges of portugall and spayne." However, although Barlow added his account of the Rio de la Plata to Enciso's descriptions of the route from Spain to northern Brazil and Cartagena, he did not make any explicit references to the voyage.⁵⁰ Despite this, there are instances in the work when

⁴⁴ Dalton, *Merchants and Explorers*.

⁴⁵ Martin Fernandez de Enciso, *Suma de Geographia Que Trata de Todas las Partidas en Prouincias del Mundo* (Seville: Jacob Cromburger, 1519).

⁴⁶ Barlow's presentation to the king was made up of three parts: a map that has been lost; "The Address to the King" proposing that the king support northern exploration, SP 1/239, ff. 106, 107, 107 verso and 108 (previously catalogued as ff. 126, 127, 127 verso and 128), National Archives, UK; and "A Brief Somme of Geographia."

⁴⁷ Taylor, introduction, in Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, xlviii; Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 96.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* (translation of Enciso).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1-2; Heather Dalton, "Fashioning New Worlds from Old Worlds: Roger Barlow's *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, c. 1541," in *Old Worlds, New Worlds: European Cultural Encounters 1100-1750*, ed. Lisa Bailey, Lindsay Diggelmann and Kim Phillips (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 77-100; and

Barlow's 'voice' emerges to relate a personal experience that clearly draws on the voyage, revealing his reactions to an unfamiliar environment.

Barlow's descriptions of the people who lived along the coast from "cape sent austyn" – that is just north of Rio Formoso - to "the ilond of sancta katerina" are likely to have been informed as much by the castaways' experiences as by his own observations. Barlow identified them as Tupís, explaining that the "topys" were naked and "paynte ther facys and bodies." The appearance of the men "when thei go to warre" made a strong impression on him for they had lip piercings of "cristall and tuskys of wylde bestes," bodies covered "wt popingaie fethers" and faces painted "a grym fashion." He noted that some of the warriors wore helmets made of dried animal heads to "put ther enemies in feare for thei go more like devilles than men." Barlow recorded only one conversation in the New World – with a group of Carajás near St Vicente which "doth not (ete) one an other as the tupys do, but when thei take ther enemie thei kyll him and so let him lie upon the grounde for to be devoured of wylde bestes."⁵¹ Staden called them the "Karaya" and described them as enemies of the "tupys" who lived inland from them.⁵² Barlow and his colleagues "thought it unmeete to se very old men have yong wenches and to se yong boyes to have old women" and so "askyd them wherfore thei dyd so." They replied that "yong women coud no skylle of the worlde, and therefore thei be coupled wt old men for that thei maie instructe or teache them how thei maie order ther house" and that the older women similarly answered that "yong men can not skylle of the worlds how to lyve."⁵³ Barlow may have reported this conversation because he could see the sense in their answer, but it is more likely that he did so because he considered it so outlandish.

Barlow and Staden's descriptions of the communities along the coast are very similar. Both described how the Tupís did not wear clothes and allowed hair to grow "onlie upon ther heedys." However, there are subtle differences, for example: while Staden explained that few villages had more than seven huts and that "each hut has its own chief, who is the king", Barlow simply stated that "thei have divers kinges wch the people do obaie"; and while Staden recorded how most of the men in the

Heather Dalton, "'Into Speyne to selle for Slavys', 91-123. English merchants had regularly visited Santa Cruz from around 1470, as it was key in the distribution of Moroccan-grown cane sugar.

⁵¹ Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 150-51.

⁵² Staden, *Warhaftige Historia*, 109. The Carajás (also called Carijós) lived in the vicinity of modern São Paulo to the Lagoa dos Patos. Barlow called these people "caraias", "acusibucas" or "cariges." The "acusibucas" cannot be identified with any accuracy.

⁵³ Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 152.

community had one “woman” but that some had more and that kings had thirteen to fourteen, Barlow explained that men “take vii ot viij wyves and whersoever thei go the wyfes go with them and carie ther children and all that thei have” and that “when the man diethe his nect brother shal inherit all his wives.”⁵⁴ Barlow’s account of the “grete generation of indies called guaranies” who lived “ffrom sent Salvador up the river of parana” is limited to a description of how they fattened and then ritually slaughtered their prisoners-of-war, before eating them.⁵⁵ Although he does not provide a distinct location, by following the route of Cabot’s party it seems that Barlow is describing an area inland, due west from where Staden was captured and held (Fig.1).

Although cannibalism is an integral part of Staden’s experiences in Book I, the detailed description of the Tupí cannibal ritual appears in chapter 29 of Book II in which Staden provides an “account of the manners and customs of the Tuppín Inbas.”⁵⁶ In this ethnographic section, Staden’s description is unaccompanied by his reactions to it. Barlow’s description is similarly disembodied, although he signalled his disgust clearly with the margin note “Guaranys wikked people”, as shown in Fig. 1.⁵⁷

Barlow was not simply fascinated by the idea that the Guaranis practiced cannibalism, but also that the women cosseted their captives before joining in the ceremonial slaughter and subsequent feast. Barlow described this behaviour in detail:

... and if ther prisoner be not fatte he wil kepe him till suche tyme as he be in good plight, and in this meane tyme thei wyl cherishe and fede him with the best meates that he can get and one of his wives shall have the keeping of him, and at all times that he lysteth he shall take his pleasure of her, but every night he shalbe tyed and watched for steling awaie. And every dai she wil paint him and dresse as though he ware her owne husbond and wil lede him with a corde made of coton tied about his necke from place to place, accompanied with many daunsyng and syngyng, and making as moche pleasure as thei can, and he likewise wt them, till suche tyme that thei do entende to kyll him.⁵⁸

Barlow describes this without comment. He did not have to. The fact that the women domesticated the men and had a preeminent role in the ritual offered a shocking

⁵⁴ Ibid.; Staden, *Warhaftige Historia*, 122.

⁵⁵ Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 157.

⁵⁶ Staden, *Warhaftige Historia*, 105.

⁵⁷ Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 157.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

subversion of conventional gender roles. By choosing to focus on the sexual aspect of the women's behaviour, Barlow was adhering to a tradition of highlighting difference through behaviour Europeans regarded as deviant.⁵⁹ He continued, describing how on the day of the ceremony, "all ther kyndred" make preparations, singing, dancing and decorating the prisoner with paint and feathers. Pots are painted and filled with water, cords are plaited and a special drink is brewed for the prisoner:

and the daie that thei wil kyll him he shalbe brought into a fayer place wch shalbe prepared for him and about his necke he shal have a color made of cotton and to that color shalbe tied v or vj cordes and round about the place shalbe set erthen pottes paynted and full of water and then the aunciest of the kynred shal take every one of them a corde that is so tyed about his necke and so lede him into the myddis of the place and stonde rounde about him wt ther cordes in ther handes, and then ther cometh in the owners sone or a ladde of his kynne, paynted and dressed all in fethres, and bringeth in his hand a sworde of hard tymbre like unto brasyl which is proportioned like a palmar or custos that thei use in grammar-scoles, which likewise is painted and dressed wt fethers.⁶⁰

Such a club is pictured in Fig. 2, an image made for the first edition of Staden's work.

Barlow described how the prisoner seems calm until he "seeth him there, and all the pottes prepared for him, then he begynneth to rave and runneth about", constrained by the cords, "til he be so wried that he falleth downe, then the ladd wt his sworde of tree manglyth him in the hede til the brayne falleth out." Once they have "cut and tere him to pieces and put him in the pottes to seethe" and "have eten him up everie morcelle", the young men were initiated. Barlow noted that "the boye that dyde kille him" received a tattoo on his back as part of a coming-of-age ceremony, "Fo' here thei be not regarded til he hathe kyiled his enemye, and the more in nombre he kylleth themore he is esteemed, and for every one that he kylleth he shal have a strike made on his backe as before" (Fig. 2).⁶¹

Like Staden, Barlow uses the word "feast" to describe the ceremony.⁶² In both English and German, this word suggests a shared celebration. Both men's accounts are very similar in most respects, however, although Staden's account does focus

⁵⁹ Whitehead and Harbsmeier, *Hans Staden's True History*, lxvi; Jennifer L. Morgan, "'Some could suckle over their shoulder': Male Travellers, Female bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1770," in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54.1 (1997): 170; Dalton, "Fashioning New Worlds from Old Worlds," 96.

⁶⁰ Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 158.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 158-59.

⁶² Staden uses the word "fest."

more on the violence inherent in each step of the process. This occurs in both Book I and Book II. Staden explains “enemies eat each other” not because they are hungry “but from great hate and jealousy” and that, “if they capture someone who is badly wounded, they immediately kill him, roast him, and carry home the meat.” While Barlow explains how the women “cherishe” the prisoner, Staden reports that when they are first brought into the village, “these are first beaten by the women and the children.” Staden also adds the extra detail that should the woman become pregnant by her prisoner, “they raise the child until it is grown. If it then enters their minds (to do so), they kill and eat the child.” Moreover, while Barlow is circumspect when it comes to describing the butchering and eating of the corpse, Staden describes how the women prepare and flay the corpse before the men cut it up. Staden also goes into detail regarding which parts of the corpse are given to the children and how the women make a broth from the entrails.⁶³ Staden’s extra details may have been a result of having lived with the Tupís for an extended period of time, and observing the extended ritual at close hand, or because his community’s ritual contained different or additional elements to that of the Guaraní Barlow described.

Significance of Roger Barlow’s Account

Having lived and worked in the port of Seville, Barlow is likely to have seen maps decorated with scenes of cannibalism and would have heard of Vespucci’s descriptions of cannibal feasts, even if he had not read them himself. He would have noted that naked women were active participants in cannibal feasts in the woodcuts made to illustrate the 1509 German edition of Vespucci’s Letters describing the east coast of South America, a factor thought to be particularly shocking to Europeans.⁶⁴ However, although lust, monstrosity or cannibalism were conventional long-standing

⁶³ Staden, *Warhaftige Historia*, 128, 131, 137.

⁶⁴ Illustrations of monstrous creatures and cannibalism featured in descriptions of the New World from Mandeville onwards. The earliest extant map on which an indigenous American appears is the “Kunstmann II Map” (1502-1506) in the Bavarian State Library in Munich. It shows a European being roasted on a spit. In Lorenz Fries’s map, *Claudii Ptolemaei Alexandrini Mathematicor[um] Principis Opus Geographi[a]e Noviter Castigatu[m] & Emaculatu[m]*, printed by Johann Grüninger in Strasbourg in 1522, cannibalism is depicted in relation to *Terra Nova*. Similar images, attributed to Hans Holbein, also feature in the Grynaeus maps of 1532 and 1537, which Barlow may have heard of prior to composing his *Summe*. It is now disputed as to whether Amerigo Vespucci actually wrote the *Mundus Novus* (August 1504), *Quatuor Navigationes* (September 1504) or the letters, such as the one to Piero Soderini. In one woodcut illustrating Vespucci’s disputed letters, three naked women are reaching out to a European man and holding his attention while a fourth stands behind him with a cudgel, that looks like a human thigh, raised above her head. In another a woman holding her breast watches a man cut up a human arm and leg while a man in the foreground urinates.

European labels for people remote and different from themselves there is a major difference between Barlow's description of cannibalism and other textual and visual depictions circulating in the first half of the sixteenth century.⁶⁵ While they depicted cannibalism as a habitual, yet haphazard activity, in keeping with mythical depictions such as Mandeville's where the people of Lamary "eat more gladly of a man's flesh than any other flesh", Barlow described an occasional, ordered ritual where the victim is fed and cared for before being dispatched.⁶⁶

Barlow's description of such a 'feast' is not simply the first description of such an event in English; it is the first detailed description by a European to have survived. While Neil Whitehead refers to earlier descriptions of the Tupís by Amerigo Vespucci and Pedro Vaz de Caminha, he notes that neither provided much detail in their written reports.⁶⁷ Antonio Pigafetta, a Lombard gentleman-volunteer, who sailed with Magellan, did describe the clothing, houses, hammocks, and boats of the Tupinamba he saw on the coast of Brazil, however, he mentioned only in passing that they practiced cannibalism. Pigafetta reported "they eat the flesh of their enemies, not because it is good, but because it is a certain established custom"; however, he did not expand on the nature of that "established custom."⁶⁸ In his long letter to his father from the Rio de la Plata, Louis Ramírez, Cabot's page, included a very brief description of the "Gaurenis" who, he said, inhabited a wide area and were hostile to the other tribes, although they were friendly to his party. He summed them up with the words: "they are a treacherous people, everything they do is by treachery." Ramírez did not describe any cannibalistic rituals, simply mentioning that they ate human flesh.⁶⁹ Oviedo consulted Alonso de Santa Cruz and other members of Cabot's expedition, but he did not record any details of such a ritual in his *La Historia General de las Indias*.⁷⁰ Indeed, if anybody else on Cabot's voyage recorded such an incident, their descriptions have not survived.

In the late 1920s when she began transcribing Barlow's manuscript, Eva Germaine Remington Taylor did not comment on the fact that Barlow's description

⁶⁵ Patricia Seed, "'Are These not Also Men?': The Indians' Humanity and Capacity for Spanish Civilisation," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 25.3 (1993): 633.

⁶⁶ Dalton, "Fashioning New Worlds from Old Worlds," 97-98.

⁶⁷ Whitehead and Harbsmeier, *Hans Staden's True History*, xxii.

⁶⁸ Antonio Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage Around the World*, ed. and trans. J. A. Robertson (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1906) vol. 1; Parry, *The Discovery of South America*, 131.

⁶⁹ Ramírez in Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Cabot*, vol. 1, 449.

⁷⁰ Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *La Historia General de las Indias* (Seville: Cromberger, 1535); Taylor, Roger Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 156, n. 4.

pre-dated Staden's, concluding simply that "the wealth of detail with which these ceremonies are described makes it certain that Roger Barlow, like Hans Staden, was an eye-witness of a cannibal feast."⁷¹ Barlow had spent time with Guaraní guides in Guaraní territory and certainly had the opportunity to witness a "cannibal feast." However, while Staden writes in the first person in Book I of *Warhaftige Historia*, thus placing himself at the scene of the "cannibal feast", Barlow's description is in the third person. This means that, while it can be argued that Barlow avoided the first person because he was writing a cosmography rather than a travel account, we cannot be sure that he did witness such a "feast". The "wealth of detail" in Barlow's story could have been the result of reading a now lost text or listening to stories from an indigenous source or from a European, like Francisco del Puerto, who had lived with the Guaranís.

Although Roger Barlow was an Englishman, he played a part in Spain's colonizing venture and, because reports of cannibalism and idolatry were used to justify conquest and slavery, his description must be met with some degree of scepticism.⁷² Indeed, as Stephen Greenblatt points out, there is only one thing one can be certain of regarding European descriptions of the New World during this period, and that is that they "tell us something about the European practice of representation."⁷³ Unlike Staden, Barlow did not embed his account of cannibalism in a text that be read as a straightforward captivity narrative or even as an allegory (Staden's continual refusal to accept his fate and his ultimate escape from the Tupinambá being seen as a tale of redemption).⁷⁴ Barlow included the description of Tupí-Guaraní practices to showcase his knowledge and establish his authenticity as a man of the world. Yet, his emphasis on sexual practices and cannibalism suggests that he set out to emphasise the otherness of the New World and, like Staden, to titillate his reader. Enciso, whose cosmography provided the basis for "A Brief Somme of Geographia", did not write about the everyday lives of the Africans he encountered because this involved cooking food, caring for children and other activities familiar to

⁷¹ Taylor, in Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 159, n. 1.

⁷² Laurence R. Goldman, *The Anthropology of Cannibalism* (Westport: Praeger/ Greenwood, 1999), 37. Pope Innocent IV proclaimed a doctrine defining cannibalism as a sin that merited punishment by Christians through the use of arms and in 1503 Queen Isabella of Spain declared that Spaniards could legally enslave American Indians who were cannibals.

⁷³ Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 7.

⁷⁴ Neil Whitehead, "Carib Cannibalism: The Historical Evidence," *Journal de la Societe des Americanistes* 70 (1984): 69–88.

Europeans. He was not interested in engendering empathy, but in pointing out how different these people were. Enciso was engaged in a construction of ‘otherness’ that Barlow embraced and extended as he translated the Spaniard’s text. When Barlow inserted parts of Ludovico di Varthema’s 1510 description of Calicut on the Malabar Coast into Enciso’s text, he also included a scene from Varthema’s section on Tarnassari in modern Burma. Thus, Barlow intensified the impression of violence and sexual aberration in Calicut by allowing his readers to assume that the scene of *sutee* had been witnessed there rather than Tarnassari. The fact that Barlow was prepared to manipulate Varthema’s text in order to optimize the otherness of the citizens of Calicut and increase the drama of his own work, alerts us to the fact that he would surely have been prepared to package his presentation of the New World similarly. Even if Barlow had seen the cannibal ritual first-hand, his description is likely to have been impacted by what Anthony Pagden calls the “principal of attachment.” This would have meant that Barlow would have unconsciously connected what he saw or heard to a European ritual he was familiar with – such as a religious ceremony or public execution – and thus misinterpreted the scene. Luciana Villas Bôas explains that such reattachment is especially relevant to travel narratives written during the period of intense religious reform around the middle of the sixteenth century. H. E. Martel provides a further explanation, suggesting that when Europeans found themselves dependent on Amerindians they had subjugated, they “feared retaliation for their trespasses.” Interpreted this way, Barlow’s description could be read as an attempt to displace the guilt arising from his party’s ferocity towards / reliance on the Guaraní by exaggerating the violence they had encountered (or imagined encountering).⁷⁵ Whether or not these theories apply to Barlow, what we can be sure of is that he is likely to have used inventive description to bridge the gaps between what he had seen or heard, and what he understood, and what he knew his readers expected.⁷⁶

Although we may not be able to achieve any coherent understanding of sixteenth-century Tupí-Guaraní communities through the prism of texts such as

⁷⁵ Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 17-24; Luciana Villas Bôas, “The Anatomy of Cannibalism: Religious Vocabulary and Ethnographic Writing in the Sixteenth Century,” *Studies in Travel Writing* 12/1 (2008): 7-29; H. E. Martel, “Hans Staden’s Captive Soul: Identity, Imperialism, and Rumours of Cannibalism in Sixteenth-Century Brazil,” *Journal of World History* 17.1 (2006): 51-69.

⁷⁶ Dalton, “Fashioning New Worlds from Old Worlds,” 92-93.

Barlow's, we can speculate on the impact Europeans were having by considering Barlow's descriptions within the context of Cabot's voyage.⁷⁷ This was not a pristine encounter – from the point of view of either the indigenous population or the European interlopers. Whitehead and Harbsmeier have pointed out that that by the time Staden was captured, Tupí-Guaraní speaking communities were desperately trying to negotiate the ever-shifting parameters between the Portuguese, Spanish, German and French, as well as threats from other Amerindian groups and the general pressure of European domination.⁷⁸ Although there were far fewer Europeans on the continent when Cabot's party travelled up the Paraná, witness statements associated with the voyage indicate a complex scenario. Cabot's party encountered European castaways who had survived due to support by Tupí-Guaraní communities. The sophistication and reach of the communication networks covering the east coast of the continent is indicated by the fact that the Portuguese in Pernambuco knew there were Europeans living hundreds of miles south. The reports of Cabot's crew suggest that indigenous communities near the coast had already aligned themselves with one group of Europeans against another – sometimes in order to maximize their chances of beating an old enemy, other times as a survival mechanism.

The hunting trips of Barlow's half-starved companions, combined with the spread of European diseases, would have had an immediate detrimental impact on local communities – especially upriver where the forest gave way to scrub.⁷⁹ Indeed, Barlow reported that the communities of “carandis, tymbus and chanais” on the north bank of the Paraná were enemies of the Tupis. He explained that although they “do not ete one another as dothe the guaranies”, they “cut of ther hedys” of the guaranties and mount them on poles along the riverside.⁸⁰ Escalations in hostility between local groups, generally brought about by food shortages, would have been exacerbated by the arrival of Cabot's party. Seen in this context, the intention behind the cannibal “feast” Barlow describes may have been a form of resistance intended to bind the group, intimidate head-stealing enemies, safeguard land claims or to impress the

⁷⁷ See Verdesio, *Forgotten Conquests*, 1-13.

⁷⁸ Whitehead and Harbsmeier, introduction, in *Hans Staden's True History*, lxvi, lxxviii; Ganson, *The Guarani under Spanish Rule*, 22-23.

⁷⁹ Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 162; Dalton, *Merchants and Explorers*.

⁸⁰ Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 159; Taylor, in Barlow, *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, 159, n. 3. Note that I am not suggesting that cannibalism was carried out in order to supplement diet but as a symbolic act.

growing numbers of European interlopers – signalling resistance to threats of encroaching domination.⁸¹

The Guaraní's reputation as cannibals was extended and entrenched by the networks of exchange that led Barlow to encounter their ritual and then record the event himself. Barlow's report would have been communicated beyond the confines of the manuscript he presented to Henry VIII, to his trading circle in Spain and England. It may have been the first detailed report of such a Tupí-Guaraní ritual to reach Spain and certainly would have been the first to reach England. It would have been instrumental in establishing, maintaining and enriching the emerging trope of the New World cannibal and should be considered an important intervention into the debate surrounding early European reports of cannibalism, as well as European encounters with Tupí-Guaraní communities in general.

Illustrations

Fig. 1. Roger Barlow, "A Brief Somme of Geographia", folio 87 verso, The British Library, UK (© British Library Board, 18 B xxviii).

Fig. 2. Ritual Killing of Captive, woodcut, from Hans Staden, *Warhaftige Historia und Beschreibung eyner Landtschafft der wilden, nacketen grimmigen Menschfresser Leuthen in der Newenwelt America gelegen*, Marburg, 1557 (courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University).

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⁸¹ Whitehead and Harbsmeier, introduction, in *Hans Staden's True History*, lxvi, lxviii; Ganson, *The Guaraní under Spanish Rule*, 22-23. Ganson suggests that the Tupí-Guaraní believed that consuming the flesh of their captives "meant they imbued their power."

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