

The Bolama Colony and Abolitionary Reform in Captain Beaver's *African Memoranda* (1805)

CAROL BOLTON

ABSTRACT: In 1805, naval officer Captain Philip Beaver (1766-1813) published his *African Memoranda: Relative to an Attempt to Establish a British Settlement on the Island of Bulama, on the Western Coast of Africa, in the Year 1792*. Beaver's text provides an absorbing testimony of his efforts to assist British colonisers in establishing their African settlement. Despite the colonial ambitions of this project, the 'Bulama Association' members were reformists at heart. Their high-minded intentions in purchasing the island and settling it, were to demonstrate the anti-slavery principle that propagation by 'free natives' would bring 'cultivation and commerce' to the region and ultimately introduce 'civilization' among them. The colonists' ambitions to benefit the African economy and set a precedent of humanitarian labour for the slave-owning lobby in Britain, led to the extraordinary emigration of 275 men, women, and children in order to put their humanitarian ideals into practice. Within two years, all the colonists had died or returned to Britain, but Beaver asserted that their socio-economic model was successful and that future settlements would benefit from their efforts. This article examines the motives of the Bolama scheme within the context of other colonial projects (for instance in Sierra Leone) to demonstrate how British anti-slavery ideals combined with commercial ambitions to settle land in Africa at the end of the eighteenth century. It contributes to academic investigations into Atlantic history, popular abolitionist movements of the 1790s, and Romantic-period colonial policy, to demonstrate how such collective enterprises sought to expand British influence abroad.

KEYWORDS: Beaver; Bolama; Sierra Leone; Africa; Colony; Abolition



IN 1805, NAVAL officer Captain Philip Beaver (1766-1813) published his *African Memoranda: Relative to an Attempt to Establish a British Settlement on the Island of*

*Bulama, on the Western Coast of Africa, in the Year 1792.*¹ His account of the extraordinary migration of 275 men, women, and children to Bolama was intended to demonstrate a socio-economic model of engagement with Africans that would prove West Indian slavery was unnecessary. At a time when anti-slavery initiatives were becoming prominent in Britain through the efforts of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade (formed in 1787) and the parliamentary campaign for abolition led by William Wilberforce in the late 1780s and early 1790s, the Bolama colonists intended to engage with the problem of slavery in Africa itself. They embraced Wilberforce's belief that Britons should vindicate their involvement in the slave trade and make 'reparation to Africa, as far as we can, by establishing a trade upon true commercial principles'.² And like the better known Sierra Leone colony, which was the inspiration for the Bolama venture, it did not only intend to promote anti-slavery policy through commercial exchange with Africans; it also had a benevolent purpose to 'improve' their lives:

To purchase land in their country, to cultivate it by free natives hired for that purpose; and thereby to induce in them habits of labour and of industry [that] might eventually lead to the introduction of letters, Religion and civilization, into the very heart of Africa.³

Such plans anticipated the better known 'civilising' missions of Thomas Fowell Buxton and David Livingstone by at least fifty years, and therefore have a much longer history of 'combining legitimate commerce, civilization and Christianity' than the 'New Africa Policy' of the mid-nineteenth century, as Suzanne Schwarz has pointed out with regard to the Sierra Leone Company's ambitions.⁴ The attempt to colonise Bolama adds to our knowledge of how eighteenth-century Britons envisioned embedding a 'legitimate

¹ Philip Beaver, *African Memoranda: Relative to an Attempt to Establish a British Settlement on the Island of Bulama, on the Western Coast of Africa, in the Year 1792* (London: Printed for C. and R. Baldwin, 1805). The colonists believed the name of the island to be Bulam, or Bulama, and these names are used interchangeably in accounts of the settlement. When not quoting from the original sources, this article will use the island's modern name of Bolama.

² Quoted in *Commercial Agriculture, the Slave Trade and Slavery in Atlantic Africa*, eds Robin Law, Suzanne Schwarz and Silke Strickrodt (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2013) p.2.

³ Beaver, *African Memoranda*, p.3.

⁴ Suzanne Schwarz, 'Commerce, Civilization and Christianity: The Development of the Sierra Leone Company', in *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, eds David Richardson, Suzanne Schwarz and Anthony Tibbles (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), pp.252-270 (p.270).

commerce' in Africa, an idea that 'by the 1780s [...] had become widely accepted, in a variety of forms, within the Abolitionist movement'.⁵ Such ideas were not confined to Britain alone; they can be identified in other parts of Europe, such as France, Denmark, and Sweden, as this article will demonstrate. It can be argued that these economic models of engagement with Africa directly contributed to the colonisation of that continent, yet the Bolama venture is an aspect of Atlantic history that has generally gone unnoticed by academics working in this field, despite 'the implications of this commercial transition for the African societies involved [being] the subject of a considerable amount of scholarly analysis and debate'.⁶ Therefore Beaver's account of the venture is a valuable document of record that offers an additional perspective on attempts to colonise Africa at this time.

For Beaver, the most important aspect of the Bolama venture was the socio-economic experiment he had been commissioned to carry out. Despite all the colonists having died or returned to Britain within two years, Beaver nonetheless asserted that this experiment was successful, in that it paved the way for future settlements. This is reflected in his *African Memoranda*, which will be discussed throughout the article to demonstrate how colonial schemes by individuals and groups emerged from their anti-slavery convictions, as well as their firm belief that they would be 'enlarging the sphere of human felicity and extending the blessings of civilization and religion to distant nations'.⁷ The first chapter of Beaver's work explains how the 'Bulama Association' members came together to plan the colony in Africa, with the next three chapters providing a detailed account of the voyage of the ships transporting the colonists. A transcript of the manuscript journal that Beaver kept on the island makes up the next, very long chapter at the centre of his work, accounting for when he took charge of the colony after more than half the settlers returned home, until their final evacuation.⁸ Six

⁵ Law, Schwarz and Strickrodt (eds), *Commercial Agriculture, the Slave Trade and Slavery in Atlantic Africa*, p. 4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.6.

⁷ C. B. Wadstrom, *An Essay on Colonization, Particularly Applied to the Western Coast of Africa, with Some Free Thoughts on Cultivation and Commerce; Also Brief Descriptions of the Colonies Formed, or Attempted, in Africa, Including Those of Sierra Leone and Bulama*, 2 vols (London: Darton and Harvey, 1794-5; repr. New York: Kelley, 1968), I, p. 59.

⁸ A distinction is made in this article between Beaver's published text and the manuscript journal he kept on the island, which is denoted as 'journal' throughout.

further chapters contain descriptions of the African people, the terrain and climate, and the flora and fauna. They were presumably written when Beaver was preparing his book for the press, as they also provide justifications of the colonists' actions and decisions, and judgements of the scheme's successes and failures. In this way the book combines two distinct types of narrative: the first being the reporting of daily events on the island from his original journal, and the second being the author's more subjective, retrospective reflections on these events (a synthesis of writing styles common in Romantic-period travel writing).⁹ The book's appendices list the settlers' names and fates, and lay out the colony's constitution and regulations, as well as providing additional documents and letters relevant to the project. Beaver's original journal contains a daily record of the colony's development, interactions with native communities, and sickness and deaths, but does not reveal very much about the colonists themselves. While some individuals stand out as more fully developed because Beaver interacts with them in some way, or rates them as significant contributors, generally we learn little about them, especially because Beaver saw his human material as largely faulty in character. Instead, readers often find out more about the conditions for the experiment, in case of it being repeated by others, as Beaver hoped it would. As his main concern in publishing this work was to ensure that the plan to colonise Bolama should be resurrected by others, Beaver also downplays his own personal investment in the project and the great physical toll it had on him. Schooled in his reading of science and philosophy, as well as by his practical naval education, and tasked with a public-service role that required obeisance to the ethics of duty and responsibility, the individual is elided in his work by a greater benefit: 'the increase of the general happiness of mankind'.¹⁰ Beaver was an avid reader of the narratives written by contemporary travellers in Africa, extolling the 'zeal, the patience, the fortitude and the intelligence' of James Bruce (1730-1794), John Ledyard (1751-1789), and Simon Lucas (d. 1799) among others.¹¹ As in their accounts, Beaver does not focus on his own

⁹ Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), pp.117-8.

¹⁰ Though Beaver's early education at a local endowed school was interrupted by the sudden death of his father, he later schooled himself in 'history, ethics, natural philosophy and jurisprudence', and during one voyage is said to have read the entire *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. W. H. Smyth, *The Life and Services of Captain Philip Beaver, Late of His Majesty's Ship Nisus* (London: J. Murray, 1829), pp.4-5, 44, 301; Beaver, *African Memoranda*, p.4.

¹¹ Beaver, *African Memoranda*, p.403.

feelings, or those of others, but on the social benefits of the outcome. Therefore, at a time when human interiority was being fetishized in Romantic literature, art, and philosophy – and despite the travel journal being generally categorised as an ego-document – national priorities are perceived as more important than individual concerns in the quest for greater knowledge of Africa, and in Beaver's case, in reporting how their colonial experiment would benefit future settlers.

Beaver's aspirations for settling the west coast of Africa need to be appreciated within the context of other late-eighteenth century colonial schemes. His *African Memoranda* is just one of many narratives of exploration and colonisation that have recently emerged, and which present a clearer picture of the overseas ambitions of individuals and groups, as well as national priorities to expand British influence abroad. The lessons learned from such texts shaped other responses and approaches, because as Felix Driver asserts, in the eighteenth century: 'the explorer was the foot-soldier of geography's empire', and Beaver's account provided knowledge for others to use in their own attempts to explore and colonise Africa.¹² One such explorer who envisaged settling Africa on behalf of Sweden, was the abolitionist, colonial theorist, and Swedenborgian, Carl Bernhard Wadstrom, who travelled to the West coast of Africa in 1787-8. On his return he moved to London to work with British abolitionists, where he published his *Observations on the Slave Trade, and a Description of Some Part of the Coast of Guinea* (1789). This text was used by Wilberforce in his anti-slavery speeches in Parliament, and Wadstrom also advised the Privy Council and House of Commons on this matter. Colonial ambitions, founded on the belief that 'cultivation and commerce on right principles' in Africa would 'promote the civilization of mankind' were never far from Wadstrom's mind, and he embraced the plans for colonization of Sierra Leone and Bolama.¹³ In fact, in 1791, he was a prime mover in collecting Bolama subscribers from Manchester, where he was then residing.¹⁴ Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization*, published in 1794 after Beaver's return to England, uses Beaver's manuscript journal as a source for advocating African settlement. His text provides a wider frame of reference for Beaver's work as well as promoting the ideas within it,

¹² Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Blackwell: Oxford and Malden, Ma., 2001), p.3.

¹³ Wadstrom, *An Essay on Colonization*, I, p.iii.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, II, p.133.

thereby demonstrating how colonialist discourses built on knowledge contained within other accounts. The *Essay* is not only more theoretical in nature than *Memoranda*, but its colonial policies are more extensively developed and have greater perspectival distance; Beaver's being limited by his experiences on Bolama and his narrower nationalistic ambitions to protect and enlarge British territories abroad.¹⁵ Wadstrom, instead, proposes what he sees as a benevolent pan-European scheme of colonial expansion. In doing so he criticises individual nations who have acquired colonial territories through 'contracted views of commercial and financial advantage' that refuse to 'spread beyond the limits of a partial and local policy'.¹⁶ In contrast, Wadstrom claims that his colonialist vision will not be marked by their records of 'injustice, rapine and murder', even if – as Deirdre Coleman points out – it invokes racial hierarchies that fall back on 'the usual cliché of the complementary natures of the European and African, with the European stronger in understanding and the African in feeling'.¹⁷

Modern scholarship recognises that colonialism, in the form of exploratory initiatives, commercial enterprises, and migratory settlements on the part of its citizens, contributed to a massive expansion in Britain's territorial possessions. In fact, by 1820 (after nearly twenty-five years of war with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France) 'Britain ruled over a quarter of the world's population', and Romantic-period literature reflects contemporary responses to the political, social, and economic impact of this phenomenon.¹⁸ These territories gave Britain great status as a colonial power and were influential in forming literary perceptions of alien people and places. First-hand accounts of colonial life, exploration into new territories, and missionary justifications of attempts to 'civilize' native populations, were consumed by a curious British public.¹⁹ Such accounts were responsible for generating racial profiles of foreign 'others' that were disseminated through popular literary forms, such as novels and poetry.

¹⁵ For instance, *African Memoranda* concludes with a long note on French plans for colonisation, exhorting the British government to prevent their attempt to 'run away with all western Africa' (p.414).

¹⁶ Wadstrom, *An Essay on Colonization*, I, p.59.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*; Deirdre Coleman, *Romantic Colonization and British Anti-Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) p.91.

¹⁸ Deirdre Coleman, 'Post-Colonialism', in *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*, ed. Nicholas Roe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp.237-56 (p.237).

¹⁹ See Innes M. Keighren, Charles W. J. Withers and Bill Bell, *Travels into Print: Exploration, Writing, and Publishing with John Murray, 1773-1859* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

Nevertheless, these texts could also contain ambivalent responses towards colonial policy, because as Britain's influence abroad was expanding, some of its citizens desired a more responsible engagement with the territories that came under its rule. For instance, writers such as William Wordsworth and Robert Southey complicated the stereotypes of Native Americans as aggressive and warlike in poems such as 'The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman' (1798) and 'Songs of the American Indians' (1799), while abolitionist poetry depicted examples of black suffering at the hands of white oppressors to oppose transatlantic slavery.²⁰ In novel form, writers such as Phoebe Gibbes in *Hartly House, Calcutta* (1789), criticised wealthy British 'nabobs', while presenting a tolerant attitude towards Hindu culture. In this way, some literary works of the period promoted British extra-parliamentary opposition to the slave trade, revised opinions about Indigenous Americans, and engaged in the debate over the best methods for governing India at a time when the East India Company's control there was being challenged.

In the wake of critical studies that contextualize socio-political discourses of the period and investigate their concerns – for instance by Mary Louise Pratt, Tim Fulford, and Deirdre Coleman – Romantic literature has been better understood as having a broader, global focus, that more accurately reflects the lives and priorities of its first readers and writers.²¹ In the last twenty years, Atlantic history has also become a rapidly developing field of academic study, shaping our understanding of the interactions between Europeans, Africans and Americans within this arena, as Bernard Bailyn has shown.²² Examining the context from which Beaver's text emerged enables understanding of the nexus between individual ambitions to explore and settle foreign lands, the imaginative engagement of readers with such accounts, their influence on secondary works, and the implications for British foreign policy in expanding knowledge of, and intercourse with, the Atlantic world. For instance, the influence of travel accounts

²⁰ For instance, Thomas Day and John Bicknell's 'The Dying Negro' (1773), Ann Yearsley's 'A Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave Trade' (1788), Southey's 'Poems on the Slave Trade' (1797).

²¹ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 9th edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2001); Tim Fulford, *Romantic Indians: Native Americans, British Literature, and Transatlantic Culture 1756-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Deirdre Coleman, *Romantic Colonization and British Anti-Slavery*.

²² Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, Ma. and London: Harvard University Press, 2005).

and colonial narratives on British writers and thinkers during the nineteenth century can be seen in the documented responses to reading Beaver's journal by Robert Southey, Dorothy Wordsworth, and John Stuart Mill. Southey's engagement with the journal in particular, demonstrates how this nexus of influence operated. As a writer for the *Quarterly Review* for thirty years, Southey specialised in travel-writing, narratives of exploration, and colonial discourse, and first-hand accounts such as Beaver's fed directly into his published opinions on how to colonise Africa. In 1809 Southey recorded that 'I have lately been much delighted with the "African Memoranda" [...] where Beaver himself did all that it was possible for man to do, and, I believe, more than it would have been possible for any other man in the world to have done'.²³ When he reviewed Smyth's *Life and Services of Captain Philip Beaver* twenty years later, Southey referred to the Bolama scheme again as evidence for his opinion that 'it is from negroes and mulattos, trained in European civilization, that the civilization of Western Africa must come; and proper colonists, fitted by such training, as well as by constitution, will be raised up in the course of one generation'.²⁴ Southey adopts Beaver's socio-economic model of engagement with Africans, but extends it further to envisage them not just as partners in a 'legitimate commerce' with Britain, but as colonial subjects; a prediction that would come to fruition in many parts of Africa during the nineteenth century.²⁵ As a prominent man of letters, Southey's poetry and journalism were directly influenced by accounts such as Beaver's, thereby demonstrating the importance of resurrecting Romantic-period travel narratives and colonial discourses for modern readers.²⁶ The significance of these forms of writing needs to be recognised, because their influence often extended beyond the confines of disciplinary boundaries by being absorbed and

²³ *The Collected Letters of Robert Southey, Part 3: 1804-1809*, eds Carol Bolton and Tim Fulford, *Romantic Circles*. Letter 1569, 20 January 1809

<https://romantic-circles.org/editions/southey_letters/Part_Three/index.html> [Accessed: 28/12/2020].

²⁴ Robert Southey, 'Life and Services of Captain Beaver', *Quarterly Review*, 41.82 (November 1829, 375-417 (p.391).

²⁵ See also Carol Bolton, *Writing the Empire: Robert Southey and Romantic Colonialism* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2007) pp.62-6.

²⁶ As part of this ongoing twenty-first century recovery of texts once familiar to Romantic-period readers and writers, my scholarly edition of *Captain Philip Beaver's African Journal* is being published by Anthem Press in 2022.

re-worked for other kinds of audiences (as in Beaver's case) so disseminating the ideas within them more widely.

While eighteenth-century European explorers and navigators were mapping the peripheries of the African continent and sharing their discoveries with readers through their narratives, the blank spaces of its interior on charts such as those made by the cartographer Aaron Arrowsmith, still justified its designation as the 'dark continent'. British interest in exploring the interior resulted in government-led and individually sponsored journeys across it, such as those by James Bruce in the 1760s and 70s, and Mungo Park in the 1790s. The African Association, founded in 1788 and led by Joseph Banks, sponsored Park's journey as well as other expeditions to gain scientific and geographical knowledge of Africa. So, when Beaver was put on half pay by the navy in 1791, after anticipated conflicts with Spain and Russia had not emerged and before the war with France, he concocted a similar scheme to cross the African continent on foot.²⁷ That was until he met the abolitionist Henry Hew Dalrymple, who had been appointed by the Sierra Leone Company to govern their settlement at Freetown. The colony of Sierra Leone was founded in 1787 to provide a home for Africans freed from slavery. These first settlers were impoverished black people from London, many of whom had been slaves in America before being emancipated by the British at the end of the American War of Independence (1775-1783).²⁸ The nascent colony struggled with the climate, lack of food and shelter, administrative problems, and high mortality rates. When the Sierra Leone Company took control of it in 1791, its first directors included the prominent abolitionists Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharp; Henry Thornton (a politician and banker); the parliamentarian, William Wilberforce; as well as two naval officers.²⁹ As Bronwen Everill has demonstrated, the 'association of key British humanitarians, colonizationists, missionaries, naval officers, and parliamentarians' that

²⁷ Romantic-period expeditions to establish geographical or scientific knowledge of unknown territories, were often carried out by half-pay officers from the army or navy whose services were not required during peace time.

²⁸ Stephen J. Braidwood, *Black Poor and White Philanthropists: London's Black and the Foundation of the Sierra Leone Settlement 1786-1791* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994) p.80.

²⁹ Schwarz, 'Commerce, Civilization and Christianity', p.255.

forged such projects through 'close connections and tight networks', were essential in determining 'the type of civilizing mission that would later develop'.³⁰

Dalrymple was no doubt appointed as the colony's governor because he was a man of high ideals who was committed to ending slavery, after his military service in the slave station of Goree in West Africa, as well as from his upbringing on a Caribbean plantation in Grenada. He believed that Africans could be taught to be as industrious as Europeans, and on inheriting his family's plantation in 1788 he freed all the slaves to prove his point, also testifying as a witness to the evils of slavery in the British Parliament.³¹ Beaver was approached by Dalrymple to join the enterprise because of his 'military and nautical knowledge', a proposal to which he instantly acceded:

It was a plan so congenial to my mind, that a second was not required to hesitate; and my own plans [to cross Africa] being too expensive for my purse were given up. I knew nothing of what would be expected from me, nothing of the plan, except that it was benevolent and humane. All that I knew was, that a colony was to be established; and among uncivilized tribes; and that was enough for me.³²

However shortly after meeting Beaver, Dalrymple disclosed that 'I am no longer governor of Sierra Leone; I have disagreed with the directors; and have nothing more to do with them'.³³ As a result, Dalrymple came up with a new plan. Having heard Bolama described 'by a director of the French Senegal Company [as] exceedingly favourable', it was decided on 'as a proper place for making an establishment'.³⁴ The 'Bulama Association', as the six founding members of the scheme who met at Old Slaughter's Coffee House in London came to be known, drew up a radical constitution to define the new colony with a republican government in which 'sovereignty resides in the people'.³⁵ They embraced universal adult male suffrage, regardless of wealth or race, 'provided they were not indented servants or domestics receiving wages, or

³⁰ Bronwen Everill, *Abolition and Empire in Sierra Leone and Liberia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.18.

³¹ *Abridgement of the Minutes of the Evidence, Taken Before a Committee of the Whole House to Whom it was Referred to Consider of the Slave-Trade* (London: House of Commons, 1789-91).

³² Beaver, *African Memoranda*, p. xiii.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Beaver, *African Memoranda*, p.xiv.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.431.

mendicants'.³⁶ Absolute freedom of religious belief was established in the colony, and of course owning slaves was outlawed.

The colonists intended to grow the same kinds of tropical produce that generated income through the slave trade: sugar, cotton, and indigo for instance, but—rather radically for the time—through hiring African workers and paying for their labour. In this regard they were influenced by the commercial ideas of Malachy Postlethwayte and John Fothergill, who in the late-eighteenth century lent substance to the arguments of abolitionists that the slave trade could be eradicated in Africa by European intervention. Postlethwayte, as Christopher Leslie Brown has shown, claimed 'that a British empire in Africa could liberate the continent from the horrors of the Atlantic slave trade' and establish 'a friendly, humane, and civilized commerce' there instead.³⁷ Fothergill, a Quaker physician and abolitionist, argued that instead of enslaving Africans to labour 'by the dread of torture' in the West Indies, they should be 'employed as servants for hire' in their own country.³⁸ Such ideas were also mooted in other parts of Europe. For instance, as Pernille Røge has demonstrated, French physiocrats 'proposed relocating the production of sugar, coffee and other colonial cash crops to Africa where free local labourers could cultivate it with European encouragement'.³⁹ The establishment of Danish plantations on the Gold Coast of Africa from 1788 onwards, came out of a similar 'shift in focus which occurred in Abolitionist thought from European to African initiative'.⁴⁰ Such ideas were also promoted by Wadstrom in Sweden and Britain, as already demonstrated, and were embraced by the Bolama colonists who also intended to promote the abolition of slavery by forging a

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.425.

³⁷ Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006) p.272. See also Brown's 'The Origins of "Legitimate Commerce"', in Law, Schwarz and Strickrodt (eds), *Commercial Agriculture, the Slave Trade and Slavery in Atlantic Africa*, pp.138-57.

³⁸ Deirdre Coleman, *Henry Smeathman, the Flycatcher: Natural History, Slavery and Empire in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018) p.2.

³⁹ Pernille Røge, *Economistes and the Reinvention of Empire: France in the Americas and Africa, c.1750–1802* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020) p.10.

⁴⁰ Law, Schwarz, and Strickrodt (eds), *Commercial Agriculture, the Slave Trade and Slavery in Atlantic Africa*, p.2. See also within this collection: Per Hernæs, 'A Danish Experiment in Commercial Agriculture on the Gold Coast, 1788-93', pp.158-179.

legitimate commercial relationship with Africans: as laid out in the Association's charter.⁴¹

The charter also stated that in order to prevent any of Bolama's individual land-owners becoming wealthier than the others (and thereby creating a dominant plantocracy, as in the West Indies) there would be an equitable division of property, with only one African labourer allowed to be hired per forty acres of land.⁴² They also pledged only to settle where they could purchase land from local people, rather than seizing it from the inhabitants. As was the case for many such enterprises, the committee advertised for subscriptions, which mostly came from people living in London and Manchester. Their payments were given in exchange for land ownership in the new colony. Absentee subscribers paid £60.00 per 500 acres, and colonist subscribers paid £30.00 for the same amount of land.⁴³ The scheme quickly gained in popularity with nearly half the subscribers coming from Manchester, home of the earliest factories in England and with a strong community of support for the abolition movement. The idea of new opportunities abroad for working-class people must have been attractive at a time when a fifth of babies in London died during infancy and adults were unlikely to live past their early thirties.⁴⁴ No doubt the Bulama Association's liberal principles were also welcomed because they allowed any man to join the governing council, whatever their religion or status. Among the colonists was one black male, James Watson, and fifty-eight female subscribers, including seventeen who signed up as 'personal servants'.⁴⁵ It seems these women were similarly motivated by anti-slavery ideals, as one of the subscribers was Ulrica Wadstrom, who clearly shared her husband's 'sincere desire to communicate to the injured nations of Africa, the blessings of civilization'.⁴⁶

⁴¹ The British colony of Senegambia (established in 1765) also focused on trade in African commodities. Despite lacking the abolitionist principles of later colonial enterprises, it 'also helped to popularize the idea of a commercial alternative to the slave trade'. Law, Schwarz, and Strickrodt (eds), *Commercial Agriculture, the Slave Trade and Slavery in Atlantic Africa*, p.17.

⁴² Beaver, *African Memoranda*, pp.427-8.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.419.

⁴⁴ Billy G. Smith, *Ship of Death: A Voyage that Changed the Atlantic World* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2014) p.36.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.40.

⁴⁶ Wadstrom, *An Essay on Colonization*, II, p.173.

While Dalrymple obviously embraced these high-minded ideals, and his reformist principles convinced his fellow Association members to join the scheme, he lacked skills as a pragmatist or planner and there were significant weaknesses in the venture that led to its downfall. Beaver later described him as a 'dreamer of dreams' who was incapable of achieving anything difficult.⁴⁷ Once in Africa, Dalrymple must have realised how hard it would be to put their plans into practice, leaving on the first ship out again two months later and dying shortly after his return to England in 1795. Idealistic in tenor, the Association's coffee-house meetings had also failed to appreciate that nobody, including Dalrymple, knew where the island was. Nevertheless, they set sail with the colonists on three ships, with the first arriving at Bolama by the end of May 1792. Due to calamitous events on their arrival, which saw several of the settlers dead, injured or sickly within a few weeks, many of the colonists returned home, and by July 1792 there were only ninety inhabitants left on the island. In November of that year, due to further deaths and departures, only twenty-eight remained. A year later Beaver was one of five men left on the island, with only he and one other being original subscribers.

One of the reasons given by Beaver for the scheme's failure was that as they prepared to leave in April 1792, the colony had still not been given a charter by the government that approved its constitution. This was ostensibly because the funding for the colony was considered to be insufficient, but it is likely that the pro-slavery Home Secretary, Henry Dundas, was alarmed by their proposal.⁴⁸ Certainly Wadstrom's account of the settlement laments the 'interference of the Ministry', which 'sent an order to detain them, till certain articles in the constitution, or agreement of the colonists, were renounced', and Dalrymple was forced to return to London to appeal against the decision.⁴⁹ It appears that in the highly charged political atmosphere of the French Revolution, the British government were suspicious of the democratic principles of their charter, which espoused common ownership of property and contained hints of Spencean agrarian radicalism.⁵⁰ Beaver's journal bears witness to the turbulent political

⁴⁷ Beaver, *African Memoranda*, p.82.

⁴⁸ Smith, *Ship of Death*, p.4.

⁴⁹ Wadstrom, *An Essay on Colonization*, II, p.297.

⁵⁰ Thomas Spence (1750-1814) believed 'that landownership lay at the root of all injustice, inequality and economic exploitation [and] argued for land nationalization in England'. When faced with the

environment of the 1790s, when British reformists came up against Pitt's repressive government, not only at home but also in new dominions abroad, where their improving principles were still seen as ideological sabotage by the administration. In contrast, in the Sierra Leone colony, where on its initiation in 1792 its settlers were made up of 'over 1,100 self-liberated slaves' from the American War of Independence, such revolutionary principles were not countenanced.⁵¹ As a result of the Bolama venture's reformist charter, its ships eventually left without official sanction, an issue that would cause problems for the settlement's leaders who lacked the authority to control the enterprise and its participants. There was no legitimacy to land claims and contracts in the colony, and little hope of protection from the British navy in the future if it was needed.⁵² Beaver also came to realise that the scheme's failure to obtain a charter was partly to do with the composition of the Bolama council itself. Though the number and configuration of the council members changed rapidly over the winter of 1791 and spring of 1792, as their plans were formalised—growing from six to nine and then thirteen—the majority were ex-military men or half-pay officers who were stood down during peace time. Dalrymple and John Young had been army officers, Sir William Halton was a captain in the militia, John King was a lieutenant of marines, and Robert Dobbin, Richard Harcourne, and Beaver were naval lieutenants. Though they had more influential supporters, namely the merchant and politician Paul Le Mesurier—one of the 'appointed trustees for the [Bolama] concern in England', MP for Southwark between 1790-1796, and later Lord Mayor of London (1793-1794)—they lacked the political clout of the Sierra Leone Company.⁵³ This colony in contrast, had several prominent

impracticalities of such a scheme in his own country, he laid out his plans for a fictional utopian colony in *Crusonia, or Robinson Crusoe's Island* of 1782. Deirdre Coleman, 'Bulama and Sierra Leone: Utopian Islands and Visionary Interiors', in *Islands in History and Representation*, eds Rod Edmond and Vanessa Smith (London: Routledge, 2003) pp.63-80 (pp.64-5).

⁵¹ Schwarz, 'Commerce, Civilization and Christianity: The Development of the Sierra Leone Company', p.252. See also Bruce L. Mouser's 'African Academy: Clapham 1799-1806', *History of Education*, 33.1 (2004) pp.87-103, which Schwarz draws on to make this point

⁵² Smith, *Ship of Death*, p.5.

⁵³ Andrew Johansen, *A Geographical and Historical Account of the Island of Bulama, with Observations of its Climate, Productions, etc. and an Account of the Formation and Progress of the Bulama Association, and of the Colony Itself* (London: printed for Martin and Bain, 1794), p.5. Though this account predates Beaver's, it draws on his unpublished journal and other source material provided by

campaigners and parliamentary lobbyists working to assist them in obtaining a government charter, so adding further weight to Everill's theory that networks of influential abolitionists, politicians and businessmen were necessary to the success of such ventures. Beaver's journal is testament to the consequences of this absence of collaborative support and highlights a significant difference between the planning and financing of the Bolama and Sierra Leone colonies.

Another difference between the two colonies becomes clear in Beaver's account of Dalrymple's rift with the Sierra Leone company directors, which was due to his recruitment of military men for the scheme when they wanted to 'create a nonmilitarized colony'.⁵⁴ Beaver reports that 'far from wishing persons of our description to go out, we were of all others those whom they most wished to avoid', despite being 'persons of liberal minds and manners'.⁵⁵ No doubt lack of employment in their professions was a motive for joining the Sierra Leone and then the Bolama scheme, as in Beaver's case. But as Mary Wills has shown 'British naval strategy in the eighteenth century was heavily concentrated on the West Indies, to protect the valuable sugar industry that was dependent on slave labour', and many sailors therefore had exposure to the evils of plantation slavery, or had served on slave ships themselves prior to naval service.⁵⁶ Beaver, for instance had served in the West Indian fleet from 1778 to 1783, and 'the breadth of his naval voyages had provided him with an appreciation of other cultures'.⁵⁷ His liberal political principles were further developed through a long period of self-education (between 1783 and 1791) during which he studied the writings of prominent philosophers and thinkers.⁵⁸ So even before the naval blockade of slave ships along the African coast after 1808, many naval (and indeed army) officers had served in locations where they saw slavery first-hand, leading to their abolitionist convictions. The fact that so many ordinary British people were prepared to support abolitionist strategies demonstrates the strong anti-slavery sentiment in society

him, as does Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization*. Johansen also published the Prospectus for the Bolama colony (see Coleman, *Romantic Colonization and British Anti-Slavery*, p. 82).

⁵⁴ Smith, *Ship of Death*, p.47.

⁵⁵ Beaver, *African Memoranda*, pp.xiii-xiv.

⁵⁶ Mary Wills, *Envoyos of Abolition: British Naval Officers and the Campaign Against the Slave Trade in West Africa* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019) p.10.

⁵⁷ Smith, *Ship of Death*, p.49.

⁵⁸ Smyth, *The Life and Services of Captain Philip Beaver*, p.44.

by the end of the eighteenth century. However, the Bolama venture shows how these military personnel, who had witnessed the slave trade first-hand, translated their distaste for it into a practical scheme to oppose the government's pro-slavery policy.

This uniting factor among the Bolama council members, however, could not make up for the lack of strategists among them and the absence of political support for the colony. A further reason for its failure was that the delays caused by waiting for government approval prevented the settlers from arriving until the rainy season had begun. On arrival they soon lamented the lack of carpentry tools or house-building skills among the settlers, and 'not carrying out with us the frame of one or more large houses, to shelter the people immediately on their arrival, was a fatal error'.⁵⁹ The colonists' frequent exposure to the extremes of tropical weather, debilitating bouts of fever, and fear of attacks from their African neighbours, compounded their problems. Beaver's fiercest criticism of the venture, however, was in having brought out 'men of the most infamous character and vicious habits' for which he provides anecdotal evidence.⁶⁰ None of the colonists were vetted prior to signing up and it turned out that some of them had criminal convictions, with the courts giving them the choice of serving a prison sentence or going on the Bolama voyage.⁶¹ In fact many of these settlers had already been rejected from the Sierra Leone venture because of their 'bad character'.⁶² It is a little-known aspect of British colonial history, that when the American War of Independence prevented the British transportation of convicts to the thirteen colonies and before Botany Bay was proposed as a penal colony, sending British convicts to West Africa was seen as a method for creating settlements there. According to Philip Curtin, 'the initial plan was to use the Gambia [...] It was a mixture of dumping, pure and simple, along with the hope for the development of tropical agriculture'.⁶³ Therefore, it is easy to see why the British government, who had adopted this policy in 1784, sanctioned the 'transportation' of undesirable characters as members of colonial projects. It eased the pressure on prisons at a time of economic difficulty, offering

⁵⁹ Beaver, *African Memoranda*, p.310.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.494.

⁶¹ Smith, *Ship of Death*, pp.36-7.

⁶² Coleman, 'Bulama and Sierra Leone: Utopian Islands and Visionary Interiors', p.66.

⁶³ See Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1973) I, p.92.

working class people 'one of the few viable alternatives to life in a factory, in poverty, in jail – or all three'.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the calibre of many of these settlers was a deep disappointment to Beaver, who was strongly committed to the middle-class values of self-improvement and hard work and espoused these values to others, judging his fellow colonists by his own principles. As Michael J. Braddick points out, where new 'societies developed and diversified [...] they did not necessarily do so in isolation from the homeland. In fact, in many ways they drew on English values and practices in order to cope with growing complexities overseas'.⁶⁵ Beaver's attempt to institute such 'values and practices' were naval in nature, and he laid out regulatory terms under five headings to which all the colonists had to agree. These were based on the 'constitution which they had all signed in England', and imposed discipline and cleanliness on the colonists, as well as 'public prayers being read, to the whole community every Sunday morning'.⁶⁶ However Beaver reports that most of them 'were dissipated vicious characters [...] who required the strong hand of the law to keep them within the bounds of decency and decorum'.⁶⁷

The most disastrous factor for the colony, however, was the high mortality rates among the settlers, at a time before modern epidemiology had identified the causes and treatment of tropical diseases. According to Billy Smith, the newly arrived colonists killed and ate several monkeys without knowing they 'harboured a vicious strain of yellow fever, circulated among them by mosquitoes that infested the mangrove swamps of Bolama'.⁶⁸ Beaver's account of the frequent deaths is often dismissive, recording them in brief, dispassionate entries that include more mundane information. The journal entries for Sunday 9th and Monday 10th of December 1792, read:

[Sunday 9th] Same weather and employment. Died of a fever, and was buried, Mrs. Harwin. Killed a bullock for the colonists. Therm. 88. Three men well. Myself a little

⁶⁴ Smith, *Ship of Death*, p. 28; see also Emma Christopher, *A Merciless Place: The Lost Story of Britain's Convict Disaster in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁶⁵ Michael J. Braddick, 'Civility and Authority', in *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (eds), 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp.113-132 (p.126).

⁶⁶ Beaver, *African Memoranda*, p.91, 93.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.152.

⁶⁸ Smith, *Ship of Death*, p.69.

feverish. [Monday 10th] Employed as before. Died of fevers, and were buried, Peter Box, Henrietta Fowler, and Hannah Riches. Therm. 90. Three men well. Myself ill of a fever.⁶⁹

Beaver's stylistic brevity reflects the reduced circumstances and depressed state of the colony. But his note-form documentation of events is also a manifestation of his training in scientific, or at least military methods of record-keeping. In Beaver's previous naval roles, he was expected to keep a log of voyages, noting climatic conditions and significant occurrences, with the assumption that he could be held to account for it later as an official document (or here as a published work). As Mary Louise Pratt asserts, such records of travel 'were central agents in legitimating scientific authority and its global project' for European readers; a 'project' that Beaver's account supports in providing information for future colonists.⁷⁰ Additionally, by stressing that the creation of a legitimate commerce in Africa will be beneficial to Africans and Britons, Beaver attempts to mitigate the tragedy of this individual colony's fate by anticipating the success of future attempts.

Beaver's account of his time on Bolama is an absorbing testimony of his extraordinary efforts to establish the colony, taking sole leadership of it when others returned to Britain or became ill and died. Despite all these adversities, in an account that approaches mythic dimensions in detailing his efforts to maintain the colony and its survivors, Beaver emerges as a heroic model of reason and self-discipline; though as the situation became more desperate and he suffered frequent attacks of fever, notes of irritability become evident. As a first-person, self-interested record of the Bolama venture, it is obvious that Beaver's intention is to impress future settlers and the British government with his endeavours on behalf of the colony. We need to be aware therefore of the limited, partial nature of his account, in which he is the sole witness to the events described. This is especially the case when we consider that Beaver had to justify imposing a constitution on the colonists that had been rejected by the British government.⁷¹ However, contemporary readers of Beaver's *African Memoranda* praised

⁶⁹ Beaver, *African Memoranda*, p.170.

⁷⁰ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p.29.

⁷¹ As Southey states, Beaver 'refused to take charge of the colony till the assembled colonists had agreed to be governed by that constitution which the council had been obliged to disclaim before they left England. Illegal he knew this to be; but he knew it also to be an act of moral necessity', 'Life and Services of Captain Beaver', p.391.

it as 'so plain and unvarnished a tale, that we have no doubts of his veracity, though his hardships and exertions appear to be almost incredible'.⁷² According to Thomas De Quincey, Beaver 'was greatly admired by Coleridge and Wordsworth for the meditative and philosophic style of mind exhibited in his book'.⁷³ Such reviews encapsulate the value to the literary marketplace of travel accounts and colonial endeavours, depicting a rational and reflective protagonist prioritising public service over private good. For instance Mungo Park's published account of his travels was 'an instant success, necessitating two more editions of the book after the first sold out within a week'.⁷⁴ Readers were attracted not only to the 'empiricist' knowledge it contained, but the writing style that presented him as 'a reliable witness because he was a disinterested gentleman, free from the desire to gain personally from his testimony'.⁷⁵ Despite the first-person nature of their accounts, Beaver and Park prioritise communitarian values, representing their own efforts through a detached and objective narrative voice. Nevertheless, Park's first readers were attracted by frequent moments of Romantic introspection in his work, and in Beaver's account his philosophical reflections and humanitarian principles are also appealing.⁷⁶ For instance in contemplating the new skills the colonists have learnt on Bolama, Beaver says, 'although I am not an advocate for Rousseau's mode of educating his Emilius, yet I cannot help thinking that the more practical knowledge one can acquire, the better: it makes a man acquainted with his own resources, and a less dependent being'.⁷⁷ To exemplify this point, Beaver lists the specific trades he has learnt in his time on the island, noting new-found skills as a carpenter, brickmaker, tanner, thatcher, rope-maker and architect (among others). Despite the colonists being at odds with the British government in leaving without official sanction, this dispute is forgotten in reading about the enormous exertions made to establish the colony.

⁷² 'Beaver's African Memoranda', *The Monthly Review*, 49, (April 1806), pp.356-366 (p. 356).

⁷³ *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. David Masson, 14 vols (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1889-90), VIII, p.289, fn.1.

⁷⁴ Tim Fulford and Debbie Lee, 'Mental Travelers: Joseph Banks, Mungo Park, and the Romantic Imagination', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 24.2 (2002) pp.117-137, (p.129).

⁷⁵ Fulford and Lee, 'Mental Travelers', p.128.

⁷⁶ See Thompson's, *Travel Writing*, p.118, for his discussion of this aspect of Park's *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (1799).

⁷⁷ Beaver, *African Memoranda*, p.297.

It is therefore easy to see how Beaver and other prominent imperial and military figures became paradigms of national character during an extensive period of European conflict and territorial expansion, especially when represented in print. The most famous example was presented to generations of schoolboys in Southey's *Life of Nelson* (1813), which was so popular that according to David Eastwood it had 'sold out within a year', with a second edition planned within six months.⁷⁸ It was 'reprinted more than any other of [Southey's] works' within his lifetime, and 'in the century after his death it went through more than a hundred impressions'.⁷⁹ Other accounts of patriotic endeavour in the service of Britain were published in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, including Southey's ambitious work of naval history, the *Lives of the British Admirals* (1833-7), and William Henry Smyth's *Life and Services of Captain Philip Beaver* (1829). While this posthumous biography written by a fellow naval officer did not sell on the scale of Nelson's, it eulogised a man whose 'bright example may serve as a beacon to all those who feel the glow of conscious worth'.⁸⁰ Like Nelson, Beaver was the son of a clergyman who became a midshipman as a boy, when the death of his father propelled him into a naval career at the age of eleven.⁸¹ Southey's review of Smyth's biography judges that 'a braver, an abler, more accomplished, or more high-minded officer never trod the deck of a British ship', while recommending that the book should 'be put into the hands of many a young sailor'.⁸² Such men from ordinary backgrounds, presented after their deaths as self-sacrificing heroes to contribute to a national myth of public service, would continue to be promoted in Victorian imperialist texts and still survive today in the popular imagination. Beaver's journal account therefore lives on as an important record of an intrepid, if misguided, endeavour to improve humanity, long after the government dispute over the origins of the colony had been relegated to history.

In *African Memoranda*, published more than ten years after the events in Bolama took place, Beaver still suggests that it could be a British colony. The defensive, even

⁷⁸ David Eastwood, 'Patriotism Personified: Robert Southey's Life of Nelson Reconsidered', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 77.2 (1991), pp.143-9 (p.143).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* See also William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.555.

⁸⁰ Smyth, *The Life and Services of Captain Philip Beaver*, p.ix.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp.4-5.

⁸² Southey, 'Life and Services of Captain Beaver', p.381, 376.

triumphalist nature of Beaver's conclusions about the success of the project in socio-economic terms, only make sense if we see the work in its original context; as an account given by a naval officer who had a mission to fulfil and colonial aspirations to justify. He argues that despite the settlement failing on the ground, it was successful in fulfilling its three main goals: 'to cultivate the tropical productions on the Island of Bulama and the adjacent shores', to do so 'by the means of *free natives*', and thirdly 'by *cultivation* and *commerce*' to 'introduce among the [Africans] *civilization*'.⁸³ He maintains that the settlement had produced 'many tropical fruits, esculent vegetables, and cotton trees' that were 'thriving admirably', so fulfilling the first claim.⁸⁴ The second claim, of using African workers, he considers achieved by hiring 'grumetas' (a Portuguese word for a free black labourer) to clear the land and build houses. Due to their resistance to tropical diseases and their ability to labour in the hot climate, Beaver says that 'in about one year I employed on the island 196 of them'.⁸⁵ In the third area, Beaver argues that the establishment of successful commercial relationships with African communities would have eventually introduced 'civilization' and was already 'paving the way for some more fortunate enterprize [sic]'.⁸⁶ He puts this down to 'the favourable alteration which we were enabled to make in the minds of the natives relative to the character of white people'.⁸⁷ According to Beaver, when the colonists arrived, they discovered that for the Africans there was 'no species of cheating, of deceit, or of treachery, of which they did not think a white man capable'.⁸⁸ However, Beaver avers that they were able to 'convert their well-grounded suspicion of fraud and deceit in all Europeans, into esteem and respect for the character of a white man'.⁸⁹

Despite the failure of his colony on the ground, Beaver hoped that his *Memoranda* would be successful in convincing the British government that the type of colonisation attempted by the Bulama Association—motivated by compassion and social responsibility—was an important aspect of national strategy. For this reason, Beaver felt some measure of vindication in the venture, and his primary motive for

⁸³ Beaver, *African Memoranda*, p.303.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.304.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.298.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.294.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.302.

publishing his account was to encourage future colonists (who would benefit from his experiential knowledge) to follow in his footsteps. The utopian ideas of colonial projectors and planners in Africa are evident in many of their written accounts which foreground the act of bringing ‘civilization’ to the continent. As Curtin states, ‘they followed the unconscious assumption of popular culture theory that a lack of civilization meant a lack of culture. African society therefore lay there, a *tabula rasa* ready and waiting for the utopian inscription’.⁹⁰ Evidence of the seductive nature of utopian planning can be seen in an illustration of the harbour of Bolama from Wadstrom’s ‘Plan of the Island of Bolama’ in his *Essay on Colonization* (see Figure 1).⁹¹ The orderly avenue of palm trees along the harbour, its solid built-up structure, and the lighthouse at the end, all exemplify the ‘cultivation and commerce’ that the Bulama Association envisaged. The scene is one of prosperity and industry, with domesticated animals (in the lower right-hand corner), ships at dock, neat warehouses on the wharf, and a well-populated scene in the foreground. At the front left of the plate, a white settler and a free black worker are walking and conversing together on the wharf. This vision seems very close to the one that Beaver had in mind when he jumped at Dalrymple’s proposal for an African colony, and which kept him going through the many hardships the settlers faced. Ultimately it was a vision that could never be achieved, with the failure of the experiment demonstrating the price to be paid for the high-minded, but nonetheless misguided idealism, which often lay behind Romantic-period colonial enterprises.

⁹⁰ Curtin, *The Image of Africa*, I, p.115.

⁹¹ Photograph by Carol Bolton, reproduced by permission of Cambridge University Library.

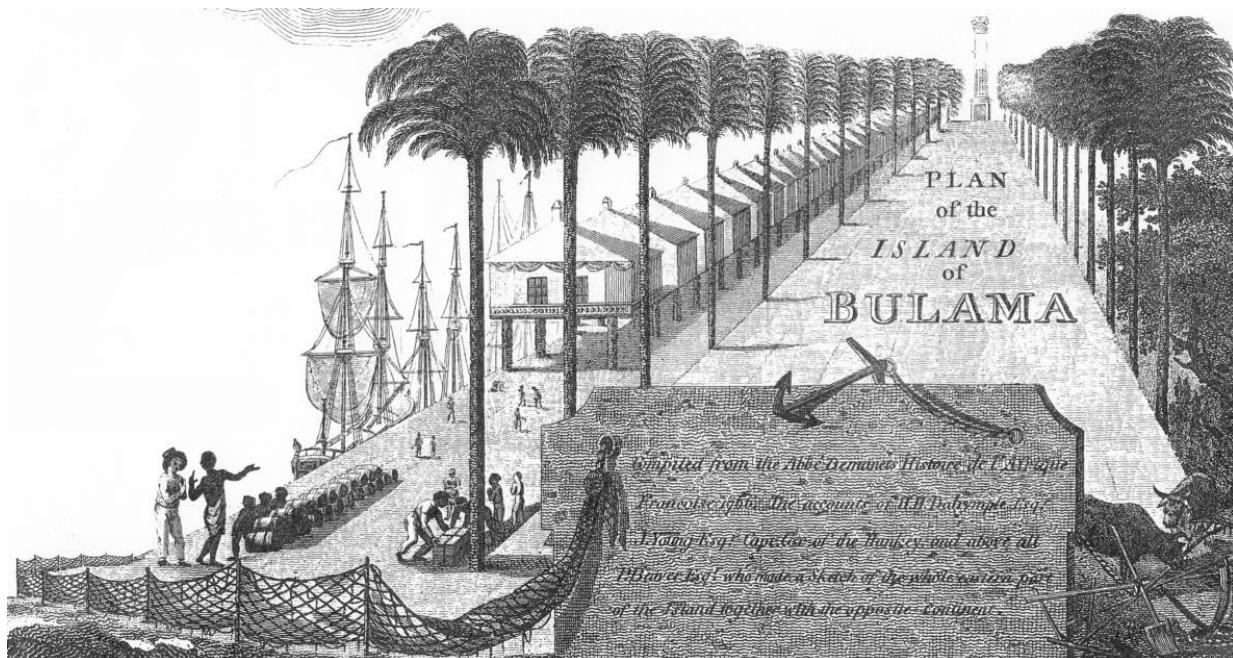


Figure 1: 'Plan of the Island of Bulama'



BIOGRAPHY: Carol Bolton's research centres on writing of the Romantic period that represents travel, exploration, and colonialism. She publishes journal articles on these subjects, as well as presenting her research at conferences. Her monograph, *Writing the Empire: Robert Southey and Romantic Colonialism* was published in 2007, and a modern edition of Robert Southey's *Letters from England* in 2016. Her current research project is preparing an edition of 'Captain Philip Beaver's African Journal' for publication with Anthem Press in 2022.

CONTACT: C.J.Bolton@lboro.ac.uk