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Joshua Duder
Western Oregon University

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Fort de Caroline, 1562-64 & Fort Raleigh, 1585-1590: Periphery Victims of Spanish
Religious Intolerance.

By

Joshua Duder

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Primary Reader: Dr. John Rector
Secondary Reader: Dr. Laurie Carlson
Course Instructor: Dr. David Doellinger

History Department
Western Oregon University

Fort de Caroline, 1562-64 & Fort Raleigh, 1585-1590: Periphery Victims of Spanish Religious Intolerance.

When Christopher Columbus returned to Spain with news of a “New World” in 1492, the countries of the old world found yet another reason to squabble with one another. A comparative analysis of the motives behind the colonization of the “New World”, the political arena between colonizing countries and the fierce religious rivalries therein during the sixteenth century uncovers a previously unrevealed theory concerning the disappearance of England’s failed first “colony” on Roanoke Island. While Spain and Portugal lay claim to the whole of the “New World”, they purposefully destroyed the colonizing efforts of countries not granted the Papal right to pursue them; especially if those colonies encroached upon Spanish sea routes used to ship the treasures of the “New World” back to Europe. In theory, it could be said that the English settlers abandoned at Fort Raleigh on a desolate Roanoke Island in 1587, were within Spain’s “La Floride”, and were either captured, killed or runoff by raging Spanish forces that were leery of England’s intentions there.

The disappearance of England’s first failed attempt to colonize in the “New World” remains one of America’s greatest cold-case mysteries. The governor of the Roanoke settlement, John White, had to suddenly leave for England in 1587, shortly after the 117 men and women had landed on the small island off of the North American coast. Though he intended on returning immediately, the religious war with Spain and the ensuing Spanish Armada of 1588 kept John White waiting until 1590 to return to

Roanoke Island.¹ By that time, the Roanoke settlers had completely disappeared and the evidence that remained spoke very little of why the planters left the safety of nearby Fort Raleigh, which was on the same small island.² Fortunately, much of what we can find out about the happenings on Roanoke Island can be found in a handful of valuable primary sources: the writings and journals of Arthur Barlowe, Ralph Lane, Richard Grenville, John White and even the famous American character, Captain John Smith.

Years later, when King James I, of England, renewed England's interests in colonizing the new world during the early 1600s, the model of heroic exploration had been intended to be replaced with a more corporate model. James even divided the overwhelming "Virginia", which encompassed all of the eastern sea-board of North America, into two more manageable portions—the southern part came under the care of the Virginia Company's London members, while the northern part belonged to members of the West Country Promoters, Bristol, Exeter, and Plymouth. In doing this, it would be easier to sub-divide the lands by corporate letters patent without running into un-guided competition for borders.³ However, the change in colonizing methodology did not exclude fascinating "heroic" characters to surface. The newly devised Virginia Company sent the colorful Captain John Smith to the "New World" in late December 1606; he arrived in chains in 1607.

¹ Polk, William R. The Birth of America: From Before Columbus to the Revolution. New York, NY: Harper-Perennial, 2006. p 101-104.

² Taylor, Alan. American Colonies: The Settling of North America. New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2002. p 123-125. For more information about Fort Raleigh: Harrington, J.C. Fort Raleigh, 1585. *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. Vol 13. No 4. (Dec 1954). p 27-28.

³ Smith, Lacey Baldwin. This Realm of England, 1399-1688 (8th Ed). Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 2001. p 265 (James I: Foreign Policy and Renewed War with Spain).

Because he was on a list of company council members, previously kept secret, he was expunged of all charges and by late 1607 had essentially become the new colony's Governor. Jamestown, the first quasi-successful English colony, has its own history but because it was established less than two decades after the failure of Roanoke, and only one-hundred thirty miles north of Roanoke Island, the mystery of the missing Englishmen would likely be on their minds. In fact, according to Smith's Writings, there were attempts to locate any survivors of what was surly thought of as a catastrophe. In Smith's *The First Booke*, he gives an account of what he has heard or read regarding the English experience in the "New World"; from speculation of a Prince Madock of Wales, having discovered *Land Unknowne* in 1170 to John Cabot and sons having actually discovered mainland North America before Columbus in 1497. Most importantly, he relays the story of Sir Richard Grenville's first voyage to Virginia for Sir Walter Raleigh in 1585 and a list of names of who were there.⁴ Smith's book at the very least, confirms that the journals and letters of those supposedly involved in the narrative of Roanoke were printed before or during his experience in America, and not falsified for any reason at a later time. It is because of his access to the history of Roanoke that Captain John Smith understands the gravity of his situation regarding the colonization of the "Savage Land" and is compelled to find out the true destroyer of the Roanoke settlers.

Roanoke Island, eight miles long and only two miles wide, was way too small to have been meant to sustain a permanent colony. By 1585, Roanoke Island was home to a fledgling Fort Raleigh and was officially inhabited by a hundred of Sir Francis Drake's soldiers; it

⁴ Smith, Capt. John. *The Generall Historie: How Ancient Authors Report The New-World, Now called America, was discovered: and part thereof first Planted by the English, called Virginia, with the Accidents and Proceedings of the same, The First Booke.* New York, NY: The Library of America, 2007. p 227-257.

seemed perfect as a hideout for English Privateers, than an official colony. The island's location provided obscurity from passing Spanish pirate-hunters because it was guarded from the Atlantic by a series of dangerous shoals, sand mounts and long barrier islands. Historians, Alan Taylor as well as William Polk suggest that though the sand mounts and sand bars made it difficult for the English ships to land supplied or theoretically load commodities, it was nearly impossible for the deeper-hulled ships of the Spaniards to approach the island. "Raleigh had selected Roanoke for its inaccessibility. A jagged sliver of island, caressed by a sheet of water thin as tissue paper...Beyond it, the Atlantic rages against miles of unyielding barrier islands."⁵ Though the sand bars shift in the Albemarle Sound, where Roanoke Island is located, and the water is never deeper than twenty-five feet, or eight meters deep. As the English explorers will find, Albemarle Sound is actually connected to the Chesapeake Bay by the Great Dismal Swamp.⁶

To find a suitable site for a colony in the first place, a favorite of Queen Elizabeth I of England, Sir Walter Raleigh, dispatched his cousin, sailor and adventurer, Sir Richard Grenville, to confirm the location of "Virginia", originally found by Captains, Master Philip Amadas and Master Arthur Barlowe⁷; then drop Master Ralph Lane and the soldiers off on the island, they would reconnoiter. They never made it—Grenville, lazily left the colonists on the island and most likely went in search of Spanish treasure. Though Roanoke Island

⁵ Miller, Lee. Roanoke: Solving the Mystery of the Lost Colony. New York, NY: Arcade Publishing, 2001. p 5.

⁶ Encyclopedia Britannica:
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/12634/Albemarle-Sound>
Last Viewed, 06/06/2008.

⁷ Lorant, Stefan. (ed). The New World: The First Pictures of America. By John White and Jacques Le Moyne. New York, NY: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1946. p 133.

seemed a perfect location for a naval harbor and post, it would prove to be a doomed site for a colony. The sandy soil could hardly yield enough, if any, crops to support even a meager population; but the militant company of men was not bothered at all by the paltry prospects of agricultural production; they expected to be tended to by the local natives. Sir Walter Raleigh selected a steely veteran, Master Ralph Lane, to lead the first English expedition in the “New World”. Lane, a survivor of the invasion and English “colonization” of Ireland, was well read and had been excited by the accounts of conquest coming from the Spaniards. He encouraged his men to behave in manners consistent with how they perceived the Conquistadores, all the while, the English were making no friends with the natives. Master Ralph Lane governed Fort Raleigh on Roanoke Island from August 17, 1685 to June 18, 1586.

According to Ralph Lane’s report to Sir Walter Raleigh, Lane led expeditions north, south and west, into the interior: Eighty miles south to Sector, one-hundred thirty miles north into the Chesapeake, most likely through the Great Dismal Swamp, and Lane’s men traveled another one-hundred thirty miles inland.⁸ Lane and his men repeatedly offended the local natives, most importantly the Chaonist tribe, the Mangoaks and the Mandoags of the Chesapian, or Chesapeake, country. Distrusting the English, the locals began to plot against the settlers. It was in 1586 that relations with the “Indians” completely broke down—Lane and his men were nearly at war with the Chaonists and the Mangoaks while Pemisopan was conspiring against the English soldiers. Both, Lane’s account of the happenings, as well as John Smith’s historic account relay the fact that things were not going well for the soldiers. A native that the Englishmen had regarded as a friend, Pemisopan, plotted to ruin what little

⁸ Lorant, Stefan. (ed). The New World... p 135-136.

crops the soldiers would have for the next harvest by neglecting them and leaving the fields untended. He and his tribe were tired of caring for the helpless newcomers and their intolerable behaviors.⁹

Nearly at the moment when all hope was lost for the Englishmen to defend themselves from the natives, on June 8, 1586, Sir Francis Drake arrives offshore with an impressive fleet of twenty-three ships. Drake had come to check up on the settlement at Roanoke because he held the position in such high regard. Drake offered Lane all that he could in order to win against the natives, and according to Lane's own admission, all of the captains were in agreement with Drake that Roanoke could not be surrendered. As it were, the Spanish considered Drake a Pirate as Drake was well-known amongst the Spanish and at times it seemed as though he was engaged in a personal war with Spain.¹⁰ By default then, the captains accompanying Drake were pirates also. For them all, Fort Raleigh on Roanoke Island was a priceless position with a perfect strategic location from which to launch raids on nearby Spanish islands and treasure laden ships enroute for the Iberian Peninsula. First, Master Ralph Lane requested that the weak and weary be taxied back to England, Grenville should have been there by now with the replacements and supplies, so Lane's instinct was most likely to wait it out. Lane did, however, request some badly needed craftsmen and oarsmen as well as provisions because of the crop failures initiated by Pemisopan.

⁹ Smith, Capt. John. The Generall Historie... p 245 & Lorant, Stefan. (ed). The New World...p 151.

¹⁰ Mattingly, Garrett. The Armada... p. 82-92 (This chapter goes into depth regarding the relationship of Drake and Spain.)

By June 12, 1586 Sir Francis Drake had outfitted Master Ralph Lane with plenty of provisions on board the bark¹¹ *The Francis*. Lane decided to stay at least until August and leave for England, on board his *Francis* and the two Pinnaces also given to Lane and his men, if Grenville had not arrived at that time. That night, however, a storm slammed into the coast and lasted until June 16th 1586—the *Francis* was lost. Under assault from the natives, lacking any provisions and with no hope of leaving Roanoke on their own, Lane and his men abandoned Fort Raleigh and headed back to England, arriving in Portsmouth on July 27th.

Ralph Lane and his men had set in motion a serious grudge held by the local natives towards any new settlers, and especially any new soldiers. That would unfortunately include Sir Walter Raleigh's second wave of settlers, which was already on its way to the desolate island. Grenville himself, returned only two weeks later, his ships hold loaded with supplies for Fort Raleigh and the soldiers that were supposed to be there. Finding nobody there, Grenville vowed not to give up the island, especially after how much time and effort had already been spent on getting this far. He left fifteen of his own sailors there as sentinels, and gave them two years worth of provisions.¹² Grenville must have expected it to be quite awhile before he could return—he may have known that Philip II of Spain was setting in motion a grand assault on England and that every resource would be taxed. On his way back to England, Grenville simply could not deny the simple pleasure of dropping anchor at the Azores and plundering the islands for anything worth having; as English captains were Englishmen first and businessmen second.

¹¹ A Bark is a flat-bottomed ship, sturdily built with a vacuous cabin, able to carry quite a bit of weight and travel in shallow waters. Not built for speed. This type of ship allowed the English access to islands and inlets that would otherwise be too shallow. A Pinnace was a light weight vessel, usual smaller in size.

¹² Lorant, Stefan. (ed). The New World... p 152.

Spain's King Philip II had also become the King of Portugal in 1581, united the two colonial empires founded in the conquering of lands and the extraction of commodities from those lands. If that was the method used by Spain to empire build, England's was in its' privateering of Spain's treasures. The Spaniards had found incalculable amounts of silver and gold when they conquered Mexico and Peru. English surveyors had looked for wealth in Africa, Newfoundland, and off the Atlantic coast of North America (what the English called Virginia) and of course all they found were vast amounts of fish, trees, and firs. Ralph Lane and his men may have overheard rumors about a copper mine run by the natives deep into the interior of the "New World", but they had never laid eyes on it.¹³ Besides which, it has always been easier for the English to simply take what they wanted from the Spanish.

That was, in fact, the way that Sir Francis Drake earned his wealth during the 1570's; plundering Spanish outliers and wayward treasure galleons. When tensions between Spain and England were coming to a boil in 1585, Drake attacked the Spanish stronghold at Santo Domingo. He torched the town after plundering its wealth and set sail for another Spanish port, Cartagena; which he captured and ransomed for 110,000 ducats. After Cartagena, Drake could not refuse the chance to obliterate St. Augustine, the capitol of Spanish Florida in 1586. He gave the orders to set the town ablaze, as he had done at Santo Domingo, and then proceeded to Fort Raleigh, where he helped his fellow protagonist Ralph Lane.¹⁴

Elizabeth I of England had authorized several attempts to discern what parts of the "New World" may yet yield an extractive wealth but the English had resigned themselves to the looting system and that was the line of reasoning behind the attacks by Captain Jack Hawkins on the Azores in 1581, Sir Humphrey Gilbert's pirating off the far western reaches

¹³Smith, Capt. John. The Generall Historie... p 238.

¹⁴ Lorant, Stefan. (ed). The New World... p 152-153.

of Ireland, and Walter Raleigh's supported attacks on Caracas, Rio de la Hacha and Santa Marta by Captain Amayas. Even Grenville's sacking of the Azores was in line with England's lack of respect for Spain's colonial assets. These shameless acts of pirating led to the Elizabethan backed system of privateering, which should be called privatized naval warfare.¹⁵

The success of Spain and Portugal's endeavors into the "New World" led England to follow suit in an attempt to emulate their Catholic neighbors' accomplishments. Queen Elizabeth I decided to reverse her father's isolationist policies and issues letters patent to the most favored adventurers of her court. It was at the behest of her gallery of favorites—Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Walsingham, Sir Humphrey Gilbert and her beloved Dudley, Earl of Leicester, that she pursued such aggressive concepts and seed the beginnings of a British Empire. For Phillip II, however, something about England's interests in establishing themselves overseas seemed ominous, "The Spanish evaluated the intelligence they were getting; the only logic they could find behind England's interest in establishing some sort of a base at the Chesapeake was piracy."¹⁶ By 1585, the English had done enough to embroil the blood of Philip II and the one time King of England denounced his former sister-in-law, Queen Elizabeth I, as a heretic and began plotting his return to England as its sovereign and its holy savior. Elizabeth was faced with overwhelming financial odds; she needed to support a navy that could fend off any Spanish attack and an

¹⁵ Ferguson, Niall. Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and Lessons for Global Power. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002. p 5-8.

¹⁶ Polk, William R. The Birth of America: From Before Columbus to the Revolution. New York, NY: Harper-Perennial, 2006. p 75.

army to protect its shores. For her authorizing the theft of Spanish wealth became a tactic of war—for Philip, it was the last straw for England.

Years before, on November 17, 1558—at St. James' Palace, in London, Queen Mary I, sister of the future Queen Elizabeth I died. Unable to leave her husband a male heir, Mary had also never taken steps to grant legitimacy to her husband, King Philip II of Spain as the principal monarch of England. The Catholic king instead watched his sister-in-law, the protestant Tudor princess Elizabeth inherit the throne of England. Despite his attempts to woo the newly crowned Queen, Philip returned to Spain to put in motion the plots to return Catholic rule to England.

England had been a thorn in the side of Spanish empire-building for far too long. In the name of Spain, the Italian adventurer Christopher Columbus laid the basis of Spain's American empire in 1492 when he traversed the "New World". Philip II inherited an empire that was the envy of the world, from Madrid to Mexico. Spain had joined with Portugal in 1581, granting the vast territories of Brazil and West Africa. According to Philip II, Elizabeth and her England had no business in the "New World"; neither did France for that matter. One year after Columbus "discovered" America, Pope Alexander VI issued a Papal Bull, or an official holy notice, that divided the lands of the "New World" between the two fiercely competitive Catholic countries of Spain and Portugal.¹⁷

Thirty years of bitter animosity and religious disdain later, in a blustery May of 1588, one-hundred and thirty ships bearing the weight of over fifty-eight thousand tons of manpower and supplies left the western ports of the Iberian Peninsula. King Philip II

¹⁷ Arber, Edward (ed). *The First Three English Books on America. Translation of Pope Alexander VI's Papal Bull.* By Richard Eden. New York, NY: Kraus Reprint Company, 1971. p 201-204

directed his blessed vehicle of vengeance north to exact the will of God. The Catholic nations of Europe and the Holy Roman Empire were unilateral supporters of the endeavor to topple England's Protestant Government—they were ordained as “God's special enterprise”. Jamestown was not the first English excursion into the “New World”, nor was Roanoke for that matter. Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Admiral of the “Seven Strong”, made a handful of voyages into the region of Newfoundland and with a valid letter of patent from Elizabeth I, he made an English claim to the fish-abundant waters of the frigid northwest Atlantic—he lost his life when his ship sank during a return trip to England. Gilbert's success, however, prompted his half-brother Walter Raleigh to request a similar patent and start-up where Gilbert had left-off. Elizabeth granted Raleigh the letter patent to settle lands not inhabited by any Christian country—just as France had before, Elizabeth and England failed to heed the papal authority granting the western hemisphere to Spain and Portugal.¹⁸ Mostly, this decree by Pope Alexander VI was meant to keep the two rival Catholic countries from going to war with one another over something that can be solved at home. Philip, however, would interpret the Papal Bull as a reason to remove the heathen Protestants from his America.

Elizabeth's grandfather, King Henry VII, recognized the need to keep pace with Spain early on, but was not included in the Pope's division of the Americas. Henry VII, however, envious of Spain's discovery of gold and silver, hired his own Italian adventurer and navigation specialist. In March of 1496, Henry VII granted the first letters patent for colonization; it was Giovanni Caboto, also known as John Cabot and his

¹⁸ Ferguson, Niall. Empire...p 64-69.

sons.¹⁹ These letters patent are tantamount to secular overriding of a Papal Bull—Henry challenges the Pope’s authority to decide who can enrich their county and better the lives of the people. According to the letters patent, the Cabotos were to have:

Full and free authority, faculty and power to sail to all parts, regions and coasts of the eastern, western and northern sea [not the southern sea, to avoid conflict with Spanish discoveries], under our banners, flags and ensigns...to find discover and investigate whatsoever islands, countries, regions or provinces of heathens or infidels, in whatsoever part of the world placed, which before this time were unknown to all Christians...[and to] conquer, occupy and possess, whatsoever such towns, castles, cities, and islands by them thus discovered that they may be able to conquer, occupy and possess, as our vassals and governors lieutenants and deputies therein, acquiring for us the dominion, title and jurisdiction of the same towns, castles, cities, islands and main lands so discovered.²⁰

England’s empire envy was founded on the need to keep pace with her contemporaries but after the reformation, by the time of Elizabeth I’s reign, a contingency of proponents for war against Spain grew. Those religious reformists, along with Elizabeth, devised the Anglican Church.²¹ It was within this English political and

¹⁹ Arber, Edward (ed). *The First Three English Books on America. Letters By Sebastian Cabot*. Translated By Richard Eden. New York, NY: Kraus Reprint Company, 1971. p 345-346.

²⁰ Ferguson, Niall. *Empire...* p 6.

²¹ Smith, Lacey Baldwin. *This Realm of England, 1399-1688 (8th Ed)*. Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 2001. p 171 (Elizabeth: Religious Settlement).

religious hybrid, that a sense of duty to build an entirely protestant empire, matching that of mighty Spain, was born. One of Elizabeth's most trusted scholars and advisors, Richard Hakluyt, argued that, if the Pope had given Ferdinand and Isabella the right to occupy the "New World", the English crown had a duty, as had Henry VII believed, to "enlarge and advance the faith of Christ on the behalf of Protestantism". Therefore, England's initial concept of empire was forged in the fires of rivalry between England's Queen Elizabeth I and Spain's Philip II.

A new group of 150 colonists were rounded up and left England to re-establish a colony in Virginia as per his letter patent. This time, under the leadership of John White, the colony was granted an official charter and incorporated under the name of Governor and Assistants of the City of Raleigh in Virginia—which sounds more like an attempt to colonize the mainland of Virginia instead of an uninhabitable island.²² It was not Captain Grenville who sailed them for Virginia this time, rather it was a Captain Stafford; however, just like his predecessor, he found the pillaging and plundering of Spanish islands superseded the importance of Raleigh's colonial ambitions. They had been sighted by the Spanish and its likely they were followed to where the colonists were eventually ditched by Stafford—Roanoke Island. The Fifteen sailors that had been left behind had disappeared and the bones of a former resident showed signs of a brutal showdown with a native.²³

John White, under mysterious circumstances, left the island with the intention to return immediately with more supplies. When he arrived in England, in 1587, news of an

²² Lorant, Stefan. ed. The New World: The First Pictures of America. By John White and Jacques Le Moyne. New York, NY: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1946. p 118-123.

²³ Miller, Lee. Roanoke... p 48-58.

imminent attack by an enormous “Spanish Armada” meant that all the ships in the name of the Queen were confiscated for the defense of the England.²⁴ Even after the Armada was over in late 1588, circumstances left Governor White without an opportunity to return to his family and colony on Roanoke until 1590. By the time of his return, the colony had nearly completely vanished and only a pair of mysterious signs remained.²⁵

The general theories include either that the colonists on Roanoke were either captured by local natives while they were still on the island or during their escape to the neighboring island of Croatoan. Perhaps they simply left the island and joined in with some merry band of natives, one which they managed not to offend or take advantage of. However, it is plausible that the Spanish, so protective of their land and treasure ships were willing to destroy their unwanted neighbors attempting to settle in their “god-given” territory. Just as the Spanish had eliminated Fort de Caroline and chased the French away from the Florida coast, perhaps Phillip ordered the elimination of any English colony as well. It has been noted that there were no signs of destruction, only dismantlement; which may mean that the English colonists were so fatigued that they surrendered to the Spanish forces without a fight.

The accepted theories regarding the mysterious disappearance of the Roanoke settlers all include the involvement of local native peoples. Historians have suggested several reasons for the colonists exit: escaping cannibalistic natives, fleeing from a local Indian war or simply moving inland to find food and escape the inhospitable conditions on the eight-mile coastal island. However, the concept of a Spanish attack on the settlement seems to have been overlooked. It is likely that the Spanish pursued the destruction of the Roanoke settlement because of its proximity to Spanish Sea-lanes, the

²⁴ Mattingly, Garrett. The Armada... p 172-186

²⁵ Polk, William R. The Birth of America... p 101-103.

settlement's encroachment on previously claimed Spanish territory and the precedent of English privateering attacks on Spanish treasure ships during the sixteenth-century.

There seems to be plenty of reasons that the Spanish would go so far as to eradicate an English colony and the Spanish seem to have a history of such actions; it had happened to the French garrison of Charlesfort in 1562, and again at the French colony Fort de Caroline, near modern-day Jacksonville Florida, in 1564.²⁶ The Spanish had been given the right, by Papal Bull, to claim all of what they called *La Floride*, which extended from the tip of the Floridian peninsula to the top of modern-day Canada and west to the Pacific—essentially, the pope had given all of North America to the Spanish crown. It was therefore unlikely that the Spanish would tolerate a detestable Protestant country to infringe upon Spanish territory.

A comparative analysis of the motives behind transatlantic colonization and of the political arena between the colonizing forces reveals fierce religious rivalries and levels of intolerance which could chalk-up the destruction of another country's colony as an act of war—religious or otherwise. Taking this into consideration justifies research concerning Spanish involvement in the disappearance of the Roanoke settlers at Fort Raleigh. The garrison built on the island was, in the eyes of the Spanish crown, an encroachment on their territory and was a threat to Spanish shipping. Just as the Spanish had done in 1562 and 1564 to the French Huguenot settlements on the coast of *La Floride*, Spanish armed-forces would seek out the location of the English garrison and eliminate the heathen incursion from their lands.

²⁶ Taylor, Alan. *Ibid.* p 76-78.

Conflict between England and Spain seems to have been inevitable; the one-time King of England, Spain's King Philip II, had been ousted when his wife, Mary Tudor, died in 1558. The hybrid "Anglican" church replaced the Catholic faith following the ascendancy of Elizabeth I and shortly thereafter, the English took up a policy of harassing the Spanish merchant ships, settlements and ports from the Americas to the coasts of Europe.²⁷ *El Draque*, or The Dragon, as Francis Drake was referred to by the Spaniards, was seen as the scourge of Spain for his plundering and deplorable tactics. The Spanish considered him outrageous and when knighted for his actions against them, the audacity was too much to handle.²⁸ Enraged, Philip and those close to him began to plan the capture of England. Members of the Spanish court had begun to plan an invasion of England in 1583 and laid out plans for the armada by 1585.²⁹

To further enrage Phillip, Henry VIII's second daughter, Elizabeth I, who inherited the crown of England and much to the displeasure of Phillip; she was semi-protestant. Her Anglican policy's, and expansionist ideals, dissolved any chances for good relations between Spain and England. It should come as no surprise that as Phillip sided with the Catholic Mary Guise, Queen of Scots, to finance the war against the Huguenots in France, Elizabeth financially backed the Protestants—thus engaging in a proxy-war with Spain.³⁰

²⁷ Phillips, Charles. The Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Kings and Queens of Britain. London, UK: Hermes House Press, 2006. p 110-111.

²⁸ Mattingly, Garrett. The Armada. Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1959. p 82-85.

²⁹ Fernández-Armesto, Felipe. The Spanish Armada: The Experience of War in 1588. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1989. p 78-79.

³⁰ Mattingly, Garrett. The Armada. Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1959. p 218-231.

The English were not alone in drawing the ire of Philip's Spain. France, Spain's continental neighbor to the north was also a Catholic country but had been excluded from the Popes division of the "New World". The French king, Charles IX, felt this lack of equal status was an insult; however, the pontiff, under the persuasion of Spain's King Phillip II, viewed France as a country that was too soft on the heinous Protestants. Only after the eradication of the Calvinists and Huguenots would Charles' France be ready for Rome's consent to bring Christ and civility to the "Indian" heathens of the Americas. Decidedly opposed to his exclusion, the youthful King Charles IX would have his colony, with or without the consent of the Pope or the approval of Portugal and Spain.

Charles-Maximilien of the House of Valois, inherited the throne of France when his older brother, François II died in 1560. He was guided by his Queen-mother, Catherine de' Medici who held strong ties to the very-Catholic House of Guise. Charles' regent-mother supposedly acted in the interests of the child-King by maintaining a precarious balance between the staunch Catholics and the aspiring Protestant Huguenots. By 1561, King Charles IX had befriended the war hero Admiral Gaspard de Coligny—a man three decades his senior. Admiral de Coligny was renowned for his services to France in various foreign campaigns and had become a Huguenot Protestant by the 1550's.

Secretly, de Coligny conspired with fellow veteran and Huguenot Nicolas Durand de Villegagnon to establish an overseas haven for the persecuted Protestants as early as 1558. De Villegagnon was a rather convincing orator and persuaded King Henri II, who was still on the throne of France, that France should have a share of the riches flowing from the "New World". The war hero spoke to Henri II of an opportunity to reply vehemently to the Papal Bull which gave all the "New World" to Portugal and Spain, but "Of the Huguenots, he said

not a word... Yet to the King, an active burner of Huguenots, Coligny too urged it as an enterprise, not for the Faith, but for France.”³¹ The war heroes planted the seeds of colonization for France and would soon reap what they had sown.

The Protestant leader, John Calvin, secretly supported the efforts of de Villegagnon and de Coligny—the first attempt to create an outlet for protestant refugees was placed precariously on an island near the Portuguese colony of Ganabara, near modern-day Rio de Janeiro, in 1555. *France Antarctique*, the name which the colony was given, struggled for its survival for nearly twelve years but eventually the colonists were driven out by the bitter Portuguese occupiers.³² Before its demise, however, de Coligny had openly opposed the Catholics in France, which was by 1562, in the throes of a civil war dubiously named the French Wars of Religion.

In the few years that had gone by since the inception of *France Antarctique*, King Henry II of France had died as well as his successor François II and Catherine de Medici had taken control of royal affairs for her child-King Charles IX. By 1564, however, the young sovereign had begun to become disenfranchised with his mother’s disdain for Protestants and Charles was convinced by de Coligny to support another attempt to colonize in the western hemisphere—this time in the north, in Spanish occupied Florida. Charles IX supported the idea of a French presence in what was obviously Spanish territory for three reasons: first, as had his predecessors, he felt betrayed by Rome for having been left out of the divisions of the “New World” by the Papal decree. Secondly, if he could not settle a colony, then he would

³¹ Parkman, Francis. Pioneers of France in the New World. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1897. p 25-26.

³² Trudel, Marcel. The Beginnings of New France: 1524-1663. Toronto, Canada: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1973. p 54.

support the seizure of Spanish treasure ships—which infuriated Spain’s King Phillip II. Lastly, Admiral Coligny, a celebrated war hero, was rather convincing regarding the propensity for wealth based on the published accounts of Spanish reconnoiters, “...Cabeça de Vaca, one of those who had survived the expedition of Narvaez, appeared in Spain, and for purposes of his own, spread abroad the mischievous falsehood, that Florida was the richest country yet discovered.”³³

Gaspard de Coligny was, of course, subversively establishing the second haven for the prosecuted Huguenots. Fort de Caroline, established in 1564 near the site of modern-day Jacksonville Florida, was meant to serve as a point of entry for the fleeing Protestants of France, but within a year it was destroyed by the Spanish. Admiral de Coligny had already returned to France to lead in the struggle against the Spanish-backed Catholic forces suppressing religious freedom in France and he was unable to defend his colony against the rampaging Spanish forces led by General Don Pedro Menendez de Aviles.

Under orders from the Spanish crown, Aviles dismantled the settlement and only a handful of the French colonists survived to flee back to Europe. Menendez de Aviles, a pirate-hunter and a war hero, was a favorite of Spain’s King Phillip II. Phillip had warned France of what doom await them if they continued to show interest in Florida and reminded Charles IX of the Pope’s preference for Phillip’s Spain, “...the Bull of Pope Alexander, to whom, as Vicar of Our Savior, it pertains to procure the conversion of all the heathen to his Holy Catholic Faith, and to this end could appoint a Supreme Christian Prince over all the

³³ Parkman, F. *Pioneers...* p 13 (Parkman footnotes his source as having been from: *The Relation of the Gentleman of Elvas*, c. 2.).

native Kings and Lords of all the Indies,...and thus he selected and chose the Kings of Castile and of Leon.”³⁴

General Menendez de Aviles had been dispatched by Phillip II to lay waste, once and for all, to the French encroachers in Florida. Spain’s intervention in early French colonialism is deeper than the fact that France had infringed upon Spanish territory—even though Spain claimed the entire breadth of North America. The specific location of Fort de Caroline seemed more like an attempt to support the pirating of Spanish treasure ships departing the “New World” for Spain, than a sincere colonial effort. Due south by southwest are the islands of the Bahamas which help to form a natural trap for pirates and privateers to launch from when attacking Spanish treasure ships. The Spanish viewed this as a threat as early as 1511, “...it was forbidden to supply foreigners with charts or maps, and in 1527 Charles V enacted that even pictures and descriptions of the Indies should not be sold or given to them without special license.”³⁵

The threat of piracy was only one of Phillip’s concerns, France was in the midst of a religious civil war and the balance of power was precariously perched on the throne of Charles IX. Catherine de Medici, the mother-queen herself was a devout Catholic and despised the idea of religious toleration; however, to retain the throne for her son she had made sacrifices to appease both the Catholics and the Protestants. Phillip II of Spain deeply resented the Huguenots’ influence in France and had self-justified reasons to destroy them. Perhaps, then it was not only French interloping in the “New World”, nor was it the

³⁴ Lowery, Woodbury. The Spanish Settlements within the Present Limits of the United States: Florida, 1562-1574. New York, NY: Russell & Russell, 1959. p 107.

³⁵ Lowery, W. The Spanish...p 14. (Lowery footnotes : *Winsor, Narr and Crit. Hist. Am., vol. ii, p. 113, note 3.*)

occasional French pirate attack on Spanish shipping that brought Phillip's rage upon the meager Huguenot colonies—it was his absolute hatred for Protestants that fueled the fire.

It's surprising that more people do not know about the story of Roanoke and Fort de Caroline—they seem to be foundational American history; especially so, because there are so many references available. That alone indicates a certain level of national interest. Several of the secondary sources that I had the pleasure of reading were actually quite contemporary. William Polk, Alan Taylor, Benjamin Wooley, J.H. Elliot, and Niall Ferguson all imply in their respective books, which Fort Raleigh on Roanoke Island was meant to be an outpost for English privateers. Some also imply that Spain knew the island was there, and that they just could not get to it. In addition to that, anything written about Fort de Caroline is substantially less contemporary, at least what I have found. Regardless, historians of the mid-twentieth century did state that it is historic fact that the French were attacked by the Spanish. It is fascinating then, that no historian has made the connection; that the Spanish did reach Roanoke.

All of the secondary sources seem to be drawing from the same pool of primary sources, which is good because the stories are straight and the primary sources themselves are accessible. Some of the more important original sources are the translations by Richard Eden of *The First Three English Books on America*, The writings of Captain John Smith, and Rene Laudonniere's *Three Voyages* translated by Charles Bennett. One of the pieces translated by Richard Eden is the Papal Bull, issued by Pope Alexander VI the year after Columbus "discovered" America—this is fascinating to find because one has to interpret the implications for themselves. Nothing said in the Papal Bull is very straight forward.

The mystery of Roanoke can be captivating and many good arguments have been made which point to the “Indians” as those most likely responsible for the disappearance of the colony. Interpretations of the evidence can also suggest that someone or something much more European in nature may have had something to do with the vanishing act. Anxiety, distrust, hatred and animosity are traits which can be used to describe the atmosphere of the European governing bodies during the 16th-century and it may have been any one of those attributes which led to the dismantling of the colony of Roanoke.

Fort de Caroline, 1562-64 & Fort Raleigh, 1585-1590: Periphery Victims of Spanish Religious Intolerance.

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