John Donne Journal
Vol. 35 (2016)

"What His Industrious Toes Have Trod": Donne, Coryate and Travel

Raymond-Jean Frontain

Philip S. Palmer, ed., *Coryats Crudities: Selections*, Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2017, 259 pp.

Travel, with its accompanying action of translation from one realm or state of being to another, proves one of the governing metaphors of John Donne's imagination. A man whose life was defined in large part by the social, religious and metaphysical boundaries he crossed, Donne was driven by a restlessness in which ferocious mental energy was expended, paradoxically, in search of quiet, calm, and the transcendence of flux—that is, to achieve stasis. "For though through many streights, and lands I roame, / I launch at paradise, and I saile towards home," the speaker announces in *Metempsychosis* (56–57), providing Frederick A. Rowe with the title of a book which, although fifty-five years old now, remains an illuminating introduction to the psychology that informs the effort expended by Donne in pushing off from the mortal realm of "Dull sublunary lovers love" and eventually making his way "to that Holy roome" where, with God's "Quire of Saints for evermore, / I shall be made thy Musique."

A contemporary of Raleigh and Drake, Donne lived during the golden age of exploration and discovery as England enlarged its awareness of the world beyond its watery borders and staked its claim to the resources to be found on other continents. Ironically, his skill exploring *interior* states may have distracted literary historians from considering the implications of the fact that geographically he was one

of the best traveled writers of the English Renaissance.[1] While Marlowe may have stoked the imaginative fires of his audience with Tamburlaine's march of conquest from Scythia, through Parthia and Caspia, to Fez, Moroccus and Argier ("Is it not passing brave to be a king / And ride in triumph through Persepolis?"), sending his generals forward to conquer the known world and dying frustrated not to have made it to the Antipodes, Marlowe's litany of exotic place names was lifted in its entirety from Abraham Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570) and was not informed in any way by the playwright's own travels in northern France and the Lowlands on behalf of Secretary of State Sir Francis Walsingham's extensive intelligence-gathering operation.[2] And, in much the same way, Shakespeare—who could pen the "traveler's history" whose recitation by Othello left Desdemona to murmur "In faith, 'twas passing strange, / 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful"—famously failed to understand that Bohemia has no seacoast.

Like Marlowe and Shakespeare, Donne's imagination was enjoined by the marvels of travel. In his love poems he weighs the apparent immensity of the external world against the unmapped immensity of the internal realm, exclaiming "Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone, / Let Maps to others, worlds on worlds have showne, / Let us possesse one world, each hath one, and is one" ("Good-morrow," 12–14). And in his hymns he makes spiritual metaphor out of his own embarkation for Germany, while in a late illness fashions himself as a "Mapp, who lie / Flat on this bed," examined by physicians who seek to chart his Southwest passage. But, unlike his contemporaries Marlowe and Shakespeare, Donne traveled as much in actuality as in

---

[1]The exception is Anthony Parr, "John Donne, Travel Writer," *HLQ* 70, 1 (March 2007): 61–85. Although Parr justifies Donne's never writing a narrative of his various travels by the fact that travel writing was in its infancy in the early seventeenth century, he goes on to demonstrate "that travel, as metaphor and as idea, pervades Donne's writing, and despite his lack of interest in the relatively inchoate or mundane travel 'relation' of his day, he uses many of its standard ingredients in literary structures where meaning and implication can be creatively controlled" (63).

[2]The same geographical errors made by Ortelius are routinely repeated by Marlowe in *Tamburlaine*; see Park Honan, *Christopher Marlowe, Poet and Spy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 171–73.

the imagination. He took part as a gentleman adventurer in Essex's campaigns to Cadiz and the Azores in 1596; sought in 1609 to be named secretary to the Virginia Company;[3] traveled with the Drurys through France in 1611; and served as chaplain to the Viscount Doncaster's embassy into Germany in 1619. Indeed, Donne seemed comparatively so well-traveled that Izaak Walton, his earliest biographer, thought him to have "staid some years first in *Italy*, and then in *Spain*," with the intention of "travelling to the *Holy Land*, and for viewing *Jerusalem* and the Sepulchre of our Saviour," which Bald hypothesizes might—if such travel actually took place—have occurred between 1589 and 1591.[4]

Donne's imaginative conjuring with the metaphor of travel throughout his canon, coupled with his comparatively extensive experience of actual travel, would make him an ideal reader of *Coryates Crudities Hastily gobled up in five Moneths travells in France, Savoy, Italy, Rhetia commonly called the Grisons country, Helvetia alias Switzerland, some parts of high Germany and the Netherlands; Newly digested in the hungry aire of Odcombe in the County of Somerset, and now dispersed to the nourishment of the travelling Members of this Kingdome* (1611). Published at the author's expense following his much ballyhooed five-month walking tour of the continent, *Crudities* proves a mammoth tome of some 836 pages crammed with the author's plentiful observations, extensive travel notes, copious transcriptions of funeral monuments, and the texts of numerous pamphlets and eclectic documents included for the edification of the reader and in the hope of establishing Coryate's credentials as a scholar and humanist. Since 1962, when Michael Strachan published his ground-breaking biography of the self-styled "Peregrine of Odcombe" and "Odcombian Leg-stretcher,"[5] Coryate

---

[3]If the appointment had been made, R. C. Bald notes, Donne would have been involved in the shipwreck on the Bermudas, "the report of which stimulated Shakespeare's imagination and helped to determine the pattern of *The Tempest*"; *John Donne: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 162.

[4]Izaak Walton, *Life of Dr. John Donne*, in *Lives*, ed. George Saintsbury (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 26; Bald, *John Donne*, p. 51.

[5]Michael Strachan, *The Life and Adventures of Thomas Coryate* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962). Two subsequent biographies rely heavily upon Strachan's pioneering work: Dom Moraes and Sarayu Srivatsa, *The Long*

has come to be celebrated as the first traveler who undertook the ardors of travel not because he was engaged in trade, on a religious mission, charged with conquest, or participating in a diplomatic embassy, but simply—like the bear that came over the mountain—to see what he could see. *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625) included a small portion of the now lost and reputedly voluminous manuscript describing Coryate's later, more ambitious travel to Constantinople and the Holy Land, from where he pressed onwards (entirely on foot) through modern day Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan, arriving finally at the court of the Great Mogul. In a surviving letter addressed to "the English Wits" who assembled at the Mermaid Tavern, Coryate expresses his intention to travel home from India by way of "Ancient Babilon and Nymrod's Tower, some few miles from Ninive, and . . . Caire in Egypt, heretofore Memphis, upon the famous river Nilus," tarrying in each place only long enough "to observe every principal matter there, and so be gone" (qtd. in Strachan 254). But he disappeared somewhere in India while still on that epic outbound trek, and any record of his death has apparently been lost as well.

Donne scholars must be grateful to have an inexpensive yet remarkably well annotated paperback edition of the *Crudities* to use whether in a seventeenth century survey course or (more problematically) a graduate Donne seminar, particularly now that the editors of the Variorum volume containing Donne's *Satyres* have weighed in on the textual authority of three mock-commendatory verses attached to the *Crudities* associated with Donne, and supplied the brief commentary tradition attached to the two poems that the editors accept as authentic.[6] At the critical moment when England,

---

Strider: How Thomas Coryate Walked from England to India in the Year 1613 (New Delhi: Viking/Penguin India, 2003); and R. E. Pritchard, *Odd Tom Coryate: The English Marco Polo* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 2004). The quatercentennary of Coryate's travels renewed interest in his curiosity and tenacity; witness Daniel Allen's attempt to duplicate Coryate's second walking tour, which Allen fashioned into the narrative *The Sky Above, the Kingdom Below: In the Footsteps of Thomas Coryate* (London: Haus, 2008).

[6]Gary A. Stringer et al, eds., *The Variorum Edition on the Poetry of John Donne, Volume 3: The Satyres* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), pp. 360–71, 372–75, and 376–80.

increasingly aware of the riches to be found abroad, sought to move out of its isolated corner of Europe, Coryate moved tirelessly on foot through Europe as a tourist whose quick eye missed little. Possessing keen sociological and anthropological bents, he is the first to describe for his English readers at home such quotidian marvels as the fork (68), the personal fan (70), the umbrella (70), and Venetian mosaics (95), as well as the radical cultural innovation of the female stage actor (110). Possibly his most commented-upon section involves his detailed description of the scrumptious appointments, aesthetic sensibility, and commanding bearing of a Venetian courtesan (121–29).

There is a tension in Coryate's text between his reliance upon exuberantly issued superlatives and the scrupulosity of his descriptions. Thus, he declares an alley of walnut trees to be "the fairest that ever I saw" (40), Venice's "Ponte de Rialto" to be "the fairest bridge by many degrees for one arch that ever I saw, read, or heard of" (80), a meal eaten in Venice to offer "the best oysters that ever I did [eat] in all my life" (111), and music played in St. Mark's cathedral to be "the best music that ever I did [hear] in all my life both in the morning and the afternoon [services], so good that I would willingly go a hundred miles afoot at any time to hear the like" (112). Superior appointments tax his powers of hyperbole. Thus, the garden attached to the palace of the earl Leonardus Walmarana contains such an "affluence of all delights and pleasures [. . .] that it is the most peerless and incomparable plot for the quantity that ever I saw" (141); "the sumptuousest" of the state rooms in the Doge's Palace in Venice is "the fairest that ever I saw in my life, either in mine own country, or France, or any city of Italy, or afterward in Germany. Neither do I think that any room in all Christendom doth excel it in beauty" (92); the clock in Strasbourg cathedral "is a fabric so extraordinarily rare and artificial that I am confidently persuaded it is the most exquisite piece of work of that kind in all Europe. I think I should not commit any great error if I should say in all the world" (171); and Marie de Medici's bedchamber "excels in my opinion, not only all those that are now in the world, but also all whatsoever that ever were since the creation thereof" (42).

Yet, almost as a counterweight to his tendency to couch his wonder in superlatives, Coryate scrupulously measures the footprint of

buildings and other structures ("I passed a wooden bridge made over the Rhine that was a thousand fourscore and six paces long. For I paced it"; 177) in order to describe them as accurately as possible for his readers, in the process oftentimes inspiring in onlookers as much curiosity about his actions as he himself experienced for the monument in question.[7] Recent work by Brent Nelson, among others, analyzes the seventeenth century propensity to collect "curiosities" in cabinets;[8] Coryate takes the entire world as a curiosity and makes his text such a cabinet containing both such simple matters as the manner in which Swiss women braid brightly colored ribbons in their hair (158), and such (for Coryate) extraordinary ones as crocodile skins

[7]A second tension is the result of Coryate's admiration for the foreign and his conflicting loyalty to his native Somersetshire. For example, when traveling through Savoy, Coryate found the Lezere to be "the swiftest and violentest lake that ever I saw." He was particularly taken with the

> huge stones which are in most places of the lake. Yea there are many thousand stones in that lake much bigger than the stones of Stonehenge by the town of Amesbury in Wiltshire, or the exceeding great stone upon Hamdon Hill in Somersetshire, so famous for the quarry, which is within a mile of the parish of Odcombe, my dear natalitial place. (63)

Conversely, Coryate finds Mantua to be "the city which of all other places in the world, I would wish to make my habitation in, and spend the remainder of my days in some divine meditations amongst the sacred muses, were it not for their gross idolatry [that is, the inhabitants' Roman Catholicism] and superstitious ceremonies which I detest, and the love of Odcombe in Somersetshire, which is so dear unto me that I prefer the very smoke thereof before the fire of all other places under the sun" (72).

[8]In "The Browne Family's Culture of Curiosity," in *Sir Thomas Browne: The World Proposed*, ed. Reid Barbour and Claire Preston (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 80–99, Nelson considers Browne as a collector of rarities and curiosities who inspired a similar interest in his family. And in "Curious Readers and Meditative Form in Thomas Browne's *Urne-Buriall*," in *"A man very well studyed": New Contexts for Thomas Browne*, ed. Kathryn Murphy and Richard Todd (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 107–26, Nelson analyzes Browne's concept of Time as "a cabinet of curiosities," and then considers how ancient funeral artefacts are to be read, "and ultimately how this reading affects the reader of *Urne-Buriall*" (115).

(75) and the Great Tun of wine in Heidelberg, which he praises as one of the wonders of the modern world (185).

The *Crudities* welcomes being taught in a number of contexts. First, although Coryate was not a scientist and expressed no interest in scientific investigation, his narrative bears witness to drives similar to Sir Francis Bacon's to map his surroundings empirically, and to that evidenced by Sir Thomas Browne in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* to sift through common reports and refute the vulgar errors inherited by his generation. For an example of the latter, consider Coryate's remarks after visiting the Jewish quarter in Venice:

> I observed some few of those Jews especially some of the Levantines to be such goodly and proper men, that then I said to myself our English proverb: to look like a Jew (whereby is meant sometimes a weather beaten warp-faced fellow, sometimes a frenetic and lunatic person, sometimes one discontented) is not true. For indeed I noted some of them be the most elegant and sweet-featured persons[.][9]

Likewise, he challenges the English stereotype of Germans as drunkards: "Truly I have heard Germany much dispraised for drunkenness before I saw it; but that vice reigns no more there (that I could perceive) than in other countries. For I saw no man drunk in any place of Germany, though I was in many goodly cities, and in much notable company" (168). Coryate's sentences often begin "a very remarkable thing to be observed" or "another memorable thing to be observed." Although Coryate believed that the wonders of Europe should fail to "strike no small impression in the heart of an observative traveller" (27), his propensity to be delighted by all that he observed rarely compromises the objectivity of his descriptions. Indeed, one senses that his unflagging curiosity and frustration to be denied access

[9]P. 104. Would that Coryate had stopped there. Unfortunately, he goes on to say that the comeliness of the Jews whom he met "gave me occasion the more to lament their religion. For if they were Christians, then could I better apply unto them that excellent verse of the poet, than I can now. *Gratior est pulchro veniens è corpore virtus* [Even more graceful is virtue associated with corporeal beauty]." As I note below, Coryate's Protestant chauvinism is regularly on display in the *Crudities*.

to a restricted collection or room probably made him a nuisance to the native inhabitants, and on several occasions his unrelenting gaze brought him to the brink of trouble.[10]

Second, as Thomas Fuller reports, in Prince Henry's circle "sweetmeats and Coryate made up the last course at all court entertainments. Indeed he was the courtiers' anvil to try their wits upon; and sometimes the anvil returned the hammers as hard knocks as it received, his bluntness repaying their abusiveness" (qtd. in Strachan 13). The verses by 48 writers appended to the *Crudities*, with an additional nine attached to the *Crambe*, suggest Coryate's importance for the study of seventeenth century sociability.[11] Two letters that Coryate penned while on his second, more extraordinary travel, survive as pamphlets titled *Thomas Coriate Traveller for the English Wits: Greeting. From the Court of the Great Mogul* (1616) and *Mr Thomas Coriat to his friends in England sendeth greeting: From Agra the Capitall City of the Dominion of the Great Mogoll in the Easterne India* (1618). As Strachan points out, Coryate "provides the only indisputable contemporary evidence" of the gatherings of Donne, Jonson, Drayton

[10]Coryate's gaze proves relentless but, finally, cautious. Attending the theater in Venice, he is surprised to find so many "noble & famous courtesans" seated prominently in the audience with their faces masked: "If any man should be so resolute to unmask one of them but in merriment only to see their faces [as Coryate seems to have thought of trying to do], it is said that were he never so noble or worthy a personage, he should be cut in pieces before he should come forth of the room, especially if he were a stranger" (110). Conversely, although respectable Venetian women veil their faces in public, "the stuff being so thin and slight, that they [passers-by like Coryate] may easily look through it," they "do walk abroad with their breasts all naked" (119). Coryate's shock to see men and women bathing naked together in Baden (162–63) seems to stem as much from his disappointment to be shown so overtly what he enjoys having to strain to discover, as from his sense of outraged sexual propriety.

[11]In *The English Wits: Literature and Sociability in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Michelle O'Callaghan dedicates two of her seven chapters to a study of Coryate's role at Prince Henry's court, his ongoing literary battle with John Taylor the Water Poet, and his involvement with the Mermaid Tavern coterie, all of which have implications for our understanding of Donne's literary coterie(s).

and others at the Mermaid Tavern,[12] and thus allows Donne scholars to reassemble the literary community through which Coryate's manuscripts (and possibly some of Donne's as well) circulated.

In keeping with Coryate's sociability, research waits to be done on the festive nature of so many of Coryate's engagements abroad, and on the generally festive tone of the *Crudities*. Coryate quotes "that merry French writer Rabelais" when describing the codpieces worn by the Swiss guards at Fontainebleau (52), and the spirits of Rabelais, Erasmus and More infuse (and are repeatedly cited within) his narrative. "Be merry, for the devil is dead," Coryate quotes "a merry Italian" whom he meets upon entering Turin and of whose philosophy of life Coryate seems thoroughly to approve (66). Although frank about the dangers and hardships of travel, Coryate rarely allows his anxiety to get the better of him and seems to have possessed a particular talent for making friends wherever he went. For example, after arriving in the town of St. Goar during his travel on the Rhine river, Coryate willingly partakes in a ritual that requires a stranger entering the city to have an iron collar attached to his neck

> which he must wear so long standing upright against a wall till he redeemed himself with a competent measure of wine. And at the drinking of it there is as much joviality and merriment as heart can conceive for the incorporating of a fresh novice into the fraternity of boon companions. (199)

However annoying Donne and certain members of Prince Henry's coterie may have found Coryate when he over-played his self-appointed role of court fool, Coryate made literature out of conviviality and was at the center of many a "fraternity of boon companions."[13]

---

[12]Strachan, p. 1.

[13]Coryate clearly earned the respect of that most sociable of the period's writers, Ben Jonson. Whereas Donne mocks Coryate's neologizing by applying to him the word "Sesqui-superlative" ("Upon Mr. Thomas Coryates Crudities," 2), Jonson praises him as "a great and bold carpenter of words, or (to express him in one like his own) a logodaedale: which voice, when he hears, 'tis doubtful whether he will more love at the first, or envy after, that it was not his own" (in Palmer 224). There is mockery in Jonson's character of Coryate, but also an affection that is not to be found in Donne's mock-

A third major context for study of the *Crudities* is in terms of the history of the book. While describing his stay in Maintz, Coryate pauses to praise the innovation of moveable type by "Joannes Cuttenbergius" (193), and to rhapsodize about the manner in which "all the liberal sciences are now brought to full ripeness and perfection" by the printing press (194). Coryate's own experiments with the form and content of the non-fiction narrative—and the care that he took to commission the woodcuts that are one of the glories of his text—link the *Crudities* with books like Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* and Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, all of which expand, accordion-like, at their author's will to promote a seemingly endlessly self-generating text. And, like Burton and Sterne, Coryate creates a book that is identical with the personality of the author, as some of the mock-panegyrists satirically point out. Here is Donne:

> Oh to what heigth will loue of greatnesse driue
> Thy leavened spirit, *Sesqui-superlatiue*?
> . . . . .
> This Booke, greater then all, producest now.
> Infinite worke, which doth so farre extend,
> That none can study it to any end.
> ("Upon Mr. Thomas Coryats Crudities" 1–2, 8–10)

Coryate's attempt to create the persona of a learned fool both within and without his book was clearly intended to identify him as a ludic humanist in the line of Erasmus and More. (When he carried through the streets of London those copies of the printed volume that he wished to present to King James and members of the royal family, he loaded them on a donkey on the sides of which he attached a quotation from Alcinati's *Emblemata*, "*Asinus Portans Mysteria.*") But not even Coryate's remarkable knowledge of languages and of Greco-Roman and patristic texts could save him from being taken at his word and dismissed by Donne and others as a fool. Perhaps the ultimate value that his narrative has for us is that it allows us to explore the failure of a remarkably sophisticated Renaissance act of self-fashioning.

---

encomia. Perhaps as the stepson of a bricklayer, Jonson could better appreciate Coryate's attempts to refashion himself through language.

Finally, the *Crudities* invokes discussion of the period's religious polemics. As a Protestant, Coryate faced danger traveling through Catholic Italy. But the Protestantism of this generally extraordinarily congenial traveler was so militant that it could not be overcome even by the example of a Roman Catholic clergyman's generosity to him. When traveling through northern Italy into Switzerland, Coryate expresses his indebtedness to a Dominican friar who

> gave me as friendly counsel as any Protestant could have done. For he told me what dangers there were betwixt that and Germany, and the means how I might avoid them. [. . .] Thus by the kind advice of this honest friar I took such a way in the Grisons country, that I shunned the Spanish Inquisition, which otherwise would not (I believe) have given me leave to bring thus much news out of Italy into England, except I would have renounced my religion, which God forbid I should ever do, notwithstanding any torments of Spaniards or any other enemies of the gospel of Christ. I am sure all kind of friars will not give Protestants the like counsel to eschew the bloody Spanish *carnificina*, (which is almost as cruel a punishment as Phalaris his brazen bull, or the exquisitest torments that the Sicilian tyrants were wont to inflict upon offenders) but on the contrary side endeavour rather to entrap them therein. (154–55)

Nonetheless, a reader may be dismayed to discover that Coryate—who is generally so respectful of other people's customs—never fails to belittle non-Protestant beliefs and practices. For example, after attending a service in a chapel in which supplicants deposited wax effigies of body parts they hoped to have cured through the intercession of the Virgin, Coryate confesses that "I had a marvellous itching desire to finger one of them, only to this end, to bring it home into England, to show it to my friends as a token of their idolatry: but I saw there was some difficulty in the matter" (152–53). Coryate may have been intimidated from purloining one of the artefacts in Brescia, but in Venice he displayed no such compunction in debating a Rabbi on the steps of his temple. During their argument he "sharply taxed their [the Jews'] superstitious ceremonies":

> after there had passed many vehement speeches to and fro betwixt us, it happened that some forty or fifty Jews more clocked about me, and some of them began very insolently to swagger with me, because I had dared reprehend their religion: whereupon fearing lest they would have offered me some violence, I withdrew myself by little and little towards the bridge at the entrance into the ghetto, with an intent to fly from them, but by good fortune our noble ambassador Sir Henry Wotton passing under the bridge in his gondola at that very time, espied me somewhat earnestly bickering with them, and so incontinently sent unto me out of his boat one of his principal gentlemen Master Bedford his secretary, who conveyed me safely from these unchristian miscreants, which perhaps would have given me just occasion to forswear any more coming into the ghetto.
>
> (107–08)

That so generally inquisitive and respectful a traveler as Coryate could brook a near-riot in the Jewish ghetto by his religious chauvinism speaks volumes to twenty-first century students who are more likely to respond to Christian-Islamic political differences than Protestant-Catholic or Christian-Jewish tensions. By contrast, Coryate's "somewhat earnestly bickering" over religion with so many people throws into high relief Donne's poignant seeking after religious certainty in poems like "Satyre III" and "Holy Sonnet: Show me deare Christ, thy spouse," and illuminates to students the courageous originality of Donne's conclusion that "To stand inquiring right, is not to stray."[14]

---

[14]In this regard, I direct students to Achsah Guibbory's chapters discussing Donne's Arminianism and religious tolerance in her *Returning to John Donne* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 175–200 and 229–61. I have also used Coryate to illuminate Milton's claim in the prologue to Book I of *Paradise Lost* that the Holy Spirit "dost prefer / Before all temples th'upright heart and pure" (I.17–18), inasmuch as, after visiting the Protestant cathedral in Basel, Coryate concludes: "I am persuaded that one godly prayer pronounced in this church by a penitent and contrite-hearted Christian in the holy congregation of the citizens, to the omnipotent Jehovan through the only mediation of his son Jesus Christ, is of more efficacy, and does sooner penetrate into the ears of the lord, than a century yea a whole myriad of Ave

Palmer's introduction places Coryate within the traditions of English travel and travel-writing from 1550 to 1650. His edition modernizes spelling and capitalization, making Coryate's sometimes highly eclectic text more easily accessible to undergraduates. More importantly, the edition is well glossed, particularly in terms of the sources on which Coryate relied for the oftentimes voluminous background information that he provides his reader. Having been long puzzled in my study of the *Crudities* by certain of Coryate's place names and the location of some seventeenth century borders, I am especially indebted to Palmer for the clarity that he brings to such matters. Palmer is identified on the book cover as Head of Research Services at UCLA's William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, and his edition is clearly a researcher's labor of love.

Unfortunately, Palmer's abridgement disappoints on a number of counts, which make the volume less valuable in the graduate-level classroom. In his preface, Palmer claims that in addition to the better known episodes in Coryate's narrative, "I have focused on including Coryate's observations and experiences as a traveler rather than his accumulation of historical material, which in many cases was copied (as he admits) from books by François Schott and Sebastian Münster" (18). And, admittedly, there is a good deal of fat that can easily be trimmed from Coryate's text inasmuch as Coryate had a tendency to collect esoterica, such as inscriptions on funeral monuments, which earned him the reputation of "a tombstone traveller" (30). But Palmer cuts some sinew with the fat. Consider Coryate's frustration upon being denied access to two cloistered Catholic convents in Amiens.

> I was at the Nunnery of the Carmelite Nunnes, right opposite to the entry whereof there was a very goodly Altar; at whose sides there were very curious and rich hangings of white lawne, as I conceived it, or some other very fine linnen most exquisitely wrought with needle-worke, and that by the Nunnes themselves, as it was reported. I saw only two Nunnes that kept the dore, but I could not be suffered to see the rest within the Nunnery, because forsooth they never see any man, for feare of inticements to

---

maries mumbled out upon beads in that superstitious manner as I have often seen at the glittering altars of the popish churches" (166).

> vanity. Also I saw another Nunnery of Franciscan Nunnes, where there was another faire Altar; I came into their Church at the time of prayers in the afternoone, the Nunnes being then at their Vespers, in a higher loft or chappell, unto the which I could not have accesse. But I saw them at service sitting in two rowes opposite to each other. They wore white vailes about their heades, and black over the same which covered their whole body to their feete: one of these was a very beautifull woman.[15]

This episode is quintessential Coryate. The Protestant traveler is repeatedly barred—by closed doors, by a grill in the Franciscan church that separates the nuns from the laity, and by the layered veils worn by the women—from learning the secrets of a cloistered Roman Catholic community. As with his visit to the Venetian courtesan, Coryate does not seek to be sexually titillated by seeing what is otherwise denied him; surveying and recording in writing is the extent of his ambition. But Coryate's compulsion to see what is denied him proves so powerful that even a barred door, a church grill and layered veils cannot curb his curiosity and he is able to determine that one of the nuns was "a very beautifull woman." The episode goes to the heart of Coryate's voyeurism, his lack of shame, and his relentless curiosity, yet Palmer excludes it from his edition.

A second weakness stems from the lack of amplifying materials. Volumes in the Broadview series often append supplementary materials that help to contextualize the primary work, but here—although Palmer includes a reliable selection of prefatory poems appended to the *Crudites* and *Crambe*—these are disappointingly minimal. For example, excerpts from contemporary travel narratives collected in *Purchas His Pilgrimes* might demonstrate the uniqueness of Coryate's voice. And Coryate's later travel letters, indicating how far afield he ventured in his subsequent travel and demonstrating how

---

[15]For those who lack easy access to a first edition of the text, the *Crudities* is available in the Short Title Catalogue. Fortunately, a two-volume reprint edition was published in 1905 by the University of Glasgow Press that alters only the u/v and i/j reversals and has the convenience of sequential pagination. It is now available through the Scholar Select program sponsored by Amazon. I quote this episode from Vol. I, pages 163–64, of the latter.

poised was the persona that he eventually fashioned, would be especially welcome.

Finally, there is the poor quality of the woodcut reprints. Coryate invested heavily in having so many made for inclusion in his book. Some are self-mocking, such as the frontispiece which shows him vomiting over the side of his ship as he suffered a rough channel crossing from Dover to Calais, and are in keeping with the essentially festive nature of the *Crudities*.[16] But some were clearly intended to heroize Coryate, such as the one of his standing arms akimbo Tom Thumb-like atop the great tun of Heidelberg—or, more famously, the image included in a later travel letter of his riding atop an elephant in India. Such images were clearly intended to demonstrate to even the illiterate the extraordinary nature of his journey and the heroic size of his accomplishments. The small scale and poor quality of the images reprinted in Palmer's edition are what we lose in order to have an inexpensive classroom edition.

University of Central Arkansas

[16]The purple prose in which Coryate self-consciously casts this episode deserves to be quoted:

> I [. . .] arrived in Calais [. . .] after I had varnished the exterior parts of the ship with the excremental ebullitions of my tumultuous stomach, desiring to satiate the gormandizing paunches of the hungry haddocks (according as I have hieroglyphically expressed it in the front of my book) with that wherewith I had superfluously stuffed my self at land, having ade my rumbling belly their capacious aumbry. (35)

Through such self-aggrandizing language, Coryate mocks his decidedly un-poetic behavior before the court wits can mock him.