Richard Hakluyt: London’s role in navigation and history

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RICHARD HAKLUYT:
LONDON'S ROLE IN NAVIGATION AND DISCOVERY
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The Hakluys

Let me begin this evening with a short account of the Hakluyt family - I generally say "Hakilt" but there are about a dozen different spellings of their name in sixteenth-century documents and the pronunciation evidently varied - as far as can be established it was usually "Hakilt" or "Haklet", occasionally "Ha-kel-wit", but there is no need to be prescriptive about it. The Hakluys were an old Herefordshire family, which, in Tudor times, believed its name and ancient roots were Welsh in origin. After Edward I's conquest of Wales, Sir Walter Hakelutele, their earliest known ancestor of note, was placed in charge of several Welsh counties, rising in 1303 to be Justice, or royal administrator, of West Wales. The family seat for the next three centuries was Leominster, and the Hakluys provided a long line of knights, esquires, MPs, government officials and priests, linked through marriage to many of the leading families in the Welsh borders - they were, then, a fairly typical gentry family.

I am concerned with two Hakluys this evening, both called Richard and both, as we will see, deeply interested in overseas discoveries and both with close links to London, the City especially. One, the older, born in the early 1530s, was a lawyer and an MP. The other, his younger cousin, born in 1552, was an Anglican priest, geographer and author of the *Principal Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation*, perhaps the most famous book of travels in English, certainly in the early modern period. This work, first published as a single volume in 1589 and then revised and considerably expanded to become a three volume edition in 1598-1600, was one of about 25 books published between 1580 and 1616, the year of the young Hakluyt's death, in which he was either directly involved as author, editor or translator, or as a principal encourager of publication - I estimate that a total of about 160 travel books, broadly defined, were printed in England during these years, so Hakluyt's association with 25 or so of these indicates the significance of his contribution to this literature. All these books, incidentally, were published in London - to which place printing in England, apart from a little at Oxford and Cambridge, had effectively been restricted since the incorporation of the Stationers' Company in 1557.

Our two Hakluyts' common grandfather, Edmond, had died in about 1500, leaving his four sons as minors. They came under the care of their maternal uncle, William Martin, a Herefordshire landowner, a member of Gray's Inn and, most pertinent to tonight's London theme, a nephew of Sir William Martin, sometime master of the Skinners' Company and Lord Mayor of London. The eldest son, Thomas, grew up to become the father of Richard the lawyer and was clerk to the Council of Wales and the Marches. He received a portion of Hakluyt lands at Eyton near Leominster, enabling him to become a landed gentleman - it was he who in the 1540s told the visiting antiquary, John Leland, about the Hakluyt's Welsh ancestry (given the Tudor dynasty's Welsh origins this was probably considered smart, although the Hakluys had always been very much on the English side in Wales). Another son, Walter, became a priest. Through the Martin family's connections, the two other sons were sent to London to be apprenticed to members of the Skinners' Company. One, Ralph, died young in 1514, but his brother, yet another Richard, apprenticed in 1510, went on to pursue an apparently prosperous career as a Skinner and all four of his sons, including Richard the geographer, were able to afford to go to Oxford or Cambridge. He died in 1557, recorded as "a citizen & Skinner of London, dwelling within the parish of St Augustine's; the lower end of the Old Change, Pauls gate, within the City", and was buried in the church of St Augustine. His wife and mother of his children, Margery, died soon after.

Hakluyt the lawyer then became his five-year-old cousin's guardian. Already established in the Middle Temple, he was developing his ties with London mercantile circles as an advisor in overseas commerce and economic geography, and it was he, ten or so years later, who inspired his ward's interest in geography, when the teenage Hakluyt, then at Westminster School, visited his chambers at the Middle Temple. The young Hakluyt later reminisced about this visit, writing that his cousin "seeing me somewhat curious" in "certeine books of cosmographie" and a "universall mappe' lying open on the table, spoke to him of the "seas, gulf's, bayes . . . empires . . . and territories" of each part of the earth, of "their special commodities, & particular wants, which by the benefit of trafficke, & intercourse of merchants, are plentifully supplied". From the map, his cousin brought him to a Bible and directed him to Psalm 107, "where I read, that they which goe downe to the sea in ships, and occupy by the great waters, they see the works of the Lord, and his woonders in the deepe, &c. Which words of the Prophet together with my cousin's discourse (things of high and rare delight to my young nature) tooke in me so deepe an impression, that I constantly resolved, if ever I were preferred to the University . . . [to] by Gods assistance prosecute that knowledge and kinde of literature'.

Hakluyt kept to his resolution and went to Christ Church, Oxford, obtaining a BA in 1574 and an MA in 1577. Ordained by late 1580, he was a Student (i.e. Fellow) of Christ Church until 1586, when he was granted a prebend at Bristol Cathedral, which provided him with a reasonable income. From 1583 to 1588 he was chaplain to Sir Edward Stafford, English ambassador in Paris - these years in France, incidentally, were Hakluyt's only travels abroad. From 1590 until his death he was rector of Wetheringsett and Blockford in Suffolk, a living in the gift of Stafford's wife, Lady Sheffield. Hakluyt had one son, Edmond, born in 1593, by his first wife, Douglas Cavendish, who died in 1597. He married his second wife, Frances Smith, in 1604. Hakluyt died in November
1616 and was buried in Westminster Abbey, where he held a prebend and had since 1602 played an active part in its affairs, variously serving as its archdeacon, steward and treasurer. Little if anything is known of either Frances or Edmond after 1616.

His elder cousin, the lawyer, had died without issue in 1591. Although he had not published any books, he had written several memoranda and reports on overseas trade and commodities for, for example, the Muscovy and Levant Companies, and a major prospectus (1585) on the prospects of a colonial settlement in Virginia. He was well known to Sir Francis Walsingham, secretary of state, to whom the young Hakluyt dedicated the original edition of the Principal Navigations, in which some of the lawyer's writings were printed. He wrote to Burleigh, Queen Elizabeth's other secretary of state, about Spanish naval preparations, and sat on the committee supervising the repairs to Dover Harbour. John Dee's Diary records him visiting Dee's house in Mortlake and he was a correspondent of the great cartographer Ortelius. Although we do not have a complete picture of Hakluyt the lawyer's life, he was, then, evidently busy and well connected.

London

That the Hakluyts should be drawn to London in the sixteenth century is not surprising. The capital was by far the largest city in the realm, the seat of government and the court; it was the undisputed economic centre of the country and home to its chief port, the growth of which had been much encouraged since 1565 by the parliamentary Act empowering Trinity House of Deptford to take practical measures to improve safe passage in its waters and approaches. In 1600 London's population was perhaps 130,000-150,000, dwarfing the second and third largest cities, Norwich and Bristol, which had populations of 15,000 and 12,000 respectively. Against this should be borne in mind that the majority of the country's population of about four million was rural and families such as the Hakluyts continued to hold lands in their native counties, so it is important not to see London, despite its dominance, as disconnected from elsewhere. Indeed as far as the cloth trade, the country's single largest export industry, is concerned London was the funnel through which the trades' earnings filtered back to the localities. Many rich Londoners maintained or acquired lands and residences in the counties, and did not necessarily confine their lives to the city; on occasions it was prudent to leave it, such as in 1603 when plague forced so many people to seek refuge in the country that the East India Company could not manage to form a quorum for its meetings.

The gravitation towards London can be illustrated by the Hawkins family from Devon. William Hawkins, who pioneered the English Guinea trade, died in 1553/4, leaving two sons to carry on his West Country shipping business. For a few years they worked together: one, also called William, remained in Plymouth, but the other, John, while keeping in touch with Plymouth, made London his headquarters. There in the early 1560s he formed a syndicate of London merchants to revive his father's ventures to Guinea to obtain slaves and transport them to the West Indies.

Mention of the Hawkins family conjures up romantic stories of seadogs from the West Country, the war with Spain and privateering. Yet it was London's great merchants who dominated the whole business of sea plunder, collaborating with each other, financing adventurers like the earl of Cumberland, working with professional seamen, buying up prize cargos. And these privateering expeditions, while certainly predatory, were not random acts of violence, but highly organised affairs on commercial lines - nearly all were joint-stock enterprises, albeit one-off ventures, and there is no mistaking the wealth and standing of their London promoters among the elite of late-Elizabethan and Jacobean merchants - for example, the Grocer Sir Thomas Myddelton, a founder member of the East India Company, who became Lord Mayor in 1613 and twice in the reign of James I personally bankrolled the Crown when the City under-subscribed government loans. That the City of London's central role in privateering went right to the top is amply illustrated by the Spanish ambassador, Pedro de Zúñiga's description of Sir John Watts, Lord Mayor in 1607, as the "greatest pirate that has even been in this kingdom". Besides sending numerous privateering squadrons to the Caribbean in the 1590s, Watts, a freeman of the Clothworkers' Company, was a member of the Spanish Company, the Levant Company, the Virginia Company, and the East India Company, of which he was governor in 1601-2. Although in the Spanish war Watts was essentially a financer of privateering voyages, he did himself see action in the Armada campaign of 1588 serving as a volunteer aboard his own ship and was involved in some of the fiercest fighting off Calais.

Many of these privateering voyages were recorded by Hakluyt in the Principal Navigations. Take for example the voyage of the Amity to Barbary in 1592, a voyage which successfully combined trade and plunder, the most profitable form of privateering expedition. After a fierce engagement, the Amity took two Spanish ships and returned to the Thames with them as prizes, laden with 1400 chests of quicksilver, a hundred tons of excellent wines, and much else, valued by the captors at over £20,000. The Amity, from Hakluyt's account a powerful ship which could deploy a devastating broadside, was employed chiefly in the Barbary Trade by four Grocers, Henry Colthurst, Simon Lawrence, Oliver Stile and Nicholas Stile, all wealthy members of the London merchant community and investors in the Levant and Barbary Companies. All four left considerable property on their deaths - the first two died in the mid 1590s, but the Stiles went on to become members of the East India Company and served in the government of the City.

An especially notable example of a Londoner who was connected with Hakluyt and whose mercantile interests reflected those of Hakluyt is Michael Lok. A member of the Mercers Company, his family was well established in commerce and he was apprenticed in the family business in Flanders, where he remained until the Antwerp trade
crisis of 1550-1 prompted him and his brothers to seek more distant alternative markets. Michael travelled widely, acting as factor for his brothers as well as trading on his own behalf, to Spain, Portugal, Venice, the Greek islands and the Levant, and it was from this experience, not least the sighting of wares from the Americas and the East, that he developed his lasting interest in the expansion of English trade through the discovery and exploitation of new markets far from home. He amassed a large collection of travel books and charts, which he placed at the disposal of Hakluyt to use in compiling the _Divers Voyages_ (1582), to which Lok contributed one of the maps. He continued in the mercery business and for a while was also London agent of the Muscovy Company. Through Martin Frobisher, he became closely involved in the Cathay Company, formed to discover a north-west passage to the Pacific and access thereby to the rich markets of eastern Asia. Frobisher's three voyages on behalf of the Cathay Company attracted numerous subscribers, including courtiers and government officials, as well as merchants - among the latter was Sir Thomas Gresham, who invested a sober £100, in contrast to the £1000 promised by the rather less discerning Edward de Vere, earl of Oxford. Wild expectations combined with the company's bad organisation led to much acrimony and to Lok's effective bankruptcy - he claimed to have been inside every London gaol except the Fleet, although he was later committed there as well. In 1591 he took up a four-year contract as consul in Aleppo of the Turkey Company, but his attempts to strictly enforce its regulations alienated its merchants in the region and ended in his dismissal. He fled to Venice and initiated a suit in the courts there for compensation, which effectively paralysed the company's trade in the Levant until a compromise settlement was reached on the urging of the privy council. Lok subsequently returned to London to continue his business and his geographical researches, publishing in 1612 a complete English translation of Peter Martyr's history of Spain in the New World, based on Hakluyt's Latin edition of 1587, and composing a note on the strait of Anian, a supposed route to the Pacific through North America.

**Overseas trade**

The Elizabethan era is rightly seen as marking a great effervescence of English activity overseas, but this is not to say that English merchants were inactive overseas at an earlier date. Between the 1470s and about 1550, rising demand on the Continent lead to a doubling in the quantity of cloth exports, the unfinished broadcloth of the West Country going mainly to Antwerp, where they were dressed and dyed for markets all over northern and central Europe. The lighter, cheaper cloths (called kerseys) found their way via Antwerp to Italy and on to the Balkans, Turkey and Persia. Other cloths were sold in the Baltic and the Iberian Peninsular, from where, in the sixteenth century, some went to the Americas. Further afield, and usually prompted by the periodic crises in the Antwerp markets, direct trade took place - for example, from about 1511 with the Levant, a trade in which the Gresham family participated, as recorded by Hakluyt in the _Principal Navigations_. By Henry VIII's reign wool accounted for about 80% by value of English exports, 70% of it through London. The profits could be high for some individuals: in 1521-23 the London merchant Thomas Kitson was achieving a 20-25% gross profit on his clothes. The accounts of Thomas Gresham for the years 1546-51 suggest net profits on his whole business, to which the export of cloth was central, of nearly 15%, which meant that he could expect to double his capital every five years. In the mid sixteenth century this picture began to change, the importance of Antwerp, which was also a major source for goods to be imported to England, declined, exacerbated by the revolt of the Netherlands, and the traditional market for English cloth was severely depressed: although in time such exports gradually recovered, they no longer played their former dynamic role in promoting the nation's wealth. At home, the gap between rich and poor increased, but the boom in land prices and rents created a substantial demand from its beneficiaries for luxury products. This combination of disruption of traditional Antwerp marts and domestic socio-economic change had a major effect on the orientation of England's overseas enterprise, prompting a search for alternative outlets for the country's exports and new direct sources for imports, especially for luxuries - the role of imports is now generally seen as much more decisive in the re-orientation of trade than the development of new export markets for English cloth. Those involved in the exploitation of new opportunities overseas did not, however, necessarily have uniform objectives - some, mainly westward (or American) in their orientation were intensely anti-Spanish and actively sought conflict to force their way into obtaining a share of the New World's riches. Others, eastward looking, took a different view and had little interest in confronting Spanish power, preferring to discover alternative sources of wealth and access to the East that avoided Spain's empire.

**The Muscovy Company**

As early as 1527 Robert Thorne, a Bristol merchant based in Seville, had identified the opportunities present in the north as a way to the riches of Cathay free to the English of political complications with Spain or Portugal (his proposals and map were later printed by Hakluyt). But it was in London that such ideas were put into effect, when, in 1553 a group of Londoners formed the Muscovy or Russia Company, the first fully incorporated joint-stock company in England. Its formation was described by the schoolmaster and cartographer, Clement Adams, one of a circle of Londoners interested in advancing navigation and discovery by the application of mathematics who were associated with the first governor of the company, Sebastian Cabot. Adams's account, as printed by Hakluyt, goes:

At that time "our merchants perceived the commodities and wares of England to be in small request from the countries and people about us, and neere unto us, and that those marchandizes which strangers in the time and memorie of our ancestors did earnestly seeke and desire, were now neglected, and the price thereof abated, although by us carried to their owne portes, and all forreine marchandizes in great accompt, and their prices wonderfully raised: certaine grave citizens of London, and men of great wisdome, and carefull of the good of
their country, began to think with themselves, how this mischief might be remedied: neither was a remedy (as it then appeared) wanting to their desires, for the avoiding of so great an inconvenience: for seeing that the wealth of the Spaniards and Portugals, by the discovery and search of newe trades and countries was marvellously increased, supposing the same to be a course and meane for them also to obteine the like, they thereupon resolved upon a newe and strange navigation. And whereas as the same time our Sebastian Cabot, a man in those days very renowned, happened to be in London, they beganne first of all to deale and consult diligently with him, and after very much speache and conference together, it was at last concluded that three ships should be prepayred and furnished out, for the search and discovery of the northern part of the worlde, to open a way and passage to our men for travaile to newe and unknowne kingdomes".

One of these "grave" Londoners was Sir George Barne, a Haberdasher, Lord Mayor in 1552-3, and already prosperous in many branches of commerce - for example in exporting cloth to and importing wine from Spain. Besides being a leading figure in the formation of the Muscovy Company, he was a backer of the voyages to West Africa in 1553 and 1554. His son, also called George, married the daughter of William Garrard, another leading founder of the Muscovy Company, and he later became the Company's governor and, in 15867, Lord Mayor. One of the elder Barne's daughters, Anne, married, first, Alexander Carlell, another Muscovy merchant, and secondly, Sir Francis Walsingham, secretary of state (it was probably through this family connection that Walsingham became so involved in the Muscovy Company); another daughter, Elizabeth, married John Rivers, mayor in 1573-4. This family vignette I think illustrates the smallness of the Tudor mercantile world in London and its close connections not only with other merchants but also with government figures.

Richard Hakluyt the lawyer was actively advising the Muscovy Company and it is interesting to note that he advised Arthur Pet and Charles Jackman, who were despatched by the Company to discover a north-east passage in 1580, to

"Take with you the mappe of England set out in faire colours, one of the biggest sort I meane, to make shew of your countrey from whence you come. Also the large mappe of London, to make shew of your citie. And let the river be drawne full of ships of all sorts, to make the more shew of your great trade and traffike in trade of merchandize". (This was perhaps a version of the great map of London traditionally attributed to Ralph Agas.)

The history of the Russia Company shows that discovery and improved navigation were not pursued as scientific ends in their own right, but they were essential if new commerce was to be developed and genuine scientific knowledge was often gained as a result. If the search for a north-east passage to Cathay was unsuccessful, it opened up Russia to English trade. Anthony Jenkinson's travels on behalf of the company yielded major new geographical information which found its place in Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570), the first atlas of the world. Cabot had ordered the making of accurate observations in his instructions for the first voyage to Russia in 1553 and the logs kept on the early Russia voyages became important records for navigation. The Russia Company claimed that it maintained a learned man in cosmography to instruct seamen and it certainly paid for Richard Eden's translation of one of the leading navigational manuals of the day, the *Arte de Navegar* of Martin Cortes.

Good seamanship and exploration were, then, commercial imperatives if trade was to be successfully expanded overseas. By the early seventeenth century this trade was paying handsome dividends, and the epitaph of Sir Thomas Smythe, one of the greatest London merchant princes of the era reveals its global reach by 1625:

"To the glory of God, and to the pious memory of . . . Sir Thomas Smith (late governor of the East Indian, Muscovia, French and Sommer Island Companies; treasurer for the Virginia plantation; prime undertaker in 1612 for that noble designe, the discoverie of the North-West passage; principal commissioneer for the London expedition against the pirates, and for a voyage to the river Senega, upon the coast of Africa; one of the chief commissioners for the navie royal, and sometime ambassador from his majeste of Great Britian to the emperour and great duke of Russia and Muscovia".

By the end of Elizabeth's reign in 1603, when Smyth was re-elected as the East India Company's first governor, there had undoubtedly been an expansion of trade in the geographical sense, as can be seen in the activities of the Levant, Russia and East India Companies, but the relative importance of these new markets needs to be kept in perspective. Figures from London customs accounts for 1587-88 show 70% of the entries to come ports concentrated on the North European coast from Hamburg to Rouen, with the heaviest concentrations at Stade and Middelburg, the staples of the Merchant Adventurers. Even if no longer concentrated at a single port (Antwerp), the bulk of England's trade still found it outlets in the traditional markets of the Adventurers - St Nicholas, Aleppo and Bantam were only minor outposts in England's commercial empire. Woollen cloth in 1603 still accounted for the bulk of the country's exports, most still finding their outlet immediately across the Channel. We should remember that many of the élite still played no part in overseas trade, and others, chiefly concerned with the Continental cloth trade, seldom ventured outside Europe.

Joint-stock companies and traditional trading structures

The new, joint-stock, companies did however allow the extension of the trading community outside the ranks of merchants and were open to those who wanted to invest but not to be actively involved in everyday operations. The Russia Company at its foundation included seven peers, eight important office-holders, fourteen knights (of whom four were aldermen), seven aldermen, eleven esquires and eight gentlemen - apart from the aldermen,
most of this group would not be found in the traditional organisation of the Merchant Adventurers. But in spite of the openness of the new trading companies to investments from all quarters, many Merchant Adventurers chose not to invest in them. The records of the East India Company, which received its first charter in 1600, begin with a list of 101 London merchants who the previous year had promised subscriptions totalling over £30,000. Dominant were Levant Company merchants, but Merchant Adventurers, whose company still included by far the greatest number of the City's wealthiest merchants, provided relatively little - indeed as time went on they seem to have been even less connected with the southern and eastern trades. Out of the 150 Merchant Adventurers trading in 1606, only 11 were among the 118 Levant Company charter members of 1605. During the first quarter of the seventeenth century, approximately 35 men who made their fortune primarily in the Merchant Adventurers' trade were prestigious and wealthy enough to become aldermen of London, but of these 35 no fewer than 25 traded with the Adventurers' privilege to Continental markets to the exclusion of all other overseas ventures. Yet, traditional or innovative, these merchants were based in London.

The two Hakluys' interests in distant overseas trade meant their natural association was with the joint-stock companies. The younger followed his cousin in offering them his expertise. In January 1601 he was called to a meeting with the directors of the East India Company, when, "having read unto them out of his notes and bookes divers instructions for provisions of jewelles", he was asked to write a report on "the principall places in the East Indies where trade is to be had, to . . . be used for the better instruction of factors". A few weeks' later, Hakluyt submitted his detailed information on the Portuguese eastern trade and was duly paid £10 for his advice as well as for three maps he had provided.

These maps were of the Moluccas, or Spice Islands, and were copied and translated by Hakluyt from an original in his possession that had been taken from the "Madre de Deus" captured by English privateers off the Azores in 1592. This great Portuguese carrack laden with a huge cargo of jewels, spices, silks and other precious goods, was probably the biggest prize taken in the Elizabethan war with Spain (Portugal had been annexed by Spain in 1580, so it too suffered from English actions). Besides the map Hakluyt benefited from the plunder of this ship in procuring from it 'divers . . . books and letters written from Japan, China, and the Indies, including a treatise on China written by Duarte Sande, a Portuguese Jesuit, which had been printed at Macao in 1590. He translated and printed this in 1599 in the second volume of the Principal Navigations, saying it had been found on the Madre de Deus 'inclosed in a case of sweete cedar wood, and lapped up almost an hundred fold in fine calcut-cloth, as though it had been some incomparable jewell'. It is today considered by scholars to be among the best available surveys of Chinese religion and culture of the late sixteenth century.

As it happens the several consortia involved in the capture of the Madre de Deus did not include a significant London merchant element. The Queen, who is reported to have made £80,000 from selling the cargo of pepper alone, equivalent to a quarter or even a third of her annual income, profited directly having provided ships, commanded by Sir John Burgh, as did George Clifford, the privateering earl of Cumberland, who, although not present at this action, provided five ships; Raleigh and Sir John Hawkins also invested heavily. One London merchant who was involved, John Bird, complained vehemently at the complete breakdown of discipline in handling the plunder, much of which was pillfered or sold far below its true value: "It is not tolerable to let such spoil be made. There is no good order used any way to encounter the thievery of these lewd fellows". Preliminary discussions for the campaign of 1592 during which the Madre de Deus was taken may have originated among the London merchants who had so profitably backed the squadron commanded by Robert Flicke, a member of the Grocers' Company turned privateer, sent to reinforce Lord Thomas Howard's fleet in the Azores in 1591 (Flicke's report to his backers, printed by Hakluyt, is notable for its clear and orderly account of ships, treasure and goods taken), but it is possible that the relatively minor amount - £6000 - that the London merchants ventured in 1592 was due to their reluctance to participate heavily in a scheme under the Queen's implicit control after her refusal to allow them a more equitable division of the prizes taken by Flicke in 1591. Among the City organisations of Flicke's expedition were Hakluyt's patron, the Clothworker Richard Staper, to whom I will refer again later, and Thomas Cordell, a Mercer, alderman and member of the Levant Company, who was to become one of the earl of Cumberland's chief creditors.

Hakluyt's involvement with the newly formed East India Company is reflected in the several books associated with him published after 1600. These include the Journal of Jacob Cornelissen Neck's expedition in 1598 to the East Indies (1601), translated by William Walker from the Dutch "by the perswasion of M. Richard Hakluyt" and dedicated to Sir Thomas Smythe, Governor of the East India Company, for the guidance of "your East Indie voyage", and Gothard Arthus's Dialogues in the English and Malaiane Languages . . . . faithfully translated into English tongue . . . for their sakes, who happily shall hereafter undertake a voyage to the East-Indies (1614). Arthus's Dialogues, an introduction to spoken Malay, one of the major languages of commerce in the Indonesian region - "very fit for the factors to learn" as the Court Minutes of the Company record - had been drawn to the East India Company's attention by Hakluyt and was translated by him from Arthus's Latin edition (1613). It was then revised by Augustine Spalding, who had gone out to Bantam in 1601 and who dedicated the book to Sir Thomas Smythe, commending him for employing "skillfull mathematicians and geographers", among them "Master Richard Hakluyt, a singular furtherer of all new discoveries and honest trades". The Dialogues is an excellent example of Hakluyt's influence in identifying useful texts, encouraging their publication, and involving himself as necessary, in this instance in translating from the Latin.

It was perhaps at the request of the East India Company that Hakluyt undertook one of his most ambitious translations, rendering Grotius's Mare Liberum (1609) into English as The Free Sea, which could be used to justify
the Company's eastern trade in international law. Grotius's arguments from universal principles in favour of the Dutch East India Company's rights against the Portuguese in maritime Asia could just as easily be applied to those of the English East India Company. They were in fact used by the English against the Dutch themselves in countering Dutch claims to exclusivity in the East Indies at the Anglo-Dutch conferences, which were held in London in 1613 and 1615 in an attempt to resolve differences between the two nations' East India Companies. Grotius participated in these conferences as one of the four Dutch commissioners, but his authorship of the anonymously published *Mare Liberum* was still apparently unknown: when the English quoted *Mare Liberum* to the effect that under the *jus gentium* - the law of nations - freedom of trade cannot be restricted without the consent of all peoples, Grotius himself replied that the proponent of "mare liberum" did not disagree with this and had established liberty everywhere before consent has been given; however, he went on to say, Dutch commercial restrictions in the East Indies stemmed from consensual treaties agreed with local rulers and were therefore not in breach of the fundamental natural law principle of the right to trade. Hakluyt's *Free Sea* was not in the event published, possibly because, even if his treatise suited English interests in Oriental regions, more important English claims against the Dutch in European waters came to rest on the principle of the closed sea, the opposite doctrine to that advocated by Grotius. Hakluyt's *Free Seas* survived, little known, in a single manuscript in the library of the Inner Temple until 2004 when it was printed in an edition by David Armitage.

The other famous company founded in the early seventeenth century was of course the Virginia Company, in which Hakluyt was involved as an adviser, investor, and as a patentee of the first charter in 1606. He also received a dispensation, which he did not in the event take up, to go to Virginia without having to surrender his various ecclesiastical posts (and therefore his income) in England. He translated the explorations of Ferdinando de Soto in the approximate vicinity of the new colony as *Virginia Richly Valued* (1609), which he dedicated to the "Counsellors, and others the cheerefull adventurors for the advancement of that Christian and noble plantation in Virginia" as a work that "dOTH yeeld much light to our enterprise now on foot". Deemed similarly useful was an English edition of Marc Lescarbot's *Nova Francia: or the description of that part of New France, which is one continent with Virginia* (1609), translated by Pierre Erondelle, who recorded that the French original "was brought to me to be translated by M. Richard Hakluyt ... and by him this part was selected and chosen ... for the particular use of this nation, to the end that comparing the goodness of the lands of the norther parts herein mentioned with that of Virginia ... greater encouragement may be given to prosecute that generous and goodly action".

The formation of the Virginia Company took place along established joint-stock principles and involved the great merchants who dominated English overseas trade. Yet from the start it suffered from a multitude of organisational and other problems and it was dissolved by the Crown in 1624. This was due to the failure of its joint stock to attract sufficient funds. As we have seen the best source of capital was the City of London's merchant community and this capital was readily forthcoming if an investment's prospects were auspicious. A group of elite city magnates around Sir Thomas Smythe, who was company treasurer, provided the major part of the Virginia Company's funds in its early years, but once it was clear that profits, if any, from the Virginia enterprise would be very much in the long term, merchant investors began to lose interest. Although the East India Company was not able to establish itself on a permanent basis for some years (a permanent joint stock was organised in 1613, prior to that terminable stock had been used, each eastern trading voyage having separate financial arrangements), it clearly out-performed the Virginia Company. Between 1609 and 1613 the Virginia Company elicited £30,000 through direct investment by its stock-holders, a further £6000 up to 1619, and just about nothing after that. By contrast the East India Company raised over £2 million for its joint stock in the period 1609-21, a time when London commerce was generally prosperous and when there was no general shortage of investment funds. Plantation settlement, with its many attendant problems, was simply not profitable enough to warrant the risk and time involved.

Themes - patronage, government and navigation

At Oxford, and unusually for some years after his departure from the university, Hakluyt received financial support from the Clothworkers' Company of London. Prominent among the Clothworkers were merchants involved in long-distance trade and it is probable that one of these, Richard Staper, later to become the Company's master, was the intermediary responsible for Hakluyt's award - in 1589 he was profusely thanked in Hakluyt's preface to the *Principal Navigations* for "divers things touching the trade of Turkey and other places in the East". Staper and his close associate Edward Osborne were founder members in 1581 of the Turkey Company. The establishment of this company, which was subsumed into the Levant Company in 1588, has been identified as the decisive step in Elizabethan expansion. It followed from the gradual revival of English trade with Turkey via the Mediterranean in the 1570s when English merchants had both the opportunity and the motivation to penetrate the Mediterranean as a result of the disruption of Venetian maritime commerce with northern Europe caused by Venice's war with Turkey and because of the need to find alternative sources for eastern products previously obtainable at Antwerp, where, with much of the Low Countries, commercial life was now thoroughly disrupted by the Dutch revolt. Allied to these motives in the founding of the Turkey Company was the attempt by the Muscovy Company to open trade with Persia by the safer and cheaper Mediterranean route as an alternative to the approach via Russia, and the efforts of merchants trading with the Peninsula after Portugal's annexation by Spain to bye-pass Iberian middlemen and directly enter the import markets of the east under Portuguese jurisdiction. It is, therefore, unsurprising that among the Turkey Company's original patentees was George Barne, governor of the Russia Company who, with his family, was much involved in the Spanish trade - indeed six of the twelve Turkey Company patentees had been founding members of the Spanish Company in
1577 and of the four Merchant Adventurers among the Company's founders, three were prominent in the Spanish trade. But, significantly, neither Staper nor Osborne were Merchant Adventurers.

The achievements of the Merchant Adventurers are not chronicled by Hakluyt, because his intention, which he adhered to in the first edition of 1589, in compiling the *Principal Navigations* was to concentrate on voyages of "search and discovery of strange coasts" and to exclude voyages "performed near home, nor in any part of Europe commonly frequented by our shipping". His omission of the Merchant Adventurers' trade with northern Europe from his story was therefore justifiable. Nevertheless, in the much enlarged second edition (1598) he did include their early activities, but only to demonstrate the antiquity of English commerce, not to celebrate their present day achievements - thus while he readily relaxed his criteria to include an account of the defeat of the Spanish Armada, he made no mention of the Adventurers' epic braving of Alva's fleet in 1569 to supply cloth to their traditional markets in Europe. Hakluyt owed nothing to the Merchant Adventurers and his chief mercantile contacts and personal interests allowed little space for them in the *Principal Navigations*; but I do not think he was personally biased against them.

The role of government

Navigation is of course essential to any maritime trade and the strategic importance of its development and tuition was widely recognised. Hakluyt, for example, while he was serving with the English embassy in Paris learnt that a navigational lectureship had been established by the French and urged Walsingham to establish a similar lectureship in London, where it could be well calculated to attract seamen (he advised the creation at Oxford of another lectureship in the more theoretical aspects of the science). Nothing came of this at an official level, but in 1588 a mathematical lectureship was started at Leadenhall under Thomas Hood, who was commissioned by Thomas Smythe, of whom we have heard much already, and John Wolstenholme, later to become one of the richest merchants in London, a prominent figure in the East India and Virginia Companies, and backer of the successive attempts begun by Henry Hudson in 1610 to discover the Northwest Passage.

In a similar fashion, William Sanderson, a wealthy London merchant who had largely financed John Davis's voyages in search of a Northwest Passage, was responsible for commissioning from Emery Molyneux (recommended to him by Davis) a terrestrial globe showing the latest discoveries and designed to facilitate navigation and further exploration in northern waters. This, and its companion celestial globe, were the first ever made in England and are among the earliest to be designed especially for use at sea. Hakluyt referred eagerly to their construction in his preface to the 1589 edition of the *Principall Navigations* and they were completed in 1592 (only a handful of these globes now survive, but a pair is to be found in London, in the Middle Temple: this had originally belonged to the William Crashawe, preacher to the Middle Temple and supporter of the Virginia Company). The fine world map on Mercator's projection, published in the second edition of the *Principal Navigations*, has been attributed to Molyneux, but it is now thought more likely that Edward Wright, who had assisted with the globes, was responsible - Wright lectured in London on navigation to merchant seaman and the East India Company; and he worked closely with Henry Briggs, the first professor of geometry at Gresham College, and with Hakluyt's friend, William Gilbert, famous now for his work on magnetism.

Official patronage for the study of navigation was however still not forthcoming. In 1597, under the provisions of the will of Sir Thomas Gresham, the Corporation of London and the Mercers Company founded the college that bears his name. With seven professorships, geometry and astronomy among them, it was hoped it would go some way to address the problem, but in 1598, in the dedication of the second edition of his *Principal Navigations*, Hakluyt called again for a government supported lectureship in navigation and proposed an examination system for pilots and masters similar to that in use by the Spanish. Addressing the Lord Admiral, Howard of Effingham, he said, "And surely when I considered of late the memorable bountie of Sir Thomas Gresham, who being but a merchant hath founded so many chargeable lectures, and some of them also which are mathematical, tending to the advancement of marine causes; I nothing doubted of your lordship's forwardness in settling and establishing of this lecture; but rather when your lordship shall see the noble and rare effects thereof, you will be heartily sorry all this while it hath not been erected . . . . whenever it shall come to pass, I assure myselfe it will turne to the infinite wealth and honour of our country, to the prosperous and speedy discovery of many rich lands and territories of heathens and gentiles as yet unknown, to the honest employment of many thousands of our idle people, to the great comfort and rejoicing or our friends, to the terror, daunting and confusion of our foes".

Among the many books published with Hakluyt's encouragement, which makes his literary legacy far more extensive than might be deduced from just looking at the books with his name on the title-page, is Ralph Handson's translation of Pitiscus's *Trigonometry: or the doctrine of triangles* (1614). Handson had studied mathematics under Briggs at Gresham College and, praising their sponsorship of lectures in navigation, dedicated the book to Sir Thomas Smythe and John Wolstenholme. Handson was no seaman, but his studies at Gresham College and his discussions with Hakluyt enabled him to gain a good grasp of current navigational practices and problems, and he understood that only a man who combined practical experience is seamanship with "the perfect knowledge of this trigonometrie" could be termed an "absolute marriner, fit to take charge in all voyages". Accordingly he added an appendix demonstrating the practical application of the treatise's contents to nautical problems. When, in 1630, he published a second edition, he dedicated it to Trinity House, with the assurance that many mariners had benefited from studying the earlier edition.
Hakluyt was absolutely correct in identifying the needs for, and benefits to, his country of overseas discoveries and navigation, but in seeking official sponsorship he was pressing the wrong buttons to achieve it. Throughout the Elizabethan period, the formal participation of government in colonial projects and overseas trade was consistently sought by Hakluyt (and others) but it was never forthcoming. Hakluyt's *Discourse of Western Planting*, written at the behest of Sir Walter Ralegh and intended for the private advice of the Queen and her council - it circulated in manuscript only and was not designed for general publication - is often considered to the pre-eminent colonial tract of the time. Presented to the Queen in person by Hakluyt it probably helped to secure him a lucrative ecclesiastical income, yet, it had no discernible influence on policy (it remained unknown to scholars until the 1870s when it was printed for the first time). The Crown was simply not interested in giving its official support. What the Queen and her advisors did want, of course, was a share in the profits of overseas ventures and all were active in investing in many of them, but in this they were so to speak following a market not creating one, reaping the rewards for as little risk as possible. I don't want to sound too censorious in saying this: one of the risks of overseas ventures was clashing with foreign powers and their rival claims, Spain's above all, and Elizabeth had higher considerations of war and peace to consider. It is, therefore, to the merchants of London and those they supported and whose advice they sought, such as the two Richard Hakluys, that advances in navigation and discovery in this era should be ascribed.

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