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## “SUB HERILI VENDITUR HASTA”: AN EARLY EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY JUSTIFICATION OF THE SLAVE TRADE BY A COLONIAL POET

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On 10 July 1713 the University of Oxford held a formal celebration in the Sheldonian Theatre of the Peace of Utrecht, which brought to an end the long War of the Spanish Succession between Britain, France, and their respective allies. Members of the university recited speeches and poems, which were, as custom required, delivered in Latin, and later published in a handsome commemorative volume.<sup>1</sup> Both Oxford and Cambridge held such ceremonies at irregular intervals on occasions of national or university rejoicing or mourning, and the resulting publications (which continued to appear until the 1760s) offered a significant outlet to writers of Latin verse.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Academiae Oxoniensis Comitium Philologica In Theatro Sheldoniano Decimo Die Julii A.D. 1713. Celebrata: In Honorem Serenissimae Reginae Annae Pacificae* (Oxford, 1713). The volume is unpaginated. Authors' names are not printed with their poems, but are given in the “Ordo Comitiorum Philologicorum” at the beginning of the volume. The work is available in Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO). Two of the most important aspects of the Peace of Utrecht were the treaty between England and France (31 March 1713), and that between England and Spain (13 July 1713).

<sup>2</sup> See Leicester Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae: A History of Anglo-Latin Poetry 1500–1925* (New York, 1940), esp. 99–102; David K. Money, *The English Horace: Anthony Alsop and the Tradition of British Latin Verse* (Oxford, 1998), chap. 9, “A Multitude of Muses” (229–249), which includes (237–238) a brief discussion of the poems by Alleyn and Maynard treated below by the present writer. As Money points out, the “vast majority” of the poems in these anthologies were in Latin; there were often some in Greek, and occasional contributions in more recondite languages such as Hebrew or Arabic, while the proportion of those in English increased over the period. Money quotes lines 69–73 of Maynard's poem, but prints *sapore* in line 73, where the copies I have seen (including that used by ECCO) have *Sopore*. As a result, my translation of these lines differs somewhat from that given by Money.

The war had been fought not just in Europe, but also in the European colonies in the Americas. Oxford's celebration of the peace included two Latin poems by colonial poets, both of them from Barbados, a Caribbean island which had been an English (and, after the 1707 Act of Union, British) colony since 1627. One of them, John Alleyn (1695–1730), of Magdalen College, offered a poem in Latin hexameters called "Commercium ad Mare Australe" ("The South Sea Trade").<sup>3</sup> This was a wonderfully detailed fantasy of South American natives (Amerindians, not Spanish colonists) hastening to load British ships with gold and silver as a result of the Peace. What Alleyn did not even mention was one of the main reasons why the Peace of Utrecht was enormously popular in Britain. Not only did it put an end to a war which had lasted since 1701, but it did so on terms which were regarded as advantageous to Britain. One of the main provisions was that Britain secured what was referred to as the Asiento: British subjects were to enjoy for thirty years the right to sell 4,800 African slaves a year in the Spanish American colonies, and to send each year one ship of 500 tons, carrying manufactured goods for sale at the fairs of Porto Bello and Vera Cruz. This was regarded as so valuable a privilege that it led to the orgy of speculation which culminated in the notorious South Sea Bubble of 1720. It was the slave trade, and the trade in British manufactured goods, which were expected to give Britain material rewards from the Peace, not the mines of South America (or at least not directly, though these would be providing the coin and bullion used to pay for purchases made from British merchants).<sup>4</sup>

This was the starting point for another poem in the 1713 Oxford volume, "Asiento, sive Commercium Hispanicum" ("The Assiento, or Spanish Trade")<sup>5</sup>, by John Maynard, of St. John's College. Born in 1692, Maynard was the son of Samuel Maynard of Barbados and had matriculated at Oxford in 1710, and was admitted

<sup>3</sup> Biographical and genealogical information about Alleyn or Alleyne (the more usual spelling of the name) and his family may be found in a series of articles by Louise R. Allen, titled "Alleyne of Barbados," which were originally published in the *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society* and collected in James C. Brandow, comp., *Genealogies of Barbados Families* (Baltimore, 1983), 3–107. See also Joseph Foster, ed., *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford 1500–1714*, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1891–1892), 1: 17; H. A. C. Sturges, comp., *Register of Admissions to the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple: From the Fifteenth Century to the Year 1944*, 3 vols. (London, 1949), 1: 266. Alleyn's poem and a number of others from the same collection (not including that by Maynard discussed below) were reprinted in *Musarum Anglicanarum Analecta: sive Poëmatum quorundam melioris notae, seu hactenus Ineditorum, seu sparsim Editorum*, Vol. 3 (Oxford, 1717), 28–31. This was an unauthorised continuation, by a different publisher, of what had become a standard anthology and, unlike the two earlier volumes, was never reprinted.

<sup>4</sup> The article "Asiento, or Assiento" in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 vols. (Cambridge, 1910–1911) gives a good brief summary.

<sup>5</sup> A text and a translation by the present writer are given below.

to the Inner Temple the same year. He had previously (1706–1709) been educated at the Merchant Taylors' School in London.<sup>6</sup> Described as a *carmen heroicum*, his poem consists of seventy-nine hexameter lines. The vocabulary is classical with two small exceptions: Maynard uses *fusim* instead of the classical *fuse* (line 24). *Angliacus* (line 71) as an adjective meaning "English" can be found in other writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, though dictionaries of the period, such as those by Elisha Coles and Robert Ainsworth, suggest that *Anglus*, *Anglicus*, and *Anglicanus* were more usual forms.<sup>7</sup> The versification is competent, and the

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses . . . 1500–1714* (Oxford, 1891), 3: 995; E. P. Hart, ed., *Merchant Taylors' School Register 1561–1934*, 2 vols. (London, 1936; unpaginated, but arranged in alphabetical order). The Merchant Taylors' register gives his date of birth as 4 May 1692 and describes him as "s. of Samuel, of Barbadoes," while Foster says "s. Sam., of Barbados (town). gent." The connection with the colony is clear enough, but while these statements may suggest that John Maynard was born in Barbados, they are perhaps ambiguous. It has not been possible to trace his baptism in the surviving records in Barbados, though this is not conclusive, as baptismal records for several of the island's parishes are not extant for the seventeenth century. Records in Barbados do include the will of Sarah Hurst, who died 14 August 1710, which lists her grandsons as Alex, Samuel, John, and William Maynard, and also mentions her son-in-law Lt. Col. Samuel Maynard and her daughter Mary Maynard. A Samuel Maynard died in St. Peter, Barbados, 11 April 1722, but his will mentions his sons William and Samuel only. If the two Samuel Maynards are the same person, and the John Maynard who was the grandson of Sarah Hurst was also the author of the Oxford poem (which fits the dates but is by no means certain), this suggests that the author of the poem may have died sometime between its public recitation in 1713 and the year 1722. A few other John Maynards can be found in the Barbados records, but the dates make it seem unlikely that they are the same person. (I am grateful to Sharon Meredith for checking material in the Barbados Department of Archives on my behalf.) The Oxford John Maynard would appear not to have taken a degree, and no one of the name is mentioned in the 1715 census of Barbados, which gives a very detailed listing of the island's white population: printed in David L. Kent, *Barbados and America* (Arlington, VA, 1980), 93–305. There is still a district in Barbados called Maynard's (in the parish of St. Peter), and Maynard is a relatively common name in the island.

<sup>7</sup> For example, the phrase "Delitiæ Angliacæ gentis," in Rob. Grovius, A. M. Cantab., "Carmen de Sanguinis Circuitu, a Gulielmo Harvæo Anglo, Primum Invento," in *Musarum Anglicanarum Analecta: sive, Poemata quædam melioris notæ, seu hactenus Inedita, seu sparsim Edita, in unum Volumen congesta* (Oxford, 1692), 144–164, at 160 (this is probably the Robert Grove of St. John's College, Cambridge, who died in 1696). See the entries under "English" in the English-Latin sections of Elisha Coles, *A Dictionary, English-Latin, and Latin-English; containing All Things necessary for the Translating of either Language into other [sic]*, 4th ed. (London, 1699), and Robert Ainsworth, *Thesaurus Linguae Latinæ compendarius: or, A Compendious Dictionary of the Latin Tongue: Designed for the Use of the British Nations*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London, 1746). The only reference I can find for *fusim* (as an occasional alternative to *fuse*) is in an Appendix of words included in other dictionaries without

somewhat high-flown style (such as the elaborate circumlocution for "cannon" in lines 3–4) and the occasional use of classical tags<sup>8</sup> are no more than what is to be expected of Neo-Latin verse of the period, and of the kind of poem included in the university anthologies in particular. This is not particularly surprising, as Maynard might well have begun his study of Latin in Barbados (where there is evidence of the language being taught from 1676, if not earlier)<sup>9</sup> and would certainly have studied Latin verse composition at Merchant Taylors'.

Maynard's poem is interesting, not for any peculiarities of diction or versification, but for three main reasons. First, it is an early example of poetry by a writer from one of the British Caribbean colonies. The earliest examples of published poetry by an author demonstrably born in such a colony are probably those (in both Latin and English) by Christopher Codrington, which appeared in the 1680s and 1690s. Significant numbers of the children of the colonial upper classes were educated in Britain during the eighteenth century, at a time when education not only consisted to a large extent of the study of classical literature, but also placed a heavy emphasis on Latin verse composition. At least half a dozen eighteenth-century Caribbean writers of Latin verse from this sort of background can be identified. While the modern Barbadian historian and poet Kamau Brathwaite lists only nine items (all in English) by five authors before 1800 in his checklist of Barbados poetry, there were at least four seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Barbadians who produced published verse in Latin. The bibliography of early poets in both English and Latin from Barbados and other British Caribbean colonies could certainly be extended by searching further potential sources, particularly periodical publications and school and university anthologies of the period. While such a source would very likely produce more verse written in English than in Latin, particularly in the second half of the eighteenth century, it is clear that, while Latin verse has been neglected by modern students of Caribbean literature, it is a potentially important source for the thought of the region's élite. It is also worth reading for the background it provides to the work of the only black writer from the eighteenth-century British Caribbean, the Jamaican writer of Latin verse, Francis Williams.<sup>10</sup>

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proper authority given in James Bailey's edition of the *Totius Latinitatis Lexicon* of Facciolati and Forcellini, 2 vols. (London, 1828).

<sup>8</sup> Apart from the Ovidian *Exilio felix* (for which see below), *Cortice pingui* (line 66) is taken from Persius 1. 96, and *Arboris Antro* (line 74) from Vergil, *Georgics*, 4. 44. There are also verbal resemblances which do not amount to direct quotation, such as the echo in Maynard's line 69 of the opening of Vergil's first Eclogue. There may be other examples which have escaped the present writer.

<sup>9</sup> Carl and Roberta Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line: The English in the Caribbean 1624–1690* (New York, 1972), 396–397.

<sup>10</sup> On Codrington, see Appendix B, "Literary Remains and References", in Vincent T. Harlow, *Christopher Codrington 1668–1710* (Oxford, 1928; facs. repr. London,

Secondly, while an enormous amount of verse on the subject of slavery, of varying aesthetic merit, was produced in Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (and has been the subject of recent studies and anthologies),<sup>11</sup> most of this was the result of the great debate about the slave trade and slavery which became prominent only in the 1770s and 1780s. Maynard's is an unusually early example of a poem on slavery, and belongs to a period which took the slave trade for granted, in the manner of Defoe's comment from the same year: "No African Trade, no Negroes, No Negroes, No Sugar; no Sugar no Islands, no Islands no Continent, no Continent no Trade; that is to say farewell to your American Trade, your West Indian Trade."<sup>12</sup> When slavery does make its appearance in British literary works in the earlier part of the eighteenth century, it is often mere background, as in the treatments of the Inkle and Yarico story anthologised and analysed by Felsenstein, which are more about ingratitude or

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1990), 221–241. Not included by Harlow is Codrington's short Latin poem in *Academia Oxoniensis Gratulatio Pro Exoptato Serenissimi Regis Gulielmi ex Hibernia Reditu* (Oxford, 1690). Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia, 2000), 19–27, discusses the presence of Caribbean and North American students (particularly the former) in British schools and universities in the eighteenth century. The bibliographies by Edward Kamau Brathwaite (*Barbados Poetry ?1661–1979: A Checklist: Books, Pamphlets, Broadsheets* [Kingston, Jamaica, 1979]; and *Jamaica Poetry: A Checklist: Books, Pamphlets, Broadsheets 1686–1978* [Kingston, Jamaica, 1979]) cover only separately-published items, and do not mention any verse in Latin, although Brathwaite does note the Latin medical dissertation (Edinburgh, 1820) by the Barbadian poet Matthew Chapman. On Francis Williams and some other Caribbean writers of Latin verse, see John Gilmore, "The British Empire and the Neo-Latin Tradition: The Case of Francis Williams," in *Classics and Colonialism*, ed. Barbara Goff (London, 2005), 92–106. Some idea of the quantity of additional material at least potentially available is given by *Caribbeana*, a two-volume anthology published in London, 1741, and consisting of material originally published in the newspaper the *Barbados Gazette* in the previous decade (editorship of the anthology is usually credited to Samuel Keimer, the printer and publisher of the newspaper, though this is far from certain). Some of this material has been reprinted and analysed in Bill Overton, ed., *A Letter to My Love: Love Poems by Women First Published in the Barbados Gazette, 1731–1737* (Newark, DE, 2001). Overton (19) notes the presence of "no fewer than 140 items of original verse" in *Caribbeana*, though he indicates that, even if first printed in the *Barbados Gazette*, a large proportion of this total was not of local authorship. Overton mentions in passing (20) the presence of five poems in Latin, but, again, at least four of these were not of local authorship.

<sup>11</sup> For example, James G. Basker, ed., *Amazing Grace: An Anthology of Poems about Slavery, 1660–1810* (New Haven, 2002); and Marcus Wood, ed., *The Poetry of Slavery: An Anglo-American Anthology, 1764–1865* (Oxford, 2003).

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Anthony Pagden, review of Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: The British Struggle to Abolish Slavery*, in *Times Literary Supplement*, 21 October 2005: 14–15.

gender relations than about slavery as such.<sup>13</sup> One of the few detailed descriptions of British colonial slavery in literary form is James Grainger's relatively late "West-India georgic," *The Sugar-Cane* (1764), which still treats the existence of slavery and the slave trade as a fact of life.<sup>14</sup>

We should not look to Maynard for factual information about either Africa or colonial slavery—his poem is as much a fantasy as Alleyn's. Nor is there anything unusual about the ideas which he puts forward, which are commonplaces of the racist and Eurocentric thinking of élites in both Britain and the British colonies in the period. However, and this is the third reason why his poem is worth our attention, the skill with which Maynard expresses these ideas is a forceful reminder that genuine artistic talent can be made to serve morally repugnant ends, or alternatively, that morally repugnant material can be given a form which possesses artistic merit. While this will not be a new argument to anyone familiar with, say, the well-known controversies over the work of Richard Wagner or Leni Riefenstahl, it is a point worth making in the context of Caribbean literature, as there are still those who feel that anything written by slave-owners or supporters of slavery is not merely morally tainted, but *ipso facto* devoid of any possibility of literary merit or interest. While this attitude is understandable, a refusal to even look at such works deprives us of a considerable body of material which can help to further our understanding of the complexities of Caribbean slave societies.<sup>15</sup>

One important social and cultural function of Latin in eighteenth-century Britain was that, as Bradner puts it, "the art of composing verses in that language was a sign that the writer was an educated gentleman." Maynard, I would suggest, goes beyond this. Not only does he use his verse to express racist points of view, but he can also be read as making the very act of writing verse in Latin into a display of what he believes to be racial as well cultural superiority over people, particularly African people, who did not practise this art.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Frank Felsenstein, ed., *English Trader, Indian Maid: Representing Gender, Race and Slavery in the New World: An Inkle and Yarico Reader* (Baltimore, 1999). Yarico was an Amerindian (or, in some versions of the story, African) woman betrayed and sold into slavery in Barbados by the treacherous Englishman, Inkle, whose life she had saved. The story became enormously popular in the eighteenth century, and there are versions in every major European language (including Latin).

<sup>14</sup> For an edition with detailed introduction and commentary, see John Gilmore, *The Poetics of Empire: A Study of James Grainger's The Sugar-Cane* (London, 2000).

<sup>15</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this, see John Gilmore, "The Colonial Classic in a Postcolonial World: Re-evaluating the Caribbean Canon," in *Postcolonial Studies: Changing Perceptions*, ed. Oriana Palusci, Labirinti 97 (Trento, 2006), 199–208.

<sup>16</sup> Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae*, 228. For a black Caribbean writer like Francis Williams to compose verse in Latin was of course a challenge to this point of view, and roused Edward Long (a notorious proponent of white superiority) to furious efforts to belittle the achievements of Williams: see Gilmore, "The British Empire and the Neo-Latin Tradition."

Maynard justifies the slave trade because—so he claims—it rescues its victims from a barbarous Africa given over to cannibalism and human sacrifice. For slaves in the American colonies, life is an earthly paradise in comparison with what they would have had to endure if they had remained in their native continent.<sup>17</sup> The poem opens (lines 1–8) with a description of the blessings of peace restored, seen very much in commercial terms. Like a number of well-known writers in English, who saw such things as suitable subject matter for poetry, Maynard clearly sees no need to be bashful about what Grainger was later to call "honest purposes of gain" (*The Sugar-Cane*, Book 3, line 319).<sup>18</sup> We then move to a description of a land beyond the "dusky Garamantes" (*fuscos . . . Garamantas*), a people mentioned in classical Latin literature as living in the interior of Africa, that is, somewhere to the south of the Roman-occupied Mediterranean coast of the continent. Although Maynard's description of British relations with Africa mentions only trade, not the establishment of any sort of colony or settlement, his use of the form *Garamantas* rather than *Garamantes* might have reminded at least some of his readers of the passage of hyperbolic prophecy in Vergil's *Aeneid* (6.794–795) where Augustus is envisaged as extending his empire into Africa and India, and thus suggested the expansion of the British Empire (which did indeed make significant territorial gains as a result of the Peace of Utrecht). The mention (line 10) of flying fish and of storms which, taken together with the flying fish, sound like Atlantic hurricanes, help to particularize the setting as the west coast of sub-Saharan Africa, the main source for the transatlantic slave trade, and this is confirmed by the later reference to the River Niger (line 32). This is perhaps the first literary reference by a Barbadian writer to the flying fish, which was a popular item of diet in Barbados at least by the middle of the eighteenth century and has long been regarded as the island's national dish.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> One suggestion which Maynard does not make is that the enslaved would benefit from being taken to lands where they could hear the Christian Gospel. While this became a stock argument among defenders of the slave trade later in the eighteenth century, in Maynard's time very little effort was made to Christianize the slaves in the British colonies.

<sup>18</sup> Compare the penultimate line of Book III of Dyer's *The Fleece* (first published 1757): "What bales, what wealth, what industry, what fleets!" in John Dyer, *Poems* (London, 1770), 154.

<sup>19</sup> Griffith Hughes, *The Natural History of Barbados* (London, 1750), 302–304. The English Jesuit Andrew White encountered *pisces volantes* on his voyage across the Atlantic in 1633, but does not mention them in his brief description of Barbados: *Voyage to Maryland (1633) / Relatio Itineris in Marilandiam: Original Latin Narrative of Andrew White, S.J.*, trans. and ed. Barbara Lawatsch-Boomgaarden, with Josef IJsewijn (Wauconda, IL, 1995), 29–32, 57–63. Richard Ligon, *A True & Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes*, 2nd ed. (London, 1673), 6, mentions what he calls the "carvil," which appears to be a flying fish, but this is with reference to his voyage, and it does not appear in his descriptions of island diet.

The region possesses gold and ivory, but its inhabitants spurn more natural foodstuffs in favour of human flesh. Those captured in war are eaten, or destined to be sacrificed on a wicked (presumably because non-Christian) altar, or are sold as slaves (lines 11–18).

After a passage giving a carefully exoticized description of an African king (lines 19–25), we then move to one which would have us see British participation in the African trade in heroic terms (lines 26–32). The “Briton” dares both “seas” (*Maria*) and “perils” (*pericla*) to deliver those who would otherwise have been killed. While one would not wish to underestimate the hazards of eighteenth-century sea voyages, the claim that the shifting sands of the Sahara were potentially lethal is an irrelevance. The trans-Saharan trade, which had been of great importance from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century, was carried on by Moroccans, and by Maynard’s time this was in decline as a result of competition from the activities of British and other European traders, who went by sea to what were known as the Gold and Slave Coasts of West Africa.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, it helps to reinforce the suggestion that the fact that the coasts are “rich with gold” (*littora . . . /Auro opulenta*, lines 30–31)—both literally and metaphorically, since the same ships which would profit from the slave trade might also be buying gold and ivory—is no more than justifiable compensation for the hazards of the climate (“scorching harbours”: *tostosque . . . portus*, lines 31–32).

The actual details of how the British traders become possessed of the slaves are passed over in silence. The next scene (lines 33–38) shows us a ship, “laden with men” (*Fæta viris*), heading off for some tropical destination. This is reminiscent of Vergil’s description of the Trojan Horse as *feta armis* (*Aeneid* 2. 238),<sup>21</sup> but if this is deliberate, rather than simply the result of appropriating a metrically convenient phrase, the parallel is far from exact. The Trojan Horse was, as Vergil put it in the previous line, a *fatalis machina*, a device which was “fateful” or “deadly” to those outside it, whereas the slave ship’s victims were those carried within it. In view of Maynard’s efforts to present the slave trade in a favourable light, he may not have intended a comparison which might hint at its cost in human lives. What he does suggest is that the human cargo are far from innocent victims—their hands, too, have been steeped in fraternal blood. Now, however, they are put to better use, producing economic prosperity in what is next revealed (lines 39–46) to be the Spanish Americas. Slave labour is essential, more important than gold, and without it, Columbus’ discoveries would have been in vain. The people who command the slaves will be in a position to control the Indies and their wealth, but this may refer as much to the British suppliers of slaves as to their Spanish purchasers.

Nevertheless, the slave trade is not something which the British undertake only for their own benefit. The slave is assured that he has nothing to complain

<sup>20</sup> See E. W. Bovill, *The Golden Trade of the Moors*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1968).

<sup>21</sup> I am grateful to an anonymous reader for pointing this out.



about in changing his former masters; the lightness, and, indeed, positively enjoyable nature, of his labours are insisted on some length (lines 47–73). The conclusion (lines 74–79) compares the labour of the slaves to that of bees. Some details here are drawn from Vergil's famous description of bees (*Georgics* 4) and possibly from the relevant passage of Pliny's *Natural History* (bk. 11, chaps. 4–23). Maynard says *torpentes . . . Accersat Tinnitus Apes* ("a tinkling sound calls drowsy bees"; lines 74–75); Vergil refers to the *tinnitus* of cymbals being used to summon bees (*Georgics* 4.64), while Pliny states that bees *gaudent plausu atque tinnitu aeris* ("rejoice in the clashing and tinkling of bronze"; 11. 22, 68). Maynard's bees "pack dripping honey" (*aliae stillantia Mella / Stipant*; lines 78–79), while Vergil's "pack purest honey" in almost identical terms (*aliae purissima mella / stipant*; *Georgics* 4.163–164). Maynard refers to the *cerata Palatia* ("wax palaces"; line 79) of his bees, while Vergil's have *cerea regna* ("wax kingdoms"; *Georgics* 4.202). However, when Maynard says that the bees "decree the beginning of a new reign" (*recentis / Principium Imperii statuit*—a detail which does not appear to draw on anything in Vergil or Pliny's descriptions of bees, though there may be a hint here of the end of the *Georgics*, 4., 561–562, where Augustus decrees laws *volentis / per populos*, "to willing peoples")<sup>22</sup>, he implies that the slaves accept their own slavery. In Maynard, as in Vergil, the difference of ranks among the bees parallels similar differences in human societies, and for him slavery is merely one more rank in an established hierarchy. The general effect is to suggest that slavery is part of the natural order of things.

Maynard uses a range of terms to describe Africans. While the Garamantes are *fuscus* ("dusky"; line 9), those to the south of them are *nigros* ("black"; line 14). Their king is *obscurum* ("dark"; line 20) and his temples are *nigrantia* (again, "black", or perhaps simply "dark"; line 20). His *Majestas discolor* (line 19) may refer to the feathers with which he is adorned, in which case we could translate it as "varicolored majesty", but it may also remind us of the *discolor Indus* in Propertius (4. 3. 10), translated by Guy Lee as "the dark Indian."<sup>23</sup> His sides are *exustae* ("sunburnt"; line 21). Africans are simply *Afri* ("Africans"; line 59), but they are also called *Aethiopes* ("Ethiopians"; line 32) or *Mauri* ("Moors"; lines 36, 43, 47). The use of *Aethiopes* for black people in general is, of course, classical, but *Mauri* is more problematic, even if the English word "Moor" was similarly ambiguous, with Nathan Bailey's *Dictionary* defining it as both "a native of Mauritania in Africa" and "a Black-moor."<sup>24</sup> Later in the eighteenth century, Francis Williams referred to himself as a *Maurus*, something which Edward Long seized upon in his hostile criticism of Williams, claiming that "*Maurus* is not in classic strictness

<sup>22</sup> Again, I am grateful to an anonymous reader for drawing this to my attention.

<sup>23</sup> Propertius: *The Poems*, World's Classics (Oxford, 1996), 109.

<sup>24</sup> Nathan Bailey, *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary*, 6th ed. (London, 1733), s.v. (first published 1721).

proper Latin for a *Negroe*.”<sup>25</sup> For Maynard, however, the double meaning is useful, as it allows him to suggest (line 43) that Spanish exploitation of enslaved Africans in the Americas is in some sort of manner compensation for the long period of Moorish rule in Spain.

Referring to the African king of lines 19–25, *obscurus* also has, at least potentially, a double meaning. He is “dark”, but the word could additionally mean, as Ainsworth’s *Thesaurus* puts it, “Obscure, ignoble, of mean parentage, poor, mean, low, pitiful.” He may be a king, but the reader is not to think of African monarchs in the same way as European ones. This is reinforced by the later reference to them as *exiguos Reges* (“petty kings”; line 53), though the suggestion in the conclusion that the bees’ *pusillus / Rex* (“puny king”; lines 76–77) parallels the authority of the planter over his slaves would appear to carry a different implication. There may also be a suggestion here of the two sorts of king among Vergil’s bees (*Georgics*, 4.88–95), one “better” (*melior*) and the other “worse” (*deterior*), with the latter described as *horridus* and *inglorius*. Something of the eighteenth century’s understanding of these terms—and an idea of the hints Maynard might have received from this passage—can be gleaned from the definitions in Ainsworth’s *Thesaurus*, which include “Rough, rugged, clownish, unpleasant” for *horridus*, and “Mean, obscure, private” for *inglorius*.

Maynard uses a number of details to “other” the African king. He wears a quiver as part of his dress, even though by this date African kings and their armies were well accustomed to the use of firearms—largely supplied by British traders and manufacturers. His feather headdress was a traditional marker of the exotic for European writers, though this sort of thing was more usually associated with Amerindian peoples.<sup>26</sup> The whiteness of his other ornaments emphasizes the blackness of his person, since he wears *albentia . . . Ossa Ferarum* (“whitening bones of beasts”)<sup>27</sup> and *Dentes nivei* (“snowy teeth”) and we are also told that *pallentque Monilia Conchis* (“and his necklaces are pale with shells”). The effect is not unlike that of the well-known simile in Dyer’s poem *Grongar Hill* (1726), though perhaps rather more sinister: “The town and village, / dome and farm, / Each give each a double charm, / As pearls upon an Æthiop’s arm.”<sup>28</sup> That these are very different from the regalia of European monarchs is stressed by the sneering reference to *pretiosa Crepundia* (“precious baubles”). While the word comes from the verb *crepare*, with the meaning of to jingle or rattle, the definitions of

<sup>25</sup> Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica*, 3 vols. (London, 1774), 2: 480. Nevertheless, Ainsworth, *Thesaurus*, gives *Æthiops* and *Maurus* as the equivalents of “A negro”.

<sup>26</sup> See the descriptions of the Amerindians in Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (1688), ed. Joanna Lipking (New York, 1997), and the texts in Felsenstein, *English Trader, Indian Maid*.

<sup>27</sup> The suggestion of barbarism may have been heightened here for some readers by the fact that the phrase *albentia ossa* appears in Tacitus (*Annals* 1.61) with reference to the slaughter by the Germans of the Roman army commanded by Varus.

<sup>28</sup> Dyer, *Poems*, 14.

*crepundia* in Ainsworth's *Thesaurus* help to suggest what Maynard is implying here: "(1) *Childrens play-things, bawbles*, as bells, rattles, puppets. (2) Also *the first apparel of children*, as swath-bands and such like" (italics in original).<sup>29</sup> For Maynard, the African king (and, by extension, Africans in general) is not just different, but childish in comparison with his European counterparts, whose superiority is taken for granted. While the king is presumably intended to be taken as the person responsible for selling the slaves to the British traders, this is not explicitly stated.

Some more multiple meanings play a part in the allegations of cannibalism and human sacrifice. The victor fattens on a triumph which is described as *crudus* (line 14), which can be literally "raw" as well as both literally and metaphorically "bloody." He "brings back a sign of victory which he can eat" (line 15: *Palmanque reportat edulem*). The "palm" is, traditionally, "a sign of victory," but by describing it as edible, Maynard echoes the explicit reference to cannibalism in the immediately preceding lines (11–14). However, the expression also suggests the lofty Caribbean tree, the cabbage palm, which was sometimes cut down so that its growing tip could be boiled and served as a delicacy. If this was, as a slightly later eighteenth-century Caribbean writer put it, "the Height of Extravagancy and Luxury,"<sup>30</sup> Maynard's reference implies that eating one's prisoners of war was even more extravagant when they could be put to good use as slaves. If African temples "redden" with the blood of human sacrifice, the word *rubent* (line 16) can also mean "blush", indicating the shamefulness of the practice.

Some of Maynard's effects are achieved by omission. Not a word is said about the Middle Passage and its horrors. Since the poem is intended as a celebration of the Peace of Utrecht and the benefits of the Asiento, it is perhaps logical enough that Maynard's images of slavery in the Americas are almost entirely restricted to the Spanish colonies or to some vague and undefined setting, but this allows him to ignore the sugar plantations of the British and other colonies in the Caribbean islands. This minimizes the extent of British involvement in both the slave trade and slavery, since the Caribbean sugar colonies were far more significant as importers of slaves than the American mainland. In the decade 1698–1707, Barbados alone imported an annual average of over 4,900 slaves, or more than the annual total projected for the Asiento to the Spanish colonies.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Ainsworth's *Thesaurus*, s.v. Ainsworth quotes Pliny, *Natural History*, bk. 11, chap. 51, in support of the second definition (as does Bailey, *Totius Latinitatis Lexicon*). This is not followed by the entry in P. G. W. Glare, ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1982), which defines the phrase *in crepundiis* as "in one's earliest childhood."

<sup>30</sup> Hughes, *Natural History*, 110. The modern scientific name of the cabbage palm is *Roystonea oleracea*.

<sup>31</sup> See the figures in Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624–1713* (Chapel Hill, 1972), 234, Table 23. Some of these slaves may have been re-exported to other islands, but this does not affect the general

There is a hint of realism in Maynard's reference to mining, though this would seem more appropriate to Portuguese Brazil (compare the paper by Mariano in this volume) than to the Spanish colonies, where gold and silver mines were worked mainly by Amerindian labour. It was the Caribbean colonies, much more than those of the American mainland, which needed slave labour to survive. However, Maynard's attempt to portray the slave as *Exilio felix* (line 54), like Ovid's Cadmus (*Metamorphoses*, 3. 132)—"in his exile blest", to quote Addison's translation<sup>32</sup>—depends on a mixture of the exotic (the reference to gathering incense in lines 66–68) and classicizing references such as vines being trained on elms (line 56) or juice being trodden out of grapes (lines 68–69). These may have very little to do with Caribbean or American reality, but they allow Maynard to suggest that slavery is something sanctioned by long tradition, an integral part of that European civilization which produces Latin verses. Just as it was not to Vergil's purpose to describe how agriculture in the Italy of the first century BCE was to a large extent a matter of slaves working on *latifundia* in often grim conditions, so Maynard chooses not to say anything about those who endured the numerically and economically most important form of slavery in his day, the slaves on the sugar plantations of his own Barbados and other Caribbean islands. For them, life was, at best, an unceasing round of long days of hard labour, performed under a broiling sun, and under the eye of a driver with a whip: the whims of a sadistic master or overseer could, all too often, make it something much worse, while colonial judicial systems enforcing racist legislation could inflict punishments of horrendous cruelty at least equal to Maynard's imaginings of African barbarism.<sup>33</sup> To describe such things, however, might make Maynard's readers doubt his claim that an "unhoped-for delight" (*insperata Voluptas*) softened the labour of the New World slave (lines 56–57). The nearest Maynard gets to the sugar colonies is his picture (lines 69–73) of the English master—who certainly does not seem to fit into the earlier suggestions that the poem is describing the Spanish Americas—being fanned to sleep while he sips his lemonade under the shade of a plantain-tree.<sup>34</sup> This has a certain charm, at least from the master's

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picture. Cuba, which was to become the world's largest sugar producer in the nineteenth century, was statistically insignificant in this respect in the early eighteenth.

<sup>32</sup> From the translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by John Dryden, Joseph Addison, and others, edited by Sir Samuel Garth and first published in 1717. See the Wordsworth Classics edition, *Ovid: Metamorphoses*, with a new introduction by Garth Tissol (Ware, Hertfordshire, 1998), 76.

<sup>33</sup> E. V. Goveia, "The West Indian Slave Laws of the 18th Century," in *Chapters in Caribbean History 2* (Barbados, 1970), 7–53.

<sup>34</sup> The word *platanus* does not have its classical meaning of "a plane-tree," but refers to the plaintain (a type of banana whose fruit is normally cooked before being eaten). Andrew White's reference to *fructus platani* offered for barter by the Caribs of St. Lucia certainly means plantains, though Lawatsch-Boomgaarden, *Voyage to Maryland*, 32,

point of view (though rum-punch might have been more likely than lemonade), but the *Turba* ("crowd") with their fans are scarcely more representative of New World slavery than the incense-gatherers.

In Maynard's poem, slavery becomes something picturesque and far away. British involvement is not only economically beneficial, but positively virtuous: far from inflicting cruelty on the enslaved, it rescues them from it. It is a description which Maynard's hearers in the Sheldonian Theatre, and his later readers, would have been happy to believe. It is quite probable that some of them, or their families, were profiting directly from the slave trade or from Caribbean plantations worked by slaves. Even if Maynard had spent his childhood in Barbados, he would have been no more than fourteen when he left to be sent to school in England, and, since he may have lived in the island's capital, Bridgetown, it is possible that he had little personal knowledge of plantation slavery and that he believed his own propaganda.<sup>35</sup> This does not make it any easier for a twenty-first-century critic to view it dispassionately. However, it is perhaps a mistake to turn away in disgust: only by looking carefully at the way in which Maynard deploys his considerable literary skills, and by examining the poem in the specific context of eighteenth-century Latin verse, can we evaluate the extent to which it suggests that slavery was central to the culture of Augustan England.

Assiento, sive Commercium Hispanicum

Arma domi sileant, & solis mercibus æquor  
 Tranet onusta ratis, Belli terrore fugato  
 Lethiferos ignes, inimicaque tela relinquat,  
 Flammarumque minas, fatique volatile Ferrum.  
 Nunc juvat æstivis ultro dare Carbasa ventis,  
 Immodico fluctusque secari sole calentes:  
 Aurea Pax iterum surgit, quæque oppida duro

5

63, translates this as "fruits of the plane tree." Nevertheless, Maynard may have chosen *platanus* for its classical resonances, as a plantain would not have been very suitable as a shade-tree. He may perhaps have been influenced here by Edmund Waller (1606–1687), who in his English poem "The Battel of the Summer-Islands" (published in the author's *Poems*, 1645) says "Oh! how I long my careless limbs to lay / Under the plantain's shade [ . . . ]." Waller had almost certainly never seen a plantain-tree, but his poems continued to be reprinted well into the eighteenth century; see, for example, *The Works of Edmund Waller, Esq; in Verse and Prose* (London, 1758), where this passage appears at 51. It is also possible that in line 70 of Maynard's poem the *Succos* ("juices") are distinct from the *Cit-reique Liguorem* ("liquor of the lime") and are in fact those of the sugar-cane, whether or not distilled into rum.

<sup>35</sup> The description in Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, of Maynard as "s. Sam., of Barbados (town)" suggests residence in Bridgetown (though this would not fit with the suggestion that his father was the Samuel Maynard of the parish of St. Peter (above, note 6).

Milite strata cadunt, reficit Mercator, & auget. Terra jacet fuscus ultra <i>Garamantas</i> , & Unda Piscibus alatis fervens, tepidisque procellis, Hinc Aurum, hinc descendit Ebur; tamen effera victu Gens ea nec cædit pecudes, nec pascitur herbis: Bella parant Epulas; madefacta Cadavera Tabo Nigros Heroas saturant, crudoque Triumpho Pinguescit Victor, Palmamque reportat edulem. Sanguine Templâ rubent Hominum, membrisque cruentis; Quem non Martis Opus sceleratæ destinat Aræ, Nec Sors convivis, sub herili venditur Hasta. Luxus Plumarum, & Majestas discolor ornat Obscurum Regem: nigrantia Tempora circum Molle undat Diadema, errantque trementia Ventis Picta Avium Spolia; exustis onerata Pharetra Descendit Costis, albentiaque Ossa Ferarum, Et Dentes nivei (pretiosa Crepundia) fusim Impediunt Collum, pallentque Monilia Conchis. Quæ Maria aggreditur, vel quanta pericla <i>Britannus</i> , Ut Cultro, & <i>Stygiis</i> devotos vendicet Umbris? Hi juga celsa situ, sed nusquam fixa, pererrant, Nec tam terret Aquæ nautas, quam fluctus Arenæ, Qui Mortem Tumulumque ferat; sed littora cursu Auro opulenta petunt alii, tostosque requirunt <i>Æthiopum</i> portus, et <i>Fluminis</i> ostia <i>Nigri</i> . Fœta viris gentem petit uncta carina remotam, Quam tellus prædives alit, sub sydere Cancri: Quasque adeo imbuerant fraterno sanguine dextras His meliora damus; <i>Maurorum</i> operaque manuque Surgunt Tecta domorum, & fervet navibus <i>Æquor</i> , Turget ager Spicis, & Fructibus arbor abundat. Nequicquam <i>Occiduas</i> tetigisset puppibus oras Per dubium <i>Columbus</i> iter, nisi fidus adesset Mancipii labor; hoc glebam domat, Arte magistra, Atque informatum deducit montibus Aurum. Interea <i>Hispanus</i> , cui fas ditescere <i>Mauris</i> , Agmine Servorum lætus, prope negligit Aurum; Hinc Spes, ut <i>Populus</i> , Servis qui mandat, <i>Iberas</i> Cogat opes, cunctisque adeo dominetur & <i>Indis</i> . Nec tibi, <i>Maure</i> , dolet Dominos mutasse priores, A sicco telluris, arenarumque Procellis, Et nimio Sole, & patriis serpentibus acto. Qui flet amicorum strages, & sæva Parentum Funera, certus & ipse mori, nisi venditur auro; Hunc Hominum si tangit Amor, si Cura Deorum, Gaudeat exiguos Reges, terramque scelestam Liquisse, Exilio felix: Seu Falce salaces	10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50
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Castigat Ramos, seu carpit Aromata Sylvæ, Vel nubit Vites Ulmo, insperata Voluptas Gratis arridet Curis, mollitque Laborem.	55
Qua parcum invito Mons pandit avarus Hiatum, <i>Afri</i> descendunt, & scintillantia Rupis Viscera mirantur, pretiosaque Lumina Pubes Gemmarum fœcto spectant hærentia Saxo, Infectumque vident Cunis fluitare Lapillum, Splendere in Gutta, & nondum indurescere Sydus.	60
Exercentur agris Vulgus. Pars Arbore plenos Decutiunt Fœtus, & odoras prodiga Fruges Accumulant. Alii pendentes Cortice pingui Abrumpunt fragiles Lachrymas, & Thura reponunt, Jam votiva Deis: Alii prægnantibus Uvis Extrudunt Mustum. Platani sub tegmine fusus Spumantes potat Succos, Citreique Liquorem	65
<i>Anglicus</i> Dominus; dum pictis Turba Flabellis Dulces alliciunt Auras, stratumque coactis Oblectant Zephyris, mulcentque Sopore reclinem.	70
Sic ubi nativo torpentes Arboris Antro Accersat Tinnitus Apes; Gens parva recentis Principium Imperii statuit; sua cuique pusillus Rex Opera imponit; Pars libat roscida Prata, Luxuriatque Rosis; aliæ stillantia Mella Stipant, & Spoliis cerata Palatia complent.	75

Translation:  
The Assiento, or Spanish Trade

[ll. 1-8]

Let arms at home keep silence, and let ships traverse the waters laden only with merchandise. The fear of war has been driven away; let them abandon death-dealing fires, hostile missiles, and the flying iron of Fate. Now ships rejoice of their own accord to give their sails to the summer winds, and the warm billows to be divided under the harsh sun. Golden Peace once more arises, and the cities which fall, laid low by the brutal soldier, the merchant rebuilds and enlarges.

[ll. 9-18]

A land lies beyond the dusky Garamantes, and a sea swarming with winged fish and hot storms. Here gold and ivory are brought; however, that people, savage in their feeding, do not kill cattle, nor are they fed on vegetables: wars prepare their feasts; corpses wet with gore fill the black heroes, and the victor fattens on a bloody triumph and brings back a sign of victory which he can eat. Temples redden with the blood of men, and gory limbs; and he whom the outcome of war does not destine to the wicked altar, nor chance to banquets, is sold under a master's spear.

[ll. 19–25]

A profusion of feathers, and a varicolored majesty adorns their dark king: about his black temples a soft diadem waves, and the painted spoils of birds wander, trembling in the winds; a full quiver comes down his sunburnt side, and the whitening bones of beasts, and snowy teeth (precious baubles) load his neck, and his necklaces are pale with shells.

[ll. 26–32]

What seas, or how many perils does the Briton approach, that he may deliver those who have been devoted to the sacrificial knife and the shades of Hell? Some wander over mountains which are lofty, but not fixed, nor does the flow of water terrify sailors as much as that of sand, which brings both death and a burial mound; but others voyage to coasts rich with gold, and search out the scorching harbours of the Æthiopes, and the mouths of the River Niger.

[ll. 32–38]

Laden with men, the rich ship seeks a far-off people, whom a most wealthy earth nourishes, beneath the star of Cancer: and indeed those hands which they had steeped in fraternal blood, we give better tasks to them; by the hands and toil of Moors the roofs of houses rise and the sea swarms with ships, the fields swell with crops and the trees abound in fruit.

[ll. 39–46]

In vain would Columbus have touched the western shores with his ships by means of an uncertain journey, unless the faithful labour of the slave was there—instructed by the master, the slave tames the soil and brings refined gold from the mountains. Meanwhile the Spaniard, to whom it is lawful to grow rich from Moors, happy in his train of slaves, neglects the nearby gold; hence the hope that the people who command the slaves may gather Iberian riches, and be lord besides of all the Indies.

[ll. 47–57]

Nor, O Moor, driven from a dry land, from sandstorms, an overpowering sun, and your native serpents, does it pain you to change your former masters. He who mourns the slaughter of his friends and the cruel deaths of his relations is sure to die himself, unless he is sold for gold. If the love of men or care for the gods touches him, let him rejoice to leave petty kings and a wicked land, happy in exile: whether he prunes wanton branches with his hook, or gathers spices from the wood, or trains vines on the elm, an unhopd-for delight smiles upon his pleasing tasks and softens his labour.

[ll. 58–63]

Where the miserly mountain unwillingly opens a small gap, the Africans descend, and wonder at the sparkling entrails of the crag, and gaze at the young gems, precious lights sticking in the rich rock, and see the unformed stones flow in their cradles, shine in a drop, a star not yet hardened.



[ll. 64–73]

The common people are worked in the fields. Part shake the full crop from the tree and gather the lavish, sweet-smelling fruits. Some break the fragile tears from the rich bark and collect the incense, now devoted to the gods; others press out the juice from the swollen grapes. Stretched out beneath the plantain's shade, the English master drinks the foaming juices and the liquor of the lime, while the crowd with painted fans entice sweet breezes, delight the stretched-out one with captive Zephyrs, and soothe him with sleep.

[ll. 74–79]

Thus when a tinkling sound calls drowsy bees from the native hollow of their tree, the little people decree the beginning of a new reign. The puny king to each their tasks enjoins; part taste the dewy meadows, and wanton among the roses; others pack the dripping honey, and fill the waxen palaces with their spoils.

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