

SUMMARY: The document below is an account prepared by Michael Lok circa 25 March 1579 under 23 headings alleging malfeasance by Martin Frobisher in connection with the three Frobisher voyages to the Canadian Arctic in the years 1576-8. Lok's allegations offer an explanation for the fact that the search for the Northwest passage was neglected, and that tons of ore brought back to England were ultimately found to be worthless, causing many adventurers to lose large sums of money, including Oxford and Lok himself.

For Oxford's letter dated 21 May 1578 to the Commissioners offering to invest £1000 in Frobisher's third voyage, to be secured by a bond due on 29 September 1578, see TNA SP 12/149/42, f. 108v.

Dr Burcot referred to in Lok's allegations below was Burchard Kranich [known as Dr Burcot] (d. 1578), physician and mining entrepreneur. From the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, available online:

*Amid growing doubts, Kranich alone insisted that the ore brought home (1577–8) by Martin Frobisher contained gold, and demanded for extracting it a daily wage of £1, and £200 pension—without success. Kranich designed a new hearth, and—someone said—'doctored' the melt with gold and silver coins. In the event, the influential investors lost their money, and his reputation suffered.*

This appears to be the Dr Burcot referred to in *Kind-Heart's Dream*.

For the Frobisher voyages generally, see:

*Inuit and Englishmen; The Nunavut Voyages of Martin Frobisher*, at [http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/Search.do?ex=on&R=VE\\_403&lang=en](http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/Search.do?ex=on&R=VE_403&lang=en).

For the document below, see also Collinson, Richard, *The Three Voyages of Martin Frobisher in Search of a Passage to Cathaia and India by the North-West, A.D. 1576-8*, (London: Hakluyt Society, 1867), pp. 359-63, available online.

### The Abuses of Captain Frobisher Against the Company Anno 1578

#### *No. 1 The ore promised was not brought*

In the first voyage he brought home by chance a stone of rich ore, and being examined by Sir William Winter, Mr Randolph, Mr Hogan and the rest of the Commissioners what quantity was to be had, he said that in that country was enough thereof to lade all the Queen's ships, and promised to lade the ships of the second voyage therewithal, whereupon the second voyage was prepared, & commission given him to bring of the same. And Jonas, Denham and Gregory were sent with him for the same, but he

performed nothing at all, & brought not so much as one stone thereof, for there was none to lade, as Jonas and the rest do witness, but laded the ships with other mines found by chance.

*2 The ore promised was not brought*

In the second voyage he returned the ships laden with stones of strange ore found by chance there, saying they were of gold mine worth 80 pounds a ton, which is not yet so found, and also he brought some stones of red ore and yellow ore of Jonas Mount, very rich of gold, as Doctor Burcot witnessed, and the stones are yet to be seen, and promised to the Commissioners that there was mountains thereof, and he would lade all the ships therewithal in the third voyage, whereupon the third voyage was prepared with so great charge, but he brought home not one stone thereof afterwards that is yet found.

*3 Superfluous ships and charge*

In the third voyage he promised to lade all the ships with the ore of Jonas Mount and other so rich ore as the best of the second voyage was, and carried out a number of ships for that purpose, and a 100 men to inhabit there under colour of the Frenchmen's preparation to that country, and besides the number appointed to him by the Commissioners he carried more 4 ships and a 100 men more for his own purpose without the knowledge of the Commissioners, which now rest upon the charge of the Company, and he brought home those ships laden with none of the ore that he promised, but with other strange ore where he could find it, which he said was better than the best that was brought the year before, which is not it [sic?] so found.

*4 He would not place Captain Fenton there*

Also he promised to the Commissioners and had special charge by commission first to plant Captain Fenton and the 100 men to inhabit in that new land, whereupon the great preparation was made, but afterwards, before his departure from London, he disliked that enterprise, and dissuaded the same colourably, and when he came there he would not help them therein one jot, not so much as for 50 men wherewithal Captain Fenton would have tarried there, he fearing that Captain Fenton's deed therein would dash his glory, and because he took the victuals of that provision to victual his own 4 ships taken with him extraordinary, which went from hence unvictualled upon his promise made them to victual them, as Captain Fenton and others witness.

*No. 5 He made no discovery of passage*

He promised and had commission to send the two barks this year to make some discovery of the passage for Cathay, which he might have done, but when he came at Meta Incognita he would do nothing at all therein, as Hall & Jackman witness, but made all his endeavour to lade his own ships and the rest home again with ore.

*6 His own men evil officers in the ships*

He hath been still very costly and prodigal in the furniture of the ships and men for the voyage, and his own men, being shipped for officers of the ships, have made very great spoil, waste and pilfery of the goods in the ships, for the which he must give account.

*7 He maintained Dr Burcot's doings*

He did practise to advance Dr Burcot into the place of Jonas, & maintain Burcot's false proofs made of the ore, to th' end he might be set on again in this third voyage, as the Commissioners and Denham can witness.

*8 He victualled the ship Ayde*

He was sent to Bristol to dispatch the ships [six?] the Ayde on the third voyage, wherein he was made victualler of the ship, for the which service he had money beforehand, but he did so evil victual the same as whereas the Company allowed him to victual her with flesh 4 day in the week, he served the men thereof only 3 days and 2 days in the week, and the rest of the week with evil fish, and that with scarcity, whereby many of them died, as the men do report.

*9 He dealt double in the miners' provision*

He was sent into the West Country to provide the 120 miners for the voyage for whose furniture he received money of the Company beforehand, for their wages £240 and for their weapons £120, but thereof he paid these men upon their wages to some 20s, to some 13s 14d, and to some nothing the man, as the accounts declare, and what weapons they had, or he for them, as yet is unknown, but in the West Country is spread a great clamour that those miners, being pressed by commission, many of them were afterwards changed by favour for shoemakers, tailors and other artificers, no workmen, and were furnished to sea at the charge of the towns and villages in manner of a subsidy, as it is reported openly.

*10 He took the ship Solomon by commission*

He took the ship the Solomon of Weymouth in the West Country without knowledge of the Commissioners by force of her Majesty's general commission to him given, and thereby caused the owner, Hugh Randall, to furnish her and to be with him in this service of the third voyage, promising him victuals and other great matters, which he performed not, as Hugh Randall doth say.

*No. 11 He led the fleet of ships to [+a] wrong place*

He led all the ships this year to a wrong place of Meta Incognita through his obstinate ignorance, whereby they were all in great danger to perish, as Hall, Davis and the rest of the shipmasters will witness.

*12 He denied the Council's commission*

He, being at Meta Incognita, did refuse conference and counsel of all others, and said his instructions given by her Majesty's honourable Privy Council were but the device of Fenton and Lok, and never read by the Council, though their hands were at the same, as Captain Fenton and the other captains and Hall do witness.

*13 He caused the great disorder of the ships' return home*

And when the ships were moored safe in harbour in the Countess of Warwick's Sound where they should lade, and from whence they should have departed orderly, he being at Bear's Sound commanded all the ships (without any advice or discretion) to come thither to take him and his men in, which place being no harbour, but wild sea, a storm of weather happened which put all the ships to sea to save themselves, with loss of all their boats and pinnaces, and other spoil, leaving him there behind them in the bark Gabriel, and so they came home in such disorder as is openly known.

*14 His arrogancy*

He is so arrogant in his government as Hall, Jackman, Davis nor the other of the masters will no more take charge of ships under him, and so imperious in his doings as some of the Commissioners are weary of his company, and many of the venturers minded to meddle no more with him.

*15 He drew his dagger on Jonas*

He drew his dagger and furiously ran upon Jonas, being in his work at Tower Hill, and threatened to kill him if he did not finish his work out of hand that he might be set out again on the third voyage, whereupon Jonas did conceive so evil nature in him that he made a solemn vow he would never go to sea any more with him, which hath been no small damage to the Company in the ore brought home the third voyage.

*16 He drew his dagger on Captain Fenton*

He drew his dagger on Captain Fenton at Dartford upon a quarrellous humour, and would have mischiefed him upon the sudden if Mr Pelham and others had not been present.

*17 Little truth in his talk*

He is so full of lying talk as no man may credit anything that he doth speak, and so impudent of his tongue as his best friends are most slandered of him when he cannot have his will.

*No. 18 He slandered Mr Lok, to the great damage of the Company*

He hath raised lately such slanderous reports against Mr Lok, and given such vehement false informations of £3000 and other great sums of money to remain in his hands due to the Company to pay the ships' freights and men's wages as hath well liked some of the venturers, which hoped thereby to be forborne of the payment of their own parts of money due for that purpose, whereby little money can yet be had of them of the £3400 due by them to discharge that duty, which hath caused the Company to spend £1000 of money in vain for charges of the ships and men since they came home, and by that means for lack of payment of their duty, a slanderous rumour is spread over all the realm, to the great discredit of the Company.

*19 He paid wages to men against commandment*

He did pay wages to the men of the ship Thomas of Ipswich for 5 months, whereas the Commissioners did agree and command to pay them but for 4 months.

*20 He brought men into wages without order*

He hath brought into wages of the Company so many men, and such men as he list, and many of them at such wages as he list, without regard of their service or deserts, whereof he is to give account for that many of them are dead & gone away.

*21 The men in the Ayde make great spoil*

He hath placed still in the ship Ayde, now in the Thames, a number of men at the Company's charges, whereof many are such disordered men, both of their tongues and of their hands, as are the cause of much slander to the Company, & great spoil done in their ships, and that have but small duty of wages owing to them when their accounts shall be examined particularly.

*22 He hath not distributed the £100 to the men*

He received £100 of money by her Majesty's order at return of the second voyage, as of her Majesty's gift and reward to be distributed among the mariners & other men which served in that voyage, but no distribution is made thereof as yet, as the men do complain.

23 To conclude, if his doings in these 3 voyages be well looked into, perchance he will be found the most unprofitable servant of all that have served the Company therein.

The slanderous clamours of Captain Frobisher against Michael Lok, 1578

He hath made false accounts to the Company, and hath cozened them of £3000 of their money.

He hath cozened my Lord of Oxford of £1000.

He hath not one groat of venture in these voyages.

---

He is a bankrupt knave.

The answer of Michael Lok

All these foresaid clamours are proved to be false slanders, as well by the new audit made of Mr Lok's accounts as also by the open knowledge had of all his doings certified to her Majesty's honourable Privy Council.

And now if any evil success should happen in the work of the ore now laid at Dartford, which I trust shall not happen, yet were not that to be imputed any ways unto Mr Lok, whose innocency therein is proved by his great goods, being £2600 of money bestowed & ventured therein, and by the testimony of the Commissioners certifying the first proof of the work made in the second voyage, but rather if any such mischief should happen, which God forbid, the same were to be laid on Captain Frobisher, whose great abuses therein are before declared, and on Jonas and Denham, being the workmen thereof, as men who have been the finders & bringers of that ore which is brought, and causers of the cost bestowed for the fetching & working of the same, and on them the same were to be punished sharply, but I trust no such cause shall be given.

Endorsed: 1578, the abuses of Captain Frobisher against the Company